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NOTE

This essay is the last in a set of three articles that form the current issue of JOLCEL. The other contributions are "Nondum satis ἀκριβῶς pertractata: Latin–Greek Code-Switching in Johannes Amos Comenius' Correspondence" by Marcela Slavíková (pp. 5–27) and "Inverting the Hierarchy: Greek and Latin in a sixteenth-century poetical encomium of Antwerp" by Adriaan Demuynck (pp. 29–57).

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Greek and “The Lady of Christ’s College”: Latin–Greek Code-Switching in John Milton’s *Prolusion VI*

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Abstract

This article explores the Latin–Greek code-switching in arguably the most famous passage of all Milton’s *Prolusions*: the autobiographical section in which Milton addresses his peculiar nickname as the “Lady” (Domina) at Christ’s College, Cambridge. Milton’s transitions from Latin into Greek are not simply ways of heightening the erudite register of the Latin oration; rather, Milton’s Latin–Greek code-switching is part of a wider rhetorical strategy for conveying change, transition, and transgression especially with respect to gender and masculinity. This article scrutinizes the allusive texture of Milton’s forays into Greek in *Prolusion VI* and explores what this can reveal about the young Milton’s self-representation. Despite the prominence of Greek in the autobiographical section of *Prolusion VI*, the specific role that Greek plays in one of the most significant and challenging revelations that he ever made about himself has not previously been an object of study.

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1 Introduction

The correspondence between a young Dutchman called Jan de Vos (ca. 1608–1636) and his father, the famous humanist Gerardus Johannes Vossius (1577–1649), contains a description of the great enthusiasm for Latin–Greek code-switching at Cambridge around the time when John Milton (1608–1674) probably delivered *Prolusion VI* (ca. July 1631).[1] Jan de Vos arrived at Peterhouse College,

[1] For advocates of the July 1631 date of composition (rather than 4 July 1628), see Campbell, “Milton and the Water Supply of Cambridge”; Shawcross, *Rethinking Milton Studies*, 182, n. 1; and Jones, “Ere Half My Days’: Milton’s Life, 1608–1640,” 10.

Cambridge in November 1628 and, according to Nicholas Wickenden's summary of Jan de Vos's letters to Vossius, his "first impression of Cambridge men was that they were very learned; often, he alleged, they used more Greek than Latin in their conversation."[2] *Prolusion VI* is especially invested in linguistic code-switching and it concludes with Milton announcing that he will "hasten from Latin to English" ("à Latinis ad Anglicana transcurro") before reciting the English poem "At a Vacation Exercise":

> Hail native Language, that by sinews weak
> Didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak.[3]

In *Prolusion VI* Milton publicly acknowledges the nickname given him by his college peers when he states that "some have recently called me 'Lady'" ("a quibusdam, audivi nuper Domina").[4] The mystery surrounding why Milton was nicknamed "Domina" by other students at Christ's College, Cambridge is a longstanding source of debate. Milton's widow, Elizabeth Mynshell (1615–1693) told the antiquarian John Aubrey (1626–1697) that "when a Cambridge scholler [...] he was so fair that they called him the Lady of Christ's College."[5] The standard interpretations given for this nickname are either that it stemmed from Milton's youthful looks or that it was intended to connect Milton with Virgil, who was nicknamed "Parthenias" (the Virgin) in Naples according to Donatus.[6] Douglas Trevor argues that Milton "struggled while at Cambridge against conventional stereotypes regarding manliness" and that, in acknowledging his nickname, he

2 Wickenden, "A Dutchman at Cambridge," 97. See also Wickenden, *G.J. Vossius and the Humanist Concept of History*, 10; Rademaker, *Leven en werk van Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577–1649)*, 236; and Romburgh, *"For My Worthy Friend Mr Franciscus Junius"*, passim. For Jan de Vos's fall from grace at Cambridge, see Vossius, *Gerardi Joan. Vossii et clarorum virorum ad eum Epistolae*, 100. He had to give up his fellowship at Jesus College when it emerged that he had married in secret a woman called Prudence Greene on 23 February 1632. Jan de Vos left Cambridge in disgrace in 1633 and, after joining the Dutch East India Company, died in India in 1636.

3 "At a Vacation Exercise", 1-2, Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 289. The Cambridge salting ceremony (the multilingual "Vacation Exercise") consists of the Latin *Prolusion VI*, the English poem, and a (lost, though presumably English) prose text. For discussion of Milton's transition to English in the context of the Christ's College statutes, see Sugimura, *"Matter of Glorious Trial"*, 21–22.

4 Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 281–282. All quotations and translations are drawn from Hale's edition of *Prolusion VI* and "At a Vacation Exercise" (Hale, 239–293). All other translations are my own unless otherwise stated. All quotations and translations from classical texts are from the Loeb Classical Library editions unless otherwise stated. On the psychological significance of the nickname the "Lady" for the young Milton, see especially Lieb, *Milton and the Culture of Violence*, 85–86; and Shawcross, *John Milton: The Self and the World*, 40–72.

5 Darbishire (ed.), *The Early Lives of Milton*, 10. Mynshell's remarks date from half a century after Milton's student days at Cambridge, but less than a decade after the publication of the *Prolusions* in 1674, since Aubrey composed the *Brief Lives* in 1680–1681. On the date of composition of Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, see Bennett, "'Many Excellent od Notes': Annotating John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*." See also Bennett (ed.), *John Aubrey: Brief Lives*, vol. 2, 1616–33.

6 See Aelius Donatus, *Life of Virgil*, trans. by Wilson-Okamura, n.p. The connection between "the Lady of Christ's" and the account of Virgil's youth in Aelius Donatus's *Vita Vergili* was first put forward by Gordon Campbell in "Milton and the Lives of the Ancients." For discussion of "the Lady of Christ's" and Donatus's statement that Virgil was called Parthenias in Naples, see McDowell, *Poet of Revolution*, 158.

"goes on to defend his putatively feminine sensibility."[7] A careful examination of Milton's use of Greek passages from Aulus Gellius's *Attic Nights* describing the mockery of the Roman orator Quintus Hortensius Hortalus (114–50BC) and the Athenian orator Demosthenes (384–322BC) for effeminacy (as well as in Erasmus's versions of those accounts in the *Apophthegmata* and the *Adages*) support this interpretation. The relationship between Greek and the transgression of gender norms emerges as a crucially informative element of Milton's own Latin–Greek code-switching in this passage of *Prolusion VI*.[8]

Although much scholarly ink has been spilled on Milton's college nickname, the effects of his creative transitions from Latin into Greek in *Prolusion VI* have not been studied before. Milton's Latin–Greek code-switching is by no means neutral. It is part of a wider rhetorical strategy for conveying subversive, carnivalesque effects, especially at moments of transition. In her study of linguistic code-switching in literature, Natalie Hess finds that code-switching generates a "state of creative in-betweenness" and that it is often employed to reflect "themes of alienation, transition and liminality."[9] Both Milton's *Prolusion VI* and a contemporary college oration by James Duport (1606–1679) shift from *romanitas* and *latinitas* into Greek in order to convey non-Roman (and, therefore, non-Latin) characteristics. In both examples, the close proximity of linguistic and moral codes is expressed by the orations' Latin–Greek code-switching itself.[10] Whereas Duport's mockery of power-hungry popes draws upon examples of Latin–Greek code-switching in Roman political discourse denouncing tyranny, Milton's oration draws upon Ovid, Aulus Gellius, and Erasmus, focusing on grammatical gender and resulting in comically destabilizing effects. This article does not attempt to derive a single, general rule for the use of Greek in seventeenth-century Cambridge orations, but the comparison between Duport and Milton is intended to highlight the different effects which such Latin–Greek code-switching could produce.

2 Duport's Oration on the Gunpowder Plot and Milton's *Prolusion I*

John Hale contextualises Milton's Latin–English code-switching by comparing *Prolusion VI* with the works of Milton's Cambridge contemporaries such as the Latin–English macaronic verse of Thomas Randolph (1605–1635) performed in 1632 when Randolph was the University Praevaricator: the performer of a comedic set piece based on the topic of a disputation.[11] At this period, Latin–English

7 Trevor, "Milton and Female Perspiration," 189.

8 On Milton and effeminacy, see Daniel, "Dagon as Queer Assemblage." See also Hodgson, *The Masculinities of John Milton*; and Martin (ed.), *Milton and Gender*.

9 Hess, "Code Switching and Style Shifting as Markers of Liminality in Literature," 5 and 17.

10 On Duport, see Monk, "Memoir of Dr. James Duport, Regius Professor of Greek, and Dean of Peterborough"; and O'Day, "Duport, James (1606–1679)."

11 Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 188. For discussion of macaronic verse in Cambridge salting ceremonies, see Hale, 187–192. See also Moul and Calzi, "Anglo-Latin Macaronic Verse." For other comparisons of Milton's *Prolusion VI* and Randolph's works, see Richek, "Thomas Randolph's Salting (1627), Its

macaronic verse is often associated with ribald themes such as Randolph's "licentious hexameters."[12] This article contextualises Milton's Latin–Greek code-switching in *Prolusion VI* by examining other specimens of Latin–Greek code-switching in orations performed at Cambridge from the same period, namely James Duport's oration on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot (ca. 1632–ca. 1640) and Milton's *Prolusion I* on whether day is more excellent than night (ca. 1625–ca. 1629). These are the most appropriate points of comparison: although Milton's Latin–Greek code-switching shares some features with Randolph's Latin–English macaronic verse, its technique differs considerably from the wider sample of Latin–Greek macaronic verse in English manuscript sources discussed by Victoria Moul and Giulia Li Calzi.[13]

Duport's vitriolically anti-Catholic oration written for the annual commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot is remarkable for its frequent Latin–Greek code-switching. It is a good comparison for Milton's text and has not been edited before. This oration is preserved only in the commonplace book of Anthony Scattergood (1611–1687) of Trinity College, Cambridge, where it is labelled as "Orõ J. Dup.".[14] Although the precise year of composition for Duport's Gunpowder Plot oration is uncertain, Scattergood's commonplace book covers the period between 1632 and 1640 when both he and Duport were members of Trinity College, and the oration almost certainly dates from the same period. Milton, too, composed several Latin poems on the Gunpowder Plot—five epigrams and one epyllion—which William Poole argues may have been "written as Cambridge tutorial exercises in 1626 for the anniversary of the plot."[15]

In his speech, Duport mocks popes who strive for tyrannical power and likens them to Tarquin, Caligula, and Nero. He adapts specimens of Greek direct speech sourced from Suetonius's *Life of Caligula* and *Life of Nero*, alluding to Caligula and Nero's spoken Greek—uttered precisely at moments of their greatest despotism and immorality—and weaves Greek phrases into his portrayal of power-hungry popes:

> hoc etiam illi alio in sensu optarûnt; quod et eundem Caligulam dixisse refert Suetonius ***εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, εἷς βασιλεύς*** Pop: Ro: unum jam habent supremum caput, unum principem et moderatorem; Atque utinam unum solùm! ***Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη***. Caesarem Pompejo parem, Rege domino suo Papae aequalem ferre non possunt; Monitore itaque

Text, and John Milton's Sixth Prolusion as Another Salting"; Freidberg, *Certain Small Festivities*; and Marlow, *Performing Masculinity in English University Drama, 1598–1636,* 141–156.

12 Ibid.

13 Moul and Calzi, "Anglo-Latin Macaronic Verse," 26.

14 British Library, MS Add. 44963, fol. 160. Scattergood's transcription of Duport's oration runs from fols. 160–177. For more details of Scattergood's commonplace book, see Davies, "Dr. Anthony Scattergood's Commonplace Book" and Poole, "The Literary Remains of Alexander Gil the Elder (1565–1635) and Younger (1596/7–1642?)," 185, n. 46. See also Poole, "More Light on the Literary Remains of Alexander Gil the Younger (1596/7–1644)."

15 Poole, *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost,* 23.

> Tarquinio Superbo, Romano Póntifice, Summa papavirum capita sunt discutienda. Notum illud Neronis **ἐμου ζῶντος γαῖα μιχθήτω πυρί**.[16]

In juxtaposing the Roman pontiffs’ desire to be the “supremum caput” with the ambitions of Tarquin, Nero and Caligula, Duport modifies Suetonius’s account that Caligula quoted Homer out loud in Greek: “Let there be one lord! One king!” (εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, εἷς βασιλεύς). Duport also adapts Suetonius’s report that, as Rome burned, Nero cried out in Greek “while I live, may the earth be consumed with fire!” (ἐμου ζῶντος γαῖα μιχθήτω πυρί). In the context of Duport’s speech, Nero setting fire to Rome evokes the plotters’ attempt to blow up the House of Lords.[17] Duport modifies Suetonius’s own Latin–Greek code-switching in his account of the following conversation:

> Sed nec populo aut moenibus patriae pepercit. Dicente quodam in sermone communi: **ἐμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μειχθήτω πυρί**, “Immo,” inquit, “**ἐμοῦ ζῶντος**,” planeque ita fecit.[18]

In their recent study of Latin–Greek code-switching in Suetonius, Olivia Elder and Alex Mullen find that Suetonius’s “use of Greek across the *Life* [*of Nero*] is a way to frame criticism of Nero’s behaviour” and that generally, throughout Suetonius’s *Lives*, Greek “was used to contribute to his (negative) portrayal of the emperors.”[19] Duport is sensitive to this effect: by adapting two striking examples of direct speech in Greek from Suetonius’s *Lives*, Duport links the depravity of the Roman emperors at the height of their megalomania to the Roman pontiffs’ ambitions for power. [20]

16 “Indeed, they also wished this, in another sense, that is, what Suetonius reports the same Caligula to have said: **“Let there be one lord! One King!” [*Iliad* 2.204–205]**. The people of Rome already have one supreme head, one prince and ruler. And may there be only one! **“It’s no good to have more than one king” [*Iliad* 2.204]** They cannot tolerate a Caesar equal to Pompey, nor an equal to the King their Lord the Pope. Therefore, with Tarquin the Proud as the leader of prayers, as the Roman Pontifex, the tallest heads of the *pope*-ies must be struck off. This was acknowledged by Nero: **“while I live, may the earth be consumed with fire!”**” (British Library, MS Add 44963, fols. 166–167). Duport alludes to a famous anecdote attributed to Tarquin who cut down the heads of the tallest poppies as a secret signal to his son, Sextus, that he must kill the chief men among the Gabii. See Livy, *History of Rome* 1.53–4. At the top of fol. 167, Scattergood has written “papavirum” [Pope-man] rather than “papaverum” [of the poppies]. This appears to be Duport’s Latin pun rather than an erroneous transcription by Scattergood, hence the translation “*pope*-ies”.

17 Metadata on this Greek sample in *Nero* 38.1 can be found in the online database “Code-Switching in Roman Literature,” `https://csrl.classics.cam.ac.uk/detail.php?id=1086` (accessed 15 September, 2022).

18 Suetonius, *Nero*, 38.1. “But [Nero] showed no great mercy to the people or the walls of his capital. When someone in the *lingua franca* [i.e. Greek] said: “**When I am dead, let earth be consumed by fire**,” he rejoined “Nay, **rather while I live**,” and his action was wholly in accord.” Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, trans. by Rolfe, vol. 2, 148–9. I have changed Rolfe’s “general conversation” to “*lingua franca*” which seems to be the more accurate meaning of “sermo communis” in *Nero* 38.1.

19 Mullen and Elder, *The Language of Roman Letters: Bilingual Epistolography from Cicero to Fronto*, 244 and 242.

20 Suetonius’s use of Greek in the *Lives* was also discussed by early modern commentators. In his commentary on Suetonius, the Swiss humanist Heinrich Glarean (1488–1563) highlights Suetonius’s Latin–Greek code-switching and reflects upon code-switching in the vernacular. Using Suetonius as a precedent, Glarean argues that code-switching should be permissible also in the vernacular. See Glarean, “Præfatio,”

It is important to distinguish the use of Greek in writing from the use of Greek in speech. Duport's adaptation of examples from Suetonius's Latin–Greek code-switching suggests that he was aware of the negative connotations that Suetonius applies to the use of Greek in an oral, moral, and Roman context in the *Lives*. As we will see in *Prolusion VI*, Milton draws upon a controversial instance of *spoken* Greek within a markedly Roman context. Although the frequent Latin–Greek code-switching in Cicero's letters demonstrates the deep familiarity with Greek among the Roman elites, James Noel Adams and Simon Swain emphasise that, in Ancient Rome, "Greek was not permissible in public discourse" because "the political consciousness of the Romans would not tolerate the expression of ideas in another language."[21] Indeed, Cicero acknowledges the sharp criticism he once faced for speaking publicly in Greek in *Verrine Orations* 2.4.66.[22] In *Epigrams* 10.68, Martial mocks Roman women who speak Greek out loud in Rome.[23] As Peter Toohey observes, in one epigram Martial mocks the linguistic transgression committed by "a quintessentially Latin woman adopting Greek rather than her own Tuscan or Latin language."[24] Duport's allusion to instances of Roman emperors speaking in Greek similarly is intended to suggest the moral and religious deviancy of the papacy. Duport is not subverting the traditional association of Hellenic study with Protestantism—after all, *qui Graecizabant, Lutheranizabant*—but rather Duport's rhetorical use of Latin–Greek code-switching is closely informed by the taboo on speaking Greek publicly in Ancient Rome.

Just as Duport's Greek allusions have a specifically oral context, Milton also employs Greek in an overtly spoken context in *Prolusion I* and especially in *Prolusion VI*. When mocking his dumbstruck auditors, Milton's Latin–Greek code-switching emphasises their muteness:

> quanto nudiores Leberide conspexeris, & exhausta inani vocabulorum & sententiuncularum supellectile, ***μηδὲ γρῦ φθέγγεσθαι***, perinde mutos ac ranuncula Seriphia.[25]

in *C. Suetonii Transquilli XII*, 115: "if it is permissible to mix Greek with Latin (indeed, often among those who do not understand Greek), then why is it not permissible to add words from the Celtic language when speaking German—two languages which are no less ancient than Latin—among those who understand it?" (si licet Graeca immiscere Latinis, saepe etiam apud non intelligentes Graeca: cur non liceat inserere Celtica ac Germanicae non minus vetustae linguae verba, apud intelligenteis?). For discussion of Glarean's lectures on Suetonius, see Grafton and Leu, "*Chronologia est unica historiae lux*." Swiss humanists including Glarean, Vadian, Gessner, and Bibliander discussed the possibility of an ancient language family of German and Celtic, on which see Metcalf, "Konrad Gesner's Views on the Germanic Languages." For Gessner and Glarean on the Celtic language (*lingua Celtica*), see Poppe, "The Celtic Languages in Conrad Gessner's *Mithridates* (1555)." See also Kidd, *British Identities Before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World 1600–1800,* 192.

21 Adams and Swain, "Introduction," in *Bilingualism in Ancient Society*, 17. On Cicero's Latin–Greek code-switching, see Swain, "Bilingualism in Cicero? The Evidence of Code-Switching." See Cicero, *De officiis,* 1.31.111–112.

22 Cicero, *Verrine Orations*, trans. by Greenwood, vol. 2, 460–461. See Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.15. See also Adams, "'Romanitas' and the Latin Language"; and Ramsay, "Roman Senatorial Oratory," 132.

23 Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 20. See also Juvenal, *Satire VI*, 185–197.

24 Toohey, "How Good was Latin?," 256. See also Watson and Watson (eds), *Juvenal: Satire 6*, 136

25 "You will find them even more bare than a serpent's slough, and when they have exhausted their meagre supply of words and little maxims, **they utter not even a grunt**, being just as speechless as the little

Hale cites several classical sources for Milton's use of the Greek phrase "they utter not even a grunt" (*μηδὲ γρῦ φθέγγεσθαι*) including Aristophanes *Wealth* 17, Demosthenes *Orations* 19.39, and Dio Chrysostom *Orations* 7.26.[26] However, Milton is primarily and ironically employing the self-same supply of "words" (*vocabulorum*) and "little maxims" (*sententiuncularum*) which he mocks his dumbstruck listeners for having exhausted: namely, Erasmus's *Adages*.

When Milton mocks members of his student audience for being "emptier than a sloughed skin" (*nudiores Leberide*), he has sourced this expression from Erasmus's adage "blinder than a sloughed skin" (*Caeciores leberide*), and Milton has borrowed one of the versions of this adage that Erasmus lists: "emptier than a sloughed skin" ("*γυμνότερος λεβηρίδος*, id est Nudior leberide").[27] The Miltonic editor Merrit Hughes cites Juvenal's *Satires* 6.565 and 10.170 for Milton's allusion to the Seriphian frogs, but Juvenal only mentions the Greek island of Seriphos rather than the Seriphian frogs specifically. Milton is again probably drawing on Erasmus's supply of "little maxims" rather than making a specific allusion to a classical author.[28] With respect to the adage "a frog from Seriphos" (Β*άτραχος ἐκ* Σ*ερίφου*), Erasmus explains that it can be applied to silent men and those who are unskilled in speaking or singing.[29] Erasmus himself employs this Greek expression in a letter from 26 October 1517 to Guillaume Budé (ca. 1468–1540). When he complains of his philhellenic correspondent's delay in replying to an earlier letter, Erasmus engages in Latin–Greek code-switching:

> Quid sibi vult, mi Budaee, tam subitum silentium, qui paulo ante me non epistolis sed voluminibus obruebas? **Περὶ τοῦ Βασιλέως, περὶ τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου** quanti pridem tumultus! nunc ***οὐδὲ γρῦ***.[30]

Here, Erasmus's motivation for referring to the king and bishop in Greek was probably to ensure greater secrecy about the politically delicate matter at hand in this letter.[31]

Milton uses Erasmus's *Adages* (as well as Aulus Gellius's *Attic Nights*) elsewhere in the *Prolusions*. For example, he employs a scatological adage—"the Augean stables" (Α*ὐγείου βουστασία*)—in his mockery of the scholastic curriculum at Cambridge in *Prolusion III*, the theme of which is "Against the Scholastic Philosophy" ("Contra Philosophiam Scholasticam"): "cum vero plus semper viderem

Seriphian frogs." *CW* 12:120–1. I have modified the Columbia edition's translation of *Leberide* as "bean pod" to "snake's slough", and "empty" to "bare".

26 Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 117.

27 ASD II.1:138; CWE 31:282.

28 Hughes (ed.), *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 596, n. 3. Milton quotes (in Greek) from *Orphic Hymns* 77.7–11 and Hesiod's *Theogony* 123–125.

29 ASD II.1:504–6; CWE 31:410.

30 "What calls for such a sudden silence, my dear Budé? Not so long ago, it was not letters, but volumes, with which you inundated me. What a tumult of news there was lately **concerning the king** and **concerning the bishop!** Now, **not a grunt.**" Allen 3:112. My translation.

31 On the use of Greek in Latin epistolary exchanges for the purpose of secrecy, see Van Rooy, *New Ancient Greek in a Neo-Latin World*, 116–119; and Rummel, "The Use of Greek in Erasmus' Letters," 67–68.

superesse, quàm quod legendo absolveram, equidem inculcatis hisce ineptiis quoties præoptavi mihi repurgandum Augeæ Bubile, fœlicemque prædicavi Herculem, cui facilis Juno hujusmodi ærumnam nunquam imperaverat exantlandam."[32] Milton's handling of this specific adage when criticising the scholastic curriculum is very similar to a near-contemporary university oration, the inaugural lecture at the University of Oxford delivered on 25 October 1626 by Matthias Pasor (1599–1658), in which Pasor evokes the Augean Stables in his demands to reform the scholastic curriculum at Oxford.[33]

The tone and language of Milton's Greek-inflected mockery of his speechless audience in *Prolusion I* is reminiscent of another humanist's denigration of an audience. In response to the University of Oxford's attempt to prohibit the teaching of Greek in 1518, Thomas More wrote a letter in which he derides the Greekless and ignorant cleric at Oxford who warns his parishioners of the dangers of Greek learning. More states that the preacher was ignorant "about Greek—of which he did not understand **a single word**" ("aut postremo de Graeca lingua, cuius **οὐδὲ γρῦ** intelligit").[34] Neil Rhodes observes that More's use of this Greek tag carries with it a "contemptuous" tone within the otherwise fully Latinate letter. Likewise, Milton's use of Greek in the *Prolusions* sometimes bears a disdainful tone as he mocks his university auditors for their over-reliance on Erasmian compendia like the *Adages*.[35] It is *Prolusion VI,* however, which particularly underlines Milton's use of Greek in an oral context as a method of highlighting change and transgression.

3 *An* → *ἄν*: Linguistic and Ovidian Transformation in *Prolusion VI*

Milton jocularly asks his fellow students at Christ's how he, the "Lady" (*Domina*), could possibly have become the "Father" (*Pater*): the name for the master of ceremonies at a university salting. After questioning how "I have so suddenly become a Father" ("tam subito factus sum Pater"), Milton engages in Latin–Greek code-switching when he offers several ludicrous explanations:

32 "[When, as always happened,] I saw that more remained to read than I had yet completed, how often I wished to clean out the Augean stables instead of having these fooleries forced upon me; and I declared Hercules a happy man, to whom good-natured Juno had never set an exhausting hardship of this kind." *CW* 12.160–161. For the Erasmian adage, see CWE 33:201.

33 Pasor, *Oratio pro Linguae Arabicae Professione*, sig. A4: "in order to clean out the Augean stable of Papish superstitions and for washing away the filth of the scholastics' sophistries, the Oriental soap [i.e. Arabic, Syriac, and Aramaic languages] is needed, as well as pure water from the springs of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old and New Testaments" (ad expurgandum sc. Augiae stabulum superstitionum Papatus, et eluendum sordes Sophisticae Scholasticorum opus erat smegmate Orientali, et aqua limpida fontium Hebraeorum et Graecorum V. et N. Testamenti). As stated on the title page of this Oxford oration, Pasor was a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Heidelberg who was given special permission to lecture on Arabic at Oxford. For discussion of Pasor's oration and the Augean Stables, see Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome and Learning*, 99. On inaugural orations at early modern universities, see Walser-Bürgler, *Oratio inauguralis* (forthcoming). See also *Of Education* (1644): "an old errour of universities not yet well recover'd from the Scholastick grosnesse of barbarous ages" (*CPW* 2:274).

34 Thomas More qt. and trans. by Rhodes in *Common*, 39, n. 40.

35 Rhodes, *Common*, 39.

> An denique ego a deo aliquo vitiatus, ut olim Caeneus, virilitatem pactus sum stupri pretium, ut sic repente *ἐκ θηλείας εἰς ἄρρενα ἀλλαχθείην ἄν*?[36]

Milton alludes to the story in *Metamorphoses* 12 in which Neptune rapes Caenis before offering to fulfil any request as compensation. Caenis asks Neptune to turn her into a man and, as a result, Caenis becomes Caeneus:

> 'Magnum' Caenis ait 'facit haec iniuria votum,
> Tale pati iam posse nihil; da, femina ne sim:
> Omnia praestiteris.'[37]

Milton's evocation of Caeneus also recalls how the centaurs taunt Caeneus for being "hardly a man" (*vixque viro*) in *Metamorphoses* 12.500 and a "half-man" (*semimari*) in *Metamorphoses* 12.506, just as Milton tells his audience to "notice how stupidly, how thoughtlessly they have taunted me [...] I wish they could as easily stop being asses as I could stop being a woman!" ("videte quam insubide, quam incogitate mihi objecerint [...] Verum utinam illi possint tam facile exuere asinos quam ego quicquid est feminae").[38]

Here, as Brendan Prawdzik observes, Milton "imagines himself as a female victim of rape."[39] When Milton asks whether he has "accepted [his] masculinity as payment for the rape" ("virilitatem pactus sum stupri pretium"), the phrase "stupri pretium" has a legal connotation. The word *stuprum* very often means 'rape' and "stupri pretium" refers broadly to the payment or recompense for sex.[40] In Roman law, anyone who offered compensation in exchange for a *stuprum* was committing a criminal offence. For example, in *De adultera*, Ulpian states that "he also is punished who takes a **bribe** [to conceal] a **sexual violation** which he has discovered" ("plectitur et qui **pretium** pro comperto **stupro** acceperit").[41] Elsewhere, *pretium* refers to a payment or reward rather than a bribe. In Ovid's *Ars amatoria* 1.10.63, the speaker says "it isn't giving, but being asked for a **reward**, that I

[36] "Or have I been violated by some god, as Caeneus was of old, and accepted my masculinity as payment for the rape, to be suddenly altered from female into male?" Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 281–282. I have altered Hale's translation slightly, changing "deed" to "rape" and "won" to "accepted." "Pactus sum" evokes the idea of entering into a (marriage) contract or agreement. See Lewis and Short, s.v. "paciscor."

[37] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 12.201–203. "Then Caenis said: 'The wrong that you have done me calls for a mighty prayer, the prayer that I may never again be able to suffer so. If you grant that I be not woman, you will grant me all." Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Miller, vol. 2, 194–5. See also *Heroides* 5.143–144.

[38] *CW* 12:240–241.

[39] Prawdzik, *Theatrical Milton*, 31. See also Lieb, *Milton and the Culture of Violence*, 83–113; and Turner, "Milton Among the Libertines."

[40] See especially Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* 4.1.76–77: "O, do ye read, my lord, what she hath writ? / 'Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius'." Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Waith, 149. On *stuprum* and its legal definition, see Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 122; Fantham, "'Stuprum': Public Attitudes and Penalties for Sexual Offences in Republican Rome"; and Caldwell, *Roman Girlhood and the Fashioning of Femininity*, 61–66. On the importance of acknowledging the legal context of certain Latin words and phrases in Milton's Latin prose, see Chapman, "Defending Milton's *Pro se defensio*."

[41] *Digest*, 48.5.30.2. Qt. and trans. by McGinn in *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome*, 174, n. 50. See also Paul, *Digest* 47.11.1.2.

disdain and despise" ("nec dare, sed **pretium** posci dedignor et odi") and in Catullus 110.2, regarding the payment of prostitutes, the speaker states that "they get their **price** for what they purpose to do" ("accipiunt **pretium**, quae facere instituunt").[42] In Joannes Petrus Lotichius' (1598–1669) 1629 commentary on Petronius's *Satyricon*, Petronius's remarks on a prostitute at a brothel in Campania—"by this time the madam had already got an *as* for the use of a room" ("iam pro cella meretrix assem exegerat", *Sat.* 8.4)—are glossed as follows: "id est, stupri pretium exegerat" ("that is, she had demanded payment for sex").[43]

Together with the reference to Ovid's Caeneus, the process of Milton's Ovidian transformation from "Lady" (*Domina*) to "Father" (*Pater*) is reflected linguistically by an extraordinary example of Latin–Greek code-switching. The position of the Latin particle *An* at the beginning of the sentence and the extremely peculiar position of the Greek particle *ἄν* at the end of the sentence—"**An** denique ego [...] *ἀλλαχθείην* ***ἄν***"—structurally conveys Milton's figurative transformation where the Latin *An* becomes the Greek *ἄν*. This compliments the multiple transformative processes in gender and language—from female to male, and from Latin to Greek—at play in Milton's response to his nickname.

After Milton questions how he could have changed gender—"how should I be suddenly altered from female to male?" ("ut sic repente *ἐκ θηλείας εἰς ἄρρενα ἀλλαχθείην ἄν*?")—he continues to focus on male and female (grammatical) genders in the next sentence.[44] He declares:

> A quibusdam, audivi nuper Domina. At cur videor illis parum masculus? Ecquis Prisciani pudor? Itane propria quae maribus femineo generi tribuunt insulsi grammaticastri?[45]

Milton evokes the Tudor grammarian and Hellenist William Lily (ca. 1468–1522) and the sixth-century Latin grammarian Priscian. Hale observes that "Milton echoes a tag from Lily's *Grammar* ("propria quae maribus" etc.), to the effect that grammar would collapse if gender were so fluid."[46] Although this kind of slightly

42 Ovid, *Amores*, trans. by Goold, 362–3; Catullus, trans. by Cornish and Mackail, 176–7. See also *Heroides* 5.143; Propertius 4.5.29; and [Ps.-]Seneca, *Octavia* 132.

43 Lotichius (ed.), *T. Petronii Arbitri Satyricon*, 69. See also Adams, "Words for 'Prostitute' in Latin."

44 Although Milton is not quoting from a specific Greek text, the language is potentially reminiscent of the sophistic wrangling between Socrates and Strepsiades about masculine (*ἄρρενα*) and feminine (*θήλεα*) grammatical genders in Aristophanes *Clouds* 658–694. With respect to Milton's use of the verb "*ἀλλαχθείην*," see Euripides, *Bacchae* 54–55: "I have **taken on** mortal form / And changed my appearance to that of a man" (*εἶδος θνητὸν* ***ἀλλάξας*** *ἔχω / μορφήν τ' ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν*). Euripides, *Bacchae*, trans. by Kovacs, 16–17.

45 "For some have recently called me "Lady." But why do I seem barely a male to them? Have they no respect for Priscian? Do these witless grammar-bunglers attribute to the feminine what is properly masculine?" I have altered Hale's "unmanly" to "barely a male" in his translation.

46 Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 283, n.35. With respect to Milton's reference to the Latin grammarian Priscian, it is interesting to note that Duport too, in a poem on Restoration actresses, associates Priscian with gender confusion between men and women: "Player is not a name for women, nor is actor, if there be credit in grammar and in Priscian; surely it is proper that only men be actors" ("Nec femininum nomen hypocrita, / Nec histrio, si Grammaticae fides, / Et *Prisciano*; nempe solos / Esse viros decet histriones." "In Roscias nostras, seu Histriones Feminas," ll. 1–4). Qt. and trans. by Vozar in "Alcaics on Restoration Actresses by the Cambridge Classical Scholar James Duport," 84–5.

risqué grammatical joke is very common, one could argue that Milton takes advantage of Latin and Greek grammatical conventions in both defending his masculinity and vindicating his feminine nickname.[47] This is because, in addition to the allusion to the tag "propria quae maribus" ("that which belongs to males") from Lily's *Grammar*, Milton's allusion to Lily also brings to mind the Tudor grammarian's definition of the "Epicene" (*Epicoenum*) gender in which "both sexes are embraced under the sign of one gender" ("sub unâ generis notâ utrumque sexum complectimur").[48] One reason Milton gives for why his "manhood" (*virilitatem*) is being questioned is because "I have never had strength to go in for drinking-competitions" ("scilicet quia scyphos capacissimos nunquam valui pancratice haurire").[49] As Alexandra Shepard observes, in seventeenth-century Cambridge, "undergraduate drinking practices involved calculated displays of excess as trials of strength and a measure of manhood."[50] *Plus ça change …*

When mocking those who tauntingly call him "Domina" as "witless grammar-bunglers" (*insulsi grammaticastri*)—that is, unintelligent, inferior grammarians—the rare word "grammati**castri**" punningly evokes the verb ***castrare***, "to castrate," thus belittling both their intelligence and their manhood.[51] Milton makes ribald and coarse jokes throughout *Prolusion VI*, such as when he remarks that a college peer "might unwittingly blurt out some riddles to us, not from his Sphinx but from his sphincter" ("et aenigmata quaedam nolens effutiat sua non Sphinx sed Sphincter anus").[52] Such risqué humour is conventional for the ludic nature of the genre and occasion.

4 Dionysia and "The Lady of Christ's College"

After Milton "utterly repudiate[s] whatever relates to 'Lord' or 'Lady'" ("quicquid hoc "Domini" aut "Dominae" est a me longe amolior atque reiicio"), he defensively provides precedents from antiquity of Greek and Roman orators who were called similar names to show, on the contrary, "how I rejoice to be linked with such great men by the common bond of a shared insult!" (exultemque gaudio me tantis viris eiusdem opprobrii societate coniunctum!).[53] Milton characterises "Domina" as an "opprobri[um]"—a strong term which can be translated as a "reproach," "insult," or "abusive word"—and states that both Hortensius and Demosthenes

[47] See Moul, "Grammar in Verse," 128. There are several examples of this kind of grammatical joke in John Owen's popular Neo-Latin epigrams.

[48] Lily, *A Short Introduction of Grammar*, 12. Note too Milton's juxtaposition of "male" and "female" which are joined together in "propria quae **maribus femineo**." On Lily's *Grammar* and gender, see Pittenger, "Dispatch Quickly," 404–5; Smith, "Latin Lovers in *The Taming of the Shrew*"; and McGregor, "'Run Not Before the Laws."

[49] Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 282–283.

[50] Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 281–2; and Shepard, "Student Masculinity in Early Modern Cambridge, 1560–1640," 69.

[51] The earliest uses of the word *grammaticaster* are recorded in John Dee's *Monus Hieroglyphica* and William Camden's *Brittanica*. See Plautus, *Mercator* 272–276.

[52] Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 211. I have slightly altered Hale's translation.

[53] Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 284–285. Hale astutely notes that "Dominus" was the equivalent term for Cambridge's "Pater" at the Inns of Court (*Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 284, n. 30). I have adapted Hale's translation.

were also subjected to similar nicknames, presumably referring to Dionysia and Batalus respectively.[54] In the *Adages*, Erasmus includes an adage simply titled "*Βάταλος εἶ*" and explains that this was Demosthenes' nickname: "Olim in effœminatos per contumeliam dicebatur. Plutarchus ostendit id cognominis Demostheni puero inditum fuisse, & ab inimicis probro obiectum."[55] To turn the potentially humiliating nickname of "Domina" into what the Dutch call a *Geuzennaam*—a derogatory name reclaimed as a badge of honour and empowerment—Milton insists that he regards it as a sobriquet that "is rightly a matter of honour to me" ("id quod ego iure optimo mihi vertam gloriae").[56]

Milton also quotes the Latin–Greek code-switching of the Roman orator Hortensius's retort to Lucius Torquatus after he publicly ridiculed Hortensius for being effeminate and called him "Dionysia"—the name of a famous female dancer and singer in Rome—during Publius Cornelius Sulla's trial in 62 BC:

> Namque et ipse Demosthenes ab aemulis adversariisque parum vir dictus est. Q. itidem Hortensius omnium Oratorum post M. Tullium clarissimus, "Dionysia Psaltria" appellatus est a L. Torquato. Cui ille, "Dionysia," inquit, "malo equidem esse quam quod tu, Torquate – *ἄμουσος, ἀγροδίατος, ἀπρόσιτος*."[57]

Hortensius switches from Latin into Greek to accuse Torquatus of being "tasteless, boorish, crass" (*ἄμουσος, ἀγροδίατος, ἀπρόσιτος*). Erasmus's version of this anecdote in the *Apophthegmata* very closely follows that of Aulus Gellius in the *Attic Nights* 1.5.3:

> Hortensius orator ob cultum mundiorem, ac gesticulationes in dicendo molliores, crebro male audiebat in ipsis etiam iudiciis. Sed quum Lucius Torquatus, homo sub agrestibus & infestivis moribus, quum apud Concilium de causa Syllæ quereretur, non iam histrionem illum diceret, sed gesticulatricem, Dionysiamque notissimæ saltatriculæ nomine compellaret: tum voce molli demissaque Hortensius, Dionysia, inquit, Dionysia malim equidem esse, quàm quod tu Torquate *ἄμουσος, ἀγρίαιτος, ἀπρόσιτος*, id est, inelegans, agrestis, aditu difficilis.[58]

[54] Lewis and Short, s.v. "opprobrium," II.

[55] "You're a regular Batalus, was said in old days by way of insult to effeminate men. Plutarch shows that the nickname was given to Demosthenes as a boy, and used to his discredit by his enemies." ASD II.2:36; CWE 32:11. See Plutarch, *Demosthenes* 4.3–4; Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 174–175; and Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* 131–132.

[56] Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 282–283.

[57] "For Demosthenes himself was called 'too little of a man' by his rivals and opponents. Hortensius, too, second only to Cicero among Roman orators, was called 'Dionysia, a singing woman' by L. Torquatus. Hortensius replied: 'I would rather be this 'Dionysia' than what you are, Torquatus—tasteless, boorish, and crass,'" Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 282–283.

[58] Erasmus, *Apophthegmata*, 6.325. "The orator Hortensius was often the subject of taunts even in the lawcourts on account of his modish dress and the rather effeminate gestures he used when delivering his speeches. But Lucius Torquatus (a boorish and unattractive character), during the investigation into Sulla's case before the council, did not merely describe Hortensius as an actor but called him a female mime artiste, addressing him as "Dionysia": the name of a notorious, female dancer. At this, Hortensius remarked in a sweet and gentle voice, "Dionysia? I would rather be a Dionysia than what you are, Torquatus, vulgar,

In response to this exchange, Craig Williams observes that it is "worth noting that Hortensius caps his retort in Greek (as if to highlight the contrast between rough Roman and refined philhellene) and delivers the whole in a noticeably effeminate way."[59] Why does Milton compare himself with Hortensius: an orator who had a reputation for stylistic transgression and unmanliness?[60] Regarding Hortensius's Greek retort, Catharine Edwards stresses how extreme this statement is in its Roman, Latinate context as a debunking of Roman *virilitas* itself: "a soft voice, a rare one, that spoke for sophistication, philhellenism and even the feminine. This may be as close as a Roman text ever comes to suggesting virility need not be the ultimate virtue."[61] In *Lingua* (1525), Erasmus contrasts Roman *brevitas* and *virilitas* with effeminate Greek rhetorical training when he praises Cato the Censor as a "real old Roman" (*viro mero Romano*) who was "not debauched [literally "made effeminate"] by an indulgence of Greek-style training" ("nec ullis graecanicarum artium deliciis effoeminato") with all its unmanly and "silly chattering" ("inepta garrulitas").[62] Milton's appropriation of Hortensius's Greek riposte serves to vindicate his feminine nickname by confuting the standard of manliness espoused by "these spiteful people" (*hos lividos*) who call him "Domina" on account of some divergence on his behalf from their view of masculinity.[63] It is difficult to tell what the reason for this may have originally been. It may simply be based on his complexion—he looked "so fair", to quote Mynshell, "that they called him the Lady of Christ's College"—or, as Gordon Campbell and Thomas Corns theorize, it may have been "because his manner or appearance was youthful or effeminate."[64]

Towards the end of *Prolusion VI*, Milton states: "nec ad vinorum genera eos nuncupare volupe est, ne quicquid dixero, sit ***ἀπροσδιόνυσον***, & nihil ad Bacchum."[65] Here, Milton is preparing to name the "fine rascals" (*lepidos nebulones*) among his audience one-by-one after the names of different vintages of wine and "after the ten Aristotelian Categories" ("ad praedicamentorum numerum nominatos"). His use of the Greek word "ἀπροσδιόνυσον" puns on its literal meaning of "nothing to Dionysus" (i.e. the god of wine).[66] There are two textual traditions to Gellius' account of Hortensius's Greek retort. The edition of Aulus Gellius which Milton most likely consulted at Cambridge is Ludovicus Carrio's 1585 edition

boorish, and surly." Erasmus, *Des Apopthegmes à la Polyanthée*, vol. 2, 1405; CWE 38:686. I have slightly adapted Knott and Fantham's translation.

59 Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 156. For discussion of Cicero's criticism of Hortensius's "Asianist" rhetorical style, see Berg, *The Politics and Poetics of Cicero's Brutus*, 20–43.

60 Dugan, *Making a New Man: Ciceronian Self-Fashioning in his Rhetorical Works*, 122.

61 Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, 97. See also Keulen, *Gellius the Satirist*, 115.

62 CWE 29:269. See also Parker, "On the Tongue," 448.

63 Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 284–285. On Milton's use of the term "manliness" and related terms in his English prose, see Hausknech, "The Gender of Civic Virtue."

64 Campbell and Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*, 60. Ad loc., Campbell and Corns explain the potential class element behind "Domina": "in this context he is deemed to be a lady in the sense of being married to a lord."

65 "Nor do I enjoy naming them [Milton's "sons"] after different kinds of wines lest whatever I should say be ***mal à propos***, and nothing to do with Bacchus". Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 284–285.

66 See *CPW* 1:285.

published in Paris by Henricus Stephanus. One textual version of Hortensius's Greek response is quoted above, but the alternative textual version of it is "*ἄμουσος, ἀναφρόδιτος, ἀπροσδιόνυσος*" ("a stranger to the Muses, to Venus, and to Dionysus"); this is the version given in most modern editions of the *Attic Nights*, including John Rolfe's edition in the Loeb Classical Library series.[67] However, this alternative Greek response of Hortensius's appears to have been first recorded by Johannes Fredericus Gronovius (1611–1671) in his 1651 edition of the *Attic Nights*, approximately two decades after Milton composed *Prolusion VI*.[68] Although it is tempting to conjecture that Milton had his eye on the alternative version of Hortensius's Greek retort in this last example of Latin–Greek code-switching in *Prolusion VI*, the alternative Greek response found in Gronovius's edition of Gellius was apparently not available to Milton and his use of the word must for now be taken to be merely a remarkable coincidence.

Aulus Gellius also uses Latin–Greek code-switching in his Latin account of the jibes directed towards Demosthenes, which Milton quotes from in *Prolusion VI*. The scene in question takes place in Athens, therefore everyone was speaking Greek; nevertheless, the Roman author Aulus Gellius retains the Greek jibes on Demosthenes' effeminacy in his Latin work. It is striking that Latin–Greek code-switching is employed in an oral context and applied to the markers of unmanliness and effeminacy—namely, women's clothing:

> Demosthenen traditum est vestitu ceteroque cultu corporis nitido venustoque nimisque accurato fuisse. Et hinc ei ***τὰ κόμψα*** illa ***χλανίσκια*** et ***μαλακοὶ χιτωνίσκοι*** aemulis adversariisque probro data, hinc etiam turpibus indignisque in eum verbis non temperatum, quin parum vir[.][69]

Aulus Gellius's Latin–Greek code-switching is not neutral but deliberately signals to his Roman readers Demosthenes' departure from *virilitas*.[70] It is clear that Milton has this exact passage in mind because he closely paraphrases Aulus Gellius's statement that "he was taunted by his rivals and opponents [...] alleging that he was no man" ("**aemulis adversariisque** probro data [...] quin **parum vir"**) in his recollection of how "Demosthenes himself was called 'too little of a man' by his

67 Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 1.5.3, trans. by Rolfe, 28–29.

68 Gronovius (ed.), *Auli Gellii noctes Atticae. Editio nova et prioribus omnibus docti hominis cura multo castigatior Amstelodami*, 11. On the transmission and textual history of the *Attic Nights*, see Holford-Stevens, *Gelliana*. For detailed discussion of all of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of *Attic Nights*, see Holford-Stevens, *Gelliana*, 289–313. On the importance of avoiding textual anachronism (that is, quoting a classical text from an edition which did not yet exist), see Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, 5.

69 Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 1.5.1. "It is said that Demosthenes in his dress and other personal habits was excessively spruce, elegant and studied. It was for that reason that he was taunted by his rivals and opponents with his **"exquisite, pretty mantles"** and **"soft, pretty tunics"**; or that reason, too, that they did not refrain from applying to him foul and shameful epithets, alleging that he was no man." Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, trans. by Rolfe, vol. 1, 28–29. See also Swain, "Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Antonine Rome." For discussion of this passage, see Keulen, *Gellius the Satirist*, 114.

70 On Aulus Gellius and contemporary readers in Rome, see Howley, *Aulus Gellius and Roman Reading Culture*.

rivals and opponents" ("ipse Demosthenes ab **aemulis adversariisque parum vir** dictus est").[71]

5 Conclusion

Michael Lieb remarks upon the singularity of Milton's college nickname and how deeply the young Milton took it to heart: "The Lady of Christ's was an identity through which Milton became known to others and as a result of which he was made to struggle with the whole notion of femininity such a designation implied."[72] Although Milton may have embraced the nickname "Domina" on account of Virgil having reportedly had a similar nickname in his youth (which therefore contributed to the burgeoning poet's Virgilian self-fashioning), the notion that Milton's peers in the late 1620s or early 1630s started calling Milton "Domina" as a way of honouring Milton as a future Virgil would be, in the proper sense of the word, preposterous. When Milton asks how he has been "suddenly altered from female into male?" ("ut sic repente ἐκ θηλείας εἰς ἄῤῥενα ἀλλαχθείην ἄν?"), his Latin–Greek code-switching throughout *Prolusion VI* is strongly influenced by the way Greek direct speech is handled by Roman and Renaissance authors. Just as Suetonius's Latin–Greek code-switching informed Duport's when denigrating the moral transgressions of the popes, Milton's similar code-switching in the autobiographical passage of *Prolusion VI* is closely informed by the use of Greek words by Aulus Gellius and Erasmus in their accounts of the insults directed at Hortensius and Demosthenes. Like Hortensius's controversial Greek utterance in the Roman courtroom, Milton's use of Greek when delivering *Prolusion VI* at Christ's College signals a linguistic deviation from both *latinitas* and the supreme Roman virtue of *virilitas*. Partly through his Latin–Greek code-switching, Milton ultimately defends his own masculinity while embracing rather than rejecting the appellation "Domina."

71 Hale (ed.), *Milton's Cambridge Latin*, 282–283. See Hubbard, "Popular Perceptions of Elite Homosexuality in Classical Athens," 66; and Reekmans, "Verbal Humour in Plutarch and Suetonius' Lives."

72 Lieb, *Milton and the Culture of Violence*, 85.

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