

Latinization of the north-western provinces: sociolinguistics, epigraphy and bilingualism.

The Germanies.

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Linguistic changes occurred in the Roman Empire at large, and these did not exclude the north-western part of the Empire (Adams 2013). In this area, we can explore a collaged background of local languages, Germanic and Celtic, attested since the Iron Age and which were not entirely erased by Latin as the dominant language by the end of the imperial period. The main aim of this paper is to present the sociolinguistic variables connected to language change in this area and how they are connected to other social phenomena (Mullen 2017).

Through a multidisciplinary approach, which involves sociolinguistics, bilingualism studies, digital epigraphy and evolving technologies (GIS, EpiDoc, RTI), it will be possible to analyse the linguistic variation in the Germanic provinces of the Roman Empire (this work is part of the ERC LatinNow project, for which, see www.latinnow.eu). Case-studies have been selected in order to study in detail the relevant phenomena of phonological deviation from Classical norms which can indicate interference between the Germanic and Latin languages (i.e. Nijmegen, Tongeren, Mainz and *Vindonissa*). Among the collected data, special consideration must be afforded to onomastics and theonyms as they have a double role: first, they are less normativized as there is not always a classical reference for the names and secondly because the diffusion of theonyms give an insight into how Roman and local tradition interacted, through cases of syncretism, and confronts socio-cultural issues (Battaglia 2013).

References:

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