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NOTE

This essay is the first of four articles that form the current issue of JOLCEL. The other contributions are “Greek Thresholds to the Stars: Nicolaus Copernicus, Georg Joachim Rheticus, and the Ideal Reader of *De revolutionibus*” by Irina Tautschnig (pp. 30–53), “Usages du néo-latin et du néo-grec ancien dans les paratextes des éditions du théâtre grec du XVIe s. Florent Chrestien et la pratique de l’*eiusdem uersio*, entre traduction et composition bilingue” by Malika Bastin-Hammou (pp. 54–83), and “Greek–Latin Code-Switching in Early Modern Greek Disputation Prints (1615–1725)” by Janika Päll (pp. 84–125).

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Toward a Tongueprint of Classical Bilingual Texts: Latin and Greek in Erasmus' *Moria* and Aleandro's Diaries*

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ABSTRACT

The extent of early modern Neo-Latin literature is truly vast, but its substantial Greek component, in the form of code-switches, has been largely overlooked. Often dismissed as mere quotes from classical sources, the phenomenon deserves further scrutiny, especially since we argue that this linguistic technique served various purposes and its use depended on factors such as author, genre, and audience. We explore the functions of Latin–Greek code-switching in three prose texts by initially like-minded humanists who ended up in bitter controversy: the *Moria* or *Praise of Folly* by Erasmus of Rotterdam (ca. 1466–1536), the diaries of Girolamo Aleandro (1480–1542), and a letter Aleandro wrote to Erasmus in 1512. We argue that Erasmus and Aleandro used code-switching differently in the construction of their bilingual literary personas—that of Folly in the case of Erasmus, and the author himself in the case of Aleandro—and that this difference is related to questions of genre. We analyse the code-switching profiles of these texts by both computational and traditional philological methods, offering a proof-of-concept for a ‘tongueprint’ parameter that requires refinement in follow-up research. Overall, Erasmus’ Folly seems to have used code-switching more

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sparingly and with a proportionally larger number of quotes from classical sources than Aleandro in his diaries, which contain more substantial code-switches. Aleandro's letter occupies an intermediate position. We investigate to what extent this difference was the result of the divergent genres, audiences and publication histories of these three texts, while at the same time considering the role played by their general profiles as authors.

1 Introduction

Language use is fundamentally variable, hovering between *rapprochement* toward other speakers (hence the importance of mutual intelligibility for communication with others) and self-identification and self-profiling (hence the existence of individual and group idioms). This variability is found also in code-switching.¹ Alongside general functions and tendencies, one can detect individual particularities in an individual language user's code-switching practices, depending also on the genre of the text. Our case study endeavors to show how, within the community of humanists, there were both common tendencies and individual variation in authors and texts. Humanist scholars used their classical bilingualism in a way that was recognizable for their peers and hence strengthened ties between them, and could serve as cultural capital for social promotion and self-fashioning.²

In this paper, we test this assumption by looking at three texts by two authors who shared the same literary and cultural ideals initially, but became bitter enemies in their later lives: Erasmus of Rotterdam (ca. 1466–1536) and Girolamo Aleandro (1480–1542). They met each other at Aldus Manutius' publishing house in Venice, where Erasmus convinced Aleandro to move to Paris and teach Latin and Greek there.³ The following two texts are the focus of analysis, with a shorter third text used for comparison:

- (1) Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (originally composed in 1509, first edition 1511, last authorized edition in 1532), a Neo-Latin oration as though declaimed by Folly in praise of herself, which abounds in code-switches to Greek and is an example of a paradoxical encomium;⁴
- (2) Aleandro's diaries (ed. Omont 1895), private ego-documents composed after 1525, when he was archbishop of Brindisi in the Greek south of Italy, and when he was no longer on good terms with Erasmus.⁵ Most journal entries are

¹ The reader is referred to the introduction of the first special issue for how we understand code-switching in this paper: see Barton and Van Rooy, "Introduction."

² For early modern language communities, see Burke, *Languages and Communities*. For cultural capital, see, e.g., Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital." For self-fashioning, see Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*.

³ Paquier, "Érasme et Aléandre"; Lowry, "Girolamo ALEANDRO"; Godin, "Érasme, Aléandre." See also the short entry by Gall, "Aleander, Hieronymus."

⁴ Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*.

⁵ Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*.

in Latin, but they are interspersed with countless Greek entries. Occasionally, there are code-switches within entries, typically from Latin to Greek.

Erasmus wrote his *Praise of Folly* in the fall of 1509 in London, at the house of his friend Thomas More, on whose name the Greek title *Μωρίας ἐγκώμιον* is a pun. The title is often Latinized as *Moriae encomium* or simply called the *Moria* by Erasmus. He got the idea for the text earlier that year while riding horseback over the Alps from Italy to England. Thinking of his friends in England, he noticed that More's name was remarkably similar to the Greek word for folly (*Moria* / *Μωρία*). Erasmus claims to have completed the work in about a week at the Old Barge (More's house), when he had just arrived there and while his kidneys were giving him trouble. His books had not yet reached him, so he had some time on his hands and wrote to distract himself from his illness. Erasmus claimed he was encouraged by More and others to complete and publish it.⁶ Erasmus revised and augmented the text at several points, publishing the final authorized edition in 1532 with Froben's printshop. The modern edition we used for the philological analysis relies primarily on the Froben edition, while recording variations.⁷

Girolamo Aleandro's diaries are of an entirely different order: they are not aimed at an audience, and even though many entries may seem amusing, the primary goal was not to entertain. Instead, Aleandro used his diaries as self-reflection and documentation of his life and the major events occurring in his world. The documents were never intended for publication and are extant in different manuscript volumes, which their nineteenth-century editor Henri Omont has described as follows:

they are *diaries*, or journals in the true sense of the word, entirely in Aleandro's hand, usually redacted in Latin, the second [volume] often in Greek, sometimes in Hebrew, and in which one will find, next to mentions of contemporary events of a general interest, records of the smallest details about Aleandro's intimate life.⁸

The diaries cover the years 1480–1531, with a major lacuna from 1518 until July 1524, when Aleandro was papal nuncio in Germany, where he worked to combat Protestantism—including at the Diet of Worms. His notes from this period must have existed but are now lost. The diary volumes, which we have consulted in Henri Omont's old edition (1895), deserve a new modern edition with translation and commentary.⁹

For the purposes of comparison, our analysis also includes the surviving correspondence between Aleandro and Erasmus from the early 1510s, in particular a

⁶ This paragraph is based on Miller's introduction to Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, 13–14.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Our translation (with original emphasis) of Omont in Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 3: "ce sont des *diaries*, ou journaux au véritable sens du mot, tout entiers de la main d'Aléandre, rédigés ordinairement en latin, le second souvent en grec, quelquefois en hébreu, et dans lesquels, à côté de mentions relatives à des événements contemporains d'un intérêt général, on trouvera consignés les plus petits détails de la vie intime d'Aléandre."

⁹ Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*.

letter Aleandro wrote to Erasmus from Paris in 1512, when they were still on good terms.¹⁰ This letter, “as from one Greek scholar to another, is liberally sprinkled with Greek phrases.”¹¹

In this paper, we test the assumption that multilingual texts have code-switching profiles that depend on the author and genre of the text, and that these profiles can be usefully quantified. We focus on the following research questions:

- (1) Can we draw up code-switching profiles for classical bilingual texts from the Renaissance?
- (2) Can digital methods and artificial intelligence help us in this respect?
- (3) How do these results relate to a philological analysis of the texts, focusing on the functions and contexts of code-switching?

We explore to what extent the difference in code-switching profiles was the result of the divergent genre, audience and publication history of the texts, while at the same time assessing the role played by the general profiles of the authors in question.

In order to analyse the code-switching profiles of these three texts, we have adopted a double method. Firstly, we conducted an automatic identification of language distribution in the three texts by using a transformer model, on the one hand, and by Unicode-based alphabet detection scripted in Python, on the other.¹² We further trained the transformer model for Latin, Greek, and Hebrew using 4,500 sentences from classical literature for each language.¹³ Secondly, we conducted a human-reading analysis of relevant passages with code-switching with regard to the variant nature and functions of this phenomenon in the three texts and the way this variation is tied to genre.

2 Distant-reading analysis: toward the tongueprint

We applied our distant-reading analysis of the ‘tongueprint’, a parameter characterizing linguistic distribution within a text, to the following versions of the three texts:

¹⁰ Aleandro in Erasmus, *Opus epistolarum*, n° 256, 502–8.

¹¹ Ferguson, the annotator of Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, 217.

¹² See <https://huggingface.co/papluca/xlm-roberta-base-language-detection> (accessed 6 February 2025).

¹³ See <https://huggingface.co/mercelisw/xlm-roberta-base-extended-language-detection> (accessed 6 February 2025).

- I. The text of *Praise of Folly* as found on *Wikisource* and hence conveniently downloadable. As the *Wikisource* text was in good shape, no new transcription was made for the sake of efficiency;¹⁴
- II. The text of Aleandro’s diaries in the edition of Henri Omont as rendered by Transkribus,¹⁵ with major manual corrections, especially for the Greek and the Hebrew (which had to be substantially corrected), and having removed the French notes and marginal elements supplied by the editor; and
- III. The letter of Aleandro to Erasmus, written from Paris at the end of February 1512, which we transcribed manually.¹⁶

The text of Aleandro’s diaries needs follow-up attention, especially its many automatically transcribed Latin parts, although the Transkribus model was overall accurate and we have manually corrected as much as possible throughout. Additionally, Omont’s edition is somewhat chaotic, with entries edited in the footnotes for unclear reasons (these are included in the analysis), so that the results presented here about Aleandro’s code-switching profile must remain provisional. It is also true that many of his writings remain in manuscript and have not been digitized.¹⁷ The detailed results of the language identification can be consulted on Humanities Commons.¹⁸

In this discussion, we focus on three statistics that may constitute the basis for determining the tongueprint of a text:

- (1) the total count of materials in different languages, the “Overall Language Indication” (OLI).
- (2) the average length of code-switching, in this case from Latin to Greek, in terms of words, the “Average Code-Switch Length” (ACSL).
- (3) the Code-Switching Density (CSD), showing how many code-switches a text has per thousand words.

The three statistics are based on identifications at the word level. Table 1 offers the three aforementioned statistics for the three texts, based on a combination of the two methods outlined above (transformer model and alphabet detection) and focusing on identifications of Latin and Greek. The distribution of languages in the three texts is visualized in Figures 1–3.

¹⁴ See https://la.wikisource.org/wiki/Colloquia_familiaria/Encomium_Moriae (accessed 6 February 2025). This text is based on Erasmus, *Colloquia familiaria et Encomium moriae*, I, 291–401. For the human-reading analysis in Section 3.1, we followed Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, which shows only minor differences with the Wikisource text, irrelevant for our analysis.

¹⁵ Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*. We used the NOSCEMUS General Model for OCR in the summer of 2022.

¹⁶ Aleandro in Erasmus, *Opus epistolarum*, n° 256, 502–8.

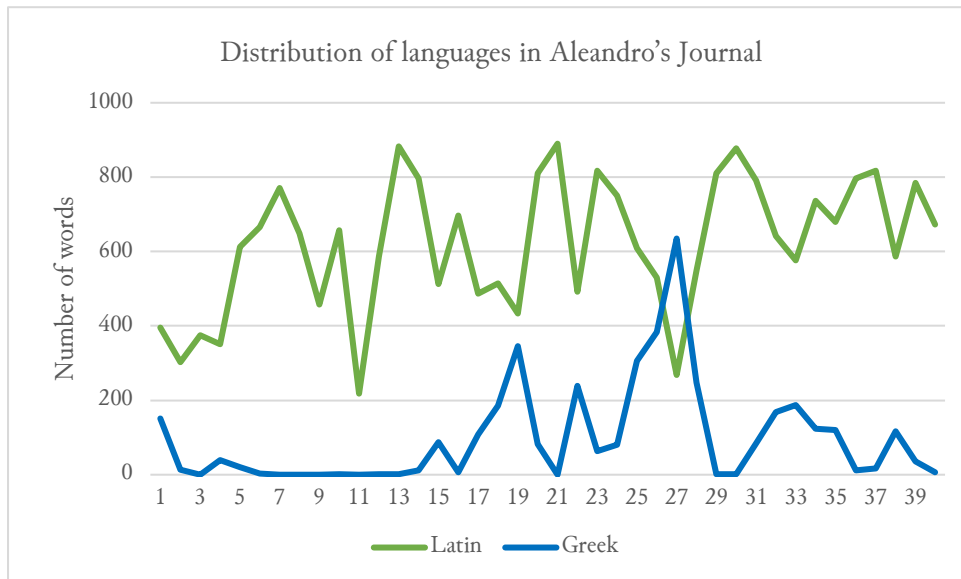
¹⁷ Maillard and Flamand, *La France des Humanistes*, 367, as well as the references in the chapter devoted to Aleandro.

¹⁸ See <https://doi.org/10.17613/cs5g-yp78>.

Text	OLI		ACSL	CSD
Erasmus, <i>Praise of Folly</i>	Latin: 98.32%	Greek: 1.19%	2.83 words	4.21
Aleandro, Diaries	Latin: 76.56%	Greek: 11.99%	7.25 words	16.55
Aleandro, Letter to Erasmus	Latin: 96%	Greek: 3%	5.2 words	6.53

Table 1: The tongueprint of our text corpus, with the three statistical figures

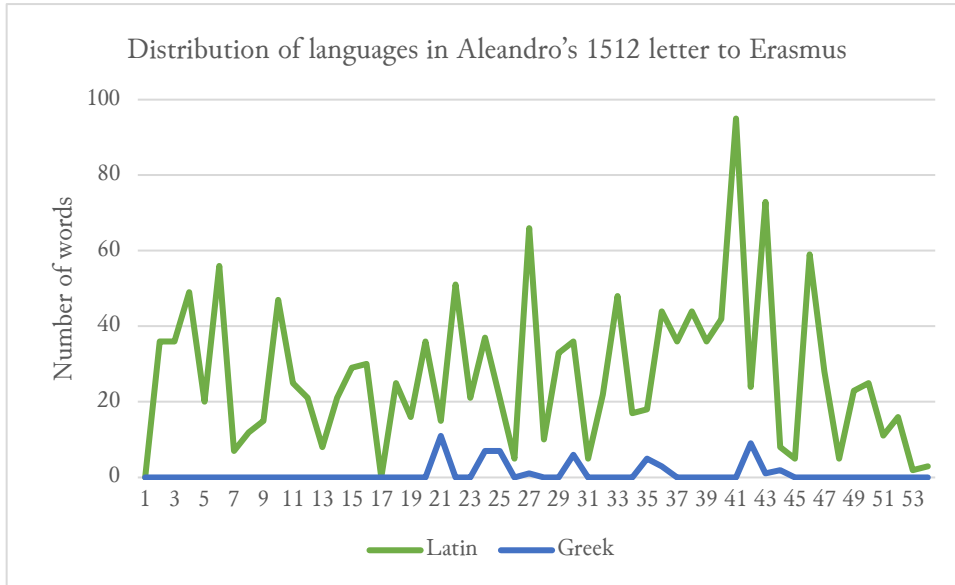
Certain numeric elements (especially in Aleandro’s diaries) and short sentences were wrongly identified as different languages by the first method of analysis (transformer model): these were mostly cases of wrongly identified Latin. There is moreover a very small amount of Hebrew in both Aleandro’s diaries and Erasmus’ *Praise of Folly*. Given the focus of this special issue on Latin–Greek code-switching, these elements have been excluded, which explains why the combination of Latin and Greek does not add up to 100%.¹⁹ Also, the CSD is calculated only roughly and a little too generously here, as it counts Latin–Greek code-switching cases per line in the transcription rather than per paragraph; code-switches involving more than one line, as frequently occurs in Aleandro’s work, therefore have a somewhat heavier weight in the count.



OLI		ACSL	CSD
Latin: 76.56%	Greek: 11.99%	7.25 words	16.55 / 1,000 words

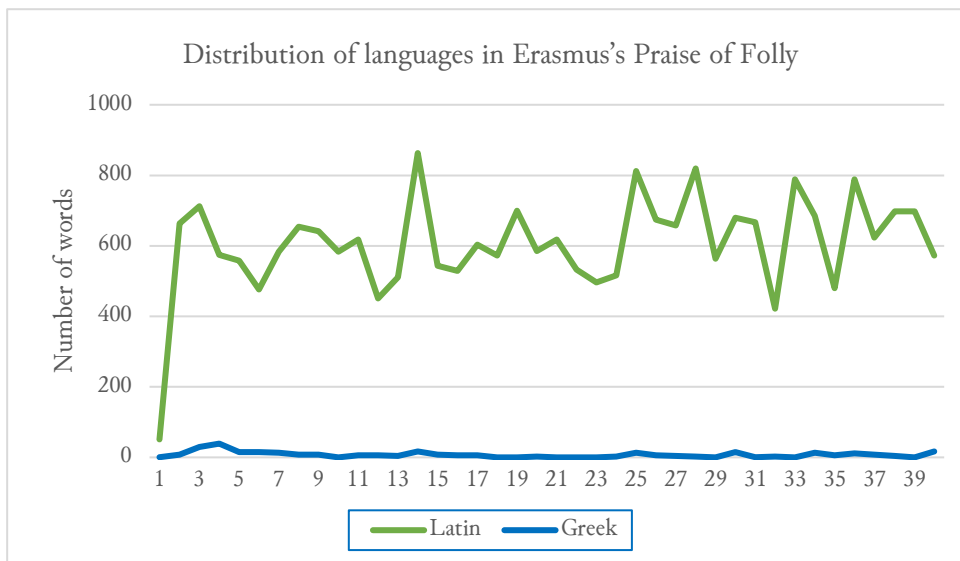
Figure 1: Distribution of Latin and Greek in Aleandro’s diaries (reduced to 40 plot points)

¹⁹ In Aleandro’s case, the Hebrew as rendered by Omont moreover poses great problems. We thank Maxime Maleux for sharing his thoughts on this topic with us. The enigmatic Hebrew elements in Omont’s text are one of the reasons for making a new critical edition of the diaries.



OLI		ACSL	CSD
Latin: 96%	Greek: 3%	5.2 words	6.53 / 1,000 words

Figure 2: Distribution of Latin and Greek in Aleandro's 1512 letter to Erasmus



OLI		ACSL	CSD
Latin: 98.32%	Greek: 1.19%	2.83 words	4.21

Figure 3: Distribution of Latin and Greek in Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* (reduced to 40 plot points)

Figures 1–3 offer statistics based on data generated partly by artificial intelligence with a (limited) margin for errors on several levels due to imperfect transcription and automated language recognition. This rough pilot data nonetheless allows us to offer some first observations on the code-switching profiles of the

three texts. Overall, the texts of Aleandro have more code-switching, as confirmed by all three statistics:

- (1) Aleandro's diaries have ten times more Greek than Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, while his letter has almost three times more Greek than Erasmus' text;
- (2) Aleandro's texts have longer code-switches (typically of five to seven words) than Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* (ca. three words);
- (3) Aleandro's texts switch more often to Greek (ca. seven to seventeen times per 1,000 words) than Erasmus' *Folly* does (ca. four times per 1,000 words, amounting to about a hundred code-switches for the entire *Praise of Folly*).

These conclusions hold both for Aleandro's diaries and for his letter to Erasmus. The difference is, however, much less pronounced in the latter case. Perhaps Aleandro accommodated his Latin–Greek code-switching practice to his addressee and then-friend to find a middle ground, or perhaps he was influenced by a sense of generic decorum for letters to friends, for which the main model was Cicero's correspondence with Atticus.²⁰ Alternatively, the difference might be explained by a combination of these two and other factors: this is a question for subsequent research on Latin–Greek code-switching in early modernity. Aleandro's diaries obviously have the greatest portion of code-switching, judging by the distribution in Figure 1, especially in the second half of the text. These graphs are simplifications, however, and for clarity it is necessary to consult the statistics presented in Table 1.

3 Human-reading analysis: the functions and contexts of Latin–Greek code-switching

The method and statistics discussed in Section 2 can only be a starting point. Telling as they may be for the code-switching profiles of the three texts, any such conclusions should still be accompanied by a functional code-switching analysis in order to find out more about the details of actual code-switching practices. In the near future, topic modelling and other digital techniques may help researchers grasp what kinds of subjects lent themselves most to Latin–Greek code-switching. While it is unreasonable to assume that digital techniques will be able to supplant philological critical-reading methods entirely, we believe that they should complement each other in a balanced way. In what follows, we offer a selective philological analysis focusing on the topics and contexts in which Aleandro and Erasmus typically code-switched in order to complete and adjust the profiles that emerged in the previous section. To this end, we have to take into account that the texts are diverse in genre and they had different audiences in mind: Aleandro wrote his diaries for himself and his letter of course to Erasmus, whereas Erasmus was consciously crafting a literary work for a broad audience, even if it initially

²⁰ Elder and Mullen, *The Language of Roman Letters*.

may only have been addressed to his friend Thomas More and his English circle. This section offers a brief human-reading analysis of the code-switching in the three texts that complements the distant-reading results of Section 2.

3.1 Erasmus' *Moria* (1509)

The *Moria* is an oration by Folly praising herself in the classical tradition of satiric orations, or paradoxical encomia, mentioned in the dedication letter to More. The Greekness of the title already suggests that Greek might play an important role in this Latin work, which engages so deeply with classical sources, especially Greek ones such as Lucian, Plutarch, and Plato.²¹ In fact, Folly even makes a joke out of code-switching to Greek to mock self-proclaimed wise men who use Greek words and phrases to cover up their foolishness:

Sumque mei vndique simillima, adeo vt nec ii me dissimulare possint, qui maxime Sapientiae personam ac titulum sibi vendicant, καὶ ἐν τῇ πορφύρᾳ πίθηκοι, καὶ ἐν τῇ λεοντῇ ὄνοι obambulant. Quamuis autem sedulo fingant, tamen alicunde prominentes auriculae Midam produunt. Ingratum me Hercle et hoc hominum genus, qui cum maxime sint nostrae factionis, tamen apud vulgum cognominis nostri sic pudet, vt id passim aliis magni probri vice obiiciant. Proinde istos, cum sint μωρότατοι re, caeterum sophi ac Thales videri velint, nonne iure optimo μωροσόφους illos appellabimus?

Visum est enim hac quoque parte nostri temporis rhetores imitari, qui plane deos esse sese credunt, si hirudinum ritu bilingues appareant, ac praeclarum facinus esse ducunt latinis orationibus subinde graeculas aliquot vuculas velut emblemata intertexere, etiam si nunc non erat his locus. Porro si desunt exotica, e putribus chartis quatuor aut quinque prisca verba eruunt, quibus tenebras offundant lectori, videlicet vt qui intelligunt, magis ac magis sibi placeant, qui non intelligunt, hoc ipso magis admirentur, quo minus intelligunt. Quandoquidem est sane et hoc nostratium voluptatum genus non inelegans, quammaxime peregrina maxime suspicere. Quod si qui paulo sunt ambitiosiores, arrideant tamen et applaudant, atque asini exemplo τὰ ὄττα κινῶσι, quo caeteris probe intelligere videantur. Καὶ ταῦτα δὴ μὲν ταῦτα.²²

²¹ See Miller's introduction to, and source apparatus in Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, and e.g. also Pouey-Mounou and Stiker-Métral, *La "Philautie" humaniste*; Chomarat, "Érasme et Platon."

²² Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, 74–76. We preserve the Latin orthography of the editions we have consulted for the three texts. Translation slightly adapted from Erasmus, "Praise of Folly," 87–88: "I am myself wherever I am, and no one can pretend I'm not - especially those who lay special claim to be called the personification of wisdom, even though they strut about like *apes in purple and asses in lion-skins*. However hard they try to keep up the illusion, their ears stick up and betray the Midas in them. There's an ungrateful lot of folk for you—members of my party if anyone is, and yet so ashamed of my name in public that they cast it freely at others as a term of strong abuse. They're *complete fools* in fact, and yet each of them would like to pass for a wise man and a Thales; so wouldn't the best name for them all be *foolosophers*? For at this point too I think I should copy the rhetoricians of today who fancy themselves practically gods on earth if they can show themselves twin-tongued, like horse leeches, and think it a splendid feat if they can work a few silly little Greek words, like pieces of mosaic, into their Latin speeches, however out of place these are. Then, if they still need something out of the ordinary, they dig four or five obsolete words out of mouldy manuscripts with which to cloud the meaning for the reader. The idea is, I suppose, that those who can understand are better pleased with themselves, and those who can't are all the more lost in admiration the less they understand. Indeed there's a special sort of refined pleasure which all my followers take in paying their highest regard to any particular exotic import from foreign parts, and the more

Erasmus’ Folly depicts Latin–Greek code-switching as a tactic to give the impression of wisdom, even though one lacks it. This does not, however, prevent her from engaging in the phenomenon herself throughout this passage and indeed the entire oration (see Figure 3). In this passage, Folly sees code-switching as an ornamental feature of intellectual discourse, while using it herself as a creative means to insult self-proclaimed wise men by means of the Lucianic borrowing *μωρόσοφοι*, “foolosophers.”²³ The concessive clause “however out of place these are,” taken from Horace’s *Ars poetica*, suggests that Erasmus, through Folly, presupposed a poetics of code-switching, which he explained in his *De copia* and elsewhere.²⁴ By the Horatian allusion, Folly suggests that decorum plays a role. Code-switches should not just be “thrown in” (*emblemata / ἐμβλήματα* from *ἐμβάλλω*) but well-reasoned and appropriate for the context. Moreover, code-switching is claimed to distinguish between “those who can understand” and “those who can’t.” These two groups experience Latin–Greek code-switching differently: the former is flattered and reassured by recognizing the reference, whereas the latter stands in awe of the speaker’s use of Greek. Greek plays a role in community formation, Folly suggests, and she mocks both the Latin–Greek orators and those contenting themselves with Latin alone. Folly’s play with the different meanings of the Latin adjective *bilinguis* is telling in this regard. As modern readers, we would probably understand it as referring primarily to bilingualism, the ability to use two languages, in this case Latin and Greek. By referring to the *hirudo*, the “horse leech,” however, Folly draws the reader’s attention to the different meanings of *bilinguis*: the biological meaning of “twin-tongued” or “two-tongued,” as well as the figurative meaning of “double-tongued,” i.e. “hypocritical, deceitful, false,” which Erasmus no doubt wanted his reader to recall in this context.²⁵

This passage, found on the very first pages of Erasmus’ *Praise of Folly*, sets the tone for the code-switching in the work as a whole, even though Figure 3 shows that the intensity of code-switching fluctuates, being greatest in the first half of the work, especially its beginning, and at the very end. At the same time, the passage evidences a meta-awareness of code-switching (the play with *bilinguis*), which is also evident in Aleandro’s letter (Section 3.2). The *Moria* deserves a meticulous complete analysis of its code switching, as well as its diverse use of Greek sources, but in the space of this exploratory paper we limit ourselves to some general observations in order to illustrate the potential of the double method discussed in Section 1.²⁶

pretentious among them have to laugh and clap their hands and *twitch their ears* like a donkey does to show the others how well they can understand. *So much for that.* Italic script indicates a code-switch to Greek in the English translation. In the last sentence of the first paragraph, I changed Radice’s “*morosophoi* or foolishwise” into Hoyt Hopewell Hudson’s apt “foolosophers”: see Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, 11. This playful English translation goes back to early modern versions.

²³ See Lucian, “Alexander,” §40.

²⁴ For details see Rummel, “The Use of Greek”; MacPhail, “The Mosaic of Speech.” Mariia Timoshchuk (KU Leuven) is currently investigating in detail Erasmus’ ideas on code-switching and classical bilingualism as part of her PhD research.

²⁵ Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *bilinguis*.

²⁶ For a recent morphosyntactic analysis of Folly’s Greek, see Mouchenier, “Insignis ἀμοιβή.”

As established in Section 2, Erasmus' Folly indulges in short code-switches, limited to words and adages, both represented in the long quote above. The frequency of proverbs can obviously be expected from an author who had just overseen a major update of his *Adagia*, printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice the year before, in 1508, and who had also helped Manutius publish Plutarch's *Moralia* in Greek, which appeared in 1509.²⁷ What is more, the new edition of the *Adagia* is part of the play in the *Moria*:

Nam id quo pacto fieri queat, cum ipsa etiam Rhamnusia, rerum humanarum fortunatrix, mecum adeo consentiat, vt sapientibus istis semper fuerit inimicissima, contra stultis etiam dormientibus omnia commoda adduxerit? Agnoscitis Timotheum ilium, cui hinc etiam cognomen, et prouerbum ἡ εὐδοντος κύρτος αἰρεῖ. Rursum aliud γλανξ ἴπταται. Contra in sapientes quadrant illa, ἐν τετράδι γεννηθέντες, et equum habet Seianum, et aurum Tolosanum. Sed desino παροιμιάζεσθαι, ne videar Erasmi mei commentaria suppilasse.²⁸

Erasmus claims to have written the first version of the text while waiting for his books to arrive. This claim, if true, implies that he cited most of the Greek words and adages by heart, perhaps checking and correcting them after his books had arrived.²⁹

Folly's frame of reference seems to be largely Greek, even though as a literary persona she is predominantly speaking in Latin. Her name is Greek, as are those of her companions (e.g. *Κολακία*, "Flattery"). She alludes extensively, although by no means exclusively, to Greek mythology and literature. The use of countless Greek adages and expressive composite nouns evoking mythological stories and classical anecdotes enlivens the discourse and adds to its wit, thus giving a climactic function to Latin-Greek code-switches. Code-switching serves to drive a point home, being found in many cases toward the end of a sentence or even at its very end.³⁰ One may moreover regard the frequency of code-switching as a homage to the Greek tradition of satirical works and, in particular, paradoxical encomia. Many prominent representatives of this genre were written in Greek, by Lucian among others, and Erasmus mentions an important Roman forerunner, the *Apocolocytosis* attributed to Seneca the Younger, in his dedicatory letter to

²⁷ Kingston, *Plutarch's Prism*, Chapter 4.

²⁸ Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, 176–78. Translation from Erasmus, "Praise of Folly," 141: "For how could it be otherwise, seeing that the goddess of Rhamnus, Nemesis herself, who directs the fortunes of mankind, gets on so well with me that she has always shown herself the bitterest enemy of the wise, while bestowing every advantage on fools even in their sleep? You know about Timotheus, the meaning of the name given him, and the saying about 'The creel catches fish while the owner sleeps.' Then there's 'The owl is on the wing,' and references to *being born on the fourth* and to having Sejanus's nag or the lost gold of Toulouse, which are clearly aimed at the wise. But enough of *quoting proverbs*; I don't want you to imagine I've been plundering the notebooks of my friend Erasmus."

²⁹ Erasmus' editor Miller makes a good case for believing his remarks about the work's genesis. See Miller in Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, 13–14.

³⁰ This impression remains to be confirmed by a detailed study, and perhaps the place of code-switching in a sentence should figure among the statistics of the tongueprint (see Section 2).

Thomas More. The *Apocolocyntosis* is a Menippean satire containing considerable Latin–Greek code-switching.³¹

Only a few Greek phrases are explicitly presented as quotes, from Sophocles and Homer among others.³² Most Greek words and phrases are fitted directly into the sentence, a technique which is perhaps best illustrated by the final paragraphs of the text:

Verum ego iamdudum oblita mei ὑπὲρ τὰ ἑσκαμμένα πηδῶ. Quanquam si quid petulantius aut loquacius a me dictum videbitur, cogitate et Stulticiam et mulierem dixisse. Sed interim tamen memineritis illius Graecanici prouerbii, πολλάκι τοι καὶ μωρὸς ἀνὴρ κατακαίριον εἶπεν, nisi forte putatis hoc ad mulieres nihil attinere.

Video vos epilogum expectare, sed nimium desipitis, siquidem arbitramini me quid dixerim etiamnum meminisse, cum tantam verborum farraginem effuderim. Vetus illud μισῶ μνάμονα συμπόταν, nouum hoc μισῶ μνάμονα ἀκροατήν. Quare valete, plaudite, viuite, bibite, Moriae celeberrimi mystae.

τέλος³³

Erasmus plays with the Doric proverb μισῶ μνάμονα συμπόταν, which he changes into μισῶ μνάμονα ἀκροατήν, though adding an Attic ending to the noun he puts in the place of Doric συμπόταν: ἀκροατήν. Erasmus' manipulation of the proverb is typical of his flexible dealings with the Greek language throughout the *Praise of Folly*, in which Greek appears generally in small portions, like "emblems" (*emblemata*).³⁴

In sum, Erasmus' *Folly* typically code-switches within sentences ('intrasententially,' in code-switching jargon), inserting one or a few Greek words or adages into the Latin text. This conclusion is confirmed by both the distant reading (Section 2) and the analysis here. He uses code-switching relatively sparingly, perhaps in order not to scare off potential readers by confronting them with large amounts of Greek. It is no doubt no coincidence that the commentary which Erasmus commissioned with Gerardus Listrius and which he ended up co-

³¹ Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, 68. A comparison of these two texts in terms of code-switching would no doubt increase our understanding of Greek in the *Moria*.

³² E.g. Erasmus, *Moriae encomium*, 82: "Cuius rei cum satis idoneus testis esse possit ille nunquam satis laudatus Sophocles, cuius extat pulcherrimum illud de nobis elogium ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἠδίστος βίος, tamen, age, rem omnem singulatim aperiamus." For Homer, see e.g. *ibid.*, 88: "Itaque sublato illo, iam multo licentius ac suavius nugantur dii, vere ῥᾶον ἄγοντες, vt inquit Homerus, nullo videlicet censore."

³³ *Ibid.*, 194. Translation from Erasmus, "Praise of Folly," 153: "But I've long been forgetting who I am, and I've overshot the mark. If anything I've said seems rather impudent or garrulous, you must remember it's Folly and a woman who's been speaking. At the same time, don't forget the Greek proverb 'Often a foolish man speaks a word in season,' though of course you may think this doesn't apply to women. I can see you're all waiting for a peroration, but it's silly of you to suppose I can remember what I've said when I've been spouting such a hotchpotch of words. There's an old saying, 'I hate a fellow-drinker with a memory,' and here's a new one to put alongside it: 'I hate an audience which won't forget.' And so I'll say goodbye. Clap your hands, live well, and drink, distinguished initiates of Folly. *The End.*"

³⁴ On this metaphor, referring to mosaic and inlaid work and perhaps also to embroidery, see the insightful observations in MacPhail, "The Mosaic of Speech."

authoring explains all the Greek insertions for those who could not understand the language.³⁵

3.2 Aleandro's letter to Erasmus (1512)

Erasmus composed the first version of his *Moria* in 1509, in London. The text was first printed in Paris in 1511, not long after which Aleandro wrote a letter to Erasmus from that same city. This text can be dated between February 15 and 29, 1512.³⁶ This letter likewise contains Latin–Greek code-switching, which shows similarities to as well as differences from the *Moria*. Like Erasmus' Folly, Aleandro quotes classical authors. In two cases, the quotations are from Theocritus, an author on whom he was lecturing at that time in Paris and of whom he had procured an edition in that same city.³⁷ In the first quote, he does, however, insert the Greek vocative Ἐρασιμε in the middle of the quotation, recalling the flexibility with which Folly manipulates proverbs. Both verses from Theocritus also feature in Erasmus' *Adagia*, so Aleandro is clearly accommodating himself to Erasmus' scholarly frame of reference, including his code-switching habits.³⁸ Aleandro even made this accommodation explicit by granting that he was overdoing the adages in his letter to the great master of adages. He admitted this excess himself in a substantial Greek code-switch before offering yet another adage, this time in Latin.³⁹ At the same time, Aleandro also includes original sentences and sentence parts in Greek, something which Erasmus' Folly tends to do much less. Aleandro moreover seems to have resorted to Greek when emotions ran high while composing the letter. Writing about his disillusionment with the amount of money one could make by teaching humanist courses in Paris, he complained: “Sed quod speret quispiam me vel alium quemuis ex hac tantum professione posse fieri in hac vrbe locupletem, ἀπαγε τοῦτο μόνον μὴ προσδοκῶνς.”⁴⁰

At the end of his letter, Aleandro apologizes for being so verbose, adding that writing to Erasmus feels like speaking with him.⁴¹ This remark may be taken to suggest that Aleandro imitated the spoken discourse they had practiced earlier in 1508, when they lived and worked together at Manutius' Venetian publishing house and the allegedly Greek-speaking *Neakademia* (“New Academy”) housed there.⁴² At the same time, Aleandro's remark may simply be understood as a

³⁵ The Listrius commentary was first published in 1515 and deserves further scrutiny, but see already Gavin, “The Commentary” for a first step toward a critical edition as well as Erasmus, *Éloge de la folie*, which offers the text of the notes as well as a French translation, with a short discussion in the introduction.

³⁶ Aleandro in Erasmus, *Opus epistolarum*, n° 256, 502–8.

³⁷ Lowry, “Girolamo ALEANDRO,” 29; Van Rooy and Van Hal, “Studying Ancient Greek,” 131 & 139.

³⁸ Ferguson's notes in Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, 219.

³⁹ Aleandro in Erasmus, *Opus epistolarum*, 506: “Et tamen plerique omnes indocti (quorum innumerus numerus) melius hos intelligunt plurisque ferme faciunt quam doctos, neque id iniuria; ἵνα γὰρ πρὸς παρομιαστὴν ἤδη πέραν τοῦ μετρίου παρομιᾶζω, balbi balbos et mutuuum muli.”

⁴⁰ Ibid., 506. Translation from Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, 220: “But as for hoping that I or anyone else could become rich in this city merely by following my profession, what nonsense! *Do not so much as entertain the thought.*”

⁴¹ Ibid., 507: “Ego vero propterea tam multa scripsi simul vt foenus tam diuturni silentii persoluerem, simul quia dum scribo, tecum interim loqui coram michi videor.”

⁴² Lowry, “The ‘New Academy.’”

classical topos in the genre of epistolography, as letters were considered conversations among absent friends.⁴³ In reality, letter writing was often much more formalized and distanced than spoken discourse. It was not only paper, ink, time and distance that stood between Aleandro and Erasmus, but also the secretary, an important factor especially when it comes to assessing code-switching in correspondence. Aleandro either drafted his bilingual letter for his secretary or dictated it to him. It seems, however, that the secretary could not read or understand all of the Greek quotations and code-switches, since most Greek passages are in Aleandro's own hand, as are some corrections and additions in the Latin text.⁴⁴ Written code-switching, then, sometimes required actual person-switching. This very practical and material side of code-switching provides a clue about an important function of Greek: its status as a confidential or even secret language.⁴⁵ Few nosy secretaries would have been able to make any sense of text written in Greek, even if they were able to get the gist of the letter from the Latin alone.

3.2 Aleandro's diaries (post 1525)

Coming to Aleandro's diaries, we slide further along the axis of confidentiality from a work intended for circulation (Erasmus' *Moria*), via a letter to an individual, to personal diaries not intended for publication. Aleandro's diary notes, made from 1525 onwards, have Latin-Greek code-switching of a nature very different to both Erasmus' text and his own 1512 letter, in which he accommodated himself to Erasmus' code-switching praxis. In the diaries, Aleandro seems to have reserved Greek for a specific set of subjects, including emotions, medical issues, dreams, the weather, gossiping, sex, religious practice, and confidential information, about political opinions for instance. Omont characterizes the diary as a whole as recording "the smallest details about Aleandro's intimate life," but this is even more true of his use of Greek.⁴⁶

The following Greek entry for August 13, 1527 has many of the ingredients we have singled out and also features Aleandro's Greek motto "Ἔσται καλῶς" ("All will be well"), which appears throughout the diaries and closes entries in both Greek and Latin:

13, ἐνύπνιον ἔωθεν, ἐν παλατίῳ Λέοντος ἀρχιερέως, καὶ ἦν Ἐρασμος νοσῶν ἐν καθέδρᾳ, ἐτέρῳ ὀφθαλμῷ λίππος, καὶ ὀπισθεν αὐτοῦ ἐκάθητο Λέων, καὶ ἐζήτουν πάντοσε οἶνον ἀνθοσμίαν Ἐράσμου, οὕτω κελεύοντος Λέοντος, καὶ ἐν λεκάνῃ ἦσαν πόλλοι κύαθοι καὶ οἶνος νέος λευκός, θολερὸς, εὐώδης, ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπον ἐπιθυμεῖν τοιοῦτον οἶνον, ὁ δὲ Λέων εἶπε ῥαδίως με δυνάσθαι τυχεῖν. Εἶτα πόλλα ἄλλα, καὶ ὅτι ἐμὲ ἀσπίξετό τις νέος ἀπὸ κοιτῶνος, καὶ ὅτι εἶχον καλὴν ἐσθῆτα ὑποκεκοσμημένην λεοντῆ, καὶ εἶχεν μανίχας πλατείας ὥσπερ ὅτε ἦν σχολαστικὸς, καὶ εἶδον πόλλας γυναῖκας, ἐταίρας, καὶ ἄλλα· ἔσται καλῶς.⁴⁷

⁴³ De Landtsheer, "Letters."

⁴⁴ Paquier, "Érasme et Aléandre," 358.

⁴⁵ On the confidentiality of Greek, see Van Rooy, *New Ancient Greek*, esp. 116–19.

⁴⁶ Omont in Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 3 (see n. 8 above).

⁴⁷ Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 65. "On the 13th, a dream in the morning, in pope Leo's palace, and Erasmus was there, ill on a chair, with one eye inflamed, and Leo was sitting behind him, and I was looking everywhere for wine with a pleasant bouquet to give Erasmus, as per Leo's order, and in a pot there were many

Aleandro describes in detail a dream he had had about Erasmus, set in the palace of pope Leo X, who had been dead since December 1, 1521. An atypical feature is that here he does not discuss his own illness, but that of Erasmus. Next, a Dionysian scene follows, where Aleandro is ordered to look for wine for Erasmus, but is tempted by the wine himself. The second half of the dream is described particularly concisely, leaving many elements to the imagination: what was he doing with the youngster in the bedroom? Was there a kind of role-play going on with different outfits? How do the women and courtesans fit in? Whatever the case, dreams seem to have been important for Aleandro, who saw in at least some of them a prediction of events in real life.⁴⁸

Aleandro's attire is a recurring theme in his dreams. For instance, in the entry of August 13, 1527, immediately preceding the one cited above, he recorded a dream in which he was wearing an ugly piece of clothing, and which had been introduced with a Latin phrase: *11 augusti, mane summo ενύπνιον* ("on August 11, very early in the morning, a dream [...]").⁴⁹ The two Greek notes follow a long series of entries mainly in Latin, on various themes, including reports on received letters, a religious procession, visits he received, details on his diet and health, and emotions he experienced vis-à-vis certain persons. The preceding entries show that Greek was by no means reserved exclusively for details about his intimate life, but it is clear that Greek was associated more with his private circumstances than Latin was. For instance, it is striking how in the following passage a dry political entry in Latin is followed by a note about his feelings in Greek: "*Apr. 1. — Hora vespertina, rex Franciscus et oratores archiducis Caroli jurati pacem in Divæ Virginis Parisiis. — Ὅργη θαυμασία κατὰ Ἰωάννου οἰκέτου ὅθεν καταργούς.*"⁵⁰

Aleandro's servants recur frequently in his diaries, including Perilla, with whom he appears to have had a long relationship.⁵¹ The intimate details are also recorded in Greek, both the good and the bad: "*Jul. 27. — Ὁρα δ' νυκτός, σὺν Περίλ[λη].*"⁵² This entry closes with a longer Latin note describing a birthday party in a friend's garden, a subject which is still personal in nature but much less intimate than the nightly adventure with his servant. Aleandro's feelings toward her must have been very passionate, as can be gathered from the following entry, which is entirely in Greek, except for the date: "*Aug. 25. — Μεγάλη ὄργη κατὰ*

ladles and a young white wine, opaque, with a fine smell, and I said I desired such a wine, to which Leo said that I could easily get it. Then many other things: some youngster elbowed me out of a bedroom, and I had a nice outfit, decorated with lionskin, and he had broad sleeves as if he was a scholar, and I saw many women, courtesans, and other things: all will be well." All English translations of Aleandro's diaries are ours. Here, too, italics represent Greek.

⁴⁸ See Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 68, entry for October 31, 1527: "Ultima octobris, ἔωθεν ενύπνιον περὶ ἀρχιερέως ἐνδεδυμένου μέλαιναν καὶ ἀθλίαν ἐσθήτα καὶ Δαταρίου ἰανθίνην, διαπεραϊνόντων ἐκ τῆς ἀγίας ἀγάπης εἰς τὸ πέραν Ἐνετήσι ἐν πλοῖδοις δυσίν. Εὐθύς δὲ ἐγερθεὶς ἤκουσα Ἀνδρέου λέγοντος Δατάριον ὑπὸ Ἀλεμάνων κρεμασθῆναι μετὰ δύο καρδινάλιων."

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16 (original italics are always taken over from the 1895 edition). "April 1, [1515]. — In the evening hour, king Francis and the spokesmen of archduke Charles made a peace agreement in the Church of the Holy Virgin in Paris. — *Excessive rage against servant Giovanni, on account of his idleness.*"

⁵¹ According to Godin, "Érasme, Aléandre," 252, Aleandro had a bastard son with Perilla in 1524.

⁵² Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 17. "July 27, [1516]. — *In the 4th hour of the night, I was with Perilla.*"

θεραπείας Περίλλης, ἣν καὶ κτείνειν ἠθέλησα.”⁵³ Yet Aleandro mainly used Greek to obsess over his health and diet, probably both because he wanted to keep this information confidential, and because Greek was the language of medicine *par excellence* and ideal for medical self-monitoring. This conclusion is supported by the entry where he recorded how he contracted syphilis (“the French disease”) after an intimate encounter with an “Illyrian” (i.e., Croatian) woman called Eka-
 terina, and by entries where he discussed treatments and their results.⁵⁴ Similarly revealing is the following passage from the long Latin entry on July 18, 1527: “Hac eadem die, misit archidiaconus Brundusinus *μηλοπέπωνας ὧν τινῶν πολὺ ἔφαγον, καὶ ἡμεῖσα, τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίησα ἐκ συμβουλῆς.*”⁵⁵ The code-switch to Greek occurs at the point at which the information becomes more personal and sensitive, as Aleandro wanted to reduce the chance of nosy readers.⁵⁶ The switch to Greek guarantees greater confidentiality and at the same time tags, as it were, his medical self-monitoring. A modern reader may be surprised at Aleandro’s apparent bulimia, but he was most likely following standard medical advice of the time. Since antiquity, emetics (to induce vomiting) were believed to restore humoral imbalances and thus to remedy various diseases and medical issues, including indigestion.⁵⁷ In general, Aleandro had a clear preference for Greek when discussing the six non-naturals distinguished by the Ancient Greek physician Galen: “air, food and drink, rest and exercise, sleep and waking, excretions and retentions (coitus), and mental affections.”⁵⁸

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss all the intricacies of Aleandro’s code-switching here, as these deserve a study of their own, together with a new edition, translation and commentary of the diaries (see Section 1). It is worth, however, noting in brief the themes that recur in the Greek entries which show a substantial overlap with the Galenic non-naturals:

- Aleandro described religious experiences and actions in Greek, such as confessing, praying, fasting, and the adoration of the saints.⁵⁹
- Aleandro expressed hopes and wishes in Greek.⁶⁰

⁵³ Ibid. “August 25, [1516]. — *Great rage against servant Perilla, whom I even wanted to kill.*” See also Godin, “Érasme, Aléandre,” 252, as well as Aleandro’s rage against his French servants in *Journal autobiographique*, 71.

⁵⁴ For the syphilis passage, see *ibid.*, 9 and Van Rooy, *New Ancient Greek*, 118–19. A passage where a treatment and its outcome are discussed, is Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 84.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 63. “On this same day, the archdeacon of Brindisi sent *melons of which I ate some too many, and I vomited, and I did that on purpose.*” According to Liddell & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. *μηλοπέπων*, it refers to the *Cucumis melo* or (musk)melon.

⁵⁶ It would be worthwhile to study Aleandro’s diet in more detail, as he gives so much information on his eating habits (see, e.g., also Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 83).

⁵⁷ There is a vast literature on early modern medical practices. See e.g. Stolberg, *Experiencing Illness*, 214 *et passim*.

⁵⁸ Jarcho, “Galen’s Six Non-Naturals,” 372. We are greatly indebted to the feedback of one of the reviewers for the information in this paragraph.

⁵⁹ E.g. *ibid.*, 47, 48, 51 & 54.

⁶⁰ E.g. *ibid.*, 51.

- Aleandro experienced fear and rage and recorded it in Greek multiple times.⁶¹ An example is an antisemitic outburst in the middle of a long Latin entry, which records an encounter he had with a number of *marranos* in the Apulian city of Manfredonia: Ἐββέτωσαν γοῦν εἰς κόρακας Ἰουδαίων γένος (“So bugger off, you Jewish lot!”).⁶² Another example is an episode of anger leading to physical discomfort to his throat and chest due to excessive shouting.⁶³
- Aleandro complained about the weather in Greek, leading to fatalist thoughts, and a similar *Weltschmerz* is recorded only a few days later.⁶⁴
- Aleandro recorded confidential political discussions in Greek,⁶⁵ as well as rumours of pederasty about the pope spread by Paolo Giovio (1483–1552),⁶⁶ and taboo information such as two suicides, by hanging and by self-defenestration, both on account of outrageous pain.⁶⁷ By contrast, he reported the death of one of his servants very neutrally in Latin.⁶⁸
- Aleandro reported in Greek on a legal-philosophical discussion on punishing robbers after mentioning a visit he made.⁶⁹

The list indicates that Aleandro tended to use Greek for a variety of purposes, in positive, neutral and negative contexts, although negative emotions seem to be somewhat more prominent. Less often, Greek was a language of pure merriment, as in three entries that appear close to one another, recording (1) the drunkenness of an acquaintance and the foolish talk he produced as a result; (2) a Lucianic story about a ghost making a sixty-year-old woman pregnant; and (3) his practical ‘joke’ of pretending to have sympathy for the Lutheran cause.⁷⁰ Here, we approximate, albeit very briefly, the atmosphere of Erasmus’ *Praise of Folly*. Notably, in the first entry, his friend is said “to have been divinely drunk and to have said foolish things [Μωρά].”⁷¹

Aleandro wrote on a variety of intimate and confidential subjects in Greek, which suggests that the language for him really was one of his inner world. As he was not composing a literary work like Erasmus with his *Praise of Folly*, the question remains why Aleandro chose to write so often in Greek in his diaries. We want to explore two options here. On the one hand, Aleandro might to some extent have been inspired by the ancient example of Cicero, who in his *Letters to Atticus* repeatedly resorted to Greek to convey confidential and sensitive information to his correspondent, for instance about laxatives or about the misconduct

⁶¹ E.g. *ibid.*, 52, 60.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 65–66.

⁶⁵ E.g. *ibid.*, 48 & 51.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 58, n. 1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 69–70.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 69: entry for December 14, 1527: Ἰαννίκος ἐμεθύσθη θεοσπεσίως, καὶ ἔλεξε Μωρά. The Greek phrase is followed by a dry remark on the weather of the following days, during which he went horse-riding: *Hactenus dies verni tres deinceps, in quibus equitavi.*

of a servant.⁷² Erasmus, too, used this device in his letters.⁷³ It is possible that Aleandro extrapolated this practice from epistolography to the diary genre.

On the other hand, the most intense code-switching seems to have taken place when during the late 1520s he was active as archbishop in Brindisi, in the south of Italy, where Greek culture was still thriving. Not only did he record local news in Greek,⁷⁴ he also referred in two different entries to a Calabrian Greek priest who tried to help him with one of his many medical issues. One of these entries is in Greek and more concise, the other in Latin and more apologetic in his choice of a Greek priest, suggesting that he felt he needed to justify himself to potential readers more when writing in the latter language: “30 septembris, ἔωθεν, ἀπῆλθεν ὁ Φονσεκάς Λύκιον, καὶ μετ’ αὐτοῦ Ἄγγελος ὁ Μαρίνος. Μεταπεμφόμενος Σαλομῶνα, ἢ Σαλωμων πρεσβύτερον ἔλληνα ἵνα με θεραπεύῃ· ἔσται καλῶς.”⁷⁵

The second, Latin entry is much longer:

4, post prandium, hora..., venit D. Salomus ex Monte Sardo, curaturus tibiam meam, vocatus multis precibus excellentis domini Fonsecae [...]. Non enim hic senex chirurgus graecus sacerdos et maritus libere exit oppidum suum. Vir, ut audio, in hac arte admodum expertus et multis curationibus clarus, ut vero visus sum videre ἀνὴρ καλοκάγαθος et bonorum morum. Est autem unus e Graecis Calabris qui Ecclesiae Romanae parent, neque ita virulenter dissident a nobis ut Graeci transmarini. Deus faxit ut et in curatione mei genu possim eum laudare!⁷⁶

In this Latin entry, Aleandro apparently felt the need to justify his choice of a Greek priest, who is, however, praised in a standard Greek phrase as “an excellent man.” This contrast suggests that Aleandro felt more secure writing Greek than Latin, as Greek seems to have allowed for more thematic freedom. In this sense, Greek was not only a confidential language but also a flexible one. These factors combined—confidentiality and flexibility in addition to the Greek atmosphere in

⁷² See e.g. Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 10.13.1 (p. 410): “Postridie redire iussit; lavari se velle et *περὶ κοινολουσίαν γίνεσθαι*,” referring to a laxative Marc Antony took, or even more tellingly at 6.4.3 (p. 229): “Illud praeterea *μυστικώτερον* ad te scribam, tu sagacius odorabere. Τῆς δάμαρτός μου ὁ ἀπελεύθερος (οἶσθα ὃν λέγω) ἔδοξε μοι πρώην, ἐξ ὧν ἀλογευόμενος παρεθέγγετο, πεφυρακέναι τὰς ψήφους ἐκ τῆς ὠνῆς τῶν ὑπαρχόντων <τῶν> τοῦ Κροτωνιάτου τυραννοκτόνου. Δέδοικα δὴ μὴ τι – νοήσεις δήπου. Τοῦτο δὲ περισκεψάμενος τὰ λοιπὰ ἐξασφάλισαι. Non quaeo tantum quantum vereor scribere; tu autem fac ut mihi tuae litterae volent obviae,” communicating to his friend that he suspected his servant Philotimus to have tampered with the accounts, a suspicion he wanted to utter “more secretly” (*μυστικώτερον*), i.e. in Greek. On code-switching in antiquity, see Elder and Mullen, *The Language of Roman Letters*, as well as the introduction to the first special issue.

⁷³ Rummel, “The Use of Greek.”

⁷⁴ Aleandro, *Journal autobiographique*, 61.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 67. “September 30, [1527]. *In the morning, Fonseca left for Lecce, and with him Angelo Marino, in order to summon Salomon, or Salomos, a Greek priest for treating me: all will be well.*”

⁷⁶ Ibid., 67 (the first ellipsis is in the original, the second one between square brackets is ours). “[October] 4, [1527], after lunch, on the ... hour, Mr. Salomus came from Montesardo, to heal my leg, summoned thanks to the many requests of the excellent lord Fonseca [...]. For this old surgeon, Greek priest, and husband did not leave his city voluntarily. A man, I hear, with great experience in this art, and famed for many healings, indeed, according to my impression, *an excellent man*, with good morals. He is one of the Calabrian Greeks who obey the Roman Church, and do not disagree as virulently with us as the Greeks across the sea. May God give me the ability to praise him also for healing my knee!”

southern Italy—may explain why Aleandro sometimes appears to have been in a kind of Greek flow, as for instance when we find a series of entries in Greek, not all of which fall into the range of topics he typically documented in this language, including reports on the weather and letter writing.⁷⁷

In conclusion, the Latin–Greek code-switching in the diaries at first sight contributes to the overall image of Aleandro as a cultivated multilingual man—important here are also some enigmatic Hebrew letters, thus far unaccounted for. On closer examination, however, Greek seems to have been for Aleandro primarily a medium of intimacy, reserved mainly for sensitive and confidential topics. As such, code-switching served as an information management strategy for Aleandro, whereas for Erasmus’ Folly it mainly was a rhetorical device creating an atmosphere of wit and satire. Folly’s code-switches can even be thought of as decorative, Greek ‘emblems’ in the Latin text. Code-switching, then, may be interpreted as a way for Aleandro to deal with the different types of information he saw himself confronted with, both on the political scene and especially in his personal life.⁷⁸ In any case, the diarist Aleandro used code-switching much more seriously than Erasmus’ Folly, and his Greek entries and code-switches reveal a very intimate image of a troubled man closely monitoring his personal condition, both physically and mentally.

5 Conclusions and outlook

The first research question posed at the start of this paper was whether one can produce code-switching profiles for classical bilingual texts. It is clear that this is indeed possible. Section 2 has shown how digital methods can help one give a rough indication of a text’s code-switching profile, provided that one has a reliable text to start from, cleaned up in the case of automated transcriptions. The analysis suggests that even with slightly imperfect text sources like Aleandro’s diaries it is possible to draw up an accurate tongueprint, as confirmed by the functional code-switching analysis in Section 3. As we have seen, much progress can still be made with regard to corpus creation of texts in Latin and Greek, even for prominent authors like Erasmus. Indeed, a uniform machine-readable corpus of Erasmus’ full oeuvre remains a major desideratum.⁷⁹

This paper has aimed to offer a proof-of-concept of the tongueprint parameter, with some basic statistics. In follow-up research, our prototype needs to be further thought through, elaborated, and made more efficient. Ideally, the double language identification method should be further refined and expanded, for instance by including automatic comparisons with existing dictionaries in order to make the identification based on the transformer model more accurate, since there is still substantial room for error, especially with shorter sentences. In the end, the aim is to provide charts for every text showing the overall language distribution, a range of statistics accompanying the three distinguished thus far, in order to

⁷⁷ Ibid., 65–69.

⁷⁸ Blair, *Too Much to Know*.

⁷⁹ The ERASMOS+ team is working, together with affiliated scholars, citizen scientists, and student assistants, on an open access Erasmus corpus, which we hope to finish by the end of 2027.

complement them, e.g. the location of code-switches within a sentence (beginning, middle, end) or the percentage of quotations from classical sources, perhaps automatically recognized by using an open source tool like *Tesseract*.⁸⁰ The eventual tongueprint pipeline would ideally also be able to map how language use develops throughout a text and to determine whether there are any broader code-switching patterns both within the text and throughout the oeuvre of an individual author or the corpora of groups of writers. In terms of visualization, much progress also remains to be made.

Piecing the data from Sections 2 and 3 together, we can arrive at a nuanced code-switching profile of Erasmus' and Aleandro's texts. Overall, in his *Praise of Folly*, a paradoxical encomium labeled as a *declamatio*, Erasmus seems to have used code-switching more sparingly and with proportionately many more quotations from classical sources than Aleandro in his diaries, where large portions of Greek appear to describe intimate details about his personal life. Erasmus' *Folly* used short and regular code-switching in order to satirize so-called wise men and, at the same time, to create an atmosphere of general merriment and wit. The lavish use of Greek proverbs and colorful words from antiquity achieved the latter effect on his readers, who—Erasmus hoped—would recognize these Greek elements from his *Adagia*. His code-switches, then, were directed toward a broad audience interested in the *bonae litterae*. Aleandro, however, wrote for himself in his diaries, a genre in which he seems to have exploited the confidential aura of Greek found in correspondence among friends for detailed self-monitoring. He rarely relied on ancient sources but instead actively created new Greek sentences and paragraphs from scratch at an intense rate. As such, Aleandro the diarist typically code-switched between paragraphs and sentences (intersententially) rather than within sentences (intrasententially), as Erasmus' *Folly* did. Taken together, the distant-reading analysis and the human-reading analysis provide a fuller picture of Latin-Greek code-switching than on their own. Even if one may be sceptical of the tongueprint, the parameter has the fundamental virtue of helping researchers find where the code-switching takes place, enabling them to study the phenomenon more efficiently.

Even though we have been insisting on differences in the code-switching profiles of texts written by two coeval classical bilingual authors from a similar intellectual milieu, we should not forget that such differences can be superficial in comparison with the gap between classical bilinguals like Erasmus and Aleandro, on the one hand, and people whose only learned language was Latin, on the other. This latter group included people like Aleandro's secretary, who knew Latin but had mastered Greek only poorly, if at all, and the scholastics the humanists liked to mock.

Finally, Erasmus' *Moria* and Aleandro's diaries, however different in genre and nature these texts are, were clearly not parroting classical culture in their Latin-Greek code-switching. The very fact that Erasmus and Aleandro code-switched in genres (declamatory oratory and ego-documents) that in their ancient models

⁸⁰ See <https://www.buffalo.edu/digital-scholarship-studio-network/projects/faculty-projects/tesseract.html> (accessed 21 August 2025).

left only limited room—if any at all—for this linguistic phenomenon, suggests that they were doing something new. As code-switching in classical literature was mostly limited to epistolography, humanists by definition innovated by using the phenomenon not only in new genres but also as a linguistic strategy to talk about contemporary events and experiences in new ways (in addition to the possibilities that vernacular–Latin code-switching offered).⁸¹ Erasmus’ Folly code-switched to add an extra touch to the satire and the display proper for declamatory oratory, while at the same time recalling the niche genre of the paradoxical encomium with its strong Greek element. Aleandro, for his part, documented his life in the two languages as an information management strategy, attaching various connotations to Greek (negative, neutral, positive). He displayed great creativity and variety in his uses of Latin–Greek code-switching in a genre that did not have such imposing classical examples as epistolography and oratory. Finally, in his letter to Erasmus. Aleandro both followed generic decorum and at the same time accommodated his code-switching to that of his addressee. Our analysis, in sum, suggests that code-switching practices depended on such factors as author profile, genre conventions, and intended audience. The complex interplay of these and other factors is, we believe, one of the major tasks for future research into Latin–Greek code-switching in early modernity, together with the creation of relevant datasets and digital tools.

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⁸¹ Elder and Mullen, *The Language of Roman Letters*, accompanied by the CSRL database (see References).

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