UCLA PROGRAM IN **INDO-EUROPEAN STUDIES**

The Role of Christian Latin in the Development of Romance Vocabulary: A Lexical Study of the *Peregrinatio Egeriae*

Valentina Lunardi
vlunardi@g.ucla.edu

Christian Latin

SCHOLARSHIP STATUS

- Previous scholarship supported the idea of a Christian *Sondersprache* (see esp. Schrijnen and Mohrmann)

- More recently, this idea was rejected (see esp. Coleman 1987)

- The vocabulary recurring in Christian Latin texts is one of the few linguistic features we can securely treat as Christian

Burton (2008, 2011)

Christian Latin

SOME LEXICAL PHENOMENA

- Greek influence:

  - Loanwords, e.g. *baptizō* < Gk. βαπτίζω, *angelus* < Gk. ἄγγελος

  - Loan translations, e.g. *glōrificō* < Gk. δοξάζω

  - Semantic extension, e.g. *virtūs* (cf. Gk. δύναμις)

- Other:

  - Taboo avoidance (?), e.g. *ōrātiō* in place of *precēs*

Burton (2008, 2011)

Research Question

CHRISTIAN LATIN AND THE ROMANCE LANGUAGES

- More generally: can one measure the extent to which Christian Latin had a role in the development of the Romance Languages?

- Reformulated: is it possible to determine the extent to which specifically Christian lexical items played a role in the development of the lexicon of the Romance languages?

- See e.g. the cases of *parabola* and *parabolāre*, which substituted such basic Classical items as *verbum* and *loquī*

Test case: The Peregrinatio

REASONS BEHIND THE CHOICE

- Extensively studied previously (e.g. Löfstedt 1911, van Oorde 1963, Maraval 1982, Väänänen 1987, etc.)

- Considerable length despite missing beginning and end

- Author's profile hopefully guarantees avoidance of "correct" Classical vocabulary

- Relatively early date among texts of its kind (late 4th cent. AD)

Test case: The Peregrinatio

USUAL TREATMENT VS MY FOCUS

- Linguists and philologists have historically focused on:

    - Author's provenance issue (looking for hispanisms or gallicisms)

    - Late and vulgar features such as:

        - (probable) uses of *ille* and *ipse* as definite articles

        - use of *habeō* + infinitive

        - use of *quod*, *quia*, and *quoniam*

        - use of prepositions and the cases they take

Test case: The Peregrinatio

USUAL TREATMENT VS MY FOCUS

- Vocabulary also treated, but no one has compiled a corpus of Christian lexemes specifically to collect evidence of impact on Romance languages

- My aim:

  - Collect and analyse Christian lexemes

  - See which end up surviving in the Romance languages

  - Get better understanding of general rationale behind impact

Test case: The Peregrinatio

FRAMING THE TEST

- Only some open-class categories analysed: nouns, verbs, and adjectives

- Classification:

    - Lexical replacement: limited to borrowings

    - Semantic shift: limited to pre-Christian vocabulary

- Borrowings not relevant to lexical replacement not treated

Test case: The Peregrinatio

LEXICAL REPLACEMENT: *EREMUS*

- Borrowing from Greek ἔρημος / ἐρῆμος

- *heremus* in the text (spelling reported elsewhere)

- Clearly from Greek scriptures: earliest attestations in Tertullian and Cyprian (quoting the Gospel of John)

- 8 occurrences: 6 referring to the literal desert crossed by the Israelites after leaving Egypt, 2 referring to the metaphorical desert / isolation of ascetics (conforming to TLL predictions)

Test case: The Peregrinatio

LEXICAL REPLACEMENT: *EREMUS*

- (Admittedly) restricted use, but *heremus* is the most common word among those in the same semantic sphere:

    - *dēsertum* x1 accompanied by *Faran* – toponym

    - *dēserta loca* x1, describing the same desert as *heremus*

    - *sōlitūdō* x1, describing the state of ascetic men

- Romance descent: Sp. *yermo*, Por. *ermo*, Cat. *erm*, Occ. *èrm*, It. *ermo* and *eremo,* etc. – either adjectives, nouns, or both (*heremus* just noun in text)

Test case: The Peregrinatio

SEMANTIC SHIFT: *COMMŪNICĀRE*

- 8 occurrences, always meaning 'to receive the Holy Communion'

- Classical Latin meaning(s):

  - 'to share / take a share in (something with someone)'

  - 'to impart / communicate (information or knowledge)'

  - 'to discuss (something) together with (someone)'

- Use in *Peregrinatio*: narrowing of the 'to take a share in (something with someone)' meaning?

Test case: The Peregrinatio

SEMANTIC SHIFT: *COMMŪNICĀRE*

- TLL entry:

    - In Classical Latin this verb is only transitive

    - Starting with Tertullian we also get an intransitive use (meaning approximately 'to participate')

- Intransitive *commūnicāre* : a case of semantic extension?

Test case: The Peregrinatio

SEMANTIC SHIFT: *COMMŪNICĀRE*

- In the *Vetus Latina*, intransitive *commūnicāre* is used to translate:

  - κοινωνέω (e.g. Romans 12:13, 1 Timothy 5:22, 1 Peter 4:13)

  - συγκοινωνέω (e.g. Ephesians 5:11, Philippians 4:14, Revelation 18:4)

  - μετέχω (e.g. 1 Corithians 10:21)

  - All used intransitively in the cases that I checked

Test case: The Peregrinatio

SEMANTIC SHIFT: *COMMŪNICĀRE*

- Use in *Peregrinatio* (reassessment): *commūnicāre* also intransitive here – more correct to consider it a narrowing of the use found starting in Tertullian (i.e. 'to participate' > 'to participate in the Holy Communion' > 'to receive the Holy communion')?

- Romance descent: Rom. *cumineca*, Sp. *comulgar*, Por. *comungar*, Cat. *combregar*, etc. Rom., Sp., and Por. also borrow Latin *commūnicāre* in the meaning 'to communicate' –Rom. *comunica,* Sp. and Por. *comunicar*.

Test case: The Peregrinatio

SEMANTIC SHIFT: *MEMORIA*

- 12 occurrences, either meaning 'memorial', or (more often) 'tomb'

- Väänänen (1987:139): semantic extension on the model of Gk. μνῆμα

- μνῆμα indeed used with both meanings in biblical texts

- TLL entry: both meanings common in Christian writing

- *memoria* is the most common word among those in the same semantic sphere:

Test case: The Peregrinatio

SEMANTIC SHIFT: *MEMORIA*

- *tumba* x1 – meaning 'tomb'

- *sepulcrum* x1 – meaning 'tomb'

- no synonyms for the 'memorial' meaning

- Romance descendants often inherit both the Classical 'memory', 'remembrance' meaning, and the Christian 'memorial' meaning (e.g. It. *memoria*, Sp. *memoria*, and Por. *memória*) but not the 'tomb' meaning

Conclusions

- Confirmed tendency for Christian lexemes to be inherited by Romance languages (as expected):

  - Some lexemes still retain a Christian meaning in some Romance languages (e.g. *commūnicāre*)

  - Some others have mostly lost it (e.g. *eremus*)

- This kind of study still makes it possible to come up with interesting new material, and will eventually give a better understanding of the reasons behind the impact of Christian Latin on the Romance languages

Essential bibliography

Blackman, Deane R. and Gavin G. Betts. 1989. *Concordantia in Itinerarium Egeriae*. Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann

Burton, Philip H. 2008. "On Revisiting the Christian Latin *Sondersprache* Hypothesis." In David C. Parker (ed.) *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies?: Papers from the Fifth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New* Testament,149-172. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press

Burton, Philip H. 2011. "Christian Latin." In James Clackson (ed.) *A Companion to the Latin Language*, 485–501. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Coleman, Robert. 1987. "Vulgar Latin and the diversity of Christian Latin." In József Hermann (ed.) *Latin vulgaire – Latin tardif: Actes du 1er Colloque International sur le latin vulgaire et tardif, Pécs, 2-5 septembre 1985*, 37–52. Tübringen: Niemeyer

Franceschini, Ezio, and Robert Weber. 1965. "Itinerarium Egeriae." In Paul Geyer et al. (eds.) *Itineraria et alia geographica*, 29–106. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 175. Turnhout: Brepols

Löfstedt, Einar. 1911. *Philologischer Kommentar zur Peregrinatio*. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der lateinischen Sprache. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell

Löfstedt, Einar. 1959. *Late Latin*. Oslo: H. Aschehoug

Meyer-Lübke, Wilhelm. 1935. *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg: C. Winter

OLD = *Oxford Latin Dictionary*

van Oorde, Willem. 1963. *Lexicon Aetherianum.* Hildesheim: Georg Olms

TLL = *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*

Väänänen, Veikko. 1987. *Le journal épître d'Égérie. Étude linguistique*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia

Thank You