

PRÉCIS

Latin in Byzantium, ca. 500-700 AD is a project on literacy, cultural identity and transmission of Latin texts in the *noua Roma*.

While in the fifth century Latin was essentially a technical *langue d'État* of the administration in the oriental part of the empire (MILLAR 2006), at the beginning of the sixth century new historical conditions caused a profound transformation, which is testified by the association of Rome and Constantinople in Priscian's and Corippus' *panegyrici*, but also by Greek texts and pictorial representations (ROCHETTE 1997a). Knowledge of Rome is attested in the *Chronicle* of Iohannes Malalas, in the fragmentary historical work by Petrus Patritius, and in Iohannes Lydus' œuvre, which contains a reflection on the evolution of Latin language, nourished by Varronian erudition (DUBUISSON 1992). Even if the emperor Phocas suspended the teaching of Latin, Teophilattus Simocatta still seems to know some peculiarities of Latin political lexicon (BALDWIN 1977), although a new professor of Latin was not to be found before Stephanos of Alexandria (BALDWIN 1984).

The problem of Latin in Constantinople has been studied since the beginning (HAHN 1921; ZILLIACUS 1935) until the end of the twentieth century (HEMMERDINGER 1966; DAGRON 1969; MIHAESCU 1973; GIGANTE 1981; BALDWIN 1985; HORSFALL 1993) and still attracts the attention of experts from different fields (see e.g. CAMERON 2009, 16-36). Nevertheless, the most stimulating works are very specific contributions, that still demand to be put in a wider and comprehensive perspective.

From a linguistic point of view, it would be interesting to thoroughly analyse the presence of low levels of Latin literacy among soldiers (some suggestions in PETERSMANN 1999), which could perhaps be extended to the Byzantine Egypt. It would also be important to differentiate this type of competence from the problem of the evolution of the overall system of Latin language in the field of the late-vulgar Latin (ADAMIK 1999; 2003a; 2003b). Linguistic policies are also very important, at least from the example of Justinian's protectionism and its ideological roots (STEIN 1937; ROCHETTE 1997b; LAVIGNE 2005).

The linguistic problem cannot be adequately approached without studying the diffusion of the writing competences and the transmission of both Greek and Latin literary *classici auctores* (see CAVALLO G. 2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2005; 2006a; 2006b): the sources concerning the Latin spoken in Constantinople and the circulation of written sources should be crossed. A particular interest could be attributed to the knowledge of Latin by Greek speaking authors as it is attested by literary quotations, within other texts or collected in anthologies, gnomologia etc.

A very important field is Roman law (see e.g. FÖGEN 1995), not only *per se*, but also for the study of Latin language (permanence of Latin technical vocabulary, borrowings and neologisms).

Roman law has been recently put in relation with the parallel development of Latin grammar (DE NONNO 2009), which is in itself another promising field, especially thanks to Priscian and his pupils. The selection of a *canon* of representative authors and the

development of a technical vocabulary more or less influenced by Greek (BIVILLE 2008; 2009) is a core question, as well as that of the pedagogical tools (ROCHETTE 2012).

Other disciplines should also be taken into account, e.g. medicine, as shown by the scholia to Dioscorides.

The study of those disciplines and topics will show that there were different groups of Latin speaking people in Constantinople, and that each of them had specific political and sociological features (see CROKE 2005; RAPP 2005; SCHAMP 2009). For the first time, a complete view of these problems will be provided together with a thorough presentation of the ancient sources, across multiple disciplines and beyond the gap between literary and non-literary texts, history and philology.

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