# THE LINGUISTIC HISTORY
## OF LATIN-SPEAKING PANNONIA: SYNTAX

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The question how the Latin parlance of the province Pannonia was developing, compared to the whole imperial Latinity, emerged long ago, but no comprehensive study has been made up to now concerning that. Scholars that face the problem approaching it via epigraphy or social history, are compelled to quote such completely out-of-date reviews even until now, as M. V. Luzsénszky's case list from 1933;[1] two comprehensive monographs were written in the last decades (those of H. Mihăescu[2] and G. Galdi[3]) which deal with the whole oriental part of the empire with Pannonia present at least as a partial unit therein, yet not as a separate one: the authors suppose implicitly that the development of the Pannonian parlance is roughly the same as that of Moesia or, *ad absurdum*, that of the Latin minorities of Syria and Egypt. Indeed, only partial researches were made concerning Pannonia by J. Herman[4] and P. Kovács.[5] All these comprehensive or partial studies were dedicated to the phonetics or to morphology to some extent, not even a sketch was drawn concerning the syntax. It is an inevitable question whether there are distinctive linguistic phenomena in the syntax of the monuments of the Pannonian Latinity; another missing link of the researches is that – at least as far as the comprehensive studies are concerned – no one faces the question: how the inner development of the language was taking

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[1] *M. V Luzsénszky*, A pannoniai latin feliratok nyelvtana (The Grammar of Latin Inscriptions in Pannonia). EPhK 57 (1933) 95-100, 228-231.

[2] *H. Mihăescu,* La langue latine dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe, Bucureşti–Paris 1978.

[3] *G. Galdi,* Grammatica delle iscrizioni latine dell'impero (province orientali). Morfosintassi nominale. Roma 2004.

[4] *J. Herman*, Posit (=posuit) et questions connexes dans les inscriptions pannoniennes. AAntH 9 (1961) 321-331; *J. Herman,* Latinitas Pannonica. FilKözl 14 (1968) 364-376, *J. Herman*, Le latin dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain. Problêmes et perspectives de la recherche. In: ANRW II 29/2 (1983), 1089-1106.

[5] *P. Kovács,* Graecism in Pannonian Latin Inscriptions. ACD 34-35 (1998-1999) 395-406; *Idem*, in CIGP[2] 102-115.

shape in the more than four centuries of the province, how the remains of the language are to be set into chronological levels.

Regrettably there are only two sources for such a research: *a)* inscriptions, with texts that are syntactically rigid, concise, often scarcely disposable into sentences, even more often uninterpretably mutilated; e.g. they are explicitly void of subordinate clauses, *b)* the corpus of Victorinus, the only classical Pannonian author.[6] Linguistic analyse of the latter is only in the beginning phase, in spite of the frequent citation of it. Naturally Victorinus, a writer of literary language and of some rhetoric education, is a source for the local parlance only in a reduced measure, not to mention that we must first separate the data based on the *Vetus Latina*.

I had to use a special altered kind of statistics, first exigency of which was to imply the whole epigraphic material of the province, now containing more than 6000 inscriptions. A necessary but not sufficient auxiliary is my epigraphic word index of the province, Lexicon Epigraphicum Pannonicum,[7] with a supplement published in 2005, which is presently up-to-date.[8] I had to deviate from traditional statistics in some points. *1)* Formular and individual expressions were to be separated, and the former group could be used only as a control group, though it contains at least the 4/5 part of the whole. *2)* It must always be taken into consideration that a continuous reclassicizing tendency modifies the rates of every phenomena of the epigraphic corpus, and of Victorinus even more seriously. It mostly results in the fact that the phenomena of the everyday speech are underrepresented. We must take into account the circumstances of each inscription and ponder the data acc to viewpoints such as which social layer the placer of the monument belonged to, whether the ethnic affiliation of the placer can be defined or not, to what extent was the cutting of the stone accurate, and to what degree the text was official.


I. How can we use our sources?
1. Literature and Pannonian parlance


A textual criticism of the extant works of Victorinus of Poetovio, *De fabrica mundi* and the commentaries on the Apocalypse, showed that the 19-20th cen-

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[6] Victorini Episcopi Petavionensis Opera ed. Ioh. Haussleiter, Vindobonae–Lipsiae 1916, Victorin de Poetovio Sur l'Apocalypse suivi du Fragment Chronologique et de la Construction du Monde, ed. *M. Dulaey*. Sources chrétiennes 423. Paris 1997.

[7] *B. Fehér*, Lexicon Epigraphicum Pannonicum. Budapest 1997.

[8] *B. Fehér*, Lexicon Epigraphicum Pannonicum. Supplementum 1994-2003. AAH 56 (2005) 213-244.

tury editorial work normalized and therefore deformed the text. By re-emending these loci, first we can have a more authentic Victorinian text, and thereafter such data are multiplied that can reveal the real parlance of Victorinus. On the other hand, these data were radically diminished and polarized by contrasting the biblical citations (separated already by J. Haussleiter and M. Dulaey, with a few smaller exceptions)[9] and the text of the commentaries. So we could state that the Bible translation used by Victorinus is more conservative, more 'classical', than his own parlance, being certainly earlier, maybe of Italian origin. Naturally, hereafter we have to banish every linguistic peculiarities of the biblical loci from the Pannonian researches.

Though Victorinus himself is also classicizing in terms of morphology, and only a few data of his works can be related to the spoken language of Poetovio, yet he wrote with less consciousness in terms of syntax, using a level slightly different from the classical tradition. So we can use his data with some caution almost in every case concerning the syntax. Caution is needed because, though only to a limited extent, stylistic reasons may have exercised influence on his writing manner too. I could state the use of a weak prose rhythm in his works, which extends only to the most common types.


## 2. Pannonian epigraphic poetry

We can identify the traces of more than fifty poems in the Pannonian inscriptions. (The use of the word is deliberate, to identify the traces, because roughly a quarter of the poems are helplessly distorted, written with mistakes and mutilated.) They contain mostly typical verses known from the whole empire, but there are some individual ones too, and the linguistic form of a significant part of them is typical of the local community. We can divide the various poems of the four Pannonian centuries into groups, which are of different literary values, but even more characteristically they are of different states of parlance.

The first group contains the early poems of the Carnuntum area. There are ones composed from mere formulas and ones drawn up individually as reminiscences of the former ones, but their structure is mostly the same; they can be appreciated as literary products but are quite useless for a linguistic analysis. Some later 3rd century poems written under their influence can reveal some interest features to us.

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[9] Victorinus ed. Haussleiter XXXVII-XXXIX; *M. Dulaey*, Victorin de Poetovio: premier exégête latin. Paris 1993, 69-86.

The 3$^{rd}$ century group of Aquincum is far more interesting as far as their language is concerned; we know poems partially connected with them from later ages and from a wider circle, even at Brigetio. Nevertheless we find some poems of a real literary value too. On the basis of these, one can establish some general tendencies of the phonetic development of the 3$^{rd}$ century NE Pannonia: vowel shifts due to accent shift, and the role of consonantal *i* and *hiatus* in the everyday language.

Some smaller groups, though closer to the everyday speech, are hardly usable because of the sporadic, mutilated and formulaic data. On the contrary, poems from the 4$^{th}$ century, mostly from the southern regions, are more individual, at any rate they do not belong to definite groups. They show a different stage of the parlance from that of the 3$^{rd}$ century. This knowledge is essential for setting the chronology of the development of Pannonian Latinity. Last, but not least, with a systematic analysis of the formularization and usage of words, sometimes we can identify texts as verses, which have no consistent rhythm therein, because while written into stone, the original form was distorted.

## II. Data concerning the local parlance
### 1. Cases

If we follow the order of syntactic functions, instead of the uses of individual cases, we will not see a constant and disordered interchange of cases, some kind of errata collection, but a system where functions have several realizations, some of which are identical with the literary ones and some are different (fewer). So we can accept as a proofed fact that the object, subject, indirect object &c. remained separate in cases, and are almost always discernable in spite of the frequent phonetic coincidences. Some contaminations, mostly connected with the dative, are mistakes of wording and/or ambiguous situations, and do not originate from the language itself; indeed the case government of prepositions is conspicuously conservative too. The late diffusion of *dativus adnominalis* is confined to the territory south of Pannonia, this phenomenon is hardly traceable here even marginally; the accusative, ablative and genitive coexisted peacefully in the (very numerous) temporal clauses, with only a few innovations. A serious linguistic innovation can be seen only in the case of adverbs of place, that is, *ablativus loci* prevailed over *locativus* and *accusativus loci* in the most part of the province, while a region is identifiable east to the Servitium–Certissa–Teutoburgium line, where the tripartite case was still used in the 3$^{rd}$, or maybe even in the 4$^{th}$-5$^{th}$ centuries.

## 2. Structure of the nominal syntagms

We can see a typical structure of syntagms in the text of Victorinus and in the individual wordings of inscriptions as well, different from the formulaic wordings and the literary standard, but these are not identical themselves either. Anyway, it is striking to see that the Victorinian language is hardly determined by the Bible at all. The 3rd century parlance seems to have had attribute-substantive and possession-possessor order in the majority, yet as the ages drew on, the possessor-possession order became more common while the attribute-substantive order prevailed even more conspicuously.

## 3. Structure of the sentence

A statistic analysis showed that the structure of the sentence was conservative in the province, with a slight dominance of the SOV type. (Such an analysis was not an easy task because at the most 20% of the epigraphic material is supposed to have been constructed in a way that is partially individual.) Juxtapositional structure was always spreading, definitely dominant in the 3rd century, but not obligatory yet. The SVO type was spreading too, but it is strange how late its rate changed significantly, up to the 2nd half of 3rd century. Naturally the more conscious the parlance, the more classicizing the structure, but we cannot say that any of the peculiarities of Latin sentence structure had been alien from the aborigines and that they could not accommodate themselves to that; and regrettably, the syntax of the lowest social layers seems untraceable for us because the material they left to us is formulaic to such a high degree. The content of the epigraphic texts is regrettably monotonous, so it is very doubtful to find the influence of the message type on the sentence structure. Anyway, the sentences of the local parlance seem less determined by the topic-comment relations than those of the literary language.

Our knowledge of the vulgar Latinity is very likely most insufficient even in the problems of word order; therefore it is highly appreciable that we have now relatively certain information on the parlance of one province. This information differs from what we suppose about a general vulgar development, yet it is no *dialectal* peculiarity but the explicit conservatism of the region.

### 4. On agreement and other syntactical problems

The local parlance had a less strict norm for the agreement of number of subject and predicate, than the literary language, but in the agreement of gender and person there was a virtually total 'classical' rigour, and the seemingly 'erroneous' co-ordinations of cases prove always to appear due to either a contamination, a mistaken situation, or an explicit misspelling of the downtaker.

There are only very few data concerning modal sentences (in the literary texts too), which prove that the hortative conjunctive was spreading instead of imperative, though we cannot say with certainty that it was dominant. Passive constructions were continuously widespread and beloved, with the acting person named either classically or by *per* + accusative from the earliest times.

### 5. Co-ordinate, subordinate, participial and infinitive clauses

Co-ordinate clauses were always frequently in use; even rarer conjunctions, such as *atque* and *-que,* were not quite outcast from the spoken language, *-que* must have been a constituent of the vulgar language at least to the 2$^{nd}$ half of the 3$^{rd}$ century. On the other hand, to the end of the 2$^{nd}$ century a compound conjunction *itemque* was born. Equivalently widespread types for multiplied co-ordination are polysyndetism or *0+et* conjunction sequence, but the asyndetic form preferred by the literary language is rare.

As for the subordinate clauses, only the relative clauses can be traced because of the peculiarities of the material, and they seem mostly conservative, save for a frequent substitution of a formally co-ordinate asyndetic clause; it is very probable that the synchronous temporal clauses were in a frequent living use too, but *ablativus absolutus* was more used than antecedent clauses. There are interesting features of the development of the *consecutio temporum*: though there was no radical collapse, yet different non-classical constructions were connected with past sentences (while present tenses seem conservative), the relative spread or prevalence of which may be defined only when the present material is significantly enlarged. The *ablativus absolutus* is alive, and even beloved, and conservative by the layers of a conscious parlance, but with some traces of transformation by the lower layers, while gerundive is practically extinct. At the moment, the use of *accusativus cum infinitivo* gives a very ambiguous picture: there are data that show its spread and others that show its repression.

194