

Introduction to the problem of African Latin
Béla Adamik (University ELTE Budapest, Hungary)

I. The problem of African Latin according to the metalinguistic evidences.

1. Sittl (1882) 92f: 'Tumor Africus': „So konnte es kommen, dass man ihn für die Eigentümlichkeit einer blossen Rhetorenschule, etwa dem *Asianum genus* der Griechen vergleichbar, ausgab, obgleich, wer auch nur oberflächlich mit einer semitischen Sprache vertraut ist, den spezitisch semitischen Charakter dieses Schwulstes nicht verkennen kann. An die Spitze stelle ich die Verbindung eines synonymen Genitivs mit einem Substantive, wobei die Abstrakta vorherrschen;”

E.g. Apuleius, De Platone 1,12: *ad aevitatem temporis*, but also Lucretius 1,558: *aetas ... temporis*, Firmicus Maternus (of Syracuse) 219,24: *temporis aetas*, cf. Kroll (1897) 584f.

cf. Svennung (1935) 211: *Genitivus inhaerentiae*: „echtlateinische ... Abundanz” E.g. Palladius: *mora temporis* (= *tempus*), *saevitiae ira* (= *saevitia*)

2. Sittl (1882) 101f: „die Zusammenstellung verschiedener Grade (...) Hier stehen die Afrikaner wieder in der ersten Linie. (...) Der Superlativ wird mit dem Positiv verbunden, wobei letzterer meistens voranssteht” E.g. Apuleius, Metamorphoses 9,37: „*saevis () et ferocissimis canibus*”

but cf. Epistulae D. Bruti ad Ciceronem: „*genus hominum () seditiosum et incertissimum*” or Bellum Alexandrinum 3,1: „*homines ingeniosi atque acutissimi*” cf. Kroll (1897) 586f.

3. Apuleius, Florida 20: *Tota civitas eruditissimi estis, penes quos omnem disciplinam pueri discunt, iuvenes ostentant, senes docent. Carthago provinciae nostrae magistra venerabilis, Carthago Africae Musa caelestis, Carthago Camena togatorum.* („For you, her citizens, are full of learning to a man, your boys learn, your young men display, and your old men teach all manner of knowledge. Carthage is the venerable instructress of our province, Carthage is the heavenly muse of Africa, Carthage is the fount whence all the Roman world draws draughts of inspiration.”)

4. Apuleius, Florida 9: *Quis enim vestrum mihi unum soloecismum ignoverit? quis vel unam syllabam barbaram pronuntiatam donaverit? quis incondita vel vitiosa verba temere quasi delirantibus permiserit blaterare?* (“For what man among you would pardon me one solecism or condone the barbarous pronunciation of so much as one syllable? Who of you will suffer me to stammer in disorderly and faulty phrases such as might rise to the lips of madmen?”)

5. Norden (1923) 596f: "der bombastische und zugleich gezierte Stil der Afrikaner nichts ist als der griechische Asianismus (Manierismus) in lateinischem Gewände (...) nur höre man auf, von einer in Afrika geborenen Latinität zu reden. Ich werde weiterhin beweisen, daß derselbe Stil später in Gallien herrschend wurde; daß er uns zuerst in Afrika begegnet, hat nichts Befremdliches.”

6. African authors

Historians: Suetonius, Florus, Apuleius, Fronto, Aurelius Victor

Grammarians: Nonius Marcellus, Sulpicius Apollinaris, Marius Victorinus, Pompeius, Martianus Capella, Priscianus

Lawyers: Aemilius Papinianus

Introduction to the problem of African Latin
Béla Adamik (University ELTE Budapest, Hungary)

Christian authors: Tertullianus, Minucius Felix, Cyprianus, Arnobius, Lactantius, Augustinus

7. Kroll (1897) 590: „es wäre Unrecht zu leugnen, dass in der Zeit des Apuleius und Tertullian die Ansätze zu einer Sonderentwicklung des in Afrika gesprochenen Lateins vorhanden gewesen sein können. Aber das uns überkommene sprachliche Material ist nicht der Art, dass es uns gestattet, über diese Dialekticismen mehr zu erfahren als einige unsichere Einzelheiten.”

8. Löfstedt (1959) 42: „SITTL's theory, propounded when he was only twenty years old, was subjected to a searching criticism by KROLL (Rh. Mus. LII, pp. 569 ff.), but had already been retracted by SITTL himself in a remarkable palinode (BURSIAN'S Jahresber. LXVIII (1892), pp. 226 ff.; 236). The theory of African Latin now has no more than a historical interest, but it is instructive from the standpoint of methodology, as showing how easily one can generalize from a number of peculiarities in certain writers and be led thereby to false conclusions.”

9. Hieronymus, *Comm. in Gal.* 357A (PL 26): *unum est quod inferimus, et promissum in exordio reddimus, Galatas excepto sermone Graeco, quo omnis Oriens loquitur, propriam linguam eamdem pene habere quam Treuiros, nec referre, si aliqua exinde corruperint, cum et Aphri Phoenicum linguam nonnulla ex parte mutauerint, et ipsa Latinitas et regionibus quotidie mutetur et tempore.*

(‘There is one point which I make and deal with as promised in the exordium, namely that the Galatians, if one leaves aside the Greek language, which the whole of the Orient speaks, retain their own language, which is almost the same as that of the Treveri, and that it does not matter if they have corrupted it in some way, since even the Afri have changed the language of the Phoenicians to some extent, and Latinity itself daily changes by region and with the passing of time’) cf. Adams (2007) 116.

10. Historia Augusta, Septimius Severus 19.9: *canorus uoce, sed Afrum quiddam usque ad senectutem sonans* (‘tuneful in voice, but sounding somewhat African right up to old age’), Sept. Sev. 15.7 *cum soror sua Leptitana ad eum uenisset uix Latine loquens, ac de illa multum imperator erubesceret . . . redire mulierem in patriam praecepit* (‘when his sister from Lepcis had come to him scarcely speaking Latin, the emperor was greatly embarrassed by her and instructed her to return home’). Cf. Adams (2007) 260.

11. Pompeius, *GL* V.286.34–287.6: *labdacismus est ille, qui aut per unum l fit aut per duo; sed per unum, si tenuius sonet, per duo, si pinguius sonet. puta llargus; debemus dicere largus. ut pingue sonet; et si dicas llex non lex: uitiosa sunt per labdacismum. item in gemino l [quando fuerint duo l], si uolueris pinguius sonare, si dicamus Metelus, Catulus. in his etiam agnoscimus gentium uitia; labdacismis scatent Afri, raro est ut aliquis dicat l: per geminum l sic locuntur Romani, omnes Latini sic locuntur, Catullus, Metellus.*

(‘That is labdacism, which is effected either by a single *l* or by a double *l*. It is effected by a single *l* if the sound is thinner (than the norm). It is effected by a double *l* if the sound is fatter. Take for example *llargus*: we should say *largus*. The result [of the double *l*] is that the sound is fat. And for example if you were to say *llex* not *lex*. These are faulty pronunciations by labdacism. Likewise in the case of double *l*, if you want to say the sound more fatly but we were to say (instead) *Metelus*, *Catulus*, [that would be the inverse form of labdacism]. In these matters we also recognise the faults of (different) peoples. Africans abound in labdacisms. It is only rarely that anyone says a (single) *l* [in words such as *Metelus* and *Catulus*]. By means

Introduction to the problem of African Latin
Béla Adamik (University ELTE Budapest, Hungary)

of a double *l* the Romans and all Latins pronounce *Catullus* and *Metellus*.’) Cf. Adams (2007) 265ff.

12. Isidorus (*Etym.* 1.32.8): labdacismus est, si pro una *l* duo pronuntientur, ut Afri faciunt, sicut *colloquium* pro *conloquium*; uel quotiens unam *l* exilius, duo largius proferimus. quod contra est; nam unum largius, duo exilius proferre debemus.

(‘Labdacism is when instead of one *l* two are pronounced, as is done by Africans, as for example in *colloquium* for *conloquium*; or when we say one *l* more thinly or two more thickly. This is the opposite (of what is required), for we should say one more thickly and two more thinly.’). Cf. Adams (2007) 267f.

13. Pompeius, GL V.285.5–7 *est alter (barbarismus), qui fit in pronuntiatio. plerumque male pronuntiamus et facimus uitium, ut breuis syllaba longo tractu sonet aut iterum longa breuiore sono.*

(‘there is another (barbarism), which is committed in pronunciation. Often we utter a bad pronunciation and commit the fault of sounding a short syllable long or, again, a long syllable short’). Cf. Adams (2007) 263.

14. Sergius, GL, IV. 522: *syllabas natura longas difficile est scire* ("it is difficult to know which syllables are naturally long"). Cf. Herman (2000) 28.

15. Consentius, GL V. 392. 3: *ut quidam dicunt ‘piper’ producta priore syllaba, cum sit breuis, quod uitium Afrorum familiare est*

(‘as some people say *piper* with a long first syllable, when it is short, a vice which is characteristic of Africans’),

392. 11 *ut si quis dicat ‘orator’ correpta priore syllaba, quod ipsum uitium Afrorum speciale est*

(‘as if someone were to say *orator* with a short first syllable, a vice which is particular to Africans’). Cf. Adams (2007) 263f.

16. Sacerdos (GL, VI.493-94) : *barbarismus nostri temporis* "barbarism of our time," cf. Herman 2000: 28 and Adamik (2014)

causā labōrō (– – | U – –) > *causă labōrō* (– U U | – –).

perspīcere possit (– U U U – –) > *perspīcere possit* (– – U U – –)

17. Augustinus, De musica 2.1.1 itaque uerbi gratia cum dixeris *cano* uel in uersu forte posueris, ita ut uel tu pronuntians producas huius uerbi syllabam primam, uel in uersu eo loco ponas, ubi esse productam oportebat, reprehendet grammaticus, custos ille uidelicet historiae, nihil aliud asserens cur hanc corripi oporteat, nisi quod hi qui ante nos fuerunt, et quorum libri exstant tractanturque a grammaticis, ea correpta non producta usi fuerint.

(‘And so, for example, when you say *cano* or happen to use it in verse, such that you either lengthen in pronunciation the first syllable of this word or place it in verse in a position where it should be long, the grammarian, that guardian of tradition, will find fault with you, giving no other reason why it should be shortened except that those who have come before us and whose books survive and are handled by the grammarians have treated it as short not long.’). Cf. Adams (2007) 261.

18. Augustinus, Doctr. christ. 4.10.24: *cur pietatis doctorem pigeat imperitis loquentem ossum potius quam os dicere, ne ista syllaba non ab eo, quod sunt ossa, sed ab eo, quod sunt ora, intellegatur, ubi Afrae aures de correptione uocalium uel productione non iudicant?*

Introduction to the problem of African Latin
Béla Adamik (University ELTE Budapest, Hungary)

(‘Why should a teacher of piety when speaking to the uneducated have regrets about saying *ossum* (‘bone’) rather than *os* in order to prevent that monosyllable (i.e. *ōs* ‘bone’) from being interpreted as the word whose plural is *ora* (i.e. *ōs* ‘mouth’) rather than the word whose plural is *ossa* (i.e. *ōs*), given that African ears show no judgment in the matter of the shortening of vowels or their lengthening?’), Cf. Adams (2007) 261ff.

19. $\varnothing s$ [ɔs] ‘bone’ vs. $\varnothing s$ [os] ‘mouth’ - *ōs* ‘bone’ = *ōs* ‘mouth’ [os]
20. cl. Latin > vulgar Latin: $\acute{e} i > e$, $\acute{e} > e$; $\acute{o} ú > o$, $\acute{o} > o$; $\bar{e} e i > e$, $\bar{o} o u > o$
Sardinian Latin/Romance: $\bar{i} i > i$, $\bar{e} e > e$, $\bar{a} a > a$, $\bar{o} o > o$, $\bar{u} u > u$
21. Herman (200) 32: „Vowel quality in Sardinia remained as it had been all along, even though the length distinctions were lost here as everywhere else”
22. Adams (2007): 262f: „The Sardinian system attracts attention in the present context. Could it be that African Latin had the same or a similar vowel system, and that Augustine’s remark about *ōs* / *ōs* should be read in that light as an indication that in Africa long and short *o* had fallen together? (...) Certainly Augustine’s assertion is consistent with a vowel system of the Sardinian type...”

Bibliography:

- Adamik, B. (2014). Barbarismus nostri temporis: Interpretation einer umstritten gewordenen Wendung in der Grammatik des Sacerdos. GRAECO-LATINA BRUNENSIA 19/1, 3-13.
- Adamik, T. (1987). *Romaniane vivat*: Bemerkungen zum Gebrauch des Vokativs und zur afrikanischen Latinität. In: J. Herman (ed.). *Latin vulgaire – latin tardif. Actes du I^{er} Colloque international sur le latin vulgaire et tardif (Pécs, 2–5 septembre 1985)*. Tübingen 1–9.
- Adams, J. N. (2007). *The Regional Diversification of Latin 200 BC–AD 600*. Cambridge.
- Herman, J. (2000). *Vulgar Latin* (translated by R. Wright). The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Kroll, W. (1897). Das afrikanische Latein. *RhM* 52, 569-590.
- Löfstedt (1959). *Late Latin*. Oslo.
- Mancini, M. (2001). Agostino, i grammatici e il vocalismo del latino d’Africa, *Rivista di linguistica* 13, 309–38.
- Norden, E. (1923⁴). *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* 2. Leipzig.
- Petersmann, H. (1998). Gab es ein afrikanisches Latein? Neue Sichten eines alten Problems der lateinischen Sprachwissenschaft, in B. García-Hernández (ed.), *Estudios de lingüística latina: Actas del IX Coloquio internacional de lingüística latina I* Madrid, 125–36.
- Schmitt, Ch. (2003). Die verlorene Romanität in Afrika: Afrolatein / Afroromanisch. In: Ernst G. / Gleßgen M.-D. / Schmitt Chr. / Schweickard W. (edd.): *Romanische Sprachgeschichte. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Geschichte der romanischen Sprachen. I.: Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft* 23.1. Berlin –New York, 668–675.
- Sittl, K. (1882). *Die lokalen Verschiedenheiten der lateinischen Sprache mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des afrikanischen Lateins*. Erlangen
- Svennung, J. (1935). *Untersuchungen zu Palladius und zur lateinischen Fach- und Volkssprache*. Lund.