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GAULISH MULTILINGUALISM? WRITING, RECEIPTS, AND COLONIAL ENTANGLEMENT

Abstract:

The site of La Graufesenque in southern France was one of the largest producers of terra sigillata pottery in the Roman Empire during the first century CE. It is also the site of a large repository of receipts in Gaulish, which were used for tracking pots fired in the massive kilns. While the combination of borrowed words and Latin alphabet that craftsmen inscribed on pots mirrored linguistic patterns in other areas of the Gaulish Provinces, the script itself reveals a unique linguistic style. Coleman argues these receipts represent an ‘entanglement’ of languages rather than a case of what we call bilingualism today. The potters at La Graufesenque wrote within a cosmopolitan community, but in a uniquely local style. Understanding the nuances of these receipts may lead to a more precise analysis of the societal changes in Gaul under the Roman Empire.

Keywords:

Gaul ♦ Rome ♦ bilingualism ♦ La Graufesenque ♦ pottery ♦ entanglement ♦ material culture

When Rome conquered the territories in Gaul, the Latin language did not quickly overwhelm indigenous languages. There was a long and gradual shift leading to the language death of Gaulish. In these intervening years the change from Celtic dialects to Latin is inconsistently observed in the limited indigenous writing available. Many studies on the topic have focused on the link between language and identity in the

provinces; however, most of the relevant research assumes this phenomenon was a form of bilingualism.¹

This presupposition falsely implies a standard language for two parties, a centralized form of education, and consistent patterns in the choices made for adopting aspects of outsider speech.² I use the concept of ‘entanglement’—introduced by Michael Dietler (2010) for archaeological evidence—to question the idea of a monolithic Romanization of Gaulish. Entanglement means that site-specific choices and negotiations combine to become a larger phenomenon, thus dispelling the notion of singularly valid versions of translations. My research looks to restore the material on which the writing occurred to its proper context; there were different meanings for the uses of, and choices by, the population regarding this type of material evidence. Different types of inscriptions vary dramatically according to the make-up and the use of the piece as a physical object. This study analyzes the material relationships among the language, artifacts, and the context of the inscriptions. The study also suggests that these receipts are not indicators of bilingualism, so much as of language entanglement. La Graufesenque, a terra sigillata pottery site, is the focus of this analysis; it serves as a case study for other sites in the three provinces of Gaul.

This reanalysis of language contact in Gaul raises questions about the assumptions of what is “Roman,” and the meaning of the terms ‘indigenous’ and ‘continuity.’ Greg Woolf (2000) claims that a clearly defined conception of ‘being Roman’ did not take hold until the imperial era, when the provinces contributed to the process and development of Roman identity. Included in this emergence is the use of Latin; however, it is not clear how extensively any sort of centralized notion of the language took hold throughout the empire. Depending on the province, local languages affected the nature of Latin in the region in different patterns. Additionally, Greek had a tremendous influence on the development of Latin before Rome’s expansion into many of the provinces outside of Italy. Thus, to define Latin as a marker of Roman homogeneity in the empire ignores all the variety found within the language.³ Within the provinces of Gaul, the Romans controlled an area that was once dominated by loose networks of tribes. The Gaulish language hosted a wide variety of dialects in the normal manner of linguistic development (Whatmough 1970, 10-20). When imperial Latin became the main language in the region, it was in contact with these many dialects of Gaulish. This contact forged a regional character for Latin in Gaul. Variance of Latin in Gaul also occurred due to the exchange with the various Gaulish dialects (Guinot 1987). In this environment of

interaction without any centralized language, the question of how to define a Roman or a Gaul is not a simple dichotomy, and thus both translation of inscriptions and notions of bilingualism must be questioned. Additionally, the continued use and development of Gaulish is an important part of the make-up of the provinces. Inscriptions in Gaulish using the Latin writing formulae and alphabet—while showing other influences from Greek—are prime examples of the levels of contact in the provinces that are truly cosmopolitan in nature.

Not only must we critically investigate the nature and scope of the language in use, we must also introduce an understanding of an inscription in relation to the material upon which it was inscribed. Receipts on clay plates tracking potters' merchandise in kilns bear different formats than do formal public stone inscriptions thanking the emperor. Too often, this material component has been neglected when researchers analyzed and translated Gallo-Roman sources.⁴ The people who wrote and read clay receipts were not the same people who sponsored official public inscriptions. The type of language used, and the respective disposition toward a standardized format, would differ for each form of writing. Different tools, furthermore, are used for writing on stone than on clay. Stone inscription requires skill, preparation, and planning, while clay, with its malleability, allows for writing of a more impromptu nature.⁵ Such variation in the use of these materials means the language used in each method requires different forms of analysis by researchers. This is briefly mentioned in the latest study by Alex Mullen, who claims there is a need for more acknowledgement of the role of material culture in linguistic analysis (2013a, 19-22). In this current study of language entanglement in Gaul, questions regarding the author and inscriber of the inscription and the inscription's intended audience—based on the material used—help to illuminate the role of choice in communication and bilingualism.⁶ This study also raises questions about standardized formulas that were supposedly used by provincials in the Roman Empire. Formulaic writing, as well as symbols, requires not only recognition of the cultural-specific context, but also an understanding of the inherent malleability of each piece.

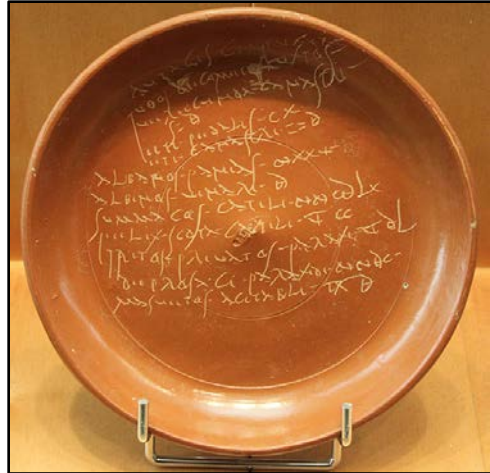
Language constantly changes to meet the needs of the communities using it, and economic writing needed only to be legible to a limited audience. In the case of Gaul, as well as other provinces, when analyzing the reaction of local languages to Latin and Greek influences, the specter of code-switching arises.⁷ While it is tempting to apply this framework to the analysis of language contact and identity in Gaul, code-switching assumes a certain amount of conscious linguistic choice that is not consistent in the

everyday (non-economic) use of a language. Instead, a more complex form of language amalgamation surfaces from use. Variance in meaning and norms of self-description must be taken into consideration when apprehending the nature of linguistic change within a community; the results of said change, and the potential emergence of tradition must also be considered.

One complication that is prevalent in research on the provinces of Gaul is the use of the term “Celt,” given that the loose tribal structure of pre-conquest society eludes clear description; however, the source material should not be merely ignored because of controversy over the terminology. The debates among archaeologists concerning the word “Celt” or “Gaul” raise questions about the nature of the regional distinctiveness of Gaul and whether large-scale study is possible in the region.⁸ There is clear evidence for a network of tribal affiliations that shared similar language, religious belief, and social structure; this network shows continual contact and recognition of these various groups as a community. When Rome conquered the region it would not only deal with local groups, but with the larger community structures as well. It is from contact with this macro-network that province-wide trends appeared. The language and symbols used in such behaviors were easily recognizable for people familiar with a shared set of traditions. Even after the Roman conquest, province-wide religious and cultural traditions were still formed using familiar symbols, such as cult images. La Graufesenque, even though it has local specificities, fits into this larger picture as well. As such, understanding this site requires knowledge of the larger network of Gauls and Romans, as well as the unique local fixtures. Studies from this site can also contribute to the larger provincial paradigms for the same reason. The potters at La Graufesenque were members of a variety of networks and communities. At the local level, they were part of a community of craftsmen specializing in a foreign-style product for purely commercial use. Additionally, they were also members of the town, participating in the cults and traditional practices associated with it. At the larger level, the potters at La Graufesenque were part of both an extensive network that traded all over the Roman Empire and its large variety of communities, as well as part of a regional network of people sharing similar language and ritual. The purpose of this study is to raise questions regarding the role of local populations in language use, in the midst of their inclusion into the Roman imperial community.

As stated earlier, one of the largest repositories of common written communication in Roman Gaul is the terra sigillata production site at La Graufesenque. Here, hundreds of

receipts inscribed on clay plates and bowls were uncovered by Frédéric Hermet during the period 1901–1906, with continued large-scale periodic excavation continuing to the present. Since terra sigillata is an Italian style of pottery imported to Gaul, this fact alone is already evidence of contact and adoption. Yet the language of the texts found at the site, which are primarily in Gaulish, does not suggest that this production was limited to the work of imported Italian potters. Gauls appeared to be the main laborers at the site with a mix of Latin-speaking workers as well (Mullen 2013b, 99; Adams 2003, 688-689). This is an area of tremendous contact where the language phenomenon relating to bilingualism and regions of ambiguity took place. While the texts follow a consistent format, the language used does not.



[“Ancient Roman inscription on terra sigillata from La Graufesenque”](#) by Rossignol Benoît is licensed under [CC Attribution-Sharelike 3.0](#).

Some Gaulish inscriptions take Latin forms; some take Gaulish forms (Adams 2003, 699-702; Lambert 1994, 130-131; Marichal 1988, 57). These changes of linguistic associations as well as the mix of languages found at the site indicate language entanglement in the local area. They also imply participation in the larger Roman commercial networks, as well as in provincial networks of mercantile groups. Uncertainty about the nature of specific groups—and accordingly seeking to determine whether a name is derived from a particular foreign root—ignores the possibilities of multilingual and multicultural language use and naming practices, which often extend beyond the language associated with that name (Mullen 2013b, 100). All these factors indicate how important local phenomena are to the provincial culture, and they offer a compelling series of caveats about how we approach the translation of the texts.

When Hermet (1904) and Joseph Déchelette (1904) excavated a few small ditches (basing their excavations on an earlier discovery by an abbot), they found numerous terra sigillata plates with writing that was identified as Gaulish. More extensive excavations occurred between 1950–1954 and 1965–1972.⁹ Many additional fragments of the inscribed pottery were excavated, as well as workshops, streets, living quarters near the workshops, stamps and other tools related to the commercial activity at the site. All the evidence points to massive production that was exported all over the Roman Empire (Greene 1986, 161). This wide distribution matches the large output of the workshops in

La Graufesenque, where some kilns fired up to 30,000 pots in a year (Aubert 1994, 208). With multiple, large production kilns at the site, the pottery output made the community one of the major terra sigillata manufacturing centers in the empire. This level of economic activity lasted from the first to the second century CE. La Graufesenque not only shows the increasing importance of provincial labor to the Roman economy; it also highlights the level and intensity of contact consistently occurring throughout the empire, and the high rate of product consumption throughout. Since terra sigillata is an Italian style of pot, the Italian techniques were imported to the site by Italian potters; these techniques were then adopted by local Gaulish craftsmen. Thus, understanding the type and method of communication occurring at the economic level is a study of contact and choice.

Before delving into the writing on these receipts, the stamps must be mentioned in some detail. These stamps, which indicate the workshop that produced the pot, follow the normative trend of stamping practices and mainly serve to give the name of the products' owner. As I will discuss later, tracking the "ethnicity" of names does not help in this study of contact; as a result, the stamps will not be a main focus of this study. Geoffrey Dannell notes that many of the names found on the receipts do not appear in the stamps (2002, 220). If the purpose of the inscriptions was to keep a record of what was in the kiln in case of problems, then the names could be associated with individual potters rather than with the workshop owner (*dominus*) or merchant/manager (*offinator*). In terms of labor, this implies that the site was an independent *vicus* run by free workmen, rather than slaves (Dannell 2002, 214). In such an environment, the need to assert the power of the villa estate over claimed land was less a concern since the local businessmen utilized the materials. Additionally, the high rate of *offinator* stamps compared to the absence of *dominus* stamps indicates that the workshops at La Graufesenque operated on non-villa land.¹⁰ While the conclusions regarding labor are useful, they do not add much to our understanding of language contact and local choice regarding the nature of that contact. The most one can claim is that the workers in La Graufesenque used the traditional stamping methods of the Italians for a product that was exported to the rest of the empire.

Given the nature of the stamps and other evidence, it is difficult to identify the owners of the individual workshops and kilns at many production sites throughout the empire (Aubert 1994, 209). However, it seems odd that anyone who owned a kiln would need to use a kiln owned by someone else (Dannell 2002, 220). The stamps can possibly indicate

who owned a kiln or worked as the representative for the owner. This is useful for understanding the embedded nature of the local economy in the wider Mediterranean; it also hints at the type of networking that was prevalent throughout the Roman economic world. In arguing that Hellenism had its roots in the far-flung Greek colonies, Irad Malkin (2011) notes that the vast trading and communication networks between the various poleis led to common meanings and associations that could influence local culture.¹¹ While La Graufesenque adapted economically into the larger network of the empire, it still retained local traditions—including its language. The receipts both follow the format of, and discuss, a Roman-style business and technique, but are written in the Gaulish language. While the choice of language might seem a simple fact of the locality, this was a large-scale production site, which performed business transactions with the rest of the empire.¹² Maintaining Gaulish for the purposes of communication with one another was a choice the potters made in the face of the more widespread use of Latin. This did not have to be a decision of resistance, but could have been a simple act of convenience that became part of the local normative understandings. Although Latin was the language of the empire, it was not essential for being a successful subject of Rome. The craftsmen at La Graufesenque were not struggling against a foreign regime, but were rather working with other peoples in the empire to further themselves economically.

When looking closer at the script used at the pottery workshops in La Graufesenque, we see an interesting mix of a standardized format with inconsistent language. All the receipt plates consist of three columns (Fig. 1). The first column contains names, the second contains styles and dimensions of pottery, and the third contains the number of pots fired (Marichal 1988, 103). Formulaic patterns of writing are not uncommon in official and commercial documents; they allow people to scan the document quickly and find the information easily (Hagedorn 1976; Kruit 1992). This format at La Graufesenque was a symptom of the nature of the site and the material upon which the receipts were written. As a commercial center for a particular craft, La Graufesenque reveals economic writing that does not have concerns beyond reporting the basic needs of the transactions. This is a form of quick writing that was not troubled with proper form or wide-scale reception; rather its concern was legibility for the local craftsmen who were involved in the singular transaction. Additionally, the receipts were written on a single piece of pottery that limited the space available for inscriptions of any sort; abbreviations were useful. The main consideration was that a limited audience understand enough of the writing to conduct business. Compared to carefully prepared and fully public stone inscriptions, the La Graufesenque receipts were hastily written, quickly discarded, and functioned through

and despite limited literacy. Standard formats and familiar common words or numbers were all that were needed for the craftsmen to use these inscriptions.

Within the standard writing formula there is a tremendous amount of variation. With the three examples provided below, clear differences are apparent in terms of spelling, abbreviation, and spaces between words (Figs. 1-3). Though all three plates have the names of some of the same people, the names are spelled inconsistently. On plate 1 and 17 the name for Summacos retains both “m’s,” while the inscription on plate 5 has one “m.” Marichal claims these two names represent the same person and, considering the surrounding names on the list are all similar, this assumption is most likely correct (1988, 121). While this might seem a simple omission or misspelling, it is also indicative of the purpose of these documents. The name, no matter the spelling, was familiar to the other members of the community who were most likely acquainted with Summacos as a fellow craftsman and understood to whom the misspelled name referred. This also shows the nature of the material written on. Mistakes or switching are acceptable means of communication in this medium and community. The inscribers were writing quickly on semi-malleable clay in the cursive Latin alphabet for an intended one-time use. The potential concern that the name might create confusion about two different people was irrelevant, given the situation. Variation in spelling is then not a strong indicator of contact or incorporation of names or words into different languages, as much as it is a symptom of the purpose of this writing.

More glaring than simple spelling errors are the shifting use of letters from other alphabets, and the changing of entire Gaulish words as a result. The most well-known example of this phenomenon at La Graufesenque is the Gaulish word *Tuθos*, which already has letters from two different alphabets.¹³ While most of the word is in the Latin alphabet, the theta in the middle of the word is Greek. Gaulish adopted first the Greek language at an undetermined early period, then it adopted Latin in as early as the 2nd century BCE in the Cisalpine regions. The Gaulish language did not have a lengthy or robust written tradition, but rather relied chiefly on oral means of relating even complicated information.¹⁴ Additionally, the Gauls adopted letters to fit their needs rather than adopting the rules of another language. In the case of the word *Tuθos*, it appears as though the Gauls in La Graufesenque did not feel any letter in the Latin alphabet was a sufficient replacement for the theta.¹⁵ Such a choice raises questions as to the validity of asserting strong meaning to the use of alphabet when analyzing Gaulish inscriptions. This is further illustrated by the different spellings of the word in the same group of

inscriptions. Looking at the example inscriptions included in the Appendix, we also see the word spelled as *Tuoos* and *TuÐÐos* (Figs. 2 & 3), as well as *Tuθθos*, *Tuddus*, *Tuso*, and *Tuos* (Marichal 1988, 96). Some of the alternate spellings may be due to sloppy attempts at writing—possibly due to the need to make so many of these receipts. *Tuos* is an omission of the theta altogether, while *Tuoos* is a misspelling replacing the Tau Gallicum with the letter “o.” This, however, does not explain all of the different versions of the word—including the versions with the extra letters. Furthermore, the term has the same meaning in each of the plates. *Tuθos* is at the top of the inscription accompanied by the Gaulish position words (*cintux*, etc.), indicating that different appearances did not affect the text. It is clear there is no single accepted spelling of this word within even the community of La Graufesenque. This production center was mainly populated by people with limited literacy.¹⁶ They could read certain words or sentences to perform their job and not much else. As long as the form of the word was recognizable, the specifics of spelling were unnecessary. That does not diminish the nature of the variation as fitting into traceable patterns that can be analyzed. There is evidence that other sites with a higher rate of literacy also retain variation in this letter (Adams 2003, 698). If so, this further reinforces the conclusion that the entanglement resulting from contact does not create standardization.

In terms of the larger picture of cultural contact, the seemingly innocuous varied spellings of *Tuθos* are also seen as a problem for the Gauls in representing what is sometimes referred to as the “Tau Gallicum.” David Ellis Evans maintains that the sound was recorded in a wide variety of related letters ranging from the Greek theta to the Ð as shown in the previous paragraph (1967, 410). He also states that, despite the multitude of scholars who conclude all of the symbols convey one of the dental *st*, *ds*, or *ts* pronunciations, there is no exact value that we can apply to the letters (Evans 1967, 418). We can potentially infer regionalism from this variation in spelling; however, no such studies have been made and no sufficient database is available for tracking where all occurrences of the Tau Gallicum occur. In contrast to *Tuθos*, the word *eti* lacks variation. The lack of variation for *eti* could be due to its less frequent appearance in the inscriptions, yet it could also be due to choices made by the various craftsmen as to whether to include the word at all. A most probable meaning for *eti* is as a signifier of repetition or addition (Delamarre 2003, 166). Beyond this abstract understanding, a specific value to the word cannot be ascertained. Straight translation from the text has been a subject of debate for a number of scholars, but this debate ignores the value of the term to the community in which it belonged (Adams 2003, 697; Marichal 1988, 100-1).

Some state that *eti* comes from the Greek ἔτι or ἔτιαμ, while others speculate it is related to the Latin *item*, with a third group claiming it is indigenous Gaulish.¹⁷ I follow the assertion that it is Gaulish, due to the continuing inconsistencies with the dental sound, and a lack of any standard form. *Eti* also has an older pedigree that includes it within the Celtic language based on an earlier evolution of form due to the retention of a simplified labiovelar (Koch 1982, 89). What both *Tuθos* and *eti* reveal is the continuing shifts of written Gaulish during periods of contact. This raises questions regarding the nature of language and contact. The difficulty for Gauls in writing this one letter shows not only a recognized inability of Latin or Greek to represent the sound, but lack of concern among many Gauls to try to standardize the representation of the sound within even one community. Given such individual agency and decision-making in representing a well-known sound, more general questions ought to be raised regarding the relative importance of using a Greek letter or not, and whether that use indicates more generalizable research findings. Whatever the case, contact did not result in complete acculturation or borrowing, but rather in appropriation within an indigenous system.¹⁸

The Tau Gallicum appears in smaller fragments associated with other incomplete words. One such piece contains the word *oθθα*, which Pierre-Yves Lambert (RIG II.2, L-30a) states is possibly related to a *Cassidanos*, a type of flamen. Within the same fragment there is another partial word *-θilu*, which is too incomplete to decipher (RIG II.2, L-30a). This small fragment is part of a pair that includes a piece written in Latin – possibly indicating an example of bilingual communication. The Latin fragment does not have the typical Tau Gallicum found on the Gaulish one; this further emphasizes the uniqueness of this letter to indigenous writing and imaginings of the alphabet. In the same vein, another fragment contains a theta imbedded in a potential numerical sequence (Fig. 5, RIG II.2, L-30f).¹⁹ This could conceivably be a mix of Greek and Latin styles of counting, or more likely, a Gaulish numerical notation. Since the theta is in between an “i” or “t” and three “c’s,” it would seem an odd choice to switch in the middle of counting and use a symbol unseen in other receipts.²⁰ Instead of such an awkward way of making the notation Greek due to the letter, I propose the letter is actually the Tau Gallicum as seen in the other receipts. It stands for a particular numerical value that we cannot translate. If this proposal is accurate, then the Gauls were using mainly Roman numerals, but counting in their own numerical system. Though the counting would not change, the conceptualization might. This being said, the combination of letters may also be an abbreviation for a different value. In either hypothesis, the Gaulish potters are creating an imagined notation with the Latin alphabet describing Gaulish vocabulary. Finally, there

are small pieces that have the word *međsili urb sa*, *međsill*, and *međsillus* (RIG II.2, L-30m-o). Xavier Delamarre translates this term as “judgment” with the possibility of “measure” depending on the form of the word (2003, 222). Without context it is hard to ascribe more meaning; however, the inconsistent spelling and the use of the Tau Gallicum fits the general model of the rest of the site. The potters were using notation, spelling, and language that was legible for their temporary economic purposes, and little beyond that. They were loose with the language, showing that Gaulish was using the Latin alphabet with an understanding of the sounds and meanings that do not translate completely across communicative boundaries. The Gauls were taking a foreign alphabet for convenience and repurposing it into something they would recognize as Gaulish.

A number of scholars have discussed the reasons for the switched endings of names and other words in the La Graufesenque receipts. They point to the choice of nominative and genitive endings in different plates that remain consistent in the plate. In Fig. 1 the endings are Gaulish, while the endings in Fig. 2 are Latin. There are also elements of Greek found in many of the receipts. Mullen asserts that finding the dominant language is more important than finding mixed language (2013b, 98). While this dominant paradigm is important for understanding the main linguistic group in the region, further analysis is required to assess the effect of contact upon that group. The inconsistency of endings indicates a variety of influences that change what the language of “Gaulish” implies. Adams states this type of inconsistency is to be expected from a bilingual community that maintained “a relaxed attitude to language choice” in their writing (2003, 698). While this is true for a community keeping clear language separations, the inscriptions at La Graufesenque show Gaulish using grammar from other distinct foreign languages as well as its own. These languages are ones with which Gaulish in the south had intensive contact; both were used for extensive trading. Thus the language contact revealed at this site is one of inclusiveness rather than of enforced distinctiveness.

Also within the texts there are various words for the pottery that are derived from Greek words, or are full Greek. The term *canastri* seems to be a direct borrowing from the Greek *κάναστρον* rather than the Latin *canistrum* (Mullen 2013b, 103; Marichal 1988, 85). While this type of loan might seem a minor point in the translation of the text, it denotes different contact for trade and recognition. The Greek colonies on the southern coast of Gaul had a longer period of trade and interaction with the surrounding communities than the later Roman conquerors. It is tempting to claim that the words used at La Graufeseque come from this interaction rather than from Roman potters. Mullen

states that the word *canastri* could also originate from the presence of Greek potters at La Graufesenque, but even she admits this would be a small community (2013b, 102). If the community were so small, it is doubtful their version of the pot name would outweigh the larger population's name. The local potters may have had this word in their lexicon for some time due to earlier communication. The reason for the use of other words such as *broci* is not so easy to determine, as Mullen points out. Marichal states that *broci* is derived from the Greek βροχίς or βρέχω (1988, 84). Both Mullen and Lambert question this assessment, with Mullen stating it is Latin or Gaulish in origin and Lambert stating the term is inconclusive (Mullen 2013b, 102; RIG II.2, 113). It is better to conclude this word entered the Gaulish context as it is found within texts of the Gaulish language and must be viewed in such a manner. Within such a paradigm we can merely conclude that *broci* refers to the particular type of pot, and is a word used by Gaulish potters at the terra sigillata site at La Graufesenque.

One of the least helpful portions of the receipts to analyze is the names listed. Numerous scholars have attempted to trace the roots of the names and to keep tallies on those which are Latin, Greek, Gaulish, a hybrid, or unknown.²¹ Such a count does not consider the malleability of naming, especially where language contact is so prevalent. Karin Stüber notes although there is a general pattern in Gaul of Latinizing names, the shifts can occur inconsistently from generation to generation (2007, 81-92). Children of people with Latin names could receive Gaulish names as frequently as the reverse could happen. Additionally, the name of a person does little to denote the language and ethnicity of a person in a site where contact is extensive. A man with the name of *Summacos* may appear Greek, but declaring the man as ethnically Greek might ignore such factors as a post in the Roman military, a mixed marriage, or a naming system based on contact with the Greek colonies that existed in southern Gaul for centuries. While the variety of names denotes interaction—also shown in other factors such as the production of terra sigillata—one cannot accurately trace ethnic groupings through the names. Lists of possible origins of names might be useful for understanding choice from a cultural milieu that has fully incorporated these Latin and Greek names. No matter the origin, these names may have been incorporated into the local understanding of Gaulish ones in the same manner as Hebrew names entered various European languages. Returning to the example of *Summacos*, this name could denote a Gaul with a Greek name, an ethnic Greek, or a combination of heritage. The name means “fighting companion,” which could possibly denote a link to the auxilia, or it could be a name used in the region for a long period of time.

The everyday use of language changes the context for translating these receipts. Formulaic and standardization concerns are no longer a factor, and variant spellings or endings should not change the nature of the text. Since each receipt was a temporary product intended for singular use, inconsistencies were accepted and did not seem to affect functionality in the reception of the information. Thus we are presented with a potentially more natural means of communication than we are presented with in many inscriptions. Language contact is comparably more visible in these receipts, and should be acknowledged fully when translating them, as well as when drawing conclusions about the area. All the variation in the texts hints at a lack of any formal training in writing within the community. Adams claims these potters were taught the language (2003, 697-8); thus they would have had the same counting system and used the same sigla. Additionally, there is a receipt that has a complete sentence that uses Gaulish syntax (Marichal 1988, 14, 20-1). However, individual exceptions do not undermine the fragmentary nature of the other inscriptions. Some potters might choose to use full sentences and others might not. Yet the counting and the format are the only consistencies in the inscriptions. Actual wording, use of language, grammar, and spelling are all varied to such a degree as to discount formalized training for some of the writers. The language and writing skill found at La Graufesenque could be mainly a purely economic form of communication that required only basic understanding of the words without particular spellings or styles of notation. Such a means of written communication can transmit the intended information without a common learned written system. When translating or analyzing this type of writing, the quantitative value is more important than the qualitative. The specifics of naming, grammar, orthography, and writing style therefore play a secondary role to the temporary economical purpose of the receipts.

Close study of the orthography and general grammar of the receipts found at La Graufesenque reveals a written habit that is cosmopolitan and at the same time Gaulish. The question then must be how one defines “tradition” when discussing language. Is the Mediterranean-wide economic nature of the La Graufesenque site tantamount to a mark of inauthenticity vis-à-vis the allegedly “Gaulish” provenance of the inscriptions, or is it an example of a new tradition that can still be considered indigenous? Such considerations necessarily alter the approach to translating these texts. Instead of treating the inscriptions as a series of isolated texts tracing pure language, one must also consider the incorporated names, grammar, words, material, and purpose of the texts. It is only after all of these variables are recognized that responsible conclusions can be made regarding language development and contact in this particular community. The highly

variable and uncertain patterns on the plates make translation less concrete than originally perceived. As regards Gaul as such, the complex phenomena at La Graufesenque are indicative of the role Gaulish “traditions” played in the development of a provincial identity. While the adoption of Mediterranean concepts and the continuation of pre-conquest traditions are well studied, the creation of new indigenous traditions in the province is not.

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Notes

¹ There is a vast bibliography of bilingual linguistic studies in the Roman provinces including primarily, but not limited to, most works on Latin and Greek contact. J.N. Adams (2003, 1) is the first to systematically analyze bilingualism in the Roman Empire, though he credits a number of scholars including Dubuisson, Holford-Strevens, Horsfall, Leiwo, Millar, Neumann and Untermann.

² Code-switching demands a certain level of standard competence in a system of rules for at least one language; see J.F. Hamers and M.H.A. Blanc (2000, 369).

³ J.N. Adams (2007, 13-15) notes that the ancient Latin texts admitted to regional difference and provincial dialects. Such diversification is normal for languages, especially ones that do not possess any standardization.

⁴ Alex Mullen (2013a, 20-21) notes that interdisciplinary approaches in linguistics are a recent phenomenon for Roman studies and need further development.

⁵ The type of person writing in each media also differs. A craftsman writing a stone inscription is a specialist with an accepted set of rules for writing, while the author of the clay receipts was writing using colloquial language.

⁶ I rely on Louise Revell's (2009) theory of the active relationship found in surrounding material culture and the community.

⁷ Both Alex Mullen (2013a) and J.N. Adams (2003, 697-699) classify loan words in Gaulish as code-switching, stating that loan words retained their meaning from the previous language without too much contextual shift to the new language. Adams also makes the distinction between code-switching and language differentiation to clarify the extent to which the texts maintain single languages, even with the loan words.

⁸ I will not delve into the celto-skeptic versus philo-celtic debate in this discussion. The vehement arguments between the two camps of thought no longer contribute much beyond the questioning of the initial narrative describing the first development of "Celtic" societies. References for the skeptic side of the argument include John Collis (2003) and to a lesser extent Peter Wells (2001). For the scholars who argue for some attachment to the term "Celt," see Timothy Bridgman (2004/2005), Raimund Karl (2010).

⁹ For a summary of the excavation history of the site, see Marichal (1988).

¹⁰ [La Graufesenque Site Archéologique](#) includes an online catalogue of the stamps, in which the ratio of officinator stamps to dominus stamps is made apparent.

¹¹ One must note that the argument can be taken too far, ignoring local influence on a regional identity in favor of the perceived network.

¹² They most likely sent their pots to the local trading point and lost control of the product from there. Still, this point of trade was connected to the wider Roman world.

¹³ This form of the word appears more often than any other form, according to Marichal (1988, 97).

¹⁴ There was a tradition of writing inscriptions for centuries, but little else was found in the archaeological record. We do not know if there was any other writing tradition, but if it was present, it did not survive.

¹⁵ Marichal (1988, 71) suspects the theta in Gaulish makes a different sound than in the Greek alphabet, a "ts" rather than a "th" sound. J.F. Eska (1998, 124-5) states that the Tau Gallicum was a germinate without any comparison in the neighboring languages; it was thus indeed unique, though the pronunciation was standard.

¹⁶ The craftsmen at La Graufesenque only needed to be able to read certain words and phrases without a larger understanding of written vocabulary or grammar. This functionality can work without consistency in spelling or writing style.

¹⁷ The three types are discussed in Adams (2003).

¹⁸ In this case, “indigenous” refers to a development local to Gaul rather than from another region. It does not require a pre-conquest or pre-contact heritage to the pattern.

¹⁹ The sequence is (īθccc{). Lambert (2002) interprets the first letter as ī, but the form of cursive Gaulish in the Latin alphabet could also mean the symbol is a *t*.

²⁰ In the Greek numerical system, the θ stands for 9; see Tod (1950, 128). If it were imbedded in the Latin counting script it would not be in the middle, but at the end.

²¹ See Mullen (2013b, 100-102), Marichal (1988, 71-74), Adams (2003, 703-712). D. Ellis Evans (1967) takes each name to task as a part of his catalogue of Gaulish names.

Appendix**Figure 1:**

Autagis · cintux · XXI ·
 Tuθos decometos · luxtos ·
 UERECUNDA · canastri ·
 S = D
 eti · pedalis · CX
 eti · canastri · = = D
 ALBANOS · panias · (I) XXV ·
 ALBINOS · uinari · D
 SUMMACOS · catili · (I) (I) CDLX
 FELIX · Scota · catili · \bar{V} CC
 TRITOS · Priuatos · paraxi · \bar{V} DL
 DEPROSAGI · paraxidi · (I) (I) DC ·
 MASUETOS · acitabli · \bar{IX} D
 (Marichal 1988, 114, 1)

Figure 2:

Tuoos · [
 MASUETOS · can[as S =
 et · canas = = \bar{C} [
 mortari · = = CC
 MASUETOS · morta S = CL
 pedalis · LV ·
 pannas · S = (I)
 uinari · C ·
 inbratari · S = CXV
 T]RITI · PRIUATI · licuias · \bar{VI} C ·
 F]ELIX · SCOTA · catili · \bar{V} CC
]SUMACOS · catili · (I)C(I)
]MASUETOS · paraxidi · \bar{V}
]MASUETO · acita · \bar{IIX} D
 (Marichal 1988, 120-1, 5)

Figure 3:

Tuθθos petuā [
 can S = CCCL
 can ped XC
 mor S= CCC
 pan S= (I)
 mor = = CCC
 cana = = C
 uin ped CC
 FELIX cat (I I) DCCC
 SUMMACUS cat (I) DCL
 TRITUS liq[ui]aş I) (I) [[.....]]
 MASUETUS par (I)I(I)
]TRITUS par (I)I)CCC
]atramentari CC
]acet I) (I)I(I)I)D
 Summa
 \bar{XXX} C
 (Marichal 1988, 141-2, 17)

Figure 4a:

Flamine .[
 ESCENTE III[
 Furnus secun[dus
 JUCUNDUS pan (X)CD[
 GEMINUS pannas D.[pan-]
 nas DC APRIMAN[
 BURRUS ped IX bes C[
 uinaria CCC itus CL[
 ria CC Primulus cat[
 ALBANUS catil bur [
 STEPANUS catil (X)DL Apri[
 catil DCCC Belanio ca[
 CRESCENS catilla (X)DL L[
 catilla (X)
 UILIESIUS par (X)(X)C[
]...PINUS CC[
].R[

Figure 4b:

Fu]rnus secundus

] Idus Maias

CRES]CES k

(Marichal 1988, 182-183, 74a-b)

Figure 5:

Face A:

VII uxse[

flauinu[s

mesclus u[

A saturni]n[

ue]brullus par[

]s parax[

]sus cd

]tisan[

S=.[

Face B:

cau[

i]ccc[

Amandus lecora[

.....

Margin

]A uebrulli. P[

(RIG II L-30f)