

Language in Style.

Linguistic variation in Greek and Latin from Lexis to Register.

18–20 May 2016, Wolfson College, Oxford

CALL FOR PAPERS

While stylistics has a very long tradition in the classical studies, ‘styles’ have not often been defined in terms of communicative functions and priorities, even though these relate naturally to linguistic variation. The present conference intends to stimulate research and debate in this perspective by looking into both the ancient texts and the rhetorical tradition. The conference is convened by Alessandro Vatri (Oxford) and Tzu-I Liao (UCL), and its aim is to rethink the traditional notion of ‘style’ in Greek and Latin in theoretical and practical terms from the perspective of language use and communication—an approach that profits especially from the tools and methods of contemporary linguistics (e.g. sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis).

Papers would be warmly received on the following themes, though other topics will be considered:

- Can we define styles/registers in Greek and Latin in a rigorous way by identifying communicative properties and their linguistic correlates? Can so-defined styles/registers be put in relation to one another on the basis of shared functions?
- Is it possible to identify the communicative function(s) of linguistic devices as they occur in combination with other linguistic features in the classical texts? Does thinking in terms of styles/registers add to our understanding of the function(s) of individual linguistic devices?
- What features of the linguistic usage of an author can be ascribed to genuine idiolectal variation as opposed to situational variation? Do genre and authorship play a primary role in determining linguistic variation? To what extent are these categories effective at this level of linguistic analysis?
- Does ancient stylistics provide useful guidance in the identification of well-defined linguistic functions and varieties? Can we substantiate ancient taxonomies of styles in Greek and Latin with sound linguistic analysis? The idea that styles are characterised by combinations of communicative properties is not alien to the ancient rhetoricians (e.g. Hermogenes’ ‘ideas of style’). Can the ancient stylistic categories be defined rigorously in linguistic terms? To what extent? Do the patterns of linguistic features that they describe actually occur in ancient texts?

Keynote speaker: Andreas Willi (Oxford)

Confirmed speakers include: Rutger Allan (Free Univ. Amsterdam), Victor Bers (Yale), Anna Bonifazi (Heidelberg), Casper de Jonge (Leiden), Jesús de la Villa (U. A. Madrid), Wolfgang de Melo (Oxford), Coulter George (Virginia), Luuk Huitink (Heidelberg), Caroline Kroon (Amsterdam), David Langslow (Manchester).

We invite submissions of abstracts for papers suitable for a 20 minute presentation. Proposals should be approx. 300 words in length (excluding references) and must be submitted as a PDF attachment by 18 January 2016. Proposals and contributions are expected to be in English. Please send all abstracts and inquiries to languageinstyle@gmail.com