FIRST INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON COMPUTATIONAL LATIN DIALECTOLOGY

7th April – 8th April 2016
Conference Room
Research Institute for Linguistics (RIL), Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS)
Benczúr utca 33.
1068 Budapest
Hungary
PROGRAMME

Thursday, 7th April

09:00–09:15 Opening remarks (M. BARKÓ-NAGY and B. ADAMIK)

FIRST SESSION (chair: S. KISS)

09:15 Potential Greek influence on the Vulgar Latin sound change [b] > [β]: Dialectological evidence from inscriptions (B. ADAMIK)
10:00 The Tabella plumbea Traguriensis as evidence for spoken Latin in Dalmatia in the 6th century (D. KUNČER)
10:45–11:00 Coffee break

SECOND SESSION (chair: T. ADAMIK)

11:00 Latin Curse Texts: Mediterranean Tradition and Local Diversity (D. URBANOVÁ)
11:45 A Letter to the Netherworld. The Third Curse Tablet from Aquincum (A. BARTA)

Friday, 8th April

FIRST SESSION (chair: T. ADAMIK)

09:00 Applied Computational Latin Dialectology: first results from the Conventus Pacensis (South Portugal). Continuity and linguistic innovation. (S. TANTIMONACO)
09:45 Constructing, deconstructing and understanding: The Paleo-Christian corpora and Latin dialectology (C. GASPAR)
10:30–10:45 Coffee break
SECOND SESSION (chair: S. KISS)

10:45 The Aquincum–Salona–Aquileia Triangle: Latin language in the Alps–Danube–Adria region (A. GONDA)

DEMO SESSION

11:30 Demonstration of the Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of the Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age (http://lldb.elte.hu/) and the database works (B. ADAMIK in active collaboration with the data collectors: Markéta MELOUNOVÁ PhD, Natália GACHALLOVÁ MA, Pavel ŠEVČÍK MA, Tereza ŠEVČÍKOVÁ MA, Radek ČERNOCH MA and Tomáš WEISSAR BA from the Department of Classical Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno.)
OPENING REMARKS – 7th April, 09:00–09:15

Marianne BARKÓ-NAGY (Chair, Department of Finno-Ugristics and Historical Linguistics, RIL/HAS, Budapest)
Béla ADAMIK (LRGCLD¹, RIL/HAS, Budapest)

FIRST SESSION – 7th April, 09:15–11:00

Chair: Sándor KISS (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

Béla ADAMIK (LRGCLD, RIL/HAS, Budapest)

Potential Greek influence on the Vulgar Latin sound change [b] > [β]: Dialectological evidence from inscriptions

The idea that the Vulgar Latin sound change [b] > [β] (later > [v]) and the same change in Koine Greek might somehow be connected is not a new one. The potential connection and contact between the two languages in this special phonological respect has been occasionally discussed in the literature in different ways. Kramer (1983: 120-121) briefly dealt with this phonological parallelism as a potential case of linguistic convergence (against this Binder 2000: 106) within the concept of the so called ‘Sprachbund’ adopted by him to refer to an assumed ‘language league’ of Greek and Latin. Politzer (1952: 215) explained this Latin sound change by Greek influence in a wider phonological framework of the transformation of Latin voiced stops into voiced continuants.

¹ LRGCLD = Lendület Research Group for Computational Latin Dialectology
The Greek influence on the Latin sound change concerned here was (rather implicitly) suggested occasionally also by scholars who, while treating territorial aspects of epigraphical Latin, observed a potential correlation between the incidence of B/V confusion (motivated by the merger of /b/ and /w/ to [β]) in Latin inscriptions and the degree of linguistic Hellenization in related areas, for instance briefly by Baehrens (1922: 80) regarding word-initial positions, and in detail by Gratwick (1982: 25) regarding all intervocalic positions. As Gratwick (1982: 32) concludes on B/V confusion: “There is a significant local variation in its incidence. It is most frequent in those parts where we must reckon with Greek as a major language (especially Rome, Ostia, and environs; south Italy and the islands). In Gallia Cisalpina and in the whole of Transalpine Europe <B> for <V> is markedly rare.” Gratwick (1982: 25) then generalises as follows: “The variation is sufficiently well marked to imply a material difference between Transalpine Latin in general and the Latin of more directly Hellenized parts of the Empire.”

At the same time, various objections can be raised to this argument according to J. N. Adams, who, after (almost rightly) criticising the methodology used by Gratwick for establishing rates of B/V confusion (cf. Adams 2007: 629), drew attention to the fact that: “the confusion is attested not only in southern Italy and at Rome, areas where its frequency might seem to fit in with the hypothesis, but also in Spain, northern Italy and central Italy, even if it is not as frequent there” (Adams 2007: 665). In the end, however, Adams (2007: 664) left his own question unanswered: “The real question is whether, if we allow that Greeks did merge Latin b and consonantal u, the case can be sustained that the widespread spelling confusions in imperial Latin between B and V (and the mergers, such as they are, in the
Romance languages) can ultimately be traced back to the influence of Greeks or bilinguals speaking Latin.”

In our paper we will attempt to answer this question of Adams. We will do so on the one hand by surveying not only the relevant linguistic data of Latin/Romance and Koine/Modern Greek, but also the related literature (e.g. Barbarino 1978, Herman 1965, 1985, 2000), and, on the other hand, by involving and analyzing relevant data sets recorded from 18 Roman provinces and the city of Rome in the Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of the Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age (cf. http://lldb.elte.hu/) by a more differentiated phonological approach considering external sandhi rules (which operate across word boundaries) in a chronological distribution more detailed than any applied before. Through this, we hope to take away the edge, at least as for the Greek language, of the next statement of Adams (2007: 663): „The case of B and V has proved a happy hunting ground in this respect, with a variety of other languages allegedly causing the confusion.”

References:

Dragana KUNČER (The Institute of History, Belgrade)

The Tabella plumbea Traguriensis as evidence for spoken Latin in Dalmatia in the 6th century

The aim of the talk is to read and discuss the most recent edition of the only non-literary and non-monumental text remaining from sixth-century Dalmatia, the so called Tabella plumbea Traguriensis (CIL III p. 961; Barada 1935). It is compared with other inscriptional evidence from sixth-century Dalmatia (around 100 monumental inscriptions) regarding phonetic, morphosyntactic and lexical phenomena. The features present in this text are not always in accordance with the features of other Dalmatian, mostly Salonitan inscriptions from the period. The relevance is examined of both comparison elements for the study of spoken Latin in the Roman province of Dalmatia, in the
time shortly preceding the invasion of the Avars and the Slavs.

References:


SECOND SESSION – 7th April, 11:00–12:30

Chair: Tamás ADAMIK (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

Daniela URBANOVÁ (Masaryk University Brno)

**Latin Curse Texts: Mediterranean Tradition and Local Diversity**

There are altogether about six hundred Latin curse texts, most of which are inscribed on lead tablets. The extant Latin *defixiones* are attested from the 2nd cent. BCE to the end of the 4th and beginning of the 5th century. However, the number of extant tablets is certainly not final, which is clear from the new findings in Mainz recently published by Blänsdorf (2012, 34 tablets), the evidence found in the fountain dedicated to Anna Perenna in Rome (Blänsdorf 2012, Piranomonte 2012, 26 tablets and other inscribed magical items), or the new findings in Pannonia (Barta...
2009). The curse tablets were addressed exclusively to the supernatural powers, so their authors usually hid them very well to be banished from the eyes of mortals; not to speak of the randomness of the archaeological findings. Thus, it can be assumed that the preserved *defixiones* are only a fragment of the overall ancient production. Remarkable diversities in cursing practice can be found when comparing the preserved *defixiones* from particular provinces of the Roman Empire and their specific features, as this contribution wants to show.

References:


Andrea Barta (LRGCLD, RIL/HAS, Budapest)

**A Letter to the Netherworld. The Third Curse Tablet from Aquincum**

In the spring of 2015 two new curse tablets were discovered beside each other in a cemetery of the civil town of Aquincum. They have different texts, but some similarities suggest they were made by the same magician or
the same office. Last year one of the curse tablets was already published, this presentation is going to examine the other one.

This tablet is addressed to the same gods as can be read on the first one. The aim of the curse is very similar, as it was also made to impose silence on the enemies of the magician’s costumers. The text is formulaic, but similarly to the other one, it is not lacking in lexical-semantic innovations little or not known until now. These phrases occurring in both text can prove other curse tablets’ doubtful readings. In addition, in my presentation I am going to examine the appearance of Muta Tacita, the characteristic form of Dis Pater’s name and the usage of some technical terms (epistularius, surgo). By identifying vulgar Latin features the rough curse would turn into a coherent text.

References:
Silvia TANTIMONACO (Universitat de Barcelona)

**Applied Computational Latin Dialectology: first results from the Conventus Pacensis (South Portugal). Continuity and linguistic innovation**

The aim of the paper is to present the first results of my investigation on the Latin language of the Roman inscriptions of the province Lusitania that I am currently carrying on for my PhD also as collaborator of the “Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age” (Adamik 2012). I will concentrate my study on the part of the territory that nowadays corresponds to the south of Portugal and that in Antiquity took the name of *conventus Pacensis* from its capital town, *Pax Iulia* (modern Beja). The epigraphical production of this region referred to Roman classical times has been studied by Encarnação (1981) and later on especially in the academic review *Ficheiro Epigráfico* (1982-) while Paleo-Christian epigraphy has been the subject of a recent corpus (Alves Dias – Gaspar Sousa 2006). In this paper, I will try to put in evidence the most relevant dialectological patterns of the Vulgar Latin of this particular part of the Roman Empire according to inscriptions (Herman 1978). I will take in account the linguistic phenomena and pay special attention to their territorial and chronological distribution. I will also analyse in a more detailed way the most represented grammatical levels (*vocalismus, consonantismus, nominalia*) in a diachronic perspective. This will make possible to evidence the continuity and the linguistic
innovations in the considered territory also in reference to the further coming linguistic developments in the investigated area (Herman 1985).

References:


Ficheiro Epigráfico (1982-) Universidade de Coimbra.


Catarina GASPAR (Universidade de Lisboa)

Constructing, deconstructing and understanding: The Paleo-Christian corpora and Latin dialectology

In this paper, my aim is to bring some data concerning Paleo-christian inscriptions from Iberian Peninsula into the discussion on the differentiation of Vulgar Latin and “the end of the History of Latin”, as stated by József Herman (1996). My presentation will focus on the way of collecting
data (in corpora and databases); the geographic distribution of the inscriptions; and its interpretation in what regards Latin dialectology.

Considering the relations between diatopic and diachronic variations, we find some specific linguistics features in Paleo-christian inscriptions that clearly resemble the Roman ones, which strongly suggest the existence of continuity in linguistic change. However, epigraphic texts are a type of testimonies that only allows us to know one part of the whole: the so-called ‘epigraphic community’ or ‘population épigraphique’ (Herman, 1978).

We have to keep in mind that our knowledge concerns only a small fringe of the population represented in epigraphic monuments and that even in modern languages, the evidences of dialectal variation are more easily found in speech than in writing. The same happened in Antiquity, and there we only have the ‘errors’ and ‘deviations’ to what we know was the standard model.

In Iberian Peninsula, the Paleo-christian inscriptions usually have monotonous texts and regular formulae (Alves-Dias, 2007), with an irregular geographic and quantitative distribution that should be regarded as an example of how restricted and incomplete are this amount of data. Another problem we deal with are the influences of oral traits and everyday life in writing, which are not always so obvious, because those who were part of that “epigraphic community” sometimes demonstrate a high-level knowledge of the Latin language and a formal and careful usage of both Latin and Greek languages.

To understand how the epigraphic texts can contribute to know the Latin dialectology we have to analyse the way we construct the corpora and databases, and sometimes, how we need to deconstruct them in our intent to come near of the ‘real’ usage of language.
References:


In our talk, we attempt to determine the common features and differences between the Latin language of the inscriptions of Aquincum, Salona and Aquileia, and, through our analysis, to demonstrate if there existed a regional dialect area over the Alpes–Danube–Adria region of the Roman empire, a hypothesis suggested by Unterman (1980) and Herman (1983). For our researches, we use all relevant linguistic data from the Tituli Aquincenses, Inscriptiones Aquileiae, CIL III, Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMII et MCMLXX repertae et editae sunt, the Salona IV, Inscriptions de Salone chrétienne, IVe-VIIe siècles and some other minor corpora, as recorded in the Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of the Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age (cf. http://lldb.elte.hu/). We will examine the relative distribution of diverse types of non-standard data found in the inscriptions, a method established by Herman, and we will contrast the linguistic phenomena of an earlier period (1st–3rd c. CE) with a later stage (4th–6th c. CE) of Vulgar Latin. The focus of our analysis will be on the changes in the vowel system and the grammatical cases between the two chronological periods within each of the three examined cities. Aquincum, Salona and Aquileia were all important provincial or regional capitals, and the inscriptions of these cities represent examples of Latin spoken in Pannonia Inferior, Dalmatia
and in Venetia et Histria (Regio X of Italia). If we succeed to identify similar tendencies in the Vulgar Latin of these three cities, the shared linguistic phenomena may suggest the existence of a regional variant of Latin in the Alpes–Danube–Adria region.

References:


**DEMO SESSION – 8th April, 11:30–12:30**

Béla ADAMIK (LRGCLD, RIL/HAS, Budapest)

**Demonstration of the Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of the Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age** ([http://lldb.elte.hu/](http://lldb.elte.hu/)) and the database works

In active collaboration with the data collectors: Markéta MELOUNOVÁ PhD, Natália GACHALLOVÁ MA, Pavel ŠEVČÍK MA, Tereza ŠEVČÍKOVÁ MA, Radek ČERNOCH MA and Tomáš WEISSAR BA from the Department of Classical Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno.

The present paper, the closing talk of the First International Workshop on Computational Latin Dialectology serves as an introductory and at the same time interactive presentation of the Database considered here,
which is first of all intended for a wider but professional public interested in a project that deals with the dialectology of the Latin language concerning Roman inscriptions, according to a special linguistic approach, with the help of modern information technology.

Introductory means here that in the first half of this presentation, after shortly outlining the aims, the antecedents and theoretical foundations of this project (in detail see Adamik 2009 and 2012) and some practical elements of the Database will be demonstrated. Vital for the linguistic evaluation of the recorded data sets are the Simple Search and even more the Extended Search modules. Latter enables the user to search the chosen criteria in every possible combination in order to achieve an utmost linguistic exploitation of data. Connected to these search modules also the charting module will be presented, which allows for the visualization of the inner structures of data sets concerning various criteria, e.g. the relative frequency or inner distribution of the diverse data types as for the searched data set.

In the second interactive part of this demonstration, in active collaboration with the Czech data collectors from the University Brno, the proper nuclei of the Database, namely data forms (i.e. data sheets) of various matter and issue will be presented together with all related modules of the Database that serve for checking recorded data forms and improving the data recording process with the help of a complex problem warning and feedback system operating between the data collectors and the principal investigator within the system of the Database, all these pointing to the achievement of the best quality of the recorded data forms, thus yielding solid foundations for the entire Database work.
References:

