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ON THE RELATINIZATION OF THE LATIN TERM *MAGISTER*¹

ABSTRACT: The expansion of the linguistic lexicon by means of loanwords is a common phenomenon. During this process the word is taken from the donor language and assimilated in the system of the recipient language. Loanword adaptation is carried out on the semantic and formal level which concerns the pronunciation, spelling and grammatical characteristics of a word in question. In this article we present the case of the Latin word *magister* concentrating on its phonetic accommodation and process of its relatinization after the original borrowing in the Old Polish language. The word was relatinized in Polish, that is reborrowed from the Latin orthographic form and as such it functions in the Polish lexicon to this very day. Additionally, we investigate the semantic adaptation of the word, describing the relations between the Latin and the Polish meanings of the word *magister* at different stages of development of both languages.

KEY WORDS: Latin borrowings in Polish, relatinization, Latin language, Polish language

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1. LEXICAL BORROWINGS

Loanwords are present in every language. They reflect its history and especially the contacts with the neighbouring languages. As such they remain to us a valuable source for investigating the history of cultural contacts between nations. Words are usually borrowed when the term is lacking in the language. Its process, lexical borrowing, is the adoption of new words from a different language usually either for new concepts or a specific meaning of an already known concept.²

Unless the borrowing amounts to a direct citation of a foreign word in the receiving language (e.g. *femme fatale* or *know-how* used in Polish), the loanword undergoes adaptation in terms of its semantic and formal properties (phonetics, orthography, morphology). From a semantic point of view if a word has several meanings, usually one concrete meaning only is transferred from the donor language in the process of lexical borrowing.³ Formal adaptation means the accommodation of the loanword to the structure of the language it is received into. Generally, the longer the loanword is present in the language, the more similar it becomes to the other lexical items and thus it becomes more and more native-like in terms of its orthography, morphology and phonetics. This nativization is the process through which the loanword is adjusted to fit the structure of the language, especially when such structures (sounds, spelling, accent, morphology) are very different in the donor language. Obviously, not only lexical items can be borrowed but other features as well including sounds, affixes, syntactic structures or word order. The process of adaptation can be manifold. Bańko⁴ gives examples of some of the mechanisms used in loanword adaptation – substitution of native sounds, letters and groups of letters for foreign ones, simplification of geminates, subsequent adaptation of vowel length and stress features, inflectional adaptation of the loanword, changes in derivational patterns to fit them into the structure of the language, depluralization of an original plural word, double marking of cases or categories which are transparent in the donor language but opaque in the recipient language.

² Hock 1986: 380.

³ Cf. Bańko et al. 2016: 19.

⁴ Bańko et al. 2016: 23–25.

2. RELATINIZATION

In this article we will be concerned with the phonetics of Latin loanwords in Polish which, after phonetic adaptation, were subsequently renewed in the language by probable learned borrowings from written language, bringing their pronunciation closer to the original forms in the donor language. In the case of borrowings from Latin this process will be called relatinization. In the 1960s and 1970s there appeared several works devoted to the process of the relatinization of the Latin borrowings in Polish.⁵

This process was explicitly called relatinization in 1974 by Józef Reczek who observed that the words borrowed from Latin to Polish often became relatinized, i.e. the borrowing was renewed on the basis of the written language in order to render more faithfully the phonetics and orthography of the word, making it closer to the original source of the borrowing. Sometimes, the outcome relies heavily on the speaker's *pre-suppositions* about the original form thus becoming a sort of hypercorrection. The examples which Reczek adduced concerned words indirectly borrowed into Polish originally from Latin but through Czech with the consonant group /kr-/. This group was subsequently changed to [kř] <krz> in Old Polish (e.g. *krzcić* 'to baptize'). Later the same word was reborrowed, or relatinized due to its conservative spelling already not reflecting the actual pronunciation, as Polish *chrzcić* 'to baptize' (cf. Latin *chrismō* 'I baptize'). In the case of the name *Christus* which in medieval Latin was already pronounced as [kristus], Reczek assumes that it was adapted in Polish as *Kryst*, then underwent the change to **Krzysz*(usz) but subsequently got relatinized into *Chrystus* which is the form now commonly in use while the older **Krzysz*(usz) was lost (but compare the name *Krzysztof*⁶).

We will use Reczek's work as a model for our investigation of the word *magister*. We think that this word was relatinized in the history of Polish as well, although this is not clearly seen from the orthographic form of the word, orthography being always more resistant to changes than phonetics.

⁵ Safarewicz 1969; Reczek 1974.

⁶ Cf. Reczek 1974: 158.

3. THE TERM *MAGISTER* IN LATIN

The word *magister* in the original meaning ‘the bigger, more important one’ is etymologically a derivative of the word *magis* ‘more’ (from the adjective *magnus* ‘big’) created with the **-teros* suffix which originally seems to have had a contrastive value.⁷ All of the forms of the root **mag* are going back to the Proto-Indo-European root **megʷ-* continued in Latin in the zero-grade form **mgʷ-*.⁸ In classical Latin the word *magister* had a wide variety of meanings. It was used as the old title of the dictator (*magister populi*), commander of a military force, a ship’s captain, a chief officer of a religious association, a manager of a company or troupe, a person in charge of animals, an expert, one at the top of his profession, a professional teacher or a person regarded as an example to be imitated.⁹ Only some of those meanings were continued further on in medieval Latin and in the particular Romance languages, the direct offspring (through Late Latin) of classical Latin.

In medieval Latin the term was used to denote a principal or superior in both an ecclesiastical or civil gathering, a specialist in a certain profession or especially a university teacher. Later on it was also a university degree.¹⁰ In the Middle Ages the connotations of the lexeme *magister* with the sphere of education were very clear. Indications of that are not only found in the basic meanings of this word but also in phrases with the element *magister* which denote particular positions in the school. Thus the phrase *magister principalis* (in Polish *magister przełożony*) referred to the head of a monastic school, *magister scholarum*, *magister scholasticus* and *magister summus* (in Polish *scholastyk*) denoted the supervisor and head of a cathedral school and the term *magister* either on its own, without any designation, or with the element *secundus*, *secundarius*, *puerorum* was used interchangeably with the term *submagister*. Those terms denoted an auxiliary teacher.¹¹

⁷ Cf. Leumann 1977: 316–317.

⁸ de Vaan 2008: 359.

⁹ After OLD: 1062.

¹⁰ After ELexicon: s.v.

¹¹ Karbowiak 1898: 41–46.

4. THE TERM *MAGISTER* IN POLISH

The term *magister* is present in the Polish language already in its oldest stage – Old Polish. *Słownik staropolski* notes only one attestaton of the word. It is present in a gloss to the Latin text of a sermon: *Ecce quidam legisperitus, magister zakona, surrexit temptans eum*, which translates as: ‘thus rose a certain man experienced in law and started tempting him’.¹² The Polish gloss *magister* concerns the first part of the compound *legisperitus*, which means ‘experienced, knowledgeable in the law’. Based on this is the meaning given in the Old Polish of the Latin *magister* ‘scholar, experienced in something, expert’.¹³ Probably already in the Middle Ages the word *magister* was used in Polish as a term for a teacher – not only at the university level, as in later periods, but also with the reference to a teacher in a cathedral school.¹⁴ Parallel terms, which also concern teaching, go back to Latin and were adapted in Polish also show that, e.g. *scholastyk* ‘a member of the chapter house who is responsible for the issues of the cathedral or collegial school, one of the prelates of the chapter house (titular)’,¹⁵ from Latin *scholasticus* ‘one who attends the school as a teacher/student, a man of science, scholar’.¹⁶ The same can be inferred from the attestations going back to the later stages of the development of the Polish language.

Through the ages the meaning of the term *magister* underwent only insignificant changes. Two dominant senses of the word can be shown: one signifying an academic degree and another denoting an academic teacher. In particular, in its first sense the word was primarily used with reference to „the academic degree of a philosophical faculty which have existed from the oldest times at nearly every university”,¹⁷ and thus overlapped semantically with the title of *magister artium liberalium*, the master of liberal arts (in the Old Polish and Middle Polish times called simply *magister*). The term *magister* stood in opposition to *doctor*, that is, the name of the degree awarded to graduates of theological-philosophical, medical or law

¹² Sstp IV: 144.

¹³ Sstp IV: 144.

¹⁴ Karbowski 1898: 41–46.

¹⁵ Sstp VIII: 143.

¹⁶ du Cange: s.v.; OLD: 1702.

¹⁷ EncOrg IX: 530.

schools.¹⁸ In its second sense the word referred to the ‘teacher of liberal arts’ in the Old Polish language. As suggested by the contemporary dictionaries of the Polish language, this meaning was the main one in Middle Ages.¹⁹ Additionally, in different periods of the history of Polish, many secondary meanings appeared, mostly in connection with phrases and compounds featuring the element *magister* such as *pocztmagister* ‘postmaster’, *kwatermagister* ‘quartermaster’, *magister kapeli* ‘conductor’, *magister artylerii* ‘commander of artillery’ etc. The meanings of the words in the individual periods of the history of Polish are presented in the table:

Period of the development of the Polish language	Diction- tionary	Lemma	Definition
Old Polish	Sstp	(Magister) Majister	‘scholar, experienced in something, expert’
Middle Polish	SXVI	Maister	‘teacher of liberal arts in the old university, here figuratively: master, expert; teacher’
			phrase <i>maister artium</i> ‘master of liberal arts’
	SL	Magister	‘title used frequently by older authors, it refers to the doctor of philosophy’
			‘magister from <i>Mayster</i> , superior’
			compounds and juxtapositions: <i>pocztmagister</i> , <i>pocztmajster</i> ; <i>kwatermagister</i> , <i>kwatermistrz</i> ; <i>magister artylleryi</i> , <i>general artyleryi</i> , <i>general prowiant magister</i> ; <i>magister kapeli muzycznej</i> , <i>kapelmajster</i>

¹⁸ Geremek 1997: 344. The *magister* academic degree was necessary in order to obtain the one of *doctor*.

¹⁹ Cf. SJP PWN.

New Polish	SWil	Magister	'master, experienced, perfect at a certain skill'
			phrase <i>magister kapeli</i> 'superordinate over the music'
			phrase <i>magister bizmutu</i> (Magisterium bismuthi), as a chemical and farmaceutical term 'basic bismuth nitrate, obtained as a deposit when bismuth is dissolved in nitric acid and water is added to this solution; extraordinarily delicate white powder which was formerly used to whiten the face but under the influence of hydrogen sulphite frequently found in air, this white colour often changes into grey-blue'
	SWar	Magister	Old Polish 'master, an academic degree, lower than doctor'
			'rector, head of a school'
			rare 'director, commander'
			phrase <i>magister artyllerii</i> 'general of artillery'
			phrase <i>magister kapeli</i> 'bandleader'
	SDor	Magister	'the lowest academic degree awarded after the successful completion of higher education, passing of the required examinations and submitting of a thesis; a person holding such a degree'

	SDor	Magister	<p>‘the lowest academic degree awarded after the successful completion of higher education, passing of the required examinations and submitting of a thesis; a person holding such a degree’</p> <p>colloquially ‘pharmacist, master of pharmacy’</p> <p>historically ‘the lowest academic degree of the medieval university (philosophical faculty), awarded to graduates in the so-called ‘liberal arts’ (humanities); a person awarded this title, teacher’, ‘master, expert, superior’</p>
Modern Polish	SJP PWN	Magister	<p>‘the title awarded after the completion of higher education, and the submission and defence of a written thesis; also: a person with this title’</p> <p>‘pharmacist working in the pharmacy’</p> <p>‘in the Middle Ages: teacher of the liberal arts’</p> <p>‘in Ancient Rome: the title of some of the officials’</p>

5. THE RELATINIZATION OF THE TERM *MAGISTER*

The Latin term *magister* was used in Old Polish, as a medieval Latin word in Latin texts most probably with the pronunciation [majister] (cf. *Egypt* pronounced as [ejipt] and the note of Parkosz that the initial <g> was pronounced like <j>²⁰). The same pronunciation was also probably commonly used in both medieval and Late Latin in Europe as evidenced by the development of the word *magister* > *majister* > *maester*.²¹ That the pronunciation of the letter <g> was commonly [j] is also evidenced by spellings <genuarius> [jenuarius] ‘January’, <agebat> [ajebat] ‘drove’,

²⁰ Cf. Łoś 1922: 156; Urbańczyk 1952: 128.

²¹ Grandgent 1934: 110; Herman, Wright 2000: 44.

<Gerapolis> for <Hierapolis> etc.²² It is very probable that the development of Late Latin [g] > [j] was the reason for this kind of pronunciation in medieval Latin. This was obviously followed in the medieval Latin used in Poland and could have also influenced the pronunciation of foreign Polish words with <g>, cf. the doublets in Middle Polish: *angjol* and *anjol* ‘angel’, *general* and *jeneral* ‘general’, *geografja* and *jeografja* ‘geography’. The pronunciation [majister] or even [majster] was probably present until the New Polish era. Then the relatinization of the term took place, which revived the old classical form [magister]. The reason for that could also be the analogical changes which occurred in loanwords with the palatal [je-], e.g. *jeneral* ‘general’ ([general] > [gjenerał] > [jenerał] → [generał]) or *ajencja* ‘agency’ ([agencyja] > [agjencyja] > [ajencyja] → [agencja]).²³ Both in native words (where the palatal consonant was due to the so-called fourth palatalization²⁴) and loanwords the palatal pronunciation [je] was generally dropped in the 20th century²⁵ and it is the hard pronunciation [ge] that is continued in present-day Standard Polish. However, the palatal pronunciation is still visible in dialectal Polish (e.g. [gjenerał])²⁶ and in some forms where the depalatalization did not occur (cf. *tygiel* ‘crucible’). There is also some evidence of variation, as in the forms *agencja/ajencja*, *agent/ajent* with changes in meaning.

6. OTHER EXAMPLES OF RELATINIZATION

There are numerous other examples of relatinization which result from this kind of process, i.e. renewal of a borrowing based on the Latin orthographic form which often leads to hypercorrection. Reczek in his 1974

²² Grandgent 1934: 110.

²³ Cf. Łoś 1922: 156.

²⁴ Cf. Długosz-Kurczabowa, Dubisz 2006: 146–147. According to Stieber (1966: 69) the palatalization in Polish had to take place before or around the 16th century.

²⁵ The varying pronunciation and orthography in Polish can be seen in the works concerning the Polish grammar from the 18th century onwards, e.g. in Kopczyński (1778–1785), Feliński 1816, Brodziński 1830 and in the *Uchwały Akademii z dnia 31 października 1891 w sprawie pisowni polskiej* (1892) where it is stated that the variants *regestr/rejestr* and *general/jeneral* coexist in the language. For the details see also Jodłowski 1979.

²⁶ Cf. Stieber 1966: 69.

article gives the following list: *krzciciel* ‘baptizer’, *krzcić* ‘to baptize’, *krzciny* ‘baptism’, *krzczenie* ‘the process of baptism’, *krzest* ‘baptism’, *krzestny* ‘godfather’, *krześcijanin* ‘Christian’ among others. All of these in turn became relatinized in Polish, under the influence of the Latin spelling in <ch> (which was pronounced as [k] already in Late Latin), and turned into *chrzciciel*, *chrzciny*, *chrzczenie*, *chrzest*, *chrzestny*, *chrześcijanin*. Although Reczek thinks that in principle it would also be possible that these words reflect a sound change in Polish of /kr/ to /hr/, they are mostly attested in words of Latin origin and reflect the earlier Latin pronunciation. Thus they can be dubbed relatinizations of older Latin lexical borrowings.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The Latin term *magister* is one of the many loanwords present in Polish which made their way into Polish and have been in use until now. Its modern shape may suggest that it is a fairly recent direct borrowing from Latin. However, as we have shown, the word was present in the language as early as the Middle Ages and the fact that it continues to be used in present day Polish is both due to its medieval history and the fact that it underwent relatinization (reborrowing), whereby the old borrowing was reshaped under the influence of written Latin and effectively made to resemble its original Latin source.

It is worth noting that in certain aspects the process of relatinization is similar to the so-called *cultismos* in the Romance languages in both meanings given by Alkire and Rosen: “1) a word taken deliberately from Latin or Greek roots, with minimal changes adapting it to the phonology of the borrowing language. 2) a word that remains in use from antiquity on, but resists the normal sound changes because of its link with cultural zones where Latin remained alive, such as religion, law, or medieval science (learned word)”.²⁷

However, the Romance languages are the direct continuation of Latin and it is obvious that they use the material of Classical Latin as the source for the renewal of their vocabulary. In case of Polish, it is the

²⁷ Alkire and Rosen 2010: 354.

direct evidence for the large influence that Latin had on the language through the ages. Even today the Polish lexicon is full of classical loanwords that were adapted at some point in the history of the language. Additionally, they are also present in today's everyday speech and, though many of them may directly come from English, some of them have Greek or Latin origins. This shows that the influence, though indirect, is still visible and strong.

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