

## CHANCELLERY LATIN IN FIFTEENTH-SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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The article presents a systemic analysis of the chancellery Latin language of Ukraine in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. A characteristic feature of the Latin language of this period was its usage by bilingual readers. The parallel usage of Latin and Ukrainian languages caused the inevitable modifications of Latin of that period because of the influence of Ukrainian language.

*Key words:* medieval Latin, chancellery Latin, Ukrainian and Latin bilingualism, virtual integrity.

A key element in the general history of culture is the history of language, which is inseparable from the social, cultural and political life of a nation.

Starting from the end of the fourteenth century a large number of linguistic booklets of the Galician Rus were written in Latin, which had penetrated here as a language of public life and legislation.

The introduction of Latin was not easy and it took place in stages. Evidence of familiarity with Latin dating from the thirteenth to the first half of the fourteenth centuries has been found in trade, economic and diplomatic exchanges between the courts of the Galician-Volhynian Principality and their western Polish, Hungarian and Czech neighbors. Ethnic blending, mutual support among political elites and frequent blood ties between dynasties also united them. At that time Latin documents were issued by the office of the Galician-Volhynian princes, first addressed mainly to West European countries, and then, probably, for internal circulation as given privileges, drawn up according to the established Latin record of service of similar acts in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland [Kupcyn's'kyj 1983, 25-45].

From the mid-fourteenth century, when an almost 50-year struggle for the so-called "Galician inheritance" began, other ethnic groups of population, with an excellent mastery of Latin, came from Silesia, the German lands, the Kingdom of Hungary and Poland to the territory of the Galician Rus, devastated by wars, laying the foundations of the future multi-ethnic society.

Thus, Latin came to be used in this territory simultaneously in three spheres:

- 1) municipal and city administration;
- 2) the Church;
- 3) among the gentry (i.e. *zemskyi*) and their role in public life.

A remarkable role in spreading the knowledge of Latin was played by Western European printed books which achieved mass circulation in the Galician Rus at the turn of the sixteenth century and even reached Central Ukraine. For example, as I. Los'kyj says, in the library of the Kyiv Pecersk Monastery alone there remained two late fifteenth century and sixteen early sixteenth century editions [Los'kyj 1931, 99-104]

Another viable way for Ukrainian students to improve their Latin language skills was for them to take study trips to the West [Nud'ha 1968, 315-316]. According to Krakow University records, from the year 1400 to 1500 students from Rus were mainly the sons of townspeople [Jakovenko 1997, 88], therefore they were coming back home as potential teachers, lawyers, clerks in courts, etc. Ukrainian students also appear in German and Italian university records, where they were registered under the names *Ruthenus* (Latin form of the ethnonym "Ruthenian"), *Roxolanus*, *Russicus*.

A comparison between documents written in Old Ukrainian in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries and Polish, Czech, Hungarian and German acts in Latin testifies to the fact that as early as the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, Rus diplomacy had been influenced by documents compiled in Latin. This was reflected in the wording of regulations, in the structure and style of the record of service, as well as the lexical and grammatical peculiarities of the language in such documents.

Due to parallel usage, Latin and Ukrainian words and word constructions inevitably interacted and that explains why Latin could not avoid being modified by the use of a chain of lexical, morphological and syntactical peculiarities of Ukrainian.

Thus, due to close contact between both official languages (Latin and Ukrainian), and also through the mediation of Polish and Czech, a specific version of medieval chancellery Latin emerged in Ukraine, the study of which is important both for the history of Latin and Ukrainian, and for the development of the theory of bilingualism as a whole.

There is general agreement in contemporary linguistics that contact between languages implies the interaction of two or more languages that influences the structure and lexicon of one or of both of them. Researchers in the field of interlinguistics suggest different classifications of the types of linguistic contact depending on which aspects are emphasized in the process of the linguistic interaction: reasons, mechanisms or consequences. The study of the court clerks Ukrainian-Latin bilingualism in Ukraine in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries is based on the classification of the linguistic interaction types, suggested by S.V. Semcyns'kyj in his monograph *Semantic Linguistic Interference* [Semcyns'kyj 1974].

In Ukrainian and foreign linguistics, numerous research projects have been devoted to the study of Ukrainian-Latin linguistic interaction. However, the central problem of these linguistic works is the lexicological analysis of Latin, namely detecting the ways in which loanwords penetrate the recipient language, determining the functions of the intermediary language (Czech, Polish and German) and establishing the historical sources.

Since Medieval Latin fulfilled numerous functions in church and religious, scientific, social and political usage, it had a great number of variations. The general consensus is that Medieval Latin was based on Late Classical Latin, and especially on the language of Biblical legends and theological treatises of that period. According to Lehmann, this language was endowed with a sort of "Greek and Eastern luster" [Lehmann 1911, 45].

It is also worth underlining that, of all languages known to us, only Latin widely functioned without any native speaker in the Middle Ages and in Modern Times

[Hensers'kyj 1957, 28]. As A. Meillet put it [Meillet 1928, 5]: precisely because the Latin of the Middle Ages was not a stable unity, it was mastered by studying Late Latin grammar and by imitating Classical authors. The absence of a living linguistic community showed that the continuity of perception and conception, on the basis of which language develops naturally, was becoming lost.

An analysis of the linguistic and cultural situation of that time allows Medieval Latin to be qualified as a virtual entirety. However, though the Latin of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries did not have any language community, it had all the dynamics of a living language: sound changes, new words, loanwords and assimilation of materials belonging to another language, as well as changes in meanings. Most of these phenomena harked back to late antiquity, to popular Latin, Late Latin and Liturgical Latin.

This observation is reinforced by the fact that any document or any court record in Latin was the result of transposition, any modern historian or philologist wishing to understand the content of the text, should translate it again, but in the opposite direction, that is from Latin into the author's native language. Indeed. Medieval business Latin expressions and formulas were closer to the modern lexicon than the dialecticisms of the Roman languages. From the linguistic point of view, according to A. Gurevic [1975, 30-74], it is easier to translate the Latin texts of this period into modern languages, than the texts written in national dialects. But this relative ease can be misleading, since this is just a literal translation, not a translation of the meaning; therefore it is important to look for the thought hidden behind the linguistic expression, i.e. to move from the plan of expression to the plan of content.

On the other hand, Medieval Latin was a logical continuation of Classical Latin, which did not constitute a unity either because of the peculiarities of its reception in different countries: for instance, you cannot transfer the Latin that functioned in France to the territory of Hungary, Poland or Ukraine, especially in the period when it gradually transformed from the language of the Catholic Church to the language of jurisprudence, universities and diplomacy. Under such premises, a certain mastery of Latin grammatical norms, depending on both personal skills and on cultural circumstances in general, played a significant role.

As to the Ukrainian version of Medieval Latin, a Slavic influence is clearly detectable, probably through the intermediacy of the Polish and Czech languages.

In that historical period, Old Ukrainian (the Eastern Slavic – or “vernacular”, which had been used in chancellery since Kyivan Rus) had not developed sufficiently to oppose the authority of Latin. However, like any living language, it was able to breathe new life into constant forms of Latin morphology and syntax. First of all, discrepancies in the way Latin was used were determined by how well it was understood. This resulted in a saturation of barbarisms on the one hand, and, on the other, a blind imitation of high Latin examples in the way the Ukrainian variant of Latin was used. But in both cases the continuous influence of the native language (Ukrainian or Polish) manifested itself to a certain extent, even if the average clerk's knowledge of Latin was quite satisfactory.

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**Канцелярська латина у XV-XVI ст.**

У статті представлена характеристика канцелярської латини в Україні XV-XVI ст. Характерною ознакою цього періоду було паралельне використання латинської та української мов, що позначилося змінами у системі латинської мови внаслідок українських впливів.

*Ключові слова:* середньовічна латина, канцелярська латина, українсько-латинський білінгвізм, віртуальна цілісність.

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В статье представлен анализ канцелярской латыни в Украине XV-XVI в. Характерной особенностью данного периода было параллельное использование латинского и украинского языков, что стало причиной изменений в системе латинского языка вследствие влияния украинского языка.

*Ключевые слова:* средневековая латынь, канцелярская латынь, украинско-латинский билингвизм, виртуальная целостность.

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