Ancient Greece: Stoicism

• Very influential school of philosophy in centuries following Aristotle, in Rome too
• Hardly any writings survive — (a disaster!)
• Our knowledge fairly sketchy
• Very important for development of grammar as a discipline
• Issues of language discussed under rhetoric and dialectic (≈ logic)
Ancient Greece: Stoicism

Basic theory of linguistic forms:

- **phōnē**: any sound/noise
- **lexis**: writable (=articulated) sound
- **logos**: meaningful sound
Ancient Greece: Stoicism

Some theory of the meaning relation and the nature of signs — details unclear

\[ \text{sēmainon} \text{ ‘signifier’ } \leftrightarrow \text{sēmainomenon} \text{ ‘signified’} \]

\[ \text{lektōn} \text{ ‘what may be put into words’} \]

Precise meaning not clear, but seems to be precursor to classification of sentence types and propositions

Best Stoic discussion of sign theory is St Augustine’s *De dialectica!*
Ancient Greece: Alexandrian philology

• Famous Alexandrian libraries established in early 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BC (Mouseion & Serapeion)
• Goal: to compare existing manuscripts of earlier texts (\textit{p.ex.} Homer) and establish the putative original; scholarly community!
• which parts of a text are original and which are later interpolations?
• which parts have been correctly transmitted and which have been garbled?
→ Textual criticism
Ancient Greece: Alexandrian philology

- Standardisation of alphabet
- Introduction of punctuation and accent marks
Ancient Greece: Alexandrian philology
Ancient Greece: Alexandrian philology

• Standardisation of alphabet
• Introduction of punctuation and accent marks
• Symbols to indicate problems in text
• Commentaries on text
• Scholarly discussions of issues like the identity of Homer (not much remains)
• Glossaries of difficult words (archaic, dialectal)
• Notes on points of morphology
• Standardised "editions" of important texts
Ancient Greece: Alexandrian philology

Dionysios Thrax (~100 BC): "Grammar is the practical study of the normal usage of poets and prose writers. It has six parts."

- competence in reading aloud observing prosody
- interpretation with attention to figures of speech
- explanation of difficult words and allusions
- investigation of the true meaning (*etymologia*) of words (probably Plato-like)
- analysis of analogy (probably morphology)
- criticism of poems, the finest branch of subject
Ancient Greece: Alexandrian philology

• basically textual criticism, closer to literary studies than to anything else
• philology in 19th century European sense
• grammar an ancillary discipline (though, of course, branches of science were not yet compartmentalised)
• seminal work, very important for future of humanities as academic disciplines and of European culture in general
Ancient Greece: Summary

- Philosophical interest: language and reality / truth / knowledge
  - meaning, syllogisms, sentence types
    - Plato, Aristotle, Stoics
- Practical interest: effective use of language
  - rhetoric, poetry, style, metaphor
    - Sophists, Aristotle, rhetoricians
- Philological interest: language as the raw material of poetry & prose
  - spelling, punctuation, morphology
    - Alexandrian scholars (Aristophanes, Zenodotos...
Rome: Grammar as a discipline

Patterned entirely on Greek models
But develops in new direction: school grammar, organised in a methodical way
Language seen "from outside" (learning Greek!)
Almost nothing remains from the crucial period (1\textsuperscript{st}–2\textsuperscript{nd} c. BC)
Twenty-odd grammars from 3\textsuperscript{rd}–5\textsuperscript{th} c. AD
Plus: Varro’s \textit{De lingua latina} (1\textsuperscript{st} c. BC) and Quintilian’s \textit{Institutio oratoria} (1\textsuperscript{st} c. AD)
Also Greek grammars in a similar tradition
Rome: M. T. Varro’s *De lingua latina*

- One of the greatest scholars of Antiquity
- Lengthy treatise, only 6 books out of 25 remain, in a single corrupt manuscript
- Unlike anything else on language!
- Philosophically grounded discussion of grammar and vocabulary; general principles (we would now call it theoretical linguistics)
- Analogy vs. anomaly (~ inflectional vs. derivational morphology — outstanding!)
Rome: Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*

- ~ *Training of the public speaker*
- Includes discussion of what is / should be taught to children
- One of the most important things: grammar — why?
Excursus: schooling in Antiquity

• basic literacy & numeracy
• reading some outstanding pieces of literature (Vergil’s Aeneid; in Greece Homer); grammar
• no compartmentalisation of subjects: ~history, geography, mythology all through literature
• higher education:
  – rhetoric (esp. in Rome)
  – philosophy (esp. in Greece)
  – law
→ verbal skills, consciousness of language
Rome: Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*

- *Training of the public speaker*
- Includes discussion of what is / should be taught to children
- One of the most important things: grammar
  - letters/sound (litterae)
  - word classes
  - figures of speech ("virtues and vices" of speech)
- Also includes brief historical recapitulation of grammar as a discipline; word classes, categories etc. (see handout)
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- Semantically oriented grammars
  - aka Ars (scil. ‘art’, tekhnē), Schulgrammatik
- Formally oriented grammars
  - aka Regulae

(none of these names are very good since in the manuscripts anything can be called anything, if there is a title at all, but there is a tradition of using them in the literature)
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- Semantically oriented grammars
  - rigorously hierarchical structure
  - systematic structure within chapters
  - emphasis on semantic – rather than formal – categories
  - (probably) aimed at native speakers
  - goal: to appreciate and imitate style of great poets & writers (Vergil, Cicero, Sallust...)
  - most famous: Donatus (mid-4th c. AD; widely used until 16th c.)
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- Semantically oriented grammars; Donatus
  - Ars minor (Shorter grammar)
    - only parts of speech
    - dialogical form (very unusual!)
  - Ars maior (Longer grammar)
    - Book 1: sound, letter, syllable, feet, accent, punctuation
    - Book 2: noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition, interjection
    - Book 3: barbarisms, solecisms, other faults, metaplasms, schemes, tropes
      - this type of info unknown in Greek grammars of the time
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

• Semantically oriented grammars; Donatus
  – Ars minor (Shorter grammar): see handout
    Example: *nomen*
      • definition
      • main types & properties listed
      • properties explained in detail
      • examples
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- Formally oriented grammars
  - (probably) written for non-natives (more and more of them from 1st c. BC on!); *Regulae* ~ *Gr Kanones*
  - all survive from originally non-Latin speaking territories (North Africa, Palestine...)
  - teachers’ attempts to organise basic morphological information for memorisation
  - long lists of similar forms arranged in some way
  - fundamental educational problem! (we have no idea how elementary Latin was taught to "Barbarians" and Greeks)
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

• **Priscian(us)**: most famous and influential grammarian (along with Donatus); Constantinople, ~ 500 AD
• Famous teacher (at advanced level); wide-ranging work; also close to Emperor
• Grammatical works basis of advanced humanities education until end of Middle Ages
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

Priscian’s *Partitiones*... (*Analyses of the twelve first lines of Vergil’s Aeneid*)

• detailed analysis of select verse lines
  – metrical
  – grammatical
  – lexical

• rare glimpse into classroom pedagogy!
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

Priscian’s *Institutio de nomine*... (*Instruction on the noun, pronoun and verb*)

- short but very systematic formal description of the four inflecting parts of speech
- successful classification into declensions and conjugations (rather than alphabetic order...)
- very influential later because of its practicality
Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

Priscian’s *Institutiones grammaticae* *(Grammatical doctrine)*

- lengthy combination of semantically oriented and formal type of grammar, advanced
- highly theoretical; Greek presumed
- first ever discussion of Latin syntax! (modelled on the Greek Apollonios Dyskolos, 2nd c. AD)
- Standard material at medieval universities