

MALS 2023.1 Koine Texts: Tranche 1

In this intensive course we will explore various specimens of Koine Greek, from the Early (last three centuries BCE), Middle (first three centuries CE), and Late (fourth to sixth centuries CE) periods. We will examine a range of genres and text-types, including both literary and documentary materials.

Text 1

The language of the New Testament, compiled during the first and early second centuries CE, is not, as was once commonly believed, a special ‘Jewish’ variety of Greek. It is in general terms a fair specimen of everyday written Greek of the early centuries CE, though displaying some degree of direct or indirect bilingual interference from Aramaic and Hebrew. This extract is drawn from Mark’s Gospel, which probably dates from the period *c.* 65–70. The four gospels reflect different levels of education and stylistic pretension. Mark’s language indicates a relatively low level.

New Testament, *Gospel according to Mark 5*

1 Καὶ ἦλθον εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν. **2** καὶ ἐξελθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου εὐθὺς ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, **3** ὃς τὴν κατοίκησιν εἶχεν ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν· καὶ οὐδὲ ἀλύσει οὐδέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι, **4** διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν πολλάκις πέδαις καὶ ἀλύσεσιν δεδέσθαι καὶ διεσπάσθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τὰς ἀλύσεις καὶ τὰς πέδας συντετριῖθαι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι· **5** καὶ διὰ παντὸς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ἦν κρᾶζων καὶ κατακόπτων ἑαυτὸν λίθοις. **6** καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔδραμεν καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ, **7** καὶ κρᾶξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγει, Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μὴ με βασανίσῃς. **8** ἔλεγεν γὰρ αὐτῷ, Ἔξελθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. **9** καὶ ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν, Τί ὄνομά σοι; καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Λεγιῶν ὄνομά μοι, ὅτι πολλοὶ ἐσμεν. **10** καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν πολλὰ ἵνα μὴ αὐτὰ ἀποστείλῃ ἔξω τῆς χώρας.

11 Ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ πρὸς τῷ ὄρει ἀγέλη χοίρων μεγάλη βοσκομένη· **12** καὶ παρεκάλεσαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες, Πέμψον ἡμᾶς εἰς τοὺς χοίρους, ἵνα εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰσέλθωμεν. **13** καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐξελθόντα τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα εἰσῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους, καὶ ὥρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ὡς δισχίλιοι, καὶ ἐπνίγοντο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ. **14** καὶ οἱ βόσκοντες αὐτοὺς ἔφυγον καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς· καὶ ἦλθον ἰδεῖν τί ἐστὶν τὸ γεγονός. **15** καὶ ἔρχονται πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ θεωροῦσιν τὸν δαμονιζόμενον καθήμενον ἱματισμένον καὶ σωφρονούντα, τὸν ἐσχηκότα τὸν λεγιῶνα, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν. **16** καὶ διηγήσαντο αὐτοῖς οἱ ἰδόντες πῶς ἐγένετο τῷ δαμονιζομένῳ καὶ περὶ τῶν χοίρων. **17** καὶ ἤρξαντο παρακαλεῖν αὐτὸν ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων αὐτῶν. **18** Καὶ ἐμβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον παρεκάλει αὐτὸν ὁ δαμονισθεὶς ἵνα μετ’ αὐτοῦ ᾗ. **19** καὶ οὐκ ἀφῆκεν αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ὑπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς, καὶ ἀπάγγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησέν σε. **20** καὶ ἀπῆλθεν καὶ ἤρξατο κηρῦσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ πάντες ἐθαύμαζον.

Text 2

Sozomen (Salminius Hermias Sozomenus) wrote an *Ecclesiastical History* in nine books around the middle of the fifth century CE. The last book is unfinished. Sozomen seems to have stopped working on it before the death of the emperor Theodosius II in 450 CE, perhaps because of his own death. We know few biographical details about Sozomen. Born between c. 380 and c. 400, he probably grew up in the village of Bethleia, near Gaza, where his grandfather had settled. He pursued a legal career in Constantinople.

Sozomen's *History*, his only surviving work, covers the period from Constantine I's 'conversion' in 312 until 425. The work makes heavy use of the *Ecclesiastical History* of his contemporary Socrates of Constantinople (born c. 380), but does not simply copy it, exploiting Socrates' own sources and creating a narrative with its own distinctive purpose and interests (for instance in monasticism). The following extract from Book VII gives a brief taste of Sozomen's educated and sometimes challenging diction and provides a demonstration of how to deal with a dragon.

Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* VII 26. 1–3

1 Κατὰ τοῦτον δὲ πολλοὶ πολλαχῆ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐν ἐπισκόποις διέπρεπον, ὡς Δονᾶτος ὁ Εὐροίας τῆς Ἡπείρου· ᾧ δὴ πολλὰ τεθαυματοργηῆσθαι μαρτυροῦσιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι, μέγιστα δὲ τὰ περὶ τὴν ἀναίρεσιν τοῦ δράκοντος, ὃς περὶ τὰς καλουμένας Χαμαιγεφύρας παρὰ τὴν λεωφόρον ἐφώλευε καὶ πρόβατα καὶ αἶγας, ἵππους τε καὶ βόας καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἐξήρπαζεν.
2 οὐ γὰρ ξίφος ἢ δόρυ φέρων οὐδὲ ἄλλο τι βέλος ἔχων ἐπὶ τουτὶ τὸ θηρίον ἦλθεν· ἀλλ' ὡς ἦσθετο καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὡς ἐφορμῆσον ἐξανέστησεν, ἀντιπρόσωπον αὐτῷ εἰς σταυροῦ σύμβολον τὸν ἀέρα τῷ δακτύλῳ κατεσήμανε καὶ ἐπέπτυσε.
3 τὸ δὲ σίελον εἰς τὸ στόμα δεξάμενον αὐτίκα κατέπεσε· καὶ νεκρὸν κείμενον οὐ μείον τῶν παρ' Ἰνδοῖς ἱστορουμένων ἐρπετῶν διεφάνη τὸ μέγεθος· ἀμέλει τοι, ὡς ἐπυθόμην, ὑπὸ ζεύγεσιν ὄκτω εἰς τὸ πλησίον πεδίον ἐξελεύσαντες αὐτὸ οἱ ἐπιχώριοι κατέκαυσαν, ὅπως μὴ διασαπείς τὸν ἀέρα λυμῆνηται καὶ λοιμώδη ποιήσῃ.

Text 3

This text is an extract from the massive assemblage of documents forming the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 CE. These are preserved in medieval manuscripts dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The language is high-level Koine of the late period. This brief passage gives a sense, among other things, of just how dangerous taking minutes can prove to be.

First Session (8 October 451) of the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, paras. 130–2 (*ACO* 2.1.1, pp. 87–8):

130 Στέφανος ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος Ἐφέσου εἶπεν· Ἐξελάμβανον οἱ νοτάριοί μου, Ἰουλιανὸς ὁ νῦν εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος Λεβέδου καὶ Κρισπῖνος διάκονος καὶ ἦλθον οἱ νοτάριοι τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου ἐπισκόπου Διοσκόρου καὶ ἀπήλειψαν αὐτῶν τὰς δέλτους καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους αὐτῶν παρὰ τι ἔκλασαν θέλοντες λαβεῖν καὶ τὰ καλαμάρια αὐτῶν. καὶ οὔτε ἀντίγραφα ἔλαβον τῶν ὑπομνημάτων οὔτε οἶδα ἐκ τότε τί ἐγένετο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν ἣ ἡ ἐξέτασις ἐγένετο, ὑπεγράψαμεν εἰς χάρτην καὶ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι οἱ μὴ ὑπογράψαντες ἐμοῦ ἐγγυησαμένου τῇ ἐξῆς ὑπέγραψαν.

131 Εὐσέβιος ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος Δορυλαίου εἶπεν· Ἀξιῶ τὸν θεοφιλέστατον ἐπίσκοπον Ἐφέσου Στέφανον εἰπεῖν εἰς ποῖον χάρτην ὑπέγραψαν.

132 Στέφανος ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος Ἐφέσου εἶπεν· Εἰς ἄγραφον χάρτην. ἐν αὐτῇ γὰρ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐν ἣ ἡ καθάρσις γέγονεν, εὐθὺς καὶ ἡ ὑπογραφή ἐγένετο.

Text 4

The following papyrus, from the famous Oxyrhynchos finds, preserves a fragment of the original version of the fortune-telling guide that came to be known in the medieval period as the *Sortes Astrampsychi* ('Responses of Astrampsychus'; Astrampsychus was supposed to be a Persian sage). The medieval version and further papyrus fragments show that in addition to a numbered list of nearly 100 questions, the person who consulted the work would have had at his or her disposal a slightly larger set of numbered answers (thus including some deliberately baffling ones) and a mathematical formula for selecting an answer to the question chosen. Two editions of the *Sortes* can be identified, containing similar questions, but differences in the answers, which tend to be longer and more elaborate in the second edition.

The *Sortes* probably originated in Egypt in the course of the third century CE. All the relevant papyri date from the late third or early fourth century.

List of Questions from a Fortune-Telling Guide (the *Sortes Astrampsychi*)

(*POxy* XII 1477; corrected edn. at G.M. Browne, *The Papyri of the Sortes Astrampsychi* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1974), 19–20)

-
- οβ· εἰ λήμφομαι τὸ ὀψώνιον
ογ· εἰ μενῶ ὅπου ὑπάγω
οδ· εἰ πωλοῦμαι
οε· εἰ ἔχω ὠφελίαν ἀπὸ τοῦ φίλου
5 ος· εἰ δέδοταί μοι ἑτέρῳ συναλλάξαι
οζ· εἰ καταλλάσσομαι εἰς τὸν τόπον [μου]
οη· εἰ λαμβάνω κομιᾶτον
οθ· εἰ λήμφομαι τὸ ἀργύριον
π· εἰ ζῆ ὁ ἀπόδημος
πα· εἰ κερδαίνω ἀπὸ τοῦ πράγματ[ος]
πβ· εἰ προγράφεται τὰ ἐμά
πγ· εἰ εὐρήσω πωλήσαι
πδ· εἰ δύναμαι ὀ ἐνθυμοῦμαι ἀγο[ράσαι]
πε· εἰ γίνομαι βιόπρατος
πς· εἰ φυγαδεύσομαι
πζ· εἰ πρεσβεύσω
πη· εἰ γίνομαι βουλευτής
πθ· εἰ λύεται μου ὁ δρασμός
ρ· εἰ ἀπαλλάσσομαι τῆς γυναικός[ς]
ρα· εἰ πεφαρμάκωμαι
ρβ· εἰ λαμβάνω ληγᾶ[το]ν
-