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GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE INTERJECTION

Interjections — the universal yet neglected part of speech. That is how Felix entitled his introduction to the themed issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* in 1992. The contributors to this similarly themed issue of the HSS Bulletin would share the view that interjections do indeed deserve more attention than they have generally been given. We hope to show that they are enormously interesting both from a historiographical and from a theoretical point of view.

The idea for a collection of articles on the interjection emerged from discussion at the joint meeting of the Henry Sweet Society and the Studienkreis Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft, held in Helsinki in 2007, at which papers on the subject were presented by Els Elffers and Minne de Boer. Further contributions were subsequently added by David Cram and Ekaterina Velmezova, who were also at the Helsinki meeting but speaking on other subjects, and who both had a long-standing interest in interjections. To extend the historical coverage of the papers, a contribution was subsequently commissioned from Richard Ashdowne on interjections in the classical tradition.

The papers are presented in broadly chronological order. Ashdowne's paper draws on his classical expertise to give a synoptic view of both the Greek and the Latin periods. Elffers provides a focussed discussion of five linguists from the early 20th century, all of whom take a functional approach to language, but develop differing models of communication. De Boer gives his paper a broader historical sweep, and is particularly stimulating in pointing up how differences in approach to the interjection match up with differing theoretical perspectives. Velmezova's paper looks at the treatment of the interjection in Eastern Europe, in the aftermath of Saussure, giving due prominence to the 1941 article by Serge Karcevski, which remains a classic. My own contribution is programmatic in nature, and attempts to pull threads together from a theoretical perspective.

Our hope is that the contributions are usefully informative about the varying treatment of the interjection at different periods, and that, in the process, we raise a number of fruitful avenues for further research, both historiographical and theoretical. One open question is this: if approaches to interjections are this complex and complicated at various stages in the western-european tradition, how does this compare with other grammatical traditions of the world?

David Cram
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Contact details: david.cram@jesus.ox.ac.uk