

AMSTERDAM STUDIES IN THE THEORY AND
HISTORY OF LINGUISTIC SCIENCE

General Editor
E. F. KONRAD KOERNER
(University of Ottawa)

Series III – STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE SCIENCES

Advisory Editorial Board

Sylvain Auroux (Paris); Ranko Bugarski (Belgrade)
Lia Formigari (Rome); John E. Joseph (Edinburgh)
Hans-Josef Niederehe (Trier); Emilio Ridruejo (Valladolid)
Rosane Rocher (Philadelphia); Vivian Salmon (Oxford)
Kees Versteegh (Nijmegen)

Volume 87

Dieter Stein and Rosanna Sornicola (eds)

The Virtues of Language
History in language, linguistics and texts

THE VIRTUES
OF LANGUAGE

HISTORY IN
LANGUAGE, LINGUISTICS AND TEXTS

PAPERS IN MEMORY OF THOMAS FRANK

DIETER STEIN
Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Düsseldorf

ROSANNA SORNICOLA
Università di Napoli "Federico II"

Fr. Mod.
UNIVERSITA' DI NAPOLI
Biblioteca Facoltà di
Lettere e Filosofia
INV. N. 33228

JOHN BENJAMINS PUBLISHING COMPANY
AMSTERDAM/PHILADELPHIA

Filomarino, former residence of Benedetto Croce. This house represented the convergence of two cultures, so English in many of its furnishings, but at the same time so Neapolitan in its setting and its atmosphere. From the balcony of his study Thomas could see the *piazza*, dominated by the church of San Domenico. He liked that old world, so full of life. Although some of his best friends were elderly gentlemen of the Neapolitan aristocracy, it would be a mistake to think that Thomas was an aristocrat confined to the society of narrow elitist groups. Like his friends, those qualities so characteristic of the old southern Italian culture – grace and good manners, and the ability to put others at their ease – came naturally to him.

Frank was a professor much loved by his students. His modesty and kindness, his clarity of expression naturally attracted young people, who saw in him more than just a teacher, an old friend with whom they could speak unfettered by academic convention. His courses were followed by many students: over the years many continue to regard him with affection and regret. During the period in which he was professor of History of the English Language, a discipline that has unfortunately received too little attention in Italian academia, he worked intensively to develop the scientific and didactic activities of the chair: he had many graduate students, all scrupulously and attentively supervised; he organised various scientific conferences, inviting Anglicist colleagues such as Roger Lass, Frans Plank, Suzanne Romaine, Dieter Stein, and others to Naples. At the same time he established contacts with historians of the English language from other Italian universities. His education and the unobtrusive way he related to others made him a loved and respected colleague. He made it a point of honour to advance the cause of English linguistics at Naples, which had, thanks to him, become a centre for the development and growth of the discipline. Thomas was happy to see the increase in young people wanting to specialise in this subject. In April 1987, a large troop of Neapolitans led by Thomas participated at the International Conference of English Historical Linguistics in Cambridge. There were Gabriella Di Martino, Silvana La Rana, Gabriella Mazzone, Mara Messina, Valeria Micillo and from Bari Nicola Pantaleo. I was also in the group, and I could see that Thomas was as happy as a sand-boy with his cherished “southern” expedition to England. In fact, in a letter to Nicola Pantaleo in February of that year Thomas observed a propos the Cambridge Congress that “ci sarà una folta rappresentanza napoletana” (“there will be a strong Neapolitan contingent”). In his detached and reserved manner can be detected the acknowledgement of a small joy and an understandable feeling of pride.

Honoring Thomas Frank Introduction and Overview of the Contributions

Rosanna Sornicola
Università di Napoli “Federico II”

Dieter Stein
Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf

The contributions in this volume ranging from English historical linguistics via history to English literary history adequately reflect Thomas Frank’s scientific and real-life personality as so vividly depicted by Rosanna Sornicola in her contribution on Thomas Frank’s life in the preceding contribution. In fact, it is difficult to see how a scholar of the stature of Thomas Frank could be honored by contributions that do not straddle the boundaries between what are now considered separate disciplines.

The personality of Thomas Frank was iconic for his definition and practice of his science. As a towering figure in Italian (historical) English linguistics and on the international scene he remained a rock in a sea of one-dimensionality: just as he in terms of personality was a nobleman of broad outlook and broad culture, the practice and definition of his science was not given to the dismal and blinkered modularity that beset the discipline of English linguistics in much of the latter part of the ending millennium in several ways. For him there was no incommunicable split between linguistics and literature on the one hand and between synchronic and diachronic linguistics on the other - divisions that the discipline as a whole and the generations of students trained on it is by now increasingly regretting.

The contributions to the present memorial volume image Thomas Frank’s orientation in several ways. Not only did he repeatedly engage in battle over notorious unresolved issues in his field, not only did he engage in pursuits that cover the whole field in its entirety, but his interests are also mirrored in

the present volume in their extension over a diachronic span from Old English to Modern English. It is befitting, then, that the first contribution should be one that is located at the crossroads of Old English philology, grammatical analysis and discourse-pragmatic analysis of narrative texts, and that takes up one of the notorious bones of contention in English historical linguistics. Susan Fitzmaurice traces the acquisition of the specific aspectual function of the English progressive *-ing* form to a use of the precursor form in specific structural positions in the narrative. She analyses this specific use as a first prefiguring of the meaning of the modern form.

The next two contributions move us into the Middle Ages. Nicola Pantaleo looks at a classical problem of historical meaning analysis in a classical text: “Wit” in *Piers Plowman*. This contribution is again at the intersection of literary interests, where the meaning of “wit” figured prominently over several centuries well into the neoclassical period, and linguistic interests, in terms of a case study in historical semantics that describes the meaning of the lexeme in relation to other lexemes in a much embattled semantic field and stresses the role of the context of occurrence in redefining the meaning of the term. It is under this aspect – the modification and extension of existing meanings into new functional territory – that this paper is linked to the previous one.

By way of contrast, the formal side is focused on in Dieter Stein’s analysis of another issue, that has traditionally been a battlefield in two respects, the rise of the French-originating *wh*-relativisers in English (*which*, *where*, *who* etc), encroaching on a field formerly dominated by indigenous forms such as *that*, *zero*, or *as*. This linguistic issue, the evolution of the present day-landscape, is another one of the traditional battlegrounds in English historical linguistics, such as Thomas Frank has repeatedly addressed in his work and in his teaching. Stein argues that the situation in the two major Medieval corpora of letters is still unresolved and far from the structure observed in more modern texts, to that extent reiterating a finding also emanating from Pantaleo’s papers of the meaning structure of “wit”.

Modernity is ultimately approached in Gabriella Di Martino’s paper, one of two papers that topicalise the new awareness of language and the problems inherent in appraising and evaluating contemporaneous linguistic meta-thought. Di Martino’s paper deals with how English coped with an element that was new in the development of English: After the “high” societal functions like science, religion and law were no longer realised in foreign languages, the English language was faced with the need to use indigenous sources to cope with the expressive and stylistic needs of performing these

functions in English. Di Martino deals specifically with which effect the search for scientific truth had on attitudes towards traditional stylistic ideals and rhetoric: both were viewed with suspicion and seen as not conducive to the search for truth and suited to a plain language expressing the scientific truth. The other main line of her enquiry is a positive one: exactly what were the lexical resources exploited for the new expressive purposes of conducting science in the national language.

Rosanna Sornicola’s paper addresses a different facet of the same macrolinguistic situation. The new expressive needs and the new status of the vernacular as a national language for high functions figured prominently among the factors that caused English to be the subject of meta-reflection and grammatical description on a major scale. The products of these grammatical descriptions are standard sources – and have been so for Thomas Frank – for information about the state of the grammar as the object language of the time – a paramount source of information on the state of the language no historical linguist can afford to pass up on. The classical question here is the reliability and validity of these descriptions. In a fundamental paper Sornicola demonstrates the extent to which traditional Medieval philosophies of language and rhetorical concepts of grammar inform contemporaneous descriptions of word order. The strong philosophical substratum of Medieval heritage and conceptual residue should caution us in the interpretation and evaluation of this type of evidence for arguments about the state of the contemporaneous object language, especially with regard to word order.

The other metalinguistic paper, Konrad Koerner’s confrontation of de Saussure and Jespersen, echoes another key pursuit of Thomas Frank, linguistic historiography. Koerner looks at similarities and differences in the way these key figures of modern linguistics approached key concepts of modern linguistics, like *langue* and *parole*. He concludes that there are more differences than similarities between the two, reflecting the different backgrounds of these two father figures of linguistics at the threshold to modernity in linguistics.

In Stefano Manferlotti’s paper, modernity is transferred from the analysis of linguistic substance to a specific type of modern literary analysis that analyses the way linguistic expressions – the script – to instruct us to conceptualise or visualise the stage beyond what is physically visual on the stage. Manferlotti describes a process of verbal stage-designing as a kind of “meta-theatre”.

The second more literary orientated paper looks at the status of a piece of literature that has had to take second place in literary appreciation by the

scholarly community to the other major work by Sir Thomas Elyot's, his *Governour*. Uwe Baumann argues that any difficulty encountered in analysing *The Image of Governauce* evaporates if we engage in a proper analysis of sources and follow the author in a tradition of "literary hide-and-seek" begun by the author of the *Historia Augusta* and more customary in the Renaissance, as a vehicle of historical narrative.

The last paper in the more literary series of papers is also about the period so dear to Thomas Frank, the Renaissance. Thomas Frank's interest in the history of England is well represented by Anna Maria Palombi Cataldi's paper on the literary repercussion and evaluation of the Union of Scotland and England. In particular, her paper focuses on how the Union is represented as a "marriage" in the real historical event and in literature in Ben Jonson's masque.

It is appropriate for a volume that aims at targeting and representing Thomas Frank's main scientific pursuits and interests to have as a final paper one that stretches furthest into modernity, by analysing texts ranging from the 16th to the 19th centuries and that targets discourse analysis proper. With the paper by David Hart the thematic orientation of the volume has come full circle. It goes back to the first paper in that it reverts to discourse linguistics. In particular, it traces changes in the style of a genre – instructional texts – from a more involved style to a more informational and less involved tone and relates it to a change in the type of audience, echoing Fitzmaurice's stance in the first paper of looking at linguistic change as driven by contexts of usage – discourse audience in the last paper and formal discourse structure in the first paper of the volume.

PART II

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE