

On the latin of Claudius Terentianus (*P. Mich.* VIII, 467-472)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *The setting*¹

While the number of extant Greek papyri is of the order of magnitude of several ten thousands, there are only little more than 400 Latin papyri. Most of these stem from Egypt, some from other parts of the Roman empire. The overall scarce number of Latin papyri is, of course, a consequence of the fact that although Egypt was a Roman province, the Latin language was little used there. There were comparatively few Romans from Italy, mostly administrators and soldiers. Most of the Roman citizens, including the soldiers, were naturalized Greeks²; their native language was Greek. The use of Latin was compulsory only in legal matters; and it was traditional in the army.

Although most of the Latin papyri are military documents, other text types are well represented. In Karanis, a rich excavation site near Alexandria exploited by archaeologists of the University of Michigan between 1924 and 1934, an archive has been found in a private house belonging to a certain Claudius Tiberianus. It contained 15 letters, which by palaeographic criteria can be dated as stemming from the first quarter of the II. cent. A.D. According to internal evidence of various sorts, they were probably written between 99 and 120 A.D., mostly around Alexan-

¹ The following information sources have been used for this section: Jouguet, 1925, esp. pp. 38 and 46; Youtie and Winter, 1951, pp. 16-18; A. Calderini, 1951, esp. p. 157; R. Calderini, 1951, esp. p. 250; Montevicchi, 1973, esp. pp. 232f and 253.

² In fact, recruits were made Roman citizens when they entered the army.

dria. Of these letters, 9 are in Greek and 6 in Latin. Five of the Greek and 5 of the Latin letters have been sent by Claudius Terentianus, son of Tiberianus. Being private letters which have a certain size, deal with a variety of subjects and are relatively well preserved, Terentianus's are the most important Latin letters on papyrus that we possess.

Tiberianus first was *speculator*, i.e. courier and secret agent of the Roman administration. Afterwards he became *veteranus* (s. *P. Mich.* n.º 475) and settled in that house in Karanis. He was probably a romanized Greco-Egyptian; the men in his house bore Roman, the women Egyptian names.

Terentianus first was a soldier in the *classis Augusta Alexandrina* (n.º 467), but then became a *legionarius*. In either case he was stationed near Alexandria. He first wrote his letters in Greek, then in Latin, which might appear to indicate that he learnt or at least perfected his Latin in the army. There is no doubt that he dictated his letters, since they are written by different hands.

The first edition of these letters has been published, with a translation, by Youtie and Winter in the *Michigan Papyri* VIII, n.º 467-481. Their commentary reflects the interest of papyrologists, i.e., essentially Graecists. It is counterbalanced by the work published in the same year by Aristide and Rita Calderini. A. Calderini gives a historical commentary, while R. Calderini provides a linguistic analysis with particular respect to features of Vulgar Latin and a heavy overweight of phonology over syntax. Later, Cavenaile (1958) republished the letters in his *Corpus Papyrorum Latinarum*, without essential changes to the original edition. New insights both into the biographical circumstances which the letters testify to and into their language was gained by Pighi (1964) in his new edition. The only monograph devoted to them is Adams, 1977, which pays equal regard to all the levels of the linguistic system. Beyond this, little work has been done on these texts.

1.2. Methodological preliminaries

When we find deviations from Classical Latin usage in primary documents such as inscriptions or papyri, we have two principal ways of accounting for them. First, they may be scribal errors, i.e., momentary slips of the pen (or chisel) which the writer would have corrected had he noticed them. A plausible example from the texts at hand is *mater ma no(n haben)s assem* (471, 34). Second, the deviations may be colloquialisms, properties of the spoken, non-standard variety of Latin, which is usually called by the inappropriate name «Vulgar Latin». An example from Terentianus's letters would be *con tirones* 'cum tironibus' (471, 22). This can safely be assumed to reflect the speech of the writer and of Romans if not in general, then at least of his social class.

Besides these two relatively unproblematic ways of accounting for non-standard features in primary documents, there is a third, more hazardous way which consists in the assumption that the writer had imperfect knowledge of the language. This hypothesis, in order to be distinct from the second one, must not mean that he did not dominate the standard medium of written communication but that he had an overall imperfect command of the language, including the spoken variety, because he was not a native speaker.

It goes without saying that this argument can only be invoked with utmost care. If a message is hard to understand or unwonted in its form, this may be a consequence of imperfect command of the language, either on the part of the sender or on that of the receiver (in this case, the philologist/linguist). Under the given factual and methodological circumstances, the burden of proof is, of course, on the part of the receiver.

There is one consideration which at first sight might seem to complicate the picture even more. The differences among Classical and Vulgar Latin are of such a quality and quantity that it has not seemed unreasonable to many scholars to relate them to the fact that Vulgar Latin was the second language for many, perhaps most of its speakers. That is, the differences may, in part, be attributed to imperfect command of the colloquial language spoken in Rome. This would mean that the colloquial Latin as spoken by the majority of its speakers in, e.g., Egypt was faulty from the point of view of native Roman speech. Consequently, the second and the third of the above explanations of non-standard features would not be clearly distinct.

This may well be the case. However, it seems to make little methodological difference. Such provincial varieties, faulty or not, are in any case the predecessors of the Romance languages. Consequently, documents exhibiting them are valid sources for the history of the Latin language.

In the present case, this consideration leads to the following consequence. If we wanted to argue that a specific feature in the letters of Claudius Terentianus is, although not a scribal error, still not representative of colloquial Latin as spoken in his society, but rather a symptom of his imperfect command of Latin, we would have to show that his command of Latin was even worse than usual in his society. I see no way of showing this. Therefore I will not take recourse to the third way of accounting for nonstandard features in the language of our texts.

2. SPECIMEN TEXT

As a specimen of the sort of text we are dealing with, and as a reference base for the subsequent discussion, I give the text of one of the letters.

In Youtie and Winter (1951) and Cavenaile (1958), the text has been emended according to the standards of Classical Latin. This has seemed

inappropriate to Pighi (1964); and I agree with him. In the emendation of a text, only such restorations should be made as are necessary from the point of view of the language which the text represents. That is, only deviations explicable by the first, and possibly the third, of the above hypotheses, should be emended. However, the letters of Claudius Terentianus clearly do not represent Classical Latin and therefore cannot be measured against this standard. In order to avoid this inconsistency, I will provide the text with an interlinear glossing in Classical Latin. Most of the restorations are from Youtie and Winter (1951).

Letter by Claudius Terentianus to his father Claudius Tiberianus (*P. Mich.* VIII, 471=Cavenaile 1958, Nr. 254); Karanis, first years of 2. cent. A.D.

[9 lines illegible]

[10] dico illi, da mi, di[c]o, a[e]s paucum; ibo, dico, ad amicos
dico ei, da mihi, inquam, aes paucum; ibo, inquam, ad amicos
 patris mei. Item acu lentiaminaque mi mandavit;
patris mei. Item acum linteaminaque mihi mandavit;
 nullum assem mi dedit. Ego tamen inc ebinde col-
nullum assem mihi dedit. Ego tamen hinc et inde col-
 lexi paucum aes ed ibi ad. uaroclum et .g[.]ivan
legi paucum aes et ii ad [n.n. et n.n.]

et emi pauca que epedivi. Si aequum tempus esset se exi-
*et emi pauca quae expedivi*³. Si aequum tempus esset se exi-

[15] turum Alexandriae s[i]lui[t]. Item non mi d[e]dit aes quam
*turum Alexandriae siluit. Item non mihi dedit aes quamquam*⁴
 aureum matri mee in vestimenta. Hoc est, inquit,
aureum matri meae in vestimenta dedit. Hoc est, inquit,
 quod pater tuus mi mandavit. Quo tempore autem veni
quod pater tuus mihi mandavit. Quo tempore autem veni
 omnia praefuerunt, et lana et matrem meam au-
*omnia praefuerunt, et lana et (linum?)*⁵. Matrem meam au-
 tem praegnatam inveni. Nil poterat facere. Dende pos pau-
tem praegnantem inveni. Nihil poterat facere. Dende post pau-
 [20] cos dies parit, et non poterat mihi succurrere. Item litem
cos dies peperit, et non poterat mihi succurrere. Item litem
 abuit Ptolemes pater meu sopra vestimenta mea, et fa-
abuit Ptolemaeus pater meus supra [i.e. de] vestimenta mea, et fac-

³ Youtie and Winter (1951, p. 39) want to restore *expetivi* 'I wanted'. However, Pighi (1964), p. 68f) rightly points out that *expedivi* makes good sense here:

⁴ The restoration shown in the classical version, due to Youtie and Winter, is perhaps unnecessary. Instead, we may interpret, with Pighi (1964, p. 69), «non... altro danaro che un aureus per la zia per acquistare vesti».

⁵ Pighi (1964, p. 69) finds this restoration unnecessary. He construes: *...et lana. Et matrem meam autem...* «...also wool. My mother, however...». It seems hard to accept the combination *et... autem*.

ctum est illi venire Alexandriae con tirones et me relidit et ut venisset Alexandriam cum tironibus, et me relidit con matrem meam. Soli nihil poteramus facere, quit cum matre mea. Soli nihil poteramus facere, absentia illi abit[ur]i. Mater mea: spec[t]emus illum absentia eius illinc abituri. Mater mea dixit: expectemus eum

- [25] dum venit et ven[i]o tecum Alexandriae et deduco te usque ad nave. Saturninus iam paratus erat exire usque ad navem. Saturninus iam paratus erat exire illa die qu[an]do tam magna lites factam est. Dico ei: illa die quando tam magna lis facta est. Dico ei: li: veni interpone te si potes adiutare Ptolemaeo patri veni interpone te si potes adiutare Ptolemaeo patri meo. Non magis curavit me pro xylophongium meo. Non magis curavit me quam xylophongium
- [30] sed sum negotium et circa res suas. Attonitus sed suum negotium et res suas. Attonitus exiundo dico illi: da m[i] pauquum aes, ut possim venire exeunti⁶ dico ei: da mihi paucum aes, ut possim venire con rebus meis Alexandriae, im inpendia. Negabit se cum rebus meis Alexandriae, in inpendia. Negavit se abiturum. Veni, dicet, Alexandriae et dabo t[ibi]. Ego habere. Veni, inquit, Alexandriae et dabo tibi. Ego non abivi. Mater mea nos assem vendedi linteamina non abivi. Mater mea non habens⁷ assem vendidit linteamina
- [35] [u]t veniam Alexandriae. ut venire Alexandriae.

Verso:

Claudio Tiberiano [pat]r[i] a Cla[ud]io Teren[tiano]
 Claudio Tiberiano patri a Claudio Terentiano

Translation:

«I tell him [probably Saturninus]: "Give me", I say, "some money. I will go", I say, "to friends of my father." Likewise he turned over to me a needle and linens, but he gave me no cent. However, I gathered some money from here and there and went to n.n. and n.n. and bought a few things which I dispatched. He did not tell me that he would leave for Alexandria when the time would be convenient. Likewise he did not give me

⁶ My interpretation of *exiundo* as 'exeunti' follows Youtie and Winter (1951, p. 40). Pighi (1964, p. 71) sees a gerundive («uscendo») here, with the writer as the agent. Although the hypothesis seems a bit bold, this non-standard use of the ablative would have a loose parallel in the construction *me iacentem in liburna sublata mi sunt* 'while I was lying ill in the ship, they were stolen from me' (468, 13).

⁷ Pighi (1964, p. 72) tries to save *nos*, but with severe harm to the syntax.

money though he did give a gold dinar to my mother for clothing. "This is", he said, "what your father commissioned me." At the time I arrived, however, everything was available, both wool and flax.

»My mother I found pregnant. She could do nothing. Then after a few days she gave birth and could not assist me. Likewise Ptolemaeus, my father, had a quarrel with me about my clothing; and it happened that he had to go to Alexandria with recruits, and he left me with my mother. Alone we could do nothing, in the absence of him who was going there. My mother said: "Let us wait for him until he comes back, and I will come with you to Alexandria and accompany you to the ship." Saturninus was already prepared to leave on that day when so great a quarrel came about. I tell him: "Come and intercede, if you can help Ptolemaeus, my father." He did not care for me one bit, but for his business and his things. Perplexed I tell him, as he leaves: "Give me some money, so that I can come with my things to Alexandria, on interest." He denied that he had any. "Come", he said, "to Alexandria, and I will give you." I did not leave. My mother, not having a cent, sold the linens so that I could come to Alexandria.

»To Claudius Tiberianus, his father, from Claudius Terentianus.»

3. COMMENTARY

3.1. *Some questions of text interpretation*

Before we can proceed to the linguistic analysis proper, it is necessary to clarify some points of fact⁸.

1. Perhaps the most puzzling problem in the interpretation of this letter—as well as the others in the series—is the fact that the writer appears to have two fathers. On the one hand, the letter is addressed to a person named Claudius Tiberianus whom he refers to as his father⁹. On the other hand, the letter mentions twice (ll. 21 and 28) a person named Ptolemaeus, who is also referred to as *pater meus*. Both of the fathers are also mentioned in other letters. The former is repeatedly addressed as *pater et dominus*, while the latter is always referred to as (*Ptolemaeus*) *pater meus*. Moreover, there is a person consistently referred to as *mater mea* and obviously associated with Ptolemaeus; and there are also *fratres mei* (467, 33; 468, 47) in the same family. Under normal circumstances, if in a letter one were to report on one's parents, it would certainly suf-

⁸ I am grateful to Haiim B. and Hannah Rosén, Phil Baldi and Harm Pinkster for helpful hints.

⁹ While the address formula in this letter itself is destroyed, it can be restored beyond doubt from other letters (e.g. n.º 469). In 472, 23f Tiberianus speaks of *Claudius filius meus*.

fice to name them simply *pater* and *mater*. In the given situation, the possessive pronoun obviously serves to set those parents off against the addressee.

Moreover, our letter contains the sentence *matrem meam aute praegnata[m] inven[i]* (l. 18f). This would be rather odd if she were the addressee's wife. It seems probable that, whatever the correct solution to the problem is, this woman is married not to Tiberianus, but to Ptolemaeus.

Any solution to the riddle presupposes that the word *pater* (and possibly *mater*) is used improperly in one of the two cases. Especially in the orient, these terms are commonly applied to more distant relatives of the higher generation. Among the possibilities deserving special consideration are their use for parents-in-law, for uncle and aunt and for adoptive parents.

Considering the first alternative, we would assume that Tiberianus was Terentianus's father, while Ptolemaeus and the person called *mater mea* were his parents-in-law. This hypothesis requires the minimal assumption that Terentianus was married. If we accept it, we would have to abide with three odd points. First, the use of the expressions *pater meus*, *mater mea* instead of *socer*, *socrus* might seem misplaced when speaking to one's real father. Second, Terentianus mentions his parents-in-law in several of his letters, but in none does he mention his wife. Finally, it is not clear why Terentianus should expect as much help from his parents-in-law as he obviously does.

Similarly, the second alternative (endorsed in Pighi, 1964) would mean that *pater* refers properly to Tiberianus, while *pater meus* and *mater mea* refer to Terentianus's uncle and aunt. This solution has the advantage that we know Terentianus to have had an aunt. Her name was Tabetheus. She wrote at least one of the other letters in the archive, lived in the surroundings of Alexandria and temporarily housed other children of Tiberianus's. Thus, all the known biographical facts are compatible with this solution. However, it still runs into the problem of whether the terms *pater meus*, *mater mea* are appropriately applied to uncle and aunt in letters to one's real father. Moreover, in one of the Greek letters (479, 10), Terentianus makes mention of this aunt by using her name, *Tabetheus*; however, there she is not around him.

Considering the third alternative (also entertained in Youtie and Winter, 1951, 30), we would assume that Ptolemaeus and the person referred to as *mater mea* are Terentianus's natural parents while Tiberianus is his adoptive father. This would be consistent with the designations *pater meus* vs. *pater et dominus* and with the different cognomina *Terentianus* and *Tiberianus*. It would also be consistent with the assumption that Tiberianus expected Terentianus to learn Latin, which might explain the observation that Terentianus in his later letters switched from Greek to Latin.

As the texts provide no basis for a choice among the alternative hypotheses, I will leave it at that.

2. Another point which renders understanding of the letter difficult is the reference of the pronoun *illi* at the start of the extant part of the letter (l. 10). Since the person apparently is supposed to lend money to Terentianus and to otherwise manage his business, it seems plausible to assume that he is the Saturninus reappearing in l. 26. He may be identical to the *Saturninus scriba* mentioned in 468, l. 51, or else to Saturnilos (473), cousin of Terentianus.

3. The verb *mandare* has two basic meanings, «entrust someone with something, deliver something to someone», and «order something from someone, order someone to do something». In both of these meanings, the construction is *mando alicui aliquid*. The verb appears twice (ll. 11 and 17) in our letter with this construction. In both cases, it is hard to know which of the two meanings is present. In view of the development of *mandare* in various Romance languages, one might be tempted to decide in favor of the first meaning (as does Pighi, 1964, 68). One must be aware, however, that in order to signify «send», Terentianus in other letters (e.g., 468) repeatedly uses *mittere*. I therefore have to leave this question open.

4. The restoration of the text in l. 13 (*ad. uaroclum et .gf. Jivan*) is doubtful. What is left over does not encourage the search for Latin words. On the basis of the context, one would assume that these are two nouns referring to different sorts of merchants. If it could be excluded that suitable nouns can be found in the Latin and Greek lexica, one might also assume that they are the proper names of the *amici* mentioned in l. 10f (Youtie and Winter, 1951, 39).

5. The present form *parit* in l. 20 is puzzling. One might think of allowing it a future reference here, which the factual context would be compatible with (if she is bound to give birth in a few days, it is natural that she cannot do very much). However, the syntactic context forbids this interpretation. First, *post paucos dies* does not mean *in a few days*, but *after a few days*. Second, the following imperfect would constitute an inexplicable tense switch.

Both the factual and the syntactic context would be better satisfied if *parit* had past reference. We would then have to assume a narrative present. Its use in this context might have been favored by the fact that Terentianus did not master the reduplicative perfect *peperit*. Indeed, *parit* may have been a perfect form for him (cf. Adams, 1977, 51f).

6. The phrase *absentia illim abituri* (l. 24) is hard to construe. The context makes it clear that *Ptolemes pater meu* is the one whose absence is being spoken of. In fact, the verbal noun *absentia* would seem to require a genitivus subjectivus. However, if *abituri* is taken to represent this, we get into trouble, since this refers to the future, but Ptolemaeus has already left. Again, one may assume that Terentianus was not quite clear

about the tense reference of the *-urus*-participle. This assumption would be strengthened by some parallel examples, to which we will return in § 3.2.2. However, none of those is quite cogent; and there are other passages where the future participle is used correctly (e.g. l. 14f).

An alternative hypothesis is the following: *abituri* is nominative plural. The following context makes it clear that mother and son do in fact want to leave (cf. Pighi, 1964, 70); so the future reference would make sense here. On this reading, however, *absentia* would lack a genitivus subjectivus. Thus both solutions have their shortcomings.

7. The phrase involving *xylesphongium* in l. 29 is unfamiliar. In the given context, the sense is clear enough. The word *xylosphongium* 'sponge stick' seems to suit well the desired meaning of something without value (cf. Engl. *a straw*)¹⁰. However, the syntax of the clause is completely irregular. There are two equivalent possibilities of emending it.

First, we may correct into *pro xylosphongio* and delete the *magis*. The clause would then have to be construed as «he did not care for me (so much as is appropriate) for a sponge stick». Second, we may retain *magis* and correct into *quam xylosphongium*. The meaning would be «he did not care for me more than for a sponge stick».

However, we may leave the text intact if we assume a blend of these two versions. Since we obviously deal with an idiom, such a contamination would not be unheard of and thus seems to be the best hypothesis.

3.2. Grammatical structure

The following comments are meant merely to highlight some selected grammatical features of our texts. Claudius Terentianus's letters display features of Vulgar Latin on all grammatical levels. I will skip here the phonology since it has been treated exhaustively in R. Calderini (1951) and Adams (1977), ch. II. Their conclusion is essentially that all the non-standard features of Terentianus's phonology are typical of Vulgar Latin and anticipate, in several respects, Romance phonology. In particular, there is much free variation in areas where standard Latin was normalized. As an example, one might mention anaptyxis and syncope of unaccented short vowels between two consonants (cf. *sopera*, l. 21, and *Juaroclum*, l. 14).

3.2.1. In the realm of grammar, the first remarkable property of Terentianus's Latin is the dissolution of case grammar. Phonology, morphology and syntax here develop in parallel, so that it is hard to attribute a given symptom to one of the levels of grammar. Perhaps the most impor-

¹⁰ Cf. Youtie and Winter (1951, 39f) for more details on the meaning of the word.

tant phonological process at this stage is the loss of final unaccented *-m*. This can be seen in uninflected forms (*aute*, l. 18f), in the accusative singular (*acu*, l. 11) and in the first person of the verb (*speraba*⟨*m*⟩, 468, 22).

In the case morphology, this makes for a merger of accusative and ablative singular. In the declension of masculine and feminine nouns, this has the outer appearance of the ablative taking the stead of the accusative. Grammatically, however, it is just the other way around. This can be seen in such expression as *quo tempus* (l. 17)¹¹, but also in the plural, where we find, e.g., *con tirones* (l. 22).

In the *a*-declension and the *o*-declension of the neuter, this syncretism extends directly to the nominative singular. In other declensions, this extension presupposes the fall of the final *-s*, which had been taking place since Old Latin. As a result, we get, in the singular, a three-case declension «unmarked case (nominative-accusative-ablative) vs. genitive vs. dative». From there on, the appearance of a final *-m* in uneducated writing merely reflects a dim remembrance from school days that in writing, nouns had to be adorned with a final letter *m* every once in a while. Witness *con matrem meam* (l. 23), *lites factam est* (l. 27). At the same time, such expressions as *con matrem meam*, *de salutem tuam* (468, 32) may be taken as evidence for the substitution of the accusative for the ablative.

Once the accusative-ablative constitutes the unmarked case form, a new morphological rule for the formation of a would-be classical nominative is abducted: add an *-s* to the unmarked form. This explains the form *lites*, which is not a plural form here (R. Calderini, 1951, 257), but the unmarked form *lite* provided by the nom. sg. *-s* (cf. Pighi, 1964, 71, Adams, 1977, 42f).

The locative serves as a directional case in *Alexandrie*. This already appears in Petronius, 62, 1 (*Capuae exierat* 'he had left for Capua', cf. Pighi, 1964, 15 and 69). Cf. also *scias Carpum hic errasse* 'know that Carpus passed by here wandering' (468, 43), where *huc* would be expected (R. Calderini, 1951, 258; Adams, 1977, 37-39).

The next grammatical area where remarkable changes occur is the pronoun. The ratio of *is* vs. *ille* in the function of a personal pronoun through all of our Latin letters is 6 to 31. The use of *is* is limited to some of the letters. The letters 470 and 471 each contain 7 occurrences of *ille* and none of *is*, and they are written by the same hand. It thus appears that some, but not all of the scribes employed by Terentianus were familiar with the use of *is* and substituted it for some of the occurrences of *ille* dictated to them.

It is also noteworthy that there is no nominative form of either pronoun in the letters. *Is* occurs mostly as a direct object, whereas *ille* is mostly used for other oblique functions, especially the indirect object.

¹¹ although this may also be an accusative, *quod tempus*; cf. Adams, 1977, p. 40

In 469, the dative singular feminine appears repeatedly in the form *illei*. In other cases, *ei* is clearly a writing for *i*, influenced by Greek (cf. *rescreibae* 'rescribe', 469, 11). However, one may also assume an analogical dative *illaei* > *illei*, which underlies Italian *lei*. We would then be confronted with a remarkably early occurrence of something the next evidence for which dates from the 6. cent. (cf. R. Calderini, 1951, 258; Pighi, 1964, 13, and Adams, 1977, 45-47).

As for the possessive pronoun, the recurrence of forms such as *pater tus* (l. 17), *sum negotium* (l. 30), *mater ma* (l. 34) makes a slip of the pen improbable. Instead, one may compare these forms to the French possessive pronoun *mon - ma, ton - ta, son - sa* (cf. Pighi, 1964, 69).

3.2.2. In conjugation, we find a similar, if not so far-reaching dissolution of the paradigm. The loss of the final *-m* of the first person singular has already been mentioned. The fate of the third person singular ending is not much different. Although voiced and voiceless consonants do alternate in words such as *et* (l. 13), the appearance of *d* in forms such as *inquit* (l. 16), *liquid* [cf. ms.] (l. 23f) is noteworthy. First of all, «il -t si sonorizza prima di scomparire», as Pighi (1964, 69) reminds us. However, it should also not be forgotten that final *-d* is a feature of the inherited Old Latin secondary ending, which may never have become voiceless in some varieties of the spoken language. Finally, if the text of l. 34 is actually to be restored into *vendedit*, our letters would contain an example of a third person singular without the final *-t*, which otherwise occurs already in the Pompeian wall inscriptions.

Another striking feature is the uncertainty in the tenses. In particular, the future participle occurs frequently, but half of the time without a discernible future meaning. In l. 32f *habiturum* is found instead of an expected *habere*, cf. Pighi, 1954, 71. In 468, 36-38, we find *spero me frugaliter viciturum et in cohortem transferri*. N.º 467, l. 8 again has the form *exiturum* in a context where *exeuntem* would suffice¹². Apart from the future participle, we already had occasion to remark on the strange use of *parit* in l. 20. Consecutio temporum is violated in *vendedi lentiamina ut veniam Alexandriae* (l. 34f).

3.2.3. Finally, some comments may be made on word order (cf. Adams, 1977, ch. IV). The most frequent order of the main constituents in independent clauses is «subject - verb - oblique complements», as in *ego... collexi paucum aes* (l. 12). So much would be expected on the basis of the facts of the Romance languages. What is striking from this point of view is the frequent position of the object pronoun after the finite verb; cf. *dico illi* (l. 10), *deduco te* (l. 25).

¹² *S[cias] autem [ra]pi me in Syriam exiturum cum vexillo, [et poposci eum] dare mihi [eos...*

On the other hand, there is much variation. Among others, we find the following orders of the main constituents:

- subj. - verb - complement: *Saturninus... paratus erat exire* (l. 26);
- dir. obj. - verb - subj.: *litem abuit Ptolemes* (l. 20f);
- dir. obj. - ind. obj. - subj. - verb: *hunc tibi mater mea misit* (468, 15);
- dir. obj. - verb.: *matrem meam... praegnatam inveni* (l. 18f);
- dir. obj. - ind. obj. - verb: *acu lentaminaque mi mandavit* (l.11).

All of these variant orders are easily interpretable as subject to functional sentence perspective. Besides, there is some apparently free variation. Cf. *ago tibi gratias* (468, 7) vs. *gratias illi ago* (468, 29); *probavere se* (467, 12) vs. *me probavi* (467, 16); *inscribe omnia et signa mihi scribe in epistula* (467, 23f).

There is also a cleft-construction in our letter, namely *hoc est... quod pater tus mi mandavit* (l. 16f). This construction is relatively rare in Classical Latin, but all the more frequent in the Romance languages.

In finite subordinate clauses, the final position of the verb, as in *quod pater tus mi mandavit* (l. 17), is predominant. Infinite verbs, however, are mostly followed by their complements, as in *se exiturum Alexandriae* (l. 14f). Otherwise, we find great variation here, too. Cf. *ut mittas mihi...* (468, 24) vs. *ut mi mittas* (468, 27).

Below the main constituent level, we find variation in *sum negotium et circa res suas* (l. 30). There are also some distantiations, as in *nullius concepi odium* (467, 16); *neminem habeo enim karum* (467, 18); *bis me in mensem calcio* (468, 26); and the formulaic *bene valere te opto multis annis* (467, 36).

The upshot of this last subsection is that although Terentianus's syntax is comparatively simple, it is by no means uniform. In fact, there appears to be some tension between the evident simplification of morphology and the freedom of word order still admissible.

4. CONCLUSION

The general purpose of this paper has not been to provide new insights into the structure of Vulgar Latin, but instead to strengthen our awareness of the fact that Vulgar Latin is not chronologically subsequent to Classical Latin, but contemporaneous with it, as well as the awareness of how different the actually spoken Latin language was from the Classical Latin we are most familiar with.

The letters of Claudius Terentianus were written at a time which we tend to associate with Tacitus and Juvenalis and where we still find sufficient literature in the standard language in order to forget about Vulgar Latin. It is good to be aware that at that time, the Latin language already displayed a situation of perfect diglossia. The standard language

was sufficiently far away from the everyday colloquial language in order to be unattainable for someone not especially trained in it.

On the other hand, we tend to associate Proto-Romance (or whatever we consider to be the basis of the Romance languages) with some time at the end of antiquity. Here it is good to be aware that in the first years of the II. cent. A.D., the spoken Latin language in some respects resembled closely the Romance languages, in some points even more so than it resembled Classical latin.

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