Gender-Specific Communication in Graeco-Roman Antiquity

With a Research Bibliography*

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"[L]es Anciens n'étoient pas moins hommes que nous, ny moins sujets à l'erreur, & l'on ne doit pas plûtost se rendre à present à leurs opinions, qu'on auroit fait de leur temps. On consideroit autrefois les femmes, comme l'on fait aujourd'huy, & avec aussi peu de raison. Ainsi tout ce qu'en ont dit les hommes doit estre suspect, parce qu'ils sont iuges & parties"

François Poullain de la Barre, *De l'égalité des deux sexes*[1]

"Ich sehe nicht ein, warum wir uns immer um die Männer oder gar um ihre Seeschlachten kümmern sollen; die Geschichte der Frauen ist meist viel interessanter."

Ebba von Rosenberg in Theodor Fontane's *Unwiederbringlich*[2]

1. *Introduction*

It is the aim of this study to offer a provisional and by no means complete survey and discussion of the most important sources on gender-specific communication from Graeco-Roman antiquity. Most of the texts to be

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1. Originally published in Paris in 1673, here quoted from the following bilingual edition: François Poullain de la Barre, *The Equality of the Two Sexes*. Translated with an Introduction by A. Daniel Frankforter & Paul J. Morman (= *Studies in the History of Philosophy*, 11), Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989, 70.

2. Theodor Fontane, *Unwiederbringlich* ed. by Christine Hehle (= *Große Brandenburger Ausgabe: Das erzählerische Werk*, 13), Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2003, 178.

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considered here will concern various ancient authors' views of forms of female speech and their attempts to describe its characteristic features. It goes without saying that with their contrastive propensity many of the Greek and Latin documents that will be analysed in what follows reveal as much about modes of male communication as they do about 'women's language', although very often not as a factual account but rather in the form of normative statements. The first part of this study consists, however, of a consideration of more recent approaches to female speech, ranging from Wilhelm von Humboldt and Jacob Grimm to more elaborate investigations from modern sociolinguistics, starting in the 1970s, including feminist studies. The enquiry concludes with an extensive bibliography for future research which assembles titles from both modern linguistics and classical philology.

2. *From Wilhelm von Humboldt and Jacob Grimm to the 20th century*

Research in modern linguistics on the connections between speech and gender was not very intensive until the 1980s, although initial attempts to deal with the problem of gender-specific communication in a more extensive and more scholarly way go back to the early 20th century. But already in the 19th century scholars paid some attention to female speech, most notably Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) and Jacob Grimm (1785–1863).

Wilhelm von Humboldt, politician, diplomat and scholar, took a strong interest in cultures and languages that were regarded as 'exotic' in his time, such as Basque, native American or Polynesian languages. Through his study of the interrelation between language and culture, which in his own view would lead him to a better understanding of the nature of 'language', he became one of the most important predecessors of modern linguistic anthropology. In his work *Ueber die Verschiedenheiten des menschlichen Sprachbaues* (1827–1829), he emphasizes the importance of collecting data on all sorts of languages that are accessible to scholars and of comparing their sometimes radically different structures, in particular their grammatical systems. This approach is seen as necessary for their classification. For long stretches of this survey, Humboldt narrates about his own linguistic research in various parts of the world and his methodological principles. The first chapter of the third section is entitled "Von der Sprache in Beziehung auf die Verschiedenheit der in der Nation vorhandenen Individualitäten". Here Humboldt starts from the assumption that languages are closely bound up with the nations in which they are spoken. But this is not to say that the language of a nation is completely uniform; rather, its speakers must be differentiated by certain features such as sex, age or

education. As Humboldt points out, sex differences can also be perceived on the linguistic level:

> Die weibliche Eigenthümlichkeit, die sich so lebendig und sichtbar auch in dem Geistigen ausprägt, erstreckt sich natürlich auch auf die Sprache. Frauen drucken sich in der Regel natürlicher, zarter und dennoch kraftvoller, als Männer aus. Ihre Sprache ist ein treuerer Spiegel ihrer Gedanken und Gefühle, und wenn dies auch selten erkannt und gesagt worden ist, so bewahren sie vorzüglich die Fülle, Stärke und Naturgemässheit der Sprache mitten in der diesen Eigenschaften immer raubenden Bildung, in der sie in gleichem Schritt mit den Männern fortgehen.[3]

Nevertheless, Humboldt refuses to speak of a distinct 'language' of women as a constitutive element of the better-known national languages. 'Weibersprachen', characterized by the use of words and phrases that do not occur in male speech, could only be conceived for communities in which male and female speakers live in quite separate spheres. Examples of female speech of this type known to him are restricted to native American languages and, in a much more pronounced form, in Carib (Humboldt 1963 [1827–1829]: 254–258).

Certain lines of Humboldt's thought lead to Jacob Grimm and his treatment of female speech and gender. In his preface to the 'German Dictionary', a joint project undertaken together with his brother Wilhelm,[4] he explains the wide-ranging purpose of a dictionary: above all, it should have the function of a thesaurus and mirror the past and present of its speakers, as its 'monument' ("ein hehres denkmal des volks"). It serves as a source of instruction about lexical matters for all members of the speech community and helps the users extend their vocabulary and their knowledge about their mother tongue. Grimm sketches an ideal scene of a family in which the father, surrounded by the other family members in the evening, reads from the 'German Dictionary' and takes this as an opportunity to test his own and his sons' lexical skills. It is remarkable that daughters are not mentioned in this passage and that the role of the housewife is restricted to a completely receptive one: whereas the

3. Quoted from the following edition: Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie* (= *Werke in fünf Bänden*, 3) ed. by Andreas Flitner & Klaus Giel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), 253.

4. On the Dictionary, see Alan Kirkness, Peter Kühn & Herbert Ernst Wiegand, eds. *Studien zum Deutschen Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991), and the short remarks by Andreas Gardt, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft in Deutschland. Vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin & New York: De Gruyter, 1999), 260–267.

male family members use this kind of exercise to improve their knowledge of German, it is sufficient for her to listen to them and to snatch up a few lexical items.[5] It seems clear that a woman's active usage of the newly acquired words or a direct participation in the reading from the dictionary and the subsequent discussion of certain expressions is not envisaged by Grimm. This impression is confirmed by a passage in a later section of the same preface in which he justifies the use of Latin technical terms for the definition of a number of entries in the dictionary. Grimm has no problem with the fact that not every reader will be familiar enough with some of these Latin terms; those who do not understand them may just skip them and still grasp the overall meaning of an entry. Women in particular, he says, will not be irritated by some Latin words unintelligible to them, nor will they give up reading the dictionary, as they often encounter similar situations while reading newspapers, for example, which are full of technical expressions. Grimm then explicitly refuses to take the users of his dictionary by the hand and to provide assistance for all details that might not yet be known to them.[6] Passages such as these reveal that Grimm's declared educational goal connected with the dictionary has its limits, as the

5. Jacob Grimm, "Vorrede". *Deutsches Wörterbuch* by Jacob Grimm & Wilhelm Grimm, Erster Band: *A — Biermolke* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1854), xii–xiii: "Einen haufen bücher mit übelerfundenen titeln gibt es, die hausieren gehn und das bunteste und unverdaulichste gemisch des manigfalten wissens feil tragen. fände bei den leuten die einfache kost der heimischen sprache eingang, so könnte das wörterbuch zum hausbedarf, und mit verlangen, oft mit andacht gelesen werden. warum sollte sich nicht der vater ein paar wörter ausheben und sie abends mit den knaben durchgehend zugleich ihre sprachgabe prüfen und die eigne anfrischen? die mutter würde gern zuhören. frauen, mit ihrem gesunden mutterwitz und im gedächtnis gute sprüche bewahrend, tragen oft wahre begierde ihr unverdorbnes sprachgefühl zu üben, vor die kisten und kasten zu treten, aus denen wie gefaltete leinwand lautere wörter ihnen entgegen quellen: ein wort, ein reim führt dann auf andere und sie kehren öfter zurück und heben den deckel von neuem."

6. Grimm, "Vorrede" (as n. 6), xli: "Auch wird man nicht die verständlichkeit aller lateinischen gebrauchten ausdrücke für alle leser des wörterbuchs verlangen; die ihrer unkundig sind, hüpfen mit leichtem fusze daran vorbei und finden sich dennoch zurecht, wie sie vorübergehn, wenn sie auf ein wort gestoszen sind, dessen gehalt sie gar nicht anzieht. ich stelle mir vor, dasz sinnigen frauen das lesen im wörterbuch durch die eingestreuten lateinischen [*sic*] so wenig gestört oder gar verleidet wird, als sie ein zeitungsblatt ungelesen lassen wegen der juristischen, militärischen, diplomatischen kunstwörter, die darin stehn. jeder leser bringt eine menge verständnisse mit sich, die ihm den zutritt zu den wörtern leicht machen; ihn auf allen schritten zu geleiten, kann nicht die absicht eines wissenschaftlichen werkes sein, das zugleich höhere zwecke verfolgt."

dictionary is at the same time a work of distinguished scholarship that makes certain demands on its users.

Much more could be said about Grimm's approach to female speech. It may be mentioned in passing that, in the preface to his 'German Grammar' from 1819, he comments upon the uselessness of earlier normative grammatical works for the development of a proper linguistic competence ('Sprachvermögen') in German and expresses the opinion that the less grammatical training girls and women receive at school, the purer and the more natural their words as well as their style will be.[7] But it must be added that a similar position is advanced by Grimm for all male members of the German speech community. It is important to note that, in the preface to his 'German Grammar', he wanted to make the case against normative school grammar and philosophical grammar: with his own grammar he did not intend to cater to the needs of schools or private users but opted for a scientific work with a strongly historical outlook based on empirical data.

Another essential issue in connection with Grimm's concern about women's language is his discussion of language origin and, more specifically, the category of gender.[8] He takes up the well-established distinction of natural and grammatical gender. In the gender of natural substantives he sees a difference between the masculine as the earlier, bigger, and active on the one hand and the feminine as the later, smaller, and passive on the other — a view that was advanced before Grimm in a similar fashion by Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806) in his work *Umständliches Lehrgebäude der deutschen Sprache*

7. Jacob Grimm, Vorrede zur *Deutschen Grammatik* (1819). Cited from the following edition: Jacob & Wilhelm Grimm, *Über das Deutsche. Schriften zur Zeit-, Rechts-, Sprach- und Literaturgeschichte* ed. by Ruth Reiher (Leipzig: Reclam, 1986), 138–139: "wichtig und unbestreitbar ist hier auch die von vielen gemachte beobachtung, daß mädchen und frauen, die in der schule weniger geplagt werden, ihre worte reinlicher zu reden, zierlicher zu setzen und natürlicher zu wählen verstehen, weil sie sich mehr nach dem kommenden inneren bedürfnis bilden, die bildsamkeit und verfeinerung der sprache aber mit dem geistesfortschritt überhaupt sich von selbst einfindet und gewiß nicht ausbleibt."

8. On the category of gender, in particular on the origin of grammatical gender, see, e.g., the monographs by La Grasserie (1906), Ibrahim (1973), Claudi (1985), and Corbett (1991), and the articles by Brugmann (1889, 1890), Frazer (1900), Meillet (1923), Meinhof (1937), Fodor (1959), Greenberg (1978), Forer (1986), Roca (1989), Wienold (1989), and Strunk (1994); very instructive is the overview by Bußmann (1995: 115–127).

from 1782.[9] In Grimm's speech 'On the Origin of Language', delivered to the Prussian Academy in 1851, he explains the deviation of the female flexion from the male as due to the influence of the female sex. More generally, he believes that women already had specific forms of communication in early times and substantiates his hypothesis by referring to the difference between the vernacular Prakrit and its highly stylized counterpart Sanskrit.[10] However, it must be pointed out that the principal distinction between Prakrit and Sanskrit is based upon social rank, not upon the sex of the speakers; therefore, Prakrit, literally the 'common' or 'natural' language, was not only spoken by women, as Grimm seems to suggest, but also by men of inferior classes.

Finally, one could supplement the analysis of Jacob Grimm's theoretical works on language and linguistics with a scrutiny of the narrative strategies in the fairy tales that were collected by him and his brother Wilhelm. It has been argued that talk in the fairy tales is distributed rather unevenly: virtuous female characters speak less than villainous ones, and thus silence seems to be equated with female virtue[11] — a concept that would correspond to the depiction of the passive, merely listening housewife in the preface to the German Dictionary. These intriguing results have a fundamental significance for research on the status of women and gender issues in bourgeois societies of the 19th century, but at the same time they accord with tendencies in other periods where a male community perceives speaking women as a danger to the *status quo*, as will be illustrated below for Graeco-Roman antiquity.

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9. For a succinct discussion see, e.g., Ulrich Wyss, *Die wilde Philologie. Jacob Grimm und der Historismus* (München: Beck, 1979), 160–167. On Grimm and certain precursors regarding gender, in particular on Adelung, see Bußmann (1995: 124–126).

10. Jacob Grimm, "Über den Ursprung der Sprache. Gelesen in der Akademie am 9. Januar 1851", quoted from the following edition: Jacob Grimm, *Selbstbiographie. Ausgewählte Schriften, Reden und Abhandlungen* ed. by Ulrich Wyss (München: dtv, 1984), 174: "man kann den frauen, die nach einigen generationen, zumal wenn mehrere paare stattfanden, gern ihre eigne, von den männern in manchem gesonderte sitte und stellung einnahmen, sogar eigenheiten der mundart für ausprägung der ihnen vorzugsweise geläufigen begriffe von frühe beilegen, wie sie uns am bestimmtesten das prakrit gegenüber dem sanskrit bezeugt. aber in allen alten sprachen sehen wir männliche und weibliche flexionen neben einander unterschieden, was auf keinen fall ohne einfluß des frauengeschlechts auf die sprachgestaltung selbst kann geschehen sein."

11. Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys. The Social and Moral Vision of the Tales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

Perhaps best-known among the studies of the early 20th century[12] is Otto Jespersen's (1860–1943) rather crude treatment in a chapter entitled "The woman",[13] which forms part of his book *Language. Its Nature, Development and Origin* (1922). After assembling all sorts of examples taken predominantly from English, but sometimes supplemented by an outlook onto more remote areas of the world, he comes to the conclusion that female thought is more rapid than male, although he would not admit that this rapidity is proof of intellectual power. Jespersen then relates his observations to the linguistic level:

> The superior readiness of speech of women is a concomitant of the fact that their vocabulary is smaller and more central than that of men. […] the highest linguistic genius and the lowest degree of linguistic imbecility are very rarely found among women. The greatest orators, the most famous literary artists, have been men; but it may serve as a sort of consolation to the other sex that there are a much greater number of men than of women who cannot put two words together intelligibly, who stutter and stammer and hesitate, and are unable to find suitable expressions for the simplest thought. Between these two extremes the woman moves with a sure and supple tongue which is ever ready to find words and to pronounce them in a clear and intelligible manner. (Jespersen 1922: 253)[14]

12. See the contributions by, e.g., Cederschiöld (1900), Chamberlain (1912), Kraus (1924), Gourmont (1925), Correia (1927), Correia (1935), and Tagliavini (1938). Sapir (1929) was concerned with Yana, a polysynthetic and agglutinate native American language spoken in California which contains special forms for use in speech either by or to women. For earlier examples of research on female speech, see the two articles by Adam (1879) and Henry (1879), both published in the same issue of the journal *Revue de linguistique*.

13. Romaine (1999: 14–15) aptly remarks on Jespersen's study: "There was no corresponding chapter on 'The Man'. The assumption is that men's language is simply language and requires no special discussion." On Jespersen, see also Romaine (1999: 34–35, 78, 180).

14. What he means by the formulation that the vocabulary of women is "more central", can be gathered from a passage on p. 248: "Women move preferably in the central field of language, avoiding everything that is out of the way or bizarre, while men will often either coin new words or expressions or take up old-fashioned ones, if by that means they are enabled, or think that they are enabled, to find a more adequate or precise expression for their thoughts. Woman as a rule follows the main road of language, where man is often inclined to turn aside into a narrow footpath or even to strike out a new path for himself. […]". Jespersen adds that the generally less comprehensive education of women cannot be held entirely responsible for this. Similar, though more concise, passages can be found in his earlier book *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, ^{9}1958), 15, which was first published in 1905.

He explains his findings by referring to the division of labour between men and women: up to the more recent past, men tended to engage in work that requires a great amount of energy, e.g., war and hunting, so that they did not have much opportunity to speak. In contrast, women's much less strenuous and intellectually less demanding domestic occupations left them plenty of time for chattering. In one sentence, Jespersen admits that in his own time the traditional composition of social groups is changing and that, in the long run, this might have an effect on the traditional speech habits of men and women. It is obvious from this as well as from other statements of his that, with their disconcerting tendentiousness, Jespersen's considerations by no means fulfil the requirements of a neutral and objective descriptive approach. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that, in those parts of the chapter in question where he simply lists instances of gender-specific use of language, some of his comments prove to be more sound. He adduces examples of characteristic types of pronunciation, particular grammatical forms, words, expressions or phrases that in certain cultures are used by women, but not by men. Restrictions of usage are repeatedly explained by taboo, the culturally determined requirement to replace certain words by other ones.[15]

A couple of years after Jespersen's *Language*, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929) published a longer article on the influence of language on worldview and mood ("Einfluß der Sprache auf Weltanschauung und Stimmung") in the Polish journal *Prace filologiczne* (Baudouin de Courtenay 1929). After a fairly general first part on the significance of mother-tongue, linguistic purism, foreign-language learning and writing systems, he proceeds to tackle the problem of gender, in particular its connection with worldview. One cannot

15. Jespersen (1922: 239–241); see also Jespersen's *Mankind, Nation and Individual from a Linguistic Point of View* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1925), 184–185. Cf. Trudgill (1983: 79–84) and Wardhaugh ([3]1998: 313–314). On linguistic taboo in general, see Nirvi (1947, 1952), Yaguello (1978: 18–20) and the following works: Arend Will Mauritz Odé, *Reflexe von „Tabu" und „Noa" in den indogermanischen Sprachen* (= *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen. Afdeeling Letterkunde*, 63.A.3), Amsterdam 1927. — Pavel Trost, "Bemerkungen zum Sprachtabu", *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* 6.288–294 (1936). — Wilhelm Havers, *Neuere Literatur zum Sprachtabu* (= *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, 223/5), Wien 1946. — Elisabeth Danninger, "Tabubereiche und Euphemismen", *Sprachtheorie und angewandte Linguistik. Festschrift für Alfred Wollmann zum 60. Geburtstag* ed. by Werner Welte (Tübingen: Narr, 1982), 237–251. — Rudi Keller, "Worttabu und Tabuwörter", *Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 60.2–9 (1987). — Christel Balle, *Tabus in der Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1990).

avoid the impression that this is a rather strange piece of academic work, sprinkled with conclusions which the scholar himself at times admits may seem overstated and unconvincing. However this may be, it contains a number of passages which could be taken to foreshadow a much later development in linguistic thinking. According to Baudouin de Courtenay, the development of the category of gender must be described as arbitrary, as something irrational and superfluous (1929: 224–227). The existence of gender in certain languages massively determines the thinking and perception of their speakers. In languages with a masculine and feminine gender there is a widespread principle of denotation: female beings are usually denoted by derivation from the denotations of males, the male being conceived as something primary and the female as something secondary. It is precisely this understanding of the system of gender that Baudouin de Courtenay finds illogical and even unjust (1929: 231–232). In order to support his view, he adduces an instance from a Russian context where a woman, trained as a medical doctor, was prevented from submitting her 'Habilitation' to Moscow University because the official statutes were not designed for such a case and contained only male occupational terms — a revealing example of circumstances in which the potential of the gender system of a language to be consciously abused is ultimately responsible for the fact that women are systematically denied access to higher academic qualification. In Finland, Baudouin de Courtenay continues, this would have been impossible, as Finnish does not have any gender-determined substantives and thus no similar regulations with explicit terms that apply only to males (1929: 239–240). Statements like these make it rather unlikely that Baudouin de Courtenay had read Jespersen's outline "The woman". But perhaps he was inspired by Alfred Götze's reflections on gender outlined in a chapter of his book *Wege des Geistes in der Sprache*, published in 1918.[16]

16. Alfred Götze, *Wege des Geistes in der Sprache. Gedanken und Beobachtungen zum deutschen Wortschatz* (Leipzig: Haase, 1918), 46–49 (ch. 7: "Vorwalten des männlichen Geistes in der Sprache"). See in particular 46: "Es ist eine durchaus männliche Kraft, die die Sprache in ihrem Werden bestimmt hat, und Männer sind am Werk gewesen, je weiter wir die Sprache zurückverfolgen, desto einseitiger, desto ungerechter gegen die Frau. […] *Jedermann* — das Wort enthält schon ein Stück der sprachlichen Frauenfrage, um die es sich hier handelt: es umschließt jeden und jede, Mann und Frau, und doch ist der Ausdruck nur vom Mann genommen." Likewise 47–48: "Ein Mädchen kann ein Luftikus genannt werden oder ein Springinsfeld, Guckindiewelt, Tunichtgut: niemand gibt sich die Mühe, eigene Worte für das weibliche Geschlecht zu bilden oder ihnen auch nur die Endung -in anzuhängen. Schon diese Bildung mit -in ist im Grund ein Unrecht gegen die Frau […]. Regelmäßig bildet, wo gewechselt wird, das männliche Geschlecht den Ausgangspunkt: *Herr*, *Fürst*, *Hund* sind

Apart from Jespersen and Baudouin de Courtenay, there were other scholars in the early 20th century who discussed various elements typical of female speech. Georg von der Gabelentz (1840–1893) in his *Sprachwissenschaft* (first published in 1891) gives some examples of lexical and phonological peculiarities and notes that taboo is almost always a central reason for their coming into existence.[17] Hermann Paul (1846–1921) devotes a paragraph of his *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* — in a chapter in which he discusses the origin of language — to the speech of nurses ("Ammensprache"). With this term he describes an idiom characterized by a high number of reduplicated forms with onomatopoetic quality.[18] In an article on language written for a manual of sociology, Leo Weisgerber (1899–1985) offers a model for subdividing a language into its various constituents, which represents an early manifestation of modern sociolinguistics. He ranges gender-specific language ("Sprache der Männer und der Frauen") amongst other types of special languages such as the idioms of certain professions, students' slang, and the language of religious groups. Jespersen's above-mentioned chapter in *Language* is referred to, and it is from there that Weisgerber seems to have taken the position that the more primitive a society is, the more pronounced are the differences between modes of male and female communication.[19]

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ursprünglich, *Herrin*, *Fürstin*, *Hündin* abgeleitet, und nur ganz selten tritt das umgekehrte Verhältnis ein, wie bei *Witwer*, *Katzert*, *Gansert*, *Enterich* zu *Witwe*, *Katze*, *Gans* und *Ente*. […]". Baudouin de Courtenay does not quote Götze, but since in his article he gives no references to other academic works at all, this does not speak against the assumption that he knew Götze's book.

17. Georg von der Gabelentz, *Die Sprachwissenschaft. Ihre Aufgaben, Methoden und bisherigen Ergebnisse* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, ^{2}1901; repr. Tübingen: Narr, 1969), 248: "Männer und Weiber haben je unter sich besondere Wörter im Gebrauche, die sie dem anderen Geschlechte verheimlichen und im Nothfalle durch gewähltere Ausdrücke ersetzen. […] Beispiele von Weibersprachen finden sich auch sonst, und überall wird etwas von geschlechtlicher Scheu bei ihrer Entstehung und Erhaltung im Spiele sein."

18. Hermann Paul, *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (Halle an der Saale: Niemeyer, ^{5}1920), 181–182: "Onomatopoetisch sind ferner die meisten Wörter der Ammensprache, und auch in ihnen spielt die Reduplikation eine grosse Rolle, vgl. *Wauwau*, *Putput*, *Papa*, *Mama* etc. Diese Sprache ist nicht eine Erfindung der Kinder. Sie wird ihnen so gut wie jede andere Sprache überliefert. Ihr Wert besteht darin, dass sie einem leicht erkennbaren pädagogischen Zwecke dient. Die innere Beziehung des Lautes zur Bedeutung, welche in ihr noch besteht und jedenfalls immer neu geschaffen wird, erleichtert die Verknüpfung beider sehr erheblich."

19. Leo Weisgerber, "Sprache", *Handwörterbuch der Soziologie* ed. by Alfred Vierkandt (Stuttgart: Enke, 1931), 592–608, esp. 594–595.

In the same direction proceeds the argument of Paul Hanly Furfey (1896–1992), an American sociologist with a distinct interest in languages and linguistics, who can be regarded as another predecessor of modern sociolinguistics.[20] In a succinct article, published in the *American Catholic Sociological Review* in 1944, he starts from the assumption that diverging forms of language usage of men and women are less prominent in the languages of Europe than in those of primitive peoples. Like the aforementioned linguists, he then adduces instances of phonetic, grammatical and lexical idiosyncrasies which are restricted to the usage of female speakers.[21] One of his examples, taken from the language of the Chiquito of Bolivia, may serve as an illustration of phenomena situated on the grammatical level:

> In the men's language two genders are distinguished. Nouns designating gods, daemons, and men are masculine, while those designating women, the lower animals regardless of sex, and all other concepts are feminine. There is an elaborate system of gender inflections involving, not only nouns, but all the words of the language except a few invariable particles. This results in a sharp distinction between constructions containing masculine nouns and those containing feminine nouns. […] In the women's language these gender distinctions do not exist. Men, therefore, use masculine constructions when speaking of masculine nouns and feminine constructions when speaking of feminine nouns, while women use the feminine constructions in all cases regardless of gender. […] The language of the Chiquito probably represents the most radical distinction between men's and women's speech which is known to exist anywhere […]. (Furfey 1944: 219)

Furfey was familiar with Jespersen's work, as can be seen from several references in his article, but moves beyond the Danish scholar's occasionally irritating conclusions. He points out that, from the sociologist's perspective, linguistic evidence on gender-specific modes of communication has intriguing implications for a better understanding of gender roles within a given society. According to Furfey, the assertion of masculine superiority can be recognized from the system of the language used in a hierarchically structured commu-

20. On Furfey, see the remarks by John E. Joseph, *From Whitney to Chomsky. Essays in the History of American Linguistics* (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2002), 110–121 and 128–131 (on Furfey's article "Men's and women's language", see pp. 117–118).

21. As can be seen from several quotations, he was familiar with Mary Haas' work, in particular with her short study on the Amerindian language Koasati (Haas 1944), which was published in the same year as Furfey's own article. On Haas' 1944 study and its context, see the brief remarks by Fasold (1990: 89–92).

nity. Since he notes that comparable sex differences also occur in the languages of Europe, one may argue that he anticipates *in nuce* key points of much later research regarding women's language.

Important impulses in more recent years came from the works by Robin Lakoff (1973) and Mary Ritchie Key (1975) as well as from Barrie Thorne's and Nancy Henley's reader *Language and Sex. Difference and Dominance* (1975). In her famous article "Language and woman's place", Lakoff started from the assumption that "[t]he marginality and powerlessness of women is reflected in both the ways women are expected to speak, and the ways in which women are spoken of." (1973: 45). In the first part of her paper, she tried to identify several traits that in her opinion characterize female speech (1973: 49–57): women tend to use a wider and more precise range of colour terms which are absent from the active vocabulary of most men (e.g., *ecru*, *aquamarine*, *lavender*); they have the inclination to employ supposedly meaningless particles such as *goodness* or *oh dear*; another significant feature of female speech is the use of evaluative adjectives for the purpose of approbation or admiration (e.g., *adorable*, *charming*, *divine*, *lovely*); a further characteristic is constituted by tag questions such as *isn't it* to avoid straightforward assertions and a conflict with the addressee; also conspicuous is rising instead of falling intonation in declarative sentences, often interpreted as a sign of women's lack of self-confidence and of a clear opinion. The second part of the article (1973: 57–73) is devoted to a scrutiny of how women are spoken of, in particular how they are referred to by the use of derogatory expressions (e.g., *lady*, *mistress*), the subsequent linguistic imbalance being a sign of social inequity between men and women. Lakoff has been criticized for her method of basing her conclusions on data which, as she admits herself, were "gathered mainly by introspection" (1973: 46) and analysed rather intuitively. Her claim that many of her findings may be universally true has also raised objection. Most importantly perhaps, it must be questioned whether lists of context-independent features that are supposedly characteristic of female speech are really useful, since "the same linguistic features can, when used by different persons in different contexts and cultures, often mean very different things" (Romaine 1999: 5). Despite its obvious deficits, Lakoff's investigation has stimulated the discussion in scholarly circles as well as in the public sphere. Two years after its publication, the article was turned into a short book with an extended list of characteristic features of women's speech (Lakoff 1975)[22] and has just been reedited as a revised and

22. For a convenient summary and critical discussion of Lakoff's revised catalogue of fea-

expanded version together with a commentary and accompanying articles by other scholars (Lakoff 2004).

During the last two decades, the investigation of 'women's language' from a wide range of different angles has attained a vital role within linguistics, as can be seen from the sheer abundance of publications. Already in 1983, the annotated research bibliography on sex similarities and differences in language, speech and nonverbal communication edited by Thorne, Kramarae and Henley listed more than 1,000 titles. Perhaps in no other branch of linguistics has the scholarly output been so high; this is also due to the fact that gender and communication are analysed in many disciplines neighbouring linguistics, such as communication studies, sociology, psychology, anthropology, education studies and gender studies (Tannen 1999: 12). However, the vast majority of these enquiries lacks a historical dimension and completely ignores the fact that some ancient authors already raised the problem of gender-specific languages (now called, e.g., *genderlects* or *sexolects*[23]) and thus made at least a first step towards a diaphasic sketch of the linguistic levels and varieties of both Greek and Latin.[24] The ancient sources on women's language are admittedly not very ample or elaborate. Moreover, they are rather scattered: there is no single treatise that deals entirely with female speech. It is the aim of the present paper to bring together relevant metalinguistic passages and provide a close reading in order to obtain a more differentiated impression of the ancients' views on gender-specific language and style. Notably, ancient authors point out gender-based differences not only in pragmatic respects, but also on the phonological, morphological and lexico-semantic levels. The focus is on excerpts from Plato, Aristophanes, Roman comedy and rhetorical writings, but further sources are also included. The final part of this paper will consider the Renaissance writer Giovanni Boccaccio and his treatise *De mulieribus claris* ('Famous Women') from 1362, and provide a brief analysis of the extent to which this work was influenced, or at least inspired, by ancient concepts of female speech.

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tures in her 1975 book, see for instance Fasold (1990: 102–107, 116) and Romaine (1999: 154–157).

23. To give just a few examples: Glück (1979) employs the corresponding Germanized term "Sexlekte", which is taken up by Löffler (1985: 137). Nabrings (1981: 113–122) speaks predominantly of 'gender-specific varieties' ("geschlechtsspezifische Varietäten"), Tannen (1990: 42, 279) of "genderlect". Jespersen (1922: 241) used the word "sex dialects".

24. Among the commonly used introductory surveys on gender and language Romaine (1999) is a notable exception; see also Bußmann (1995) and Kramarae (1982: esp. 87–90).

3. *Questions concerning gender-specific communication as discussed in modern linguistics*

Before I discuss some representative excerpts from ancient Greek and Roman literature, it will be useful to summarize a couple of questions and problems concerning gender-specific communication that have been discussed in modern linguistics, primarily in sociolinguistics.[25] This overview does by no means intend to cover the full range of scholarly enquiry; I shall restrict myself to the following points:

a. *Societal roles ('soziale Lebenswelten') of women and their speech*
The societal position of women has changed considerably in the last 200 years or so. Women's roles as housewives and mothers have still been predominant in the 19th and 20th centuries, but gradually the spectrum of tasks and responsibilities has become wider, in particular by the increasing number of jobs occupied by women. The separation of private and public space has become more and more reduced. For these reasons, scholars have asked to what extent this development has repercussions for the linguistic behaviour of women. Did the restriction of women to the private sphere entail a tendency towards more informal speech, and did their increasing visibility in the public sphere require an adoption of more formal speech patterns? If this was the case, it could be asked whether and how women took over 'public speech' from men. Although differences concerning social roles of men and women have been reduced in the last two centuries — in some speech communities certainly more than in others —, it is still the case that such differences can be observed. It has been argued that the more distinct and inflexible these social roles are, the larger and more rigid the linguistic differences between men and women tend to be (see, e.g., Trudgill 1983: 88; Wardhaugh ^{3}1998: 321).

25. Short overviews of the issues discussed in research on gender-specific communication can be found, e.g., in Klann-Delius (1987), Aries (1987), McConnell-Ginet (1988), Günthner & Kotthoff (1991: 7–51), Bußmann (1995), Freytag (1997), and Braun (2000); the research report by Schoenthal (1985) is mostly concerned with German scholarship. In addition, most introductions to sociolinguistics contain a chapter on gender and language, e.g., Trudgill (1983: 78–99), Löffler (1985: 137–139), Fasold (1990: 89–118), Romaine (1994: 99–133; a very condensed precursor of Romaine 1999), Hartig (^{2}1998: 156–167), and Wardhaugh (^{3}1998: 309–324); see also Nabrings (1981: 113–122) and Linke, Nussbaumer & Portmann (^{2}1994: 318–323). Among the more extensive surveys, in particular the books by Yaguello (1978), Talbot (1998), Romaine (1999) and Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003), but also the useful volumes edited by Hellinger & Bußmann (2001–2003) and Holmes & Meyerhoff (2003) deserve to be mentioned.

b. *Language change: openness towards change*
The fact that women tended to move in the private sphere and that they were to a great extent excluded from public life has been regarded as the principal reason for their rather conservative attitude towards their mother tongue. As contacts outside the home were relatively limited, they were exposed only to a very small number of phenomena of language change which they would adopt for their own speech. It can be taken for granted that for the 20th century this view of women's social isolation no longer holds true, at least not in most European countries and in North America.

As to conservatism, it has been claimed for female speakers, in particular for those living in urban settings, to be oriented more towards the standard or prestige variety of a language (e.g., Trudgill 1983: 84–95; Löffler 1985: 138; Fasold 1990: 92–99; Romaine 1994: 79–80, 99, 116–123). This has been explained primarily by the fact that "generally speaking, more 'correct' social behaviour is expected of women" (Trudgill 1983: 88; cf. Fasold 1990: 95–99).

c. *Language and power*
To what extent does the way in which language is used reveal the dominance of one (the male) sex over the other (the female)? Is superiority expressed only by certain individual speakers, or is it discernible amongst an entire group of speakers, in the extreme case by all, or at least a majority of, male speakers of a single language? It goes without saying that different modes of communication contain the potential for social conflicts between the sexes. In connection with this, it has to be considered how the interplay works between speakers' conscious attempts to reduce the number of differences between the speech of men and women on the one hand and their effort to retain a certain degree of linguistic individuality and the conscious divergence from established speech patterns on the other.

d. *Language domains*
Modern investigations on gender-specific communication focus on the analysis of various language domains ('Sprachverwendungsbereiche') or, to use a circumscription from pragmalinguistics, areas or spheres in which speech acts take place ('sprachliche Handlungsfelder'). This includes the study of conversational behaviour, rhetorical style and literary discourse. Particular attention is paid to the question as to what kind of topics are raised and discussed in which context or domain. Do male speakers address subject matter fundamentally different from that of women? Are

there any concepts or even expectations as to appropriate communicative behaviour attributed to men and women, and how is actual speech determined by such implicit or explicit expectations? One may think of all sorts of stereotypes that prevail with regard to women: they are said to be not only notoriously garrulous but also to talk much more than men. Behind this cliché lies the irrational assumption that women ought to keep silent as much as possible, as speaking, a male domain, does not befit them. What is the relation between speaking, silence and interruptions? How direct are certain formulations (*I believe …*, *I want …* vs. *Wouldn't you like to …?*), and what does directness reveal about the linguistic strategies of speakers? What kind of role does nonverbal behaviour of men and women in this context play? Can it be proved that there are certain nonverbal strategies of submission practised by women towards their dialogue partners, such as the lowering of the eyes, the general avoidance of eye contact, a less relaxed posture or the touching of oneself as an expression of awkwardness (cf. Henley 1975, 1977; Hall 1987; Freytag 1997: 384)?

e. *Dominance of masculine speech forms*
In English and even more so in German, but also in other languages, there has been for quite a long time now a debate on the predominance of masculine linguistic forms and how to reduce them by coming up with alternatives. One method is the consequent adding of feminine forms to masculine nouns, sometimes leading to combinations of the two in a single word (e.g., German *Lehrer/in*, *KollegInnen*, English *s/he*, French *illes* "they" < *ils* + *elles*). Sometimes male forms are replaced by female equivalents, as is the case with *she* instead of the generalizing *he*. New morphological patterns have been created in order to establish neutral terms that can be used to subsume both male and female substantives (e.g., English *spokesperson* instead of *spokesman*, or *flight attendant* for both *steward* and *stewardess*, German *Studierende* for both *Studenten* and *Studentinnen*). Other elements are classified as particularly sexist, like the German *man*, which feminists often replace by *frau* (cf. the indefinite pronoun *jefrau* instead of *jemand*).[26] These and other issues are discussed in connection with the question of how women are discriminated against via language. The state of affairs is complicated by the fact that the public and private usage of 'politically correct' speech may differ considerably.

26. On German *frau*, see for instance the corpus in Pusch (1996: 86–106); cf. Samel ([2]2000: 90–95) and Schmitter (2001: 23–25).

This is not the right place to comment on these points of analysis and findings. Regarding methodology, it can only be emphasized that some studies seem to be inclined to grasp 'women's language' as a uniform concept. However, modern sociolinguistics, following ancient rhetoric (consciously or unconsciously), has convincingly demonstrated that sex or gender alone is not the only parameter that determines the communicative behaviour of a speaker. Thus the simple fact that a speaker is female cannot be used to draw far-reaching conclusions. In addition, criteria such as the cultural and social background, regional origin, level of education and age of a speaker and also the communicative context of an utterance ('Who speaks to whom and when?') must be taken into account. It is open to question whether the category of gender can be sufficiently isolated from these other factors (e.g., Frank 1992; Bußmann 1995: 148–149; Braun 2000: 13; see also Adams 1984: 44). Therefore, "the study of men's versus women's speech is much more complicated than it at first appears" (Romaine 1999: 131).

4. *Methodical problems connected with the analysis of ancient texts*

Since the 1980s, there has been a remarkable concern in Classical Studies with the role of women in ancient Greece and Rome.[27] The majority of investigations concentrates on aspects of gender and sexuality, the legal status of women (e.g., marriage laws, the regulation of inheritance) and general patterns of behaviour in various spheres of society. However, no wide-ranging attempt has been made so far to systematically collect and discuss the literary evidence on gender-specific communication in Graeco-Roman antiquity. The few contributions touching upon this topic are rather eclectic in their approach: either they do not pay much attention to metalinguistic documents, or they concentrate on a single genre or author such as analyses of women's language in Greek comedy. Moreover, most classicists tend to ignore modern linguistic studies on female speech, a fact which is occasionally responsible for a lack of rigorous methodology as well as of a critical distance to the ancient texts.

Sometimes documents of a period of more than a thousand years are grouped together in order to reconstruct a coherent picture of epochs of antiquity which are in fact rather incongruent (e.g., Burck 1969: 8). Such anachronisms become acutely problematic when pagan and Christian authors are

27. See in particular the more recent research reports by Scheer (2000) and Dixon (2001: 3–15). The internet websites "Diotima" (http://www.stoa.org/diotima) and "Feminae Romanae" (http://dominae.fws1.com), which are updated on a regular basis, also contain some very valuable information on this subject.

viewed under the same rubric. Also, the fact that the vast majority of ancient documents on female speech was written by men and not by women is usually tacitly acknowledged but not problematized (on this issue, see, e.g., Scheer 2000: 145–147; Schweers 1999: 2–3; Gould 1980: 38; Bain 1984: 25; Dixon 2001: 16–25, esp. 21; see also Kramarae 1982: 87). Finally, the different contexts in which ancient literary documents on gender-specific communication occur are not given sufficient attention for a proper evaluation of the evidence.

In the following outline I shall try to structure the sources that will be examined according to their content and also contextual criteria, although cases of overlap cannot be entirely avoided. This emphasis on the contexts of the documents may help prevent a grossly anachronistic approach, without restricting the corpus to a too narrowly focused period of time. In seven sections I shall treat the following topics: first, the linguistic influence of mothers and nurses; second, passages from rhetorical treatises on 'unmanly' appearance; third, the phenomenon of language change and the question of openness of women towards change; fourth, the stereotype of the loquacity of women; fifth, the discussion concerning masculine and feminine word forms; sixth, some other aspects of communicative strategies that are described as typical of women, such as forms of address, diminutives, and oath formulae; and seventh, the Christian ideal of female communicative behaviour as outlined by St. Jerome. The survey ends with a brief section on the Renaissance, with Boccaccio being taken as an illustrative example.

It should be noted that I will not be concerned in this contribution with literary texts written by women[28] and the minute analysis as to their linguistic peculiarities. Such an investigation must be reserved for the future and may serve as a valuable supplement and touchstone to the documentation of metalinguistic sources on gender-specific communication. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the fragmentary character of some of the ancient texts produced by women requires a careful methodology and does not allow for rash and generalizing judgements.

28. A short overview of female Greek and Roman writers is offered by Zweig Vivante (1999) and Hallett (1999), each with further secondary literature. Extensive collections of literature written by women are Homeyer (1979), Wilson-Kastner et al. (1981), Rayor (1991), Bernabé Pajares & Rodríguez Somolinos (1994), Balmer (1996), Churchill, Brown & Jeffrey (2002) and Plant (2004); see also Snyder (1990), Hemelrijk (1999) and Luck (1954), and cf. the short remarks by Susanna Morton Braund, *Latin Literature* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 170–175.

5. *The linguistic influence of mothers and nurses*

Some literary sources accentuate the great influence of the language of women on children. For the purposes of assuring a most effective education of very young children, Quintilian, professor of rhetoric in first-century Rome, recommends employing only those nurses[29] who are not only morally impeccable, but also have a flawless diction. It is to be expected that by permanent contact with the nurse the children imitate her ways of speaking. As all kinds of impressions are likely to be engraved in children's minds to a significant extent, one ought to take care, he says, that children do not adopt bad language from a supposed model; later in their life, they might have severe problems in getting rid of certain defective accents or incorrect grammar.[30] Similar remarks can be found in Cicero's dialogue *Brutus*.[31] Both Cicero and Quintilian demonstrate how influential the contact with an ideal speaker of Latin can be for children with the example of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi Gaius and Tiberius: she is said to have contributed much by her own high linguistic standards and her erudition to the rhetorical talent of her sons, and her sophisticated style could still be recognized from her letters.[32] But in some cases, it was the father

29. On the role of nurses in the education of children, see in particular Dixon (1988: 120–129, 141–149) and Bradley (1994), the latter of whom gives special attention to the gynaecologist Soranus' and other medical writers' detailed outline of the responsibilities of a nurse; see also Beryl Rawson, *Children and Childhood in Roman Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 120–125, 130–133, 157–158. (On Rawson's study, see the review by Thorsten Fögen, *Gymnasium* 112 (2005) [in print].) — On "baby-talk" and little children's language as spoken with their nurses and parents, see Wilhelm Heraeus, "Die Sprache der römischen Kinderstube", *Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie* 13.149–172 (1903), who also includes some evidence from Greek; further, Jean-Pierre Néraudau, "Quand parle l'enfant romain", *Paroles romaines* ed. by Florence Dupont (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1995), 65–72, Martin L. West, "Three Greek baby-words", *Glotta* 47.184–186 (1969), and Boscherini (1995: 58–60).

30. Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 1.1.4–5: *Ante omnia ne sit vitiosus sermo nutricibus: quas, si fieri posset, sapientes Chrysippus optavit, certe quantum res pateretur, optimas eligi voluit. et morum quidem in his haud dubie prior ratio est, recte tamen etiam loquantur. has primum audiet puer, harum verba effingere imitando conabitur. et natura tenacissimi sumus eorum, quae rudibus animis percepimus* […]. *non adsuescat ergo, ne dum infans quidem est, sermoni qui dediscendus sit*.

31. Cicero, *Brutus* 210: *sed magni interest, quos quisque audiat cotidie domi, quibuscum loquatur a puero, quem ad modum patres, paedagogi, matres etiam loquantur*.

32. Cicero, *Brutus* 211: *legimus epistulas Corneliae matris Gracchorum: apparet filios non tam in gremio educatos quam in sermone matris*. Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 1.1.6: *In parentibus*

himself who not only attended to the more advanced education of his sons, but also taught them to read and write, like the Elder Cato. He thought elementary instruction of his son to be so crucial that he did not want to leave it to a slave, and he even tutored him in the principles of Roman law and physical education, as Plutarch reports (*Cato maior* 20.5–6).

It is interesting to note that in ancient Latin, in contrast to many other languages of Europe, there is no word which corresponds exactly to 'mother tongue'. There are, however, the terms *sermo patrius* or *lingua patria*, referring to the 'tongue of the father(s)', or expressions consisting of a word for 'language' and a possessive pronoun such as *sermo noster* or *lingua nostra*. The coining *materna lingua* with the meaning of 'mother tongue' does not come into use until the 12th century A.D., and even then it still coexists for quite a while with the more common *lingua patria* or similar expressions (Fögen 2000: 51–56, with full references). Greek terms such as φωνὴ πατρῴα or πάτριος are loan translations of the Latin *patrius sermo* and are not attested in literary documents before the third century A.D. (Fögen 2000: 58–60).

For the Roman world, one may not find it surprising that it is the fathers who are imagined as the ones from whom a language is inherited. The Roman society was characterized by its patriarchal structure. The centre of the Roman family is the *pater familias* who rules not only his natural relatives but also his servants, slaves and clients. In Rome's early days, the *patres* were the heads of royal families (*gentes*) with absolute sovereignty (*patria potestas*). In the time of the Roman Republic, the senators who ruled the Roman state were called *patres* (Fögen 2000: 56–58, with further literature).

6. *Rhetorical treatises on 'unmanly' appearance*

In addition to the practical training in the forum as part of the *tirocinium fori*, normative rhetorical treatises and handbooks were used to prepare the future orator for his professional career. They contained important advice for the successful appearance of the rhetorician in public. To achieve this goal, not only stylistic aspects were to be taken into account, but also the impression which the orator made on his audience by his nonverbal behaviour, i.e., the use of gestures, posture, facial expression and voice (see Fögen 2001: 207–209;

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vero quam plurimum esse eruditionis optaverim. nec de patribus tantum loquor: nam Gracchorum eloquentiae multum contulisse accepimus Corneliam matrem, cuius doctissimus sermo in posteros quoque est epistulis traditus. — Two excerpts from a letter by Cornelia, written perhaps around 124 B.C., are given by Nepos (*fr.* 59 Marshall); for a translation and discussion, see Farrell (2001: 60–65) and, more briefly, Fantham et al. (1994: 264–265).

cf. Richlin 1997). Quintilian starts his own outline with the earliest level of rhetorical education. Already in his very young years, the future orator ought to concentrate on a proper diction in his grammatical and stylistic training: poetic texts should not be read without a certain gracefulness, but at the same time their recitation must sound manly and dignified.[33] But this postulate is not only applied to the reading aloud of literature; it is a maxim for all speaking in public: a feeble and thin voice is associated with female speech and thus by all means to be avoided by the future orator.[34] This goal is achieved by a rigorous speech training during the rhetorical instruction. At the same time, the teacher of rhetoric guides his pupil towards a skilful use of nonverbal elements to enhance the effectiveness of his presentation (Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 1.11.3–19).

Why does Quintilian so emphatically point to the danger of effeminacy in an orator? In the twelfth chapter of the fifth book of his *Institutio oratoria*, he complains about the degeneracy of rhetoric in his own time. According to him, declamations have become more and more oriented towards superficial beauty, the goal of which is to enhance the pleasure of the audience. In earlier times, good speeches were characterized by brevity and vigorous style; they were comparable to a male body, by nature strong, powerful and robust. However, this old ideal has now been abandoned in favour of a castrated style, as it were, which has lost all the natural qualities of manly speech. In particular, verbosity, contrived expressions and long-windedness are denigrated in this context (*Inst. orat.* 5.12.17–21). The same analogy between style and the human body is taken up by Quintilian in the preface to the eighth book. As he bases his definition of good style upon the principles of naturalness and unaffectedness, he transposes the concept of established Roman virtues to the

33. *Inst. orat.* 1.8.2: *sit autem in primis lectio virilis et cum suavitate quadam gravis, et non quidem prosae similis, quia et carmen est et se poetae canere testantur, non tamen in canticum dissoluta nec plasmate, ut nunc a plerisque fit, effeminata* […].

34. *Inst. orat.* 1.11.1: *non enim puerum, quem in hoc instituimus, aut femineae vocis exilitate frangi volo aut seniliter tremere*. More extensively 11.3.32: *itemque si ipsa vox primum fuerit, ut sic dicam, sana, id est nullum eorum, de quibus modo retuli, patietur incommodum, deinde non subsurda, rudis, inmanis, dura, rigida, rava, praepinguis, aut tenuis, inanis, acerba, pusilla, mollis, effeminata* […]. One feels reminded of the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who, after some training, successfully managed to lower the pitch of her voice and thereby gained more acceptance among her male fellow politicians as well as among the public (see, e.g., Romaine 1994: 104–105; Romaine 1999: 48–49 and 171; Wardhaugh ^{3}1998: 311–312; see also Kramarae 1982: 86).

linguistic level.[35] This does not mean that he pleads for a fully archaic style or for the complete renunciation of rhetorical devices; rather, archaisms and embellishing elements should both be deployed moderately and with great care, not just for cheap showmanship, but as a means to make one's case effectively.[36] Quintilian is not the first rhetorician to advocate this position. As in many other cases, he follows certain tenets developed by the rhetorical tradition, in particular Cicero.[37] The key to understanding the rejection of female elements in a male speech lies in the contention of Roman authors that a man's style indicates his morals, and that his morals will affect his style (*talis oratio qualis vita*). This principle is discussed at greater length in *Epistle* 114 of Seneca the Younger with reference to Maecenas as an example of effeminate style and, earlier on, in some passages of Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* where in particular the 'soft' style of the orator Arellius Fuscus is censured (*Contr.* 1 pr. 7–9, 2 pr. 1, and *Suas.* 2.23; Richlin 1997: 94–98).

This all demonstrates that in the later Roman republic and early Empire there existed fixed concepts as to how men were expected to communicate in public discourse. Quintilian's contention that a man's appearance as well as his style ought to differ significantly from that of a woman also appears in earlier rhetorical treatises as a postulate of a pronounced normative character. But as it seems, the actual rhetorical practice in the early Roman Empire diverged from these strict views.

Nonetheless, conceptions of appropriate forms of self-presentation for men in public, as expressed by Quintilian and others, were so forcefully articulated that they continued to have an effect on later periods. This can be seen in some passages from the *Noctes Atticae*, a miscellany written by Aulus Gellius

35. *Inst. orat.* 8 pr. 19–28, esp. 20–21: *at muliebris et luxuriosus non corpus exornat, sed detegit mentem. similiter illa translucida et versicolor quorundam elocutio res ipsas effeminat, quae illo verborum habitu vestiantur. curam ergo verborum, rerum volo esse sollicitudinem. nam plerumque optima rebus cohaerent et cernuntur suo lumine*. Similarly *Inst. orat.* 8.3.6–11, 10.1.43 and 12.10.40–47.

36. *Inst. orat.* 8 pr. 32–33: *sit igitur cura elocutionis quam maxima, dum sciamus tamen nihil verborum causa esse faciendum, cum verba ipsa rerum gratia sint reperta: quorum ea sunt maxime probabilia, quae sensum animi nostri optime promunt atque in animis iudicum quod nos volumus efficiunt. ea debent praestare sine dubio et admirabilem et iocundam orationem, verum admirabilem non sic, quo modo prodigia miramur, et iocundam non deformi voluptate, sed cum laude ac dignitate coniuncta*.

37. E.g., *De orat.* 3.41: *Nolo exprimi litteras putidius, nolo obscurari neglegentius; nolo verba exiliter exanimata exire, nolo inflata et quasi anhelata gravius. Nam de voce nondum ea dico,*

(c. A.D. 130–180). He reports that the famous orator Demosthenes was blamed for making too much fuss about his outward appearance and for not being man enough (*parum vir*). Another rhetorician named Hortensius is described as having indulged in excessive bodily hygiene and an obsession with dressing up; this and his inclination to make an immoderate use of gestures during his speeches prompted the rhetorician to insult him for being a *histrio*, a comedian (*Noct. Att.* 1.5; cf. 11.2). In another passage Gellius refers to Plutarch, who mentioned that the philosopher Arcesilaus had once offended a rich man who was craving admiration. Arcesilaus admitted that the man was morally impeccable, but felt that his broken voice, his artistic hairdo and the lecherous and provocative movement of his eyes indicated otherwise. Arcesilaus compared the man with a *cinaedus*[38] and insinuated that he committed unnatural sexual acts, which were stigmatized in antiquity (*Noct. Att.* 3.5; cf. 6.12). These excerpts thus serve as further instances of "la crainte bien romaine de la *mollitia*" (Moreau 1995: 60).

7. Language change: openness of women towards change

In a passage of Plato's *Cratylus* it is maintained that women's pronunciation differs in certain respects from men's (*Cratylus* 418b7–419b4). Socrates remarks that words change their phonological shape over the course of time, some so much so that their original meaning is no longer discernible. According to him, the semantic value of a word becomes particularly evident if it has retained its original shape or if it can be traced back to it. With this background, Socrates describes two phenomena of sound change which are obviously related to Attic Greek: first, the change from /i/ to /ei/ or /ē/, supported by the example ἰμέρα > εἰμέρα and later ἡμέρα, and, second, the change from /d/ to

quae sunt actionis, sed hoc, quod mihi cum sermone quasi coniunctum videtur: sunt enim certa vitia, quae nemo est quin effugere cupiat; mollis vox aut muliebris aut quasi extra modum absona atque absurda. Further *De orat.* 3.199: *His tribus figuris insidere quidam venustatis non fuco inlitus, sed sanguine diffusus debet color*. An earlier document is *Rhet. Her.* 3.22: *Acuta exclamatio vocem volnerat; eadem laedit auditorem: habet enim quiddam inliberale et ad muliebrem potius vociferationem quam ad virilem dignitatem in dicendo adcommodatum*.

38. On the term κίναιδος or *cinaedus*, see Wilhelm Kroll, s.v. "Kinaidos", *Paulys Realenzyklopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* XI.1 (1921), 459–462; further, Ilona Opelt, *Die lateinischen Schimpfwörter und verwandte, sprachliche Erscheinungen. Eine Typologie* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1965), 122 and 155, and now Vogt (2003). On the broader context, see Williams (1999) and Hubbard (2003), further Edwards (1993), Gleason (1995) and Foxhall & Salmon (1998), each with further literature.

/z/, illustrated by the example δυογόν > ζυγόν. The motivation for this change is explained by euphony: the sounds that are in use now are perceived by the speaker to be more sublime (μεγαλοπρεπέστερα). It is added that women in particular tend to stick to the archaic pronunciation, as they do in the case of phonological change.[39]

From the findings provided by historical Greek grammar it must be disputed that the phenomena of language change outlined by Plato really took place in the way he described. However, it seems plausible that Plato sketched a phonological feature occurring in the first half of the fourth century B.C. that was indeed restricted to female speech, namely the pronunciation of Attic /e/ as /i/ and of /zd/ as /d/. But this development cannot be interpreted as a feature of archaizing tendencies, but, on the contrary, as a phonological innovation which has its origins in non-standard Greek.[40] The prestige forms of Standard Attic seem to have been retained by men rather than women; they were learned by men at school and used in assemblies as well as in the public sphere more generally. Nonetheless, the excerpt from the *Cratylus* sheds an interesting light upon the way in which linguistic peculiarities of female speakers were perceived. Therefore, it may serve as an intriguing document of language awareness in ancient Greece. It seems to be very unlikely that the passage is to be interpreted as an ironic exaggeration or even conscious distortion, as in many other instances in Platonic dialogues.

Further evidence of the supposedly archaizing speech of women comes from a passage from the third book of Cicero's treatise *De oratore*, in which Crassus discusses the significance of earlier Latin for contemporary rhetoric (*De orat.* 3.39–46). It cannot be denied, he says, that most early Roman orators had a plain, unambiguous and correct style, since in this epoch of simplicity one did not yet strive for embellishment. Certainly, a blind imitation of this

39. *Cratylus* 418b7-c3: οἶσθα ὅτι οἱ παλαιοὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι τῷ ἰῶτα καὶ τῷ δέλτα εὖ μάλα ἐχρῶντο, καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα αἱ γυναῖκες, αἵπερ μάλιστα τὴν ἀρχαίαν φωνὴν σῴζουσιν. νῦν δὲ ἀντὶ μὲν τοῦ ἰῶτα ἢ εἶ ἢ ἦτα μεταστρέφουσιν, ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ δέλτα ζῆτα, ὡς δὴ μεγαλοπρεπέστερα ὄντα.

40. On details, see Boscherini (1995: 55–56) and in particular Sommerstein (1995: 81–83), each with references to further secondary literature on this passage. Sommerstein's interpretation of the passage has now been questioned by Willi (2003: 161–162, 171, 194–195), who assumes "(1) that women prominently furthered linguistic innovation in Attic because they regarded the innovatory variety as prestigious, and (2) that this variety had prestige connotations also for those (male) social groups who aimed at cultural refinement (ἀστειότης) although that meant to be on the 'female' side of the established gender-model" (2003: 162).

unadorned and straightforward style is not recommended by Crassus, as the usage of Latin has changed in many respects. He therefore advocates the moderate use of uncommon words and forms that belong to the past, and only for the sake of special stylization of certain passages. Moreover, antiquated style should not be confused with coarse and boorish diction, as so often happens. That an uncultivated and peasant-like way of speaking must not be equated with the refined and urbane style of old Roman aristocracy is illustrated by the example of Laelia, Crassus' own mother-in-law (b. around 160 B.C.), who was married to the augur Quintus Mucius Scaevola. For aristocratic women of that time, Crassus continues, it was typical not to adopt common phenomena of language change into their own idiolect because they lived a secluded life in private and thus did not have the opportunity to perceive new tendencies of language usage. By hearing Laelia's diction with its natural plainness, one felt reminded of the language of old Roman dramatists such as Plautus (d. 184 B.C.) and Naevius (d. after 201 B.C.).[41] According to Crassus, it would be possible to conclude that Laelia's ancestors also used a similarly simple, but nonetheless cultivated style, which had nothing to do with the crude diction of peasants.[42] It is obvious that Crassus herewith gives an example of early forms of the linguistic variety characteristic of the city of Rome, which was typically described as not having any external admixtures and as being characterized by a specific euphony. Frequently termed *sermo urbanus* and thus defined as a mainly diatopic (i.e., local) variety, it is clearly distinguished from other varieties of Latin (cf. Fögen 2000: 119–141).

8. *Loquacity of women*

The notion that women are well-advised to remain silent is a stereotype of which one can find instances in early Greek literature. For Greek drama,

41. Quite similar is Pliny's remark on the epistolary style of the wife of the orator, poet and historiographer Pompeius Saturninus, one of his friends, in *Epist.* 1.16.6: *Legit mihi nuper epistulas* [sc. *Pompeius Saturninus*]; *uxoris esse dicebat. Plautum vel Terentium metro solutum legi credidi. Quae sive uxoris sunt ut adfirmat, sive ipsius ut negat, pari gloria dignus, qui aut illa componat, aut uxorem quam virginem accepit, tam doctam politamque reddiderit.*

42. *De orat.* 3.45: *Equidem cum audio socrum meam Laeliam — facilius enim mulieres incorruptam antiquitatem conservant, quod multorum sermonis expertes ea tenent semper, quae prima didicerunt — sed eam sic audio, ut Plautum mihi aut Naevium videar audire, sono ipso vocis ita recto et simplici est, ut nihil ostentationis aut imitationis adferre videatur; ex quo sic locutum esse eius patrem iudico, sic maiores; non aspere ut ille, quem dixi* [i.e., *L. Cotta*], *non vaste, non rustice, non hiulce, sed presse et aequabiliter et leniter*. Further *Brutus* 211: *auditus est nobis Laeliae C. F. saepe sermo: ergo illam patris elegantia tinctam vidimus* […].

there is a passage in Sophocles' *Ajax*: it is Ajax himself who gives this sort of recommendation to his beloved Tecmessa, the daughter of the Phrygian king Teleutas, when she attempts to prevent him from leaving the house and from killing the Greek army commanders Agamemnon and Menelaus.[43] In her report to the chorus, Tecmessa speaks of Ajax' reaction as of an 'old song' (ἀεὶ δ' ὑμνούμενα) and thus provides us with a hint that the exigency for women to be quiet attained proverbial status in fifth-century Athenian conceptions of the ideal communicative behaviour of women.[44] At the same time Ajax' response illustrates his brusque behaviour towards his beloved. Indeed, Tecmessa follows Ajax' advice and keeps silent;[45] he leaves the house and, blinded with madness by the goddess Athena, murders the cattle instead of the army commanders (*Ajax* 294–326). In the further course of the tragedy, Ajax refuses to answer Tecmessa's questions and turns her away, asking her not to besiege him any further, as she has already spoken far too much and for too long (*Ajax* 585–592). The servant, who brings along Ajax' son Eurysaces, is encouraged by Ajax not to cry about the fatal incidents, as laments are the domain of women.[46]

In comedy and related genres the image of the loquacious woman is exploited as a topos, employed to evoke laughter and ridicule, and often developed into the grotesque. Comedy allows for intentional exaggerations, like those in Plautus' *Aulularia*, in which the matron Eunomia says that women are rightly held to be garrulous, as something like a silent woman has never

43. *Ajax* 292–293: ὁ δ' εἶπε πρός με βαί', ἀεὶ δ' ὑμνούμενα· / "γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἡ σιγὴ φέρει."

44. Alex F. Garvie, *Sophocles: Ajax* ed. with introduction, translation and commentary (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1998), 153, claims that the proverbial character of v. 293 can hardly be denied; but he also points out that it is difficult to assess to what extent the audience would have agreed with the proverb and whether it mirrored a view that was commonly held in Sophocles' time. In my opinion, v. 293 can be taken as a proverb already prevalent in Sophocles' time, as there are similar sources from roughly the same period, e.g., Democritus *fr.* 68 B 274 DK (κόσμος ὀλιγομυθίη γυναικί · καλὸν δὲ καὶ κόσμου λιτότης.) and Euripides, *Electra* 945–946 (ἃ δ' ἐς γυναῖκας — παρθένῳ γὰρ οὐ καλὸν / λέγειν — σιωπῶ, γνωρίμως δ' αἰνίξομαι.). Sophocles' line is quoted by Aristotle, *Pol.* I 13 1260a30, and slightly modified by Menander, *Mon.* 139 (γυναιξὶ πάσαις κόσμον ἡ σιγὴ φέρει).

45. *Ajax* 294: κἀγὼ μαθοῦσ' ἔληξ' ὁ δ' ἐσσύθη μόνος.

46. *Ajax* 578–580 : ἀλλ' ὡς τάχος τὸν παῖδα τόνδ' ἤδη δέχου, / καὶ δῶμα πάκτου, μηδ' ἐπισκήνους γόους / δάκρυε. κάρτα τοι φιλοίκτιστον γυνή.

existed.[47] But Aristophanes already plays with this stereotype, which is taken up after him by various other authors.[48]

Particularly impressive is the Fifteenth *Idyll* by Theocritus, which portrays the conversation of the Syracusane women Gorgo and Praxinoa in a parodistic manner. With their vicious tongue, they make nasty comments about their husbands, before they move on to speak about the Adonis Festival. When they go together to the palace of Queen Arsinoe in order to attend the festival in person, they encounter a man who is surprised at their torrent of words and also at their Doric accent. Praxinoa tells him to mind his own business (*Id.* 15.87–95).

Almost four centuries later, Juvenal takes up the stereotype in his so-called Satire on Women and supplements it by references to women's inclination to spread rumours and fabricate horror stories in an unrestrained fashion.[49] This proclivity for exaggeration is mirrored in Juvenal's verses by hyperbolic formulations (*Sat.* 6.410–411: *magno … diluvio*; *cuncta arva*) as well as emphatic plural substantives (ibid.: *populos*, *urbes*, *terras*). The fact that unbelievably crude and grossly made-up stories were usually called 'old women's tales' (γραῶν μῦθοι or *aniles fabellae*) indicates that in particular older women were thought to be quite inventive in their narrations. Quintilian relates such stories to the fables of Aesopus[50] and thus to the world of fantasy. But literary evidence

47. *Aulularia* 123–126: *quamquam hau falsa sum nos odiosas haberi; / nam multum loquaces merito omnes habemur, / nec mutam profecto repertam nullam esse / <aut> hodie dicunt mulierem <aut> ullo in saeclo*. Cf. Plautus, *Rudens* 1114: *eo tacent, quia tacita bonast mulier semper quam loquens*; further *Cistellaria* 120–129 (words of a *lena*) and *Poenulus* 32–35. See also Terence, *Heaut.* 621, 879–881, 1006–1111.

48. Aristophanes, *Eccl.* 120, *Thesm.* 393; Alexis, *fr.* 96 Kassel-Austin (= II 326 Kock); Menander, *Mon.* 139 (see above, n. 44), *fr.* 581.13; Lucian, *Rh. Pr.* 23; Libanius, *Declam.* 26.34. Cf. also Semonides, *fr.* 7.10.

49. *Sat.* 6.408–412: *instantem regi Armenio Parthoque cometen / prima videt, famam rumoresque illa recentis / excipit ad portas, quosdam facit; isse Niphaten / in populos magnoque illic cuncta arva teneri / diluvio, nutare urbes, subsidere terras, / quocumque in trivio, cuicumque est obvia, narrat*.

50. *Inst. orat.* 1.9.2: *Aesopi fabellas, quae fabulis nutricularum proxime succedunt*; cf. Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 1.8.19; Cicero, *De nat. deor.* 1.94; Apuleius, *Met.* 6.25.1; and in particular Seneca, *De ben.* 1.4.6: *serio loquantur et magnis viribus agant, nisi forte existimas levi ac fabuloso sermone et anilibus argumentis prohiberi posse rem perniciosissimam*. Comparable documents are discussed by Georg Heldmann, *Märchen und Mythos in der Antike? Versuch einer Standortbestimmung* (München & Leipzig: Saur, 2000), 84–132; see also Oeri (1948),

on women's talkativeness is also found outside the tradition of comedy and parody. The rhetorician Seneca the Elder, for instance, mentions *muliebris garrulitas* to denote the opposite of his description of a woman who is not only perfectly capable of keeping a secret even in a most precarious situation, but who is also a paragon of female modesty (*Contr.* 2.5.12).

The stereotype of female loquacity is ubiquitous in ancient literature, in particular in comedy and satire (cf. Burck 1969: 10). It recurs in these and other literary genres, but also in proverbs and sayings of all centuries thereafter. In addition to their garrulity, female speakers are often described as noisy and gossiping. They are said to be unreliable in what they utter, to reveal secrets and to have a tendency to lie, and sometimes their language would mirror their irrationality.[51] In general, these proverbs point out that it is women who deviate with their communicative behaviour from social norms; it is evident that the perspective in these sayings is almost always a male one. The 'norm' is thus equated with male speech, as is the case in many other respects. The simplistic statement that 'women talk too much' has therefore been rightly contested by modern linguists (e.g., Tannen 1990: 74–95 and also 96–122; Holmes 1998).

9. *Masculine and feminine word forms*

In Aristophanes' *Clouds*, first performed in 423 B.C., the simpleton Strepsiades finds himself in financial difficulty because of his son Pheidippides' costly hobbies. He therefore comes into the 'think-factory' of Socrates in order to learn from him rhetorical techniques that would enable him to get rid of his creditors. Socrates is portrayed here as an eccentric scientist and sophist, and thus contrasts sharply with the Socrates of Plato's dialogues. In Aristophanes' comedy, he teaches some of those new doctrines which he attacks in Plato, and consequently, the *Clouds* has always been a controversial and much-discussed work. In his *Apology*, Socrates himself points out that this comedy was to a

Massaro (1977), Bremmer (1984), Bradley (1994: 150–151), Moreau (1995: 57) and Lanza (1997: 20–22). For an overview of the talk of women as portrayed in fairy tales of more recent periods, see Warner (1994).

51. See Kramarae (1982: esp. 87–90), Bußmann (1995: 135–136), Bierbach (1995), and David Crystal & Hilary Crystal, *Words on Words. Quotations about Language and Languages* (London: Penguin, 2000), 257–259 (ch. 53: "Men and women: opinions and attitudes about male and female speech"); see also Daniels (1985), Rotondo (1991) and Schipper (1996). Eble (1976) deals with Etiquette Books from the 17th to the 20th century which prescribe in particular verbal behaviour applicable to each sex. On women in ancient and modern satire, see Matthew Hodgart, *Satire* (New York & Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 79–107.

certain extent responsible for the negative opinion held by some Athenians about him.[52]

For the issues pursued in this paper, it is relevant that Aristophanes in the *Clouds* pokes fun at numerous pseudo-scientific innovations. In particular, grammar and rhetoric of the Sophists belong to the targets of his derision. It is in this light that one should view the scene in which Socrates explains to Strepsiades the correct usage of gender in substantives and proper names (*Clouds* 658–693). Socrates outlines that the different sexes of animals must have repercussions for the gender of their names. For this reason, there is the feminine form ἀλεκτρύαινα ("hen") that corresponds to the masculine ἀλεκτρυών ("rooster") (*Clouds* 658–666).[53] This passage might be interpreted as an allusion to the concept of the correctness of language (ὀρθοέπεια) as set out by the Sophist Protagoras and also by Prodicus, who is even mentioned in the *Clouds* (v. 361); this assumption is corroborated by the fact that Socrates wants Strepsiades to learn "which of the quadrupeds is *correctly* (ὀρθῶς) male". It is known about Protagoras that, in the context of his observations about the right use of words, he endeavoured to make natural sex and linguistic gender correspond in language.[54]

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52. Plato, *Apology* 18b-d, 19b-c. Socrates appeared not only in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, but also in comedies written by Ameipsias and Eupolis; see John Burnet, *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924), 78–79.

53. On the text and the lacuna before v. 662 that is assumed by Bentley, see Kenneth J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Clouds* ed. with introduction and commentary (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 182. In contrast to Dover, it seems adequate to me to postulate a lacuna; Dover's argument that the joke would come off much better without such an addition is not convincing.

54. E.g., *fr.* 80 A 28 DK (= Aristotle, *Soph. el.* 14 173b17). See the remarks by Jacob Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax*. Zweite Reihe (Basel: Birkhäuser, ^{2}1928), 1–6. On early linguistic theory of the Sophists see, e.g., Peter M. Gentinetta, *Zur Sprachbetrachtung bei den Sophisten und in der stoisch-hellenistischen Zeit* (Winterthur: Keller, 1961); Donatella Di Cesare, "Die Geschmeidigkeit der Sprache. Zur Sprachauffassung und Sprachbetrachtung der Sophistik", *Sprachtheorien der abendländischen Antike* ed. by Peter Schmitter (Tübingen: Narr, ^{2}1996), 87–118; Carl Joachim Classen, "The study of language amongst Socrates' contemporaries" (1959), *Sophistik* ed. by Carl Joachim Classen (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 215–247; Hermann Diels, "Die Anfänge der Philologie bei den Griechen" (1910), *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte der antiken Philosophie* ed. by Walter Burkert (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 68–92; Elmar Siebenborn, *Die Lehre von der Sprachrichtigkeit und ihren Kriterien. Studien zur antiken normativen Grammatik* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1976).

It would, however, be a misreading of the passage in question if one were to understand it as evidence that women were striving for linguistic equality. The feminine word ἀλεκτρύαινα is nothing but a neologism which is not attested before Aristophanes and very unlikely to have been established in common usage. It is true that the scholion to this passage notes that in Attic Greek the feminine was used besides the obviously more common masculine form.[55] But one may ask how seriously a text written centuries after Aristophanes can be taken and from where the scholiast derived his information. Therefore, the reliability of the observation provided by the scholion can be ruled out with some degree of certainty.

10. *Forms of address, diminutives, oath formulae*

Finally, some minor topics will be discussed that are associated in ancient texts with female speech. Certain forms of address are classified by the *Suda* lexicon as being used only by women, although earlier on they were also employed by men (s.v. ὦ μέλε [Vol. III p. 609 Adler], ὦ τάν [Vol. III p. 628–629 Adler]; cf. Bain 1984: 33–35, with special reference to Menander; Sommerstein 1995: 73–78, and Willi 2003: 186–188, 192–193, with special reference to Aristophanes).

The fourth-century grammarian Donatus writes in his commentary to Terence's comedy *Eunuchus* that the vocative of the possessive pronoun *meus* fits very nicely with the flatteries of women.[56] It is generally typical of women, he adds, that they flatter and lament.[57] A further characteristic trait of female speech that is recorded by some sources is the frequent usage of diminutives termed in Greek ὑποκορισμοί or ὑποκοριστικά (Gilleland 1980: 181; Sommerstein 1995:

55. Schol. in Ar. *Nub*. 663b: οἱ Ἀττικοὶ οὕτω καὶ τὰς θηλείας ἐκάλουν, ὡς καὶ Θεόπομπος. λέγουσι δὲ αὐτὴν καὶ ἀλεκτρύαιναν. But see Wackernagel ([2]1928 [as n. 54]: 2): "Nirgends ist dieses Femininum belegt; mit Sicherheit darf man es als erfunden bezeichnen, zumal sonst die Feminina auf -αινα nur aus Paroxytona gebildet werden. Die Theorie hat zur Vergewaltigung der Sprache geführt."

56. Donatus in Ter. *Eun*. 656.1 : *'mea' et 'mea tu' et 'amabo' et alia huiuscemodi mulieribus apta sunt blandimenta*; similarly, Donatus in Ter. *Phorm.* 1005, *Ad.* 289, *Andr.* 685. On the various characterizations of female speech in Donatus' commentary on Terence's comedies, see Adams (1984: 47).

57. Donatus in Ter. *Ad*. 291.4: *proprium est mulierum, cum loquuntur, aut aliis blandiri* […] *aut se commiserari* […] *nam haec omnia muliebria sunt, quibus pro malis ingentibus quasi in acervum rediguntur et enumerantur nullius momenti querelae*. In Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, a male character refers to women as 'born cajolers' (*Lys.* 1037: θωπικαὶ φύσει).

76–77). One may interpret statements like these as an indication of the belief that the general tendency of women to be more affective or emotional than men could be perceived on the linguistic level. Some of the sources pointing in that direction could also be related to the frequently expressed attitude of ancient authors that women use language for trickery and cheating. Hesiod's Pandora is the classical example in this respect,[58] and Aristotle in his *Historia animalium* (IX 1 608a21-b18) states that, while the nature of men is most consummate and complete, women are, among other things, more compassionate than men, more easily moved to tears, more mendacious (ψευδέστερον) and more deceptive (εὐαπατητότερον) (*Hist. anim.* IX 1 608b8–15). But already in Homer there are various female figures who use their speech, with its softness or its sweet sound, to beguile men (see Bergren 1983: esp. 69–75; Cantarella 1996: esp. 3–13), like the Sirens (*Od.* 12.39–54, esp. 12.39–40: αἵ ῥά τε πάντας / ἀνθρώπους **θέλγουσιν**, ὅτίς σφεας εἰσαφίκηται), the sorceress Circe (*Od.* 10 passim; see Fögen & Baertschi 2005) and the nymph Calypso (esp. *Od.* 1.55–57: τοῦ θυγάτηρ δύστηνον ὀδυρόμενον κατερύκει, / αἰεὶ δὲ **μαλακοῖσι καὶ αἱμυλίοισι λόγοισι / θέλγει**, ὅπως Ἰθάκης ἐπιλήσεται). All of these female characters have in common that they symbolize sexual attractiveness, that they are *femmes fatales*; by their conscious instrumentalization of their erotic appeal and charm they try to interfere with Odysseus' plan to return to his faithful wife Penelope who, as Odysseus himself admits, cannot compete with the immortals' looks (*Od.* 5.215–218). Thus they present a serious danger to the male protagonist that he must overcome in order to pursue his goal.

Other gender-specific differences are observed for the use of vows and oath formulae.[59] In Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* (produced probably in 392 or 391 B.C.), one of the women is rehearsing a speech which she wants to deliver at the assembly in male guise and which should therefore sound like the speech of a man (ἀνδριστί). However, when she swears μὰ τὼ θεώ ("by the Two Goddesses", i.e., by Demeter and Persephone), she is harshly criticized by the female protagonist Praxagora, as this formula was only used by female speakers and would most definitely betray her sex (*Eccl.* 148–160, cf. 189–192; see

58. Hesiod, *Erga* 54–104, esp. 77–79: ἐν δ' ἄρα οἱ στήθεσσι διάκτορος Ἀργεϊφόντης / **ψεύδεά θ' αἱμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπίκλοπον ἦθος** / τεῦξε Διὸς βουλῇσι βαρυκτύπου (cf. *Erga* 372–374 and *Theog.* 570–612). On Pandora, see in particular Zeitlin (1996: 53–86). — See also Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 393, 483–485, 502–516, *Eccl.* 238.

59. Cf. Gilleland (1980: 182) and Moreau (1995: 54–56), as well as the more extensive discussions by Sommerstein (1995: 64–68) and Adams (1984: 47–55). There are also the much earlier studies by Nicolson (1893) and Ullman (1943/44); see also Knobloch (1988: 123).

Bain 1984: 39–42). The exclamation *mehercle* is, according to Gellius, reserved for men, whereas *mecastor* is an expression exclusively employed by women. Gellius even gives a reason for this: women never swear by Hercules because they do not participate in his festivals (*Noct. Att.* 11.6.1–3). However, the oath formula *edepol* ("by Pollux") was uttered by both men and women. Gellius closes with the statement that he disbelieves the hypothesis brought forward by Varro that in early Rome *edepol* was only used by women during the Eleusinian Mysteries and only later taken up by men, who were not informed about the original context of the formula (*Noct. Att.* 11.6.4–6). Part of the evidence provided by Gellius is supported by a note of the grammarian Charisius, who adds the exclamation *eiuno* ("by Juno") to the list of formulae that are reserved for women and *mediusfidius* ("I call heaven to witness", "so help me God") to the formulae used by male speakers.[60] In Petronius, however, the female character Quartilla uses *mediusfidius* (*Sat.* 17.4: *misereor mediusfidius vestri*); one may argue that the author consciously puts a 'male' expression into the mouth of a woman who is on the whole portrayed rather negatively as lacking proper female conduct and being vulgar.

11. *The Christian ideal: St. Jerome*

The twenty-second letter of St. Jerome, the Church Father,[61] written in A.D. 384 to Eustochium, the daughter of his pupil Paula, appears in a special light. His recommendations for a life of asceticism and virginity are interspersed with quotations from the Bible and contain several paragraphs on the ideal communicative behaviour of a faithful Christian woman. St. Jerome advises Eustochium to avoid congregations of married women and those who

60. Charisius, *Gramm. Lat.* 1.198.18–23 Keil (= p. 258.1–7 Barwick), esp. 17–18: *Edio fidio, per Iovem vel fidem filiumve Iovis Herculem. quae iuratio propria virorum est, ut feminarum edepol ecastor eiuno. eiuno* is not attested otherwise. Instead of *edio fidio*, expressions like *mediusfidius* or *Dius Fidius* are found in works by Roman authors; the full formula would be *ita me Dius Fidius iuvet* ("so help me God"), *me* being the accusative object indicating the person who requires help from a divine power.

61. On Jerome and women, see Turcan (1968), McNamara (1984), Marcos (1986), Arjava (1989), Krumeich (1993), Adkin (1993) and Vidén (1998). On women and Christianity in general, with special emphasis on women and the Church Fathers, see in particular Thraede (1970) and Delling (1978), further, e.g., the books by Quéré-Jaulmes (1968), Tibiletti (1969), Laporte (1982), Dupriez (1982), Clark (1983), Brown (1988), Witherington (1988, 1990), Mattioli (1992), Clark (1993), Power (1995) and Jensen (2002), as well as the articles by Thraede (1979), Eyben (1989), van Bawel (1989), Clark (1994), Shaw (1994), Rousseau (1995) and Vierow (1999).

just pretend to practise chastity (*Epist.* 22.15–16). She ought to prefer the company of those women whose virtuous lifestyle can be recognized from their natural and unadorned outward appearance (*Epist.* 22.17). She should not listen to indecent talk and flattering compliments, as they could distract her from her goal of pursuing the path of virtue (*Epist.* 22.24). Prayer is supposed to be a conversation of the virgin with God as her husband; by her reading of the Holy Scriptures, her husband speaks directly to her (*Epist.* 22.25). When talking to her co-religionists, she should not lower her voice too much, as she might create the impression that she is exhausted from fasting; this method of pretending piety, says St. Jerome, is common among certain women, but can only be regarded as extremely dishonest (*Epist.* 22.27). If she does not immediately comprehend certain passages from the Bible, she ought to choose carefully whom to ask for elucidation; in some cases it would be better to remain ignorant for some time than to be exposed to danger by false expositions (*Epist.* 22.39). St. Jerome recommends Eustochium to speak moderately and to shun an excessive exhibition of rhetorical talent. In his view, unchastity is manifest from speech: artificialities such as the pressing together of teeth or lisping do not befit a Christian woman.[62]

It is true that St. Jerome does not propose to the virgin Eustochium that it is in general best for women to remain silent, but restraint in speech as well as in their entire appearance is articulated as a fundamental principle of a virtuous and honest life.[63] The exhortation to refrain from a sophisticated stylization according to the rules of classical rhetoric and not to get accustomed to affected speech is in accord with the Church Fathers' rejection of pagan rhetoric, the allure of which they themselves never entirely withstood. One may think of St. Jerome's twenty-second letter in which he expresses his personal conflict

62. *Epist.* 22.39: *Nec tibi diserta multum velis videri aut lyricis festiva carminibus metro ludere. Non delumbem matronarum salivam delicata secteris, quae nunc strictis dentibus, nunc labiis dissolutis, balbutientem linguam in dimidiata verba moderantur, rusticum putantes omne, quod nascitur. Adeo illis adulterium etiam linguae placet*. See also *Epist.* 107.4 and the much earlier passage in Ovid, *Ars amat.* 3.293–296: *Quid, cum legitima fraudatur littera voce / blaesaque fit iusso lingua coacta sono? / In vitio decor est : quaedam male reddere verba / discunt, posse minus, quam potuere, loqui*.

63. Cf. 1 Cor. 14.34–35: αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει. εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν· αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ. See also 1 Tim. 2.9–15, and cf. Eyben (1989: 593–594) and Gottfried Fitzer, *"Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde". Über den unpaulinischen Charakter der mulier-taceat-Verse in 1. Korinther 14* (München: Kaiser, 1963).

in renouncing pagan authors in favour of Christian writings, which may have embodied the truth, but were stylistically rather poor (*Epist.* 22.30).

12. *Giovanni Boccaccio's* De mulieribus claris *(1362)*

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), in his work *De mulieribus claris*, published in 1362, assembles 106 longer and shorter sketches of mythological and historical women's lives.[64] They range from biblical figures such as Mother Eve, Athaliah, Queen of Jerusalem and Mariamne, as well as Roman and other goddesses like Juno, Ceres and Isis, to mythological heroines such as Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, or the sorceresses Circe and Medea, but they also include several lesser-known females, two of whom even remain unnamed. It must be emphasized that the number of examples taken from Graeco-Roman antiquity by far outweighs profiles of women from other periods.

In the preface to his book, Boccaccio expresses his surprise at the fact that the biographical tradition has paid little attention to the description of women, in particular pagan ones, although some of them clearly deserve to be commemorated — especially when they demonstrated courage, virtue and intelligence in a manner comparable to that of men (praef. 1–4). On the other hand, he does not want to deploy the term 'famous' in too strict a sense: he alerts his readers that he has adopted a broader meaning of the word, which allows him to present not only honourable women, but also those who have gained a reputation for less praiseworthy or even wicked and evil deeds (praef. 5–6). By using this method, he wants to combine entertainment with encouragement of noble and virtuous behaviour (praef. 7). His work was written for both men and women; according to him, the latter are likely to extend their generally rather limited knowledge of history by reading his book (praef. 8).

64. On women in early Humanism and the Renaissance, see in particular the following works: Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1956). — Romeo De Maio, *Donna e rinascimento* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1987). — Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism. Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990). — Margaret L. King, *Women in the Renaissance* (Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1991). — Paul Gerhard Schmidt (ed.), *Die Frau in der Renaissance* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994). — Judith C. Brown & Robert C. Davis (eds.), *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy* (London & New York: Longman, 1998). On Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*, see the more recent studies by Ricarda Müller, *Ein Frauenbuch des frühen Humanismus. Untersuchungen zu Boccaccios "De mulieribus claris"* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), and Stephen D. Kolsky, *The Genealogy of Women. Studies in Boccaccio's "De mulieribus claris"* (New York: Lang, 2003).

The ideal communicative behaviour of women, as viewed by Boccaccio, is outlined in the chapter on the Roman matron Sulpicia, one of the chastest women Rome ever saw (*De mulieribus claris* 67). Complete chastity in a woman, he points out, is signalled by the lowering of the eyes and by the avoidance of idleness, singing and dancing, shameful conversation and the use of cosmetics. This ideal, formulated predominantly in negative terms and remarkably reminiscent of St. Jerome's advice to Eustochium, is supplemented by remarks in other chapters, in particular by those that stand in direct contrast to this ideal.

The sorceress Circe, embodying in ancient literature female attractiveness, trickery and danger at the same time, is presented as having been quite eloquent, but not very restrained in her sexuality. She knew very well, it is said, how to use charming words to entice men stranded at the shore of her island. Human conduct demonstrates, Boccaccio continues, that many women behave like the mythical witch, and even more men succumb to that kind of wiliness and fail to act according to their rational nature (ch. 38). Thus, women who know all too well how to make use of — or even abuse — their verbal skills are associated with a kind of danger. In any case, they transgress the boundaries set up for them and hence do not meet the expectations that society projects on them. It could be argued that, in this respect, the perceptions of Graeco-Roman antiquity and Boccaccio's Humanist world do not differ very much.

Female eloquence, however, is not categorically condemned, nor is the striving of women for proper education, including the study of language and literature, as the example of the poetess Cornificia proves (ch. 86). Boccaccio maintains that although silence in public was normally considered to be appropriate for women in ancient Rome, there were situations in which it was beyond criticism and even necessary for women to raise their voices, as in the case of Hortensia, daughter of the distinguished orator Quintus Hortensius (ch. 84). She spoke vigorously against extremely high taxes that were imposed upon women, and she did so with much success.

Even more laudable from a Christian perspective are the literary ambitions of Proba (see Plant 2004: 170–188 and Green 1995), who, after gaining a thorough familiarity with the Bible as well as the poetry of Virgil, compiled a verse history of the Old and New Testament by using material from his works (ch. 97). Proba's achievements are outstanding and apt to achieve immortality, Boccaccio says, since most women do not care to meet intellectual challenges, but rather restrict their interests to the usual domestic needs and waste their time with frivolous stories and gossip (ch. 97.10–11).

But if intellect and eloquence are combined with wickedness, then rhetorical abilities tend to be applied for vile purposes, as in the case of Sempronia, a Roman lady who lived during the late Roman republic and joined the Catiline conspiracy (ch. 79, based upon Sallust, *Cat.* 25; see Fauth 1962 and Dixon 2001: 147–155). Wantonness of females, as Boccaccio remarks in one paragraph of the Sempronia chapter, is caused by a misguided education that does not set rigorous limits to the first signs of bad behaviour. Female cunning is also quite prone to instrumentalize elements of nonverbal communication for the conscious deceit of men. In particular, false tears can be used by women very effectively to achieve their goals (ch. 95.8 and 95.14 on Poppaea), and this does not even require much effort, as they are said to have a natural inclination to weep at all sorts of occasions, especially during funeral rites (ch. 29.5–7, 49.6, 65.8).

Although Boccaccio himself is aware of the fact that he writes about women from disparate temporal and cultural spheres, he does not make a real attempt to differentiate precisely along these lines his evaluations of the communicative behaviour of the women he portrays. The ideal he postulates implicitly and explicitly does not completely deviate from that of Roman authors of the late Republic and early Empire, but at the same time it is manifestly influenced by the ideas and doctrines of Christian writers and, like them, is even stricter than the pagan concepts. On the whole, the cultivation of intellectual capacities including rhetorical talent is permitted, provided they are used in the right way and for purposes that are designated as virtuous because of their innocuous nature. Diligent study of the Bible and of pagan writers is most welcomed, as it distracts women from useless occupations by which they do not attain any goodness. They are allowed to speak in public, but only in extreme cases where men are not prepared to speak for them. In more common situations, however, they are expected to leave verbal initiative to men.

The Renaissance discourse on female speech and its characteristics is taken up after Boccaccio by various other writers, in particular by those who join the discussion that is generally known by the term *Querelle des femmes*.[65] Some of

65. See, e.g., Gisela Bock & Margarete Zimmermann, "Die *Querelle des Femmes* in Europa. Eine begriffs- und forschungsgeschichtliche Einführung", *Die europäische* Querelle des Femmes. *Geschlechterdebatten seit dem 15. Jahrhundert* ed. by Gisela Bock & Margarete Zimmermann (= *Querelles. Jahrbuch für Frauenforschung*, 2), Stuttgart & Weimar: Metzler, 1997, 9–38, and Margarete Zimmermann, "Vom Streit der Geschlechter. Die französische und italienische Querelles des Femmes des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts", *Die Galerie der starken Frauen* ed. by Bettina Baumgärtel & Silvia Neysters (Düsseldorf: Kunstmuseum, 1995), 14–33.

Boccaccio's remarks on women's language presented in *De mulieribus claris* reappear in Christine de Pizan's (1365–c. 1430) *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (1405), where Boccaccio is frequently mentioned as one of the sources.[66] Also of much interest for the question of gender-specific communication are the treatises *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus* (published in 1529) by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim (1486–1535) and *Il merito delle donne* (published posthumously in 1600) by Moderata Fonte (1555–1592).[67]

13. *Conclusions*

In this survey, I had to restrict myself to the discussion of a few passages selected from a rather extensive corpus. Further topics could have been taken into account, such as linguistic taboo and the language of love (cf. Boscherini 1995: 57–58; on the second topic, see Pabón 1939). Then there is evidence on women's knowledge of foreign languages,[68] above all the mastering of Greek by Roman women. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw at least some conclusions from the material considered so far. It has become apparent that both Greek and Roman writers do indeed discuss aspects of gender-specific communication, although some more extensively than others. One can differentiate the documents examined in this contribution along the following lines. These are:

(1) texts that contain remarks on the language of women in general;

66. On Boccaccio's influence on Christine de Pizan, see Barbara Feichtinger, "Antikerezeption mit Ambitionen. Christine de Pizans *Livre de la Cité des Dames* und Boccaccios *De claris mulieribus*", *Die Frau in der Renaissance* ed. by Paul Gerhard Schmidt (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 203–221.

67. The two treatises are now available in the following editions: H. Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus. Von Adel und Vorrang des weiblichen Geschlechtes*. Latin text and German prose translation, introduction and notes by Otto Schönberger (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1997), and Moderata Fonte, *Das Verdienst der Frauen. Warum Frauen würdiger und vollkommener sind als Männer* transl. and ed. by Daniela Hacke (München: Beck, 2001).

68. Plutarch (*Antonius* 27.2) reports of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra's talent to turn to whatever language she pleased, so that in her interviews with barbarians she very seldom had the need of an interpreter, but made her replies to most of them herself and without any assistance, whether they were Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes or Parthians. On Cleopatra's linguistic abilities as portrayed by Plutarch, see Anika Strobach, *Plutarch und die Sprachen. Ein Beitrag zur Fremdsprachenproblematik in der Antike* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997), 160–161 and similarly 174.

(2) sources that are related to the language of specific groups of women and thus take into account social (diastratic), age-related, education-related and regional (diatopic) differences;
(3) documents that are concerned with individual women and thus relate to a specific idiolect typical of one particular female speaker;
(4) passages from normative rhetorical treatises that characterize the speech of certain men as 'unmanly' and thus proceed from a more or less clear idea of what prototypical female speech is like, at least with regard to pitch and voice quality.

Women's language was almost always understood in antiquity as a deviation from the male norm. If, on the other hand, women did not behave as they were expected to and acted more like male speakers, this was perceived as a transgression of boundaries and a threat to male domains.[69] In particular the documents reporting on women's loquacity reveal that the majority of the texts concerned with female speech is loaded with stereotypes, though in certain literary genres like comedy and satire admittedly on purpose and for the sake of parodistic exaggeration. But on the whole, the use of clichés is so pronounced and importunate even in non-humoristic texts that it is absolutely impossible to claim that ancient texts provide a reasonably neutral description of the characteristics of women's language. Nonetheless, many of the documents, in particular those imbedded in a rhetorical context, reflect relatively precise societal expectations regarding the communicative behaviour of both men and women. Those who did not adopt the system of strategies of communicating that were regarded to be ideal and thus required for certain situations committed an offence and had to reckon with sanctions. On the other hand, as has been pointed out, prescriptive rules "are of limited value in determining how females really spoke" (Adams 1984: 44).

Most intriguing and perhaps also most reliable are documents like those on certain forms of address or oath formulae, the use of which is described as being restricted to women. Also, remarks on pronunciation (the phonological level) and the personal style (the lexical and pragmatic level) of individual women, as they occur in Plato's *Cratylus* and in Cicero's description of Laelia,

69. Some scholars claim that the situation has not changed very much since antiquity, e.g., Trömel-Plötz (1984: 384): "Wenn eine Frau so lang und so oft redet wie ein Mann, wird sie als geschwätzig, vielredend, dominant gehört. Wenn eine Frau hart auf ihrem Standpunkt besteht oder sogar ironisch, sarkastisch, aggressiv ist, gilt sie als unfeminin, wenn nicht kastrierend. Wenn eine Frau starke Sprache benützt und damit ihren Unmut, ihren Ärger, ihre Wut ausdrückt, gilt sie als unfein, wenn nicht vulgär."

should not be totally discarded, although it must be underscored that sketches like these can be criticized for incorrect explanations of phonological phenomena or for the lack of a more detailed description of the idiolect of a particular female speaker.

Most ancient sources offer far-from-nuanced analyses of elements of gender-specific communication, but they do contain a large number of prejudices and stereotypes towards female speech that, along with many other texts, have unwittingly set the agenda for modern criticism and in particular feminist linguistics. But however one-sided and biased ancient approaches may have been, it cannot be denied that some of the texts, notably rhetorical treatises, are noteworthy for their attempts to provide the first steps towards a sociolinguistic outline of Greek and Latin; in particular, the modern concept of idiolect can be traced back to Graeco-Roman antiquity. It was recognized in ancient rhetoric that there are a number of parameters that determine the communicative behaviour of a speaker, namely social background, regional origin, level of education, age and also gender.[70] This provided the basis for elaborate research in modern sociolinguistics that has been undertaken mainly from the 1970s onwards, and it would not be completely mistaken to maintain that it lay at least some of the groundwork for contemporary studies on gender-specific communication.

The informative value of ancient sources regarding gender-specific forms of language may be rather limited from the viewpoint of modern linguistics, in particular because of the biased and stereotypical character of the majority of the ancient texts in question. But their importance can certainly not be denied from a historical perspective, since "[t]hrough an historical approach we can learn how our present attitudes toward women's and men's speech were shaped" (Kramarae 1982: 87).

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This bibliography on gender-specific communication, which makes no claim whatsoever to be comprehensive, consists of two main parts and an appendix: the first part assembles contributions from modern linguistics, the second lists

70. See, e.g., Fögen (2000: esp. 117–141) and Thorsten Fögen, "Metasprachliche Reflexionen antiker Autoren zu den Charakteristika von Fachtexten und Fachsprachen", *Antike Fachschriftsteller: Literarischer Diskurs und sozialer Kontext* ed. by Marietta Horster & Christiane Reitz (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 2003), 31–60, esp. 37–38 (with further literature).

studies from classical philology, many of which have a broader perspective on women in Graeco-Roman antiquity and do not (only) concentrate on linguistic issues. The first two parts each consist of three sections: (1) bibliographies, (2) monographs and edited volumes and (3) articles published in journals and edited volumes. The final part provides a very selective catalogue of internet websites.

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Zweig Vivante, Bella. 1999. s.v. "Literaturschaffende Frauen. I. Griechenland". *Der Neue Pauly* (Vol. 7), 335–338. Stuttgart & Weimar: Metzler.

3. *Select internet websites*

3.1 *Bibliographies*

- *Diotima. Materials for the Study of Women and Gender in the Ancient World* by Ross Scaife et al.:
  http://www.stoa.org/diotima/biblio.shtml
- *Bibliography on Women in Antiquity* by John Porter:
  http://duke.usask.ca/~porterj/CourseNotes/women.html
- *Bibliography on Women and the Family in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (2nd to 7th century A.D.)* by Antti Arjava:
  http://www.nipissingu.ca/department/history/muhlberger/orb/arjava3.htm
- *Bibliography on Women in Byzantium (2003)* by Alice-Mary Talbot & Thalia Gouma-Petersen:
  http://www.doaks.org/WomeninByzantium.html
- *A General Bibliography on Gender and Language* in two parts by Harold F. Schiffman:
  http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/bibliogs/gender/genbib.htm
  http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/popcult/bibliogs/gender/genbib2.htm

- *Bibliographie zu Gender* by Elisabeth Burr (with particular emphasis on Romance languages):
  http://www.uni-duisburg.de/Fak2/FremdPhil/Romanistik/Personal/Burr/gender/Biblio.shtml
- *Chinese Language and Gender. On-line Bibliography* by Marjorie Chan:
  http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/chan9/g-bib.htm

3.2 *Small selection of links on women and gender studies*

- *Diotima. Materials for the Study of Women and Gender in the Ancient World* by Ross Scaife et al.:
  http://www.stoa.org/diotima
- *Feminae Romanae. The Women of Ancient Rome* by Suzanne Cross:
  http://dominae.fws1.com
- *WWW-Dokumentation Genderlinguistik* by Elisabeth Burr (with particular emphasis on Romance languages):
  http://www.uni-duisburg.de/Fak2/FremdPhil/Romanistik/Personal/Burr/gender/links.shtml
- *Women and Gender Studies* by the Women's Studies Section of the Association of College & Research Libraries (American Library Association):
  http://libr.org/wss/WSSLinks/index.html
- *Women's Studies Database* by the University of Maryland, College Park:
  http://www.mith2.umd.edu/WomensStudies/
- *Women's Studies / Women's Issues Resource Sites* by Joan Korenman:
  http://umbc7.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/links.html
- *L'homme. Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* (first periodical in German on the history of women and gender, founded by Edith Saurer, History Department of the University of Vienna, in 2000):
  http://www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/LHOMME/lhomme.html

SUMMARY

It has been the main interest of numerous studies in modern linguistics, in particular since the 1980s, to analyse gender-specific language and modes of communication. However, the vast majority of these contributions completely ignores the fact that some ancient authors already raised the problem of gender-specific language and thus made at least a first step towards a diaphasic sketch of the linguistic levels and varieties of both Greek and Latin. The ancient sources on women's language are admittedly not very ample and, moreover, rather scattered. It is the aim of this contribution to bring together relevant metalinguistic passages and provide a close reading in order to obtain a more differentiated impression of the ancients' views on gender-specific language and

style. It is highlighted that differences are pointed out by ancient authors not only in pragmatic respects, but also for the phonological, morphological and lexico-semantic levels. The focus is on excerpts from Plato, Aristophanes, Roman comedy and rhetorical writings, but further (sometimes indirect) sources are also included. The final part of this contribution considers the evidence on "women's speech" in Giovanni Boccaccio's treatise *De mulieribus claris*.

RÉSUMÉ

De nombreuses études de la linguistique moderne, surtout depuis les années 80, cherchent à analyser le langage et les manières de communiquer propres aux deux sexes. Cependant, la plupart desdites études passent tout à fait sous silence le fait que la question de la spécificité de la langue des hommes et celle des femmes avait déjà été soulevée par des auteurs de l'antiquité, effectuant ainsi un premier pas en ce qui a trait à la description des niveaux de langue et de la variation en grec et en latin. Les documents anciens sur la langue des femmes (par opposition à celle des hommes) ne sont certes pas très détaillés, et de plus, on les retrouve assez dispersés. Le but de cet article est de recueillir divers extraits pertinents, de nature métalinguistique, et de les examiner attentivement afin d'obtenir un tableau nuancé des perceptions qu'avaient les auteurs de l'antiquité sur la langue et le style propre aux hommes et aux femmes. On y souligne que ces auteurs indiquent des différences de nature non seulement pragmatique, mais encore de nature phonologique, morphologique et lexico-sémantique. On met l'emphase sur des extraits de Platon, Aristophane, des comédies romaines et d'écrits portant sur la rhétorique, mais sont compris également d'autres documents (parfois indirectement connus). Enfin, l'article se termine par un bref regard sur le traité de Giovanni Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris*.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Untersuchung der Frage, ob Frauen "anders sprechen" als Männer, ist seit den 1980er Jahren ein vorrangiges Anliegen der modernen Sprachwissenschaft, vor allem der feministisch orientierten Linguistik. Die historische Dimension ist jedoch in diesem Zusammenhang größtenteils ausgeklammert. In diesem Beitrag wird nachgewiesen, daß bereits in der griechisch-römischen

Antike Vorstellungen von geschlechtsspezifischen Formen der Kommunikation auszumachen sind. Sicher ist für die Verfasser antiker Textdokumente nicht davon auszugehen, daß diese in elaborierter Weise die Charakteristika von Frauensprache herausgearbeitet haben. Doch lassen sich durchaus Tendenzen zu einer Unterscheidung von Mitteilungs- und Verständigungsformen ausmachen, die als typisch für Frauen, nicht jedoch für Männer bezeichnet werden. Es wird herausgearbeitet, daß antike Autoren neben pragmatischen Aspekten auch phonetische, grammatisch-morphologische und lexikalisch-semantische Besonderheiten für die Sprechweise von Frauen thematisieren. Diskutiert werden explizite metasprachliche Passagen insbesondere aus Platon, Aristophanes, der römischen Komödie und rhetorischen Schriften; zum Teil werden jedoch auch indirekte Zeugnisse berücksichtigt. Die sprachlichen Aspekte, die sich aus der Betrachtung der relevanten Quellen ergeben, lassen sich zur Rekonstruktion eines diaphasischen Varietätenbewußtseins in Griechenland und in Rom heranziehen. Den Schlußteil dieses Beitrags bildet ein Ausblick auf den Diskurs über geschlechtsspezifische Kommunikation im Humanismus.

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