The Functional Distribution of Latin Forms in Western Europe of the Early Middle Ages

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of the historical dynamics of the functional distribution of Latin forms common in Western Europe in the IV–X centuries. Studying the history of the development of the Latin language as the most important source of Romance languages in the light of these developments is an extremely important phenomenon, because it is able to bring the researcher closer to understanding the issues of the emergence of Romance languages and the vitality of the Latin language after the collapse of the Roman Empire. After the fall of Rome, interest in Roman culture and classical Latin in Western European countries is still relevant. It is known that in the late period of the development of the Roman Empire, there is a differentiation of forms of classical and folk Latin, of which the vulgar, Folk Latin successfully contributed to the processes of linguistic development and the formation of new Romance languages.

However, the distancing of the forms of classical and folk Latin is primarily associated with the emergence of a new religion—Christianity and the emergence of a new Latin form—Christian Latin. Thus, Latin remains in school education and is newly developed in Christian communities. Christian Latin is a means of linguistic unification of Gaul in the Middle Ages. Christian literature combines the norm of classical literature and the folk language and becomes the new language standard. The crucial role of Christianity in the development of the Latin language and medieval European culture and society is noted.

To solve the tasks in the work, the historical method is used to establish types of language situations and conditions and their temporal correlation in the territory of Western Europe; comparative-historical, based on a cultural-historical interpretation and identification of types of idioms; comparative-comparative, suggesting a systematization of emerging language situations and conditions on the territory of the studied areas in the specified period. An analysis of the various forms of the Latin language that existed in Western Europe right up to the New Time allows us to judge the process of transforming one language into another as extremely complex, fed by various sources, each of which is marked by its own developmental features. Materials and conclusions of the study can be used in theoretical courses in romance philology, general linguistics, in the course of the Latin language.

The Spread of Latin Forms

It is known that in the IV-X centuries Roman culture and the Latin language continue to enjoy great prestige among the inhabitants of many Western European countries. As an international language, Latin serves all sectors of human life: trade, politics, education, science. However, they are not the organizing, unifying core of the life of European medieval society, but the new religion—
Christianity. It gradually becomes a powerful factor in the ideological unity of all the territories of the Roman world, thereby ensuring its linguistic and cultural continuation.

The Medieval Latin world: Classical, Folk, School and Christian Latin

During this period, Latin developed within the framework of two social structures - the school system of education and Christian communities. Both systems form a single common Latin world for medieval man. Medieval man lives in this system of the Latin language, sensing, on the one hand, its tradition, rooted in the ancient world of secular classical and religious patristic literature; on the other hand, it is a world which, with the same texts, invades the everyday life of a person through schooling and liturgical services. Such an experience of the Latin language made it possible to feel it and use it as a living language [1]. The language norms of the Latin language in written and oral forms were understood and accepted before the language reform of Charlemagne, together with the possibility of changing the Latin language. K. Mormann in this regard notes that linguistic norms in the Middle Ages are permissive, evolutionary in nature [2].

It is known that in the last centuries of the existence of the Roman Empire, distancing of the forms of classical and folk Latin is found. However, this phenomenon is not related to the fact that of the two forms of Latin, only its folk form is included in the processes of linguistic development and variation, which, ultimately, contribute to the formation of new Romance languages. The main reason for the distancing of classical and folk Latin is seen by many researchers in the emergence of a new Latin form—Christian Latin.

The Innovations in Medieval Latin

As a new religious ideology, developing in the I–II centuries the first millennium in the urban environment of commoners, Christianity contributed to the development of new meanings for the already existing lexical units of folk Latin; the resemantization of many lexical units contributes, in the opinion of G. Meerszek, to the ennoblissement of popular Latin [3]. However, the school system of education did not accept these innovations, adhering to the practice of teaching the old classical norms. In subsequent centuries, folk Latin in its Christianized form, gradually approaching local forms of speech, is transformed into Romance languages, and school Latin is evolving into a new artificial language form, the so-called Medieval Latin. It is not the native language for any of the social groups of Gaul and exists only as a linguistic form studied in the framework of the school system.

With the advent of the III–IV centuries new generations of Christians, originating from noble and educated citizens, folk Latin begins to draw a lot of concepts and images from the ancient Greco-Roman literary tradition. Without denying the influence of popular culture on Christian Latin, already in the IV century Christian literature increasingly focuses on classical norms. This symbiosis of an earlier folk tradition with the classical one, implemented within the framework of Christian Latin, was not without reason received in linguistic literature the name second classical period of Latin literature.

The heterogeneity of the style of many church fathers, based on this symbiosis, is the most important feature of Christian texts of this period. However, later on, the awareness gradually emerges of the need for a certain adaptation of Christian Latin to the folk language, which, in the Merovingian era, found itself in a situation of increasing regionalization and Germanization. A simple and clear style, adapted mainly to the speech of ordinary residents of the villages of the crisis Merovingian era, is characteristic of Christian authors of the VI–VII centuries—Sidonia Apollinaria, Gregory of Tours, Gregory the Great and others. Again there is a convergence of Christian Latin and local forms of speech [4]. At the same time, these Christian preachers and writers do not completely abandon the inherited classical traditions, which are creatively processed in order to better adapt the Latin language to the sociocultural reality in which it operates. The ultimate goal of the Church Fathers during this period, however, like any other, is the accessibility of the word of God, expressed in a language that people understand.
The Christian Latin/the Folk Latin

We emphasize, however, once again that the language of Christian texts has never been dissolved in the language of the people. Despite the fact that from the very beginning, Latin Roman Christian communities gravitated towards the transfer of new meanings by existing folk linguistic means, the development of new meanings for existing words, new clichéd phrases quite quickly, according to Albert Blaise, turns the language of the first Christian communities into a kind of group tongue (Gruppensprache) [5]. In connection with its spread, it gradually acquires the qualities of a common Christian form of speech, a kind of Latin Christian koyne.

Thus, we state that in the V–VII centuries Christian Latin, being somewhat close to regional folk linguistic forms, nevertheless differs from them: profane vocabulary penetrating Christian Latin from the folk language is reinterpreted, gaining the right to be used in Christian written texts in the future. Linguistic means of secular classical literature are subjected to a similar treatment. In this sense, we believe that Christian literature is becoming a new linguistic standard, organically linked to the previous norm of classical literature and the popular language. Christian Latin is also the only means of linguistic unification of Gaul during this period. Thus, Christianity played a crucial role in the development of medieval European society and the Latin language.

Classical Latin in Galia

In the VII–VIII centuries in connection with the opening of episcopal schools in the famous Christian schools of north-eastern, central and southern Gaul, as well as with the need for in-depth study of Christian texts from previous eras, interest in classical Latin again intensifies.

This interest becomes leading during the reign of Charlemagne, a period marked by political rapprochement with the Roman Church. Latin of the classical era is again regarded as the ideal of elegant literature. The style of Virgil, Cicero, Ovid inspires R. More, E. le Noir, Eginhard and other poets of this era [6].

If the spread of school education and interest in ancient culture in the Carolingian era are unconditionally assessed by modern scholars as a positive result of the reforms undertaken, then an attempt to carry out the language reform of the popular Latin, widespread in France during this period, is increasingly evaluated negatively in a number of modern linguistic works. Note that the social status of the new Gallo-Roman form of speech was significantly lower than the Germanic forms of speech, having the status of the languages of power; the latter were actively used in the training system. During this period, numerous translations are made from Latin into Germanic languages; Latin itself was studied through Germanic forms of speech [7].

F. Bruno notes that the Galloroman speech in the Carolingian period was not at all perceived by the German elite of society as the heir to Latin [8]. That is why the main direction of the language reform of Charlemagne was a clear distinction between written language and spoken language. The first was supposed to be as close as possible to the Latin language models of the IV–VI centuries. The second, through perceived liturgical texts, was supposed to adapt to the phonetic principle of the first—read and pronounced texts should fully reproduce the form of the written word.

In this manifestation, the language reform of Charlemagne could not be accepted by the population; folk Christian Latin, which had previously developed in a lively relationship with the era, being placed in the tight framework of the grammar of Donatus and Priscian, severed living ties with modern society. Instead, it offered a perceived as an alien language pattern, in fact—a foreign language of previous centuries. It is known that the lack of understanding by the majority of the population of the liturgical texts sounded under such a rule led to the official rejection of this rule in 813, fixed by the decision of the local Church Council in the city of Tours. From now on, all the sermons were delivered either in French—lingua romana rustica, or in German—lingua thiostisca. The named date is also considered the date of official recognition of the French language as an independent language.

This testifies, on the one hand, to significant shifts that have occurred in Christian Latin over the past time (IV–IX centuries); on the other, about the peculiar failure of the language reform of
Charlemagne. Focusing on the convergence of the liturgical language of France with the liturgical language of Rome, the reform ultimately contributed to the division of Christian Latin into 1) church, oriented to Roman Latin and 2) folk Latin, merged with local forms of speech. With a return to the old language norm of the IV–VI centuries, set forth in the works of Donatus and Priscian and promoted as part of the language reforms carried out in France by the English monk Alquin, the liturgical Latin acquired in France a character divorced from real life. Folk Latin in its developed form has become recognized in France as one of the new Romance languages—French. Finally, school Latin, also oriented towards the old language norm, is becoming an international means of communication, mainly in the scientific field of knowledge, reaching its peak in large European universities in the XII–XV centuries.

Conclusion
In the history of the formation of vulgar dialects or Romance languages, the written and literary tradition of the Latin language appears at all stages of the functioning of Latin in various European countries as the most important unifying language pattern. It differs from oral forms of speech (dialects, dialects) in a much larger unity of language means and a rather unified norm, repeatedly updated: during the Merovingian period it is updated, more intuitively, by each author; during the period of Karl the Great’s language reform and later, when developing literature on vulgar dialects (that is, developing their functional styles), this update of the written Latin tradition takes place institutionally on the basis of Donatus and Priscian recognized as exemplary grammars.

References