

Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- Semantically oriented grammars
 - rigorously hierarchical structure
 - systematic structure within chapters
 - emphasis on semantic – rather than formal – categories
 - (probably) aimed at native speakers
 - goal: to appreciate and imitate style of great poets & writers (Vergil, Cicero, Sallust...)
 - most famous: Donatus (mid-4th c. AD; widely used until 16th c.)

Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- Semantically oriented grammars; Donatus
 - Ars minor (Shorter grammar)
 - only parts of speech
 - dialogical form (very unusual!)
 - Ars maior (Longer grammar)
 - Book 1: sound, letter, syllable, feet, accent, punctuation
 - Book 2: noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition, interjection
 - Book 3: barbarisms, solecisms, other faults, metaplasms, schemes, tropes
 - this type of info unknown in Greek grammars of the time

Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- Semantically oriented grammars; Donatus
 - Ars minor (Shorter grammar): see handout

Example: *nomen*

- definition
- main types & properties listed
- properties explained in detail
- examples

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- Formally oriented grammars
 - (probably) written for non-natives (more and more of them from 1st c. BC on!); *Regulae* ~ *Gr Kanones*
 - all survive from originally non-Latin speaking territories (North Africa, Palestine...)
 - teachers' attempts to organise basic morphological information for memorisation
 - long lists of similar forms arranged in some way
 - fundamental educational problem! (we have no idea how elementary Latin was taught to "Barbarians" and Greeks)

Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

- **Priscian(us)**: most famous and influential grammarian (along with Donatus); Constantinople, ~ 500 AD
- Famous teacher (at advanced level); wide-ranging work; also close to Emperor
- Grammatical works basis of advanced humanities education until end of Middle Ages

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Priscian's *Partitiones*... (*Analyses of the twelve first lines of Vergil's Aeneid*)

- detailed analysis of select verse lines
 - metrical
 - grammatical
 - lexical
- rare glimpse into classroom pedagogy!

Rome: Extant grammars (late period)

Priscian's *Institutio de nomine...* (*Instruction on the noun, pronoun and verb*)

- short but very systematic formal description of the four inflecting parts of speech
- successful classification into declensions and conjugations (rather than alphabetic order...)
- very influential later because of its practicality

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Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae*
(*Grammatical doctrine*)

- lengthy combination of semantically oriented and formal type of grammar, advanced
- highly theoretical; Greek presumed
- first ever discussion of Latin syntax!
(modelled on the Greek Apollonios Dyskolos, 2nd c. AD)
- Standard material at medieval universities

Christianity and language: St Augustine

Christianity and language: St Augustine

354–430; highly learned teacher of rhetoric from North Africa; convert to Christianity, then bishop of Hippo (now Annaba, Algeria)

Highly regarded preacher, prolific writer, most influential thinker of Western Christianity, with strong background in philosophy and liberal arts

Vast amount of exegesis

Works on liberal arts, including dialectic with discussion of signs/semiotics

Christianity and language: St Augustine

The Bible on language (Augustine's exegesis):

- The Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1–9)
 - variety of languages is God's punishment
- The Pentecost miracle (Acts 2:1–11)
 - reversal of punishment, "redemption" of lgs
- Jesus as the *Word* of God (Greek *logos* / Latin *verbum etc.*) → Jn 1:1–23 [see next slide]

Christianity and language: St Aug on Jn1

"In the beginning was the **Word** and the Word was with God and the Word was God...

[John the Baptist] said: I am... a **voice** of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord..."

← The word (*logos, verbum*) is a meaningful unit of utterance, which exists before it is uttered; the only valuable part of the relation

← The voice (Greek *phōnē*, Latin *vox*) is only the carrier, the body of the meaning, accidental (e.g. can be in any language), of no value in itself

Christianity and language: St Augustine

The consequence at a general level: what were seen as accidental, external properties of language (forms, sound shapes, variation) were not considered interesting

What matters is meaning and pragmatic force

Also: great efforts to anchor "accidental" properties of language in some aspect of reality (e.g. five vowels → five senses; eight parts of speech → eight beatitudes)

Christianity and the language of the Church

In the East, several languages with time-honoured literary traditions (Greek + Aramaic, Coptic, Syriac)

→ Church had no reservations about translating Bible; liturgy, services in local languages

→ creation of alphabet for languages with no tradition of writing (Armenian, Georgian, Gothic 4th c., Old Church Slavonic 9th c.)

Christianity and the language of the Church

In the West, no such languages (West Germanic, Celtic, later Scandinavian, Slavonic and Hungarian)

- Roman Church decided to use Latin in liturgy, services, also as the sole language of the Bible (though translations & paraphrases of parts were made occasionally)
- Literacy meant knowledge of Latin; anyone aspiring for higher status had to be schooled in Latin, the language of all serious business

The Early Middle Ages: 600–800

Elementary instruction in Latin was needed
(primarily morphology)

inherited material (Donatus) not really good for
this purpose

Lot of experimentation, additions to Donatus,
combinations of Donatus and Priscian's
Institutio de nomine...

Insular grammars (mainly by Irish and English
monks — Ireland most cultured part of
Europe between cca. 600–800; missions!)