diaphasic variation as its modern Romance descendants. We therefore deliberately avoid capitalized epithets in such syntagms as 'Vulgar Latin' or 'Late Latin', which unreasonably suggest an ill-founded linguistic and psychological demarcation between one supposed language, Classical Latin on the one hand, and an autonomous derivative, 'Vulgar Latin' or 'Late Latin' on the other. Rather, in the same way that linguists regularly append descriptive labels like 'modern', 'spoken', 'popular', 'dialectal', 'journalistic', 'literary', 'Latin-American' and such like to the modern Romance languages to refer to a particular 'variety' of that language (e.g., '(spoken) Barcelona Catalan', 'popular French', 'journalistic Italian', 'literary Romanian', 'Latin-American Spanish'; see Wright, Volume II, for further discussion), we have left it to the discretion of individual authors to indicate and identify, where necessary, the particular register, style or variety of Latin intended by means of an appropriate non-capitalized epithet or periphrasis, be it 'vulgar Latin', 'spoken Latin' or 'the Latin of North-West Africa'.

To conclude, we should like to remember here Joseph Cremona, who died on 19 March 2003, and to whom the present volume of *The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages* is dedicated – fittingly so since Joe was the first to hold the post of Lecturer in Romance Philology (1955–89) in the University of Cambridge. During his long and eminent career, Joe firmly established, and when necessary, defended, the study of Romance linguistics in Cambridge, and inspired and encouraged successive generations of students to become specialists in Romance and/or general linguistics. Indeed, it stands as a testimony to his continuing legacy that a great many of those currently teaching the history and structure of Romance languages in British universities have been his students (or, latterly, have been taught by his students). Amongst them are two of the present editors and several of the contributors to the two volumes. The subject is buoyant and flourishing in Britain today, and a very large share of the credit goes to him. What he created was not so much a 'Cremona school' as a 'Cremona style': he argued that fruitful study of the structure and evolution of the Romance languages requires a thorough acquaintance with linguistic theory, and at the same time that the study of linguistics, and especially historical linguistics, needs mastery of the kind of comparative and historical data which can be gleaned abundantly from Romance languages. It is these same issues and principles which have guided and shaped *The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages*, a fitting tribute, we believe, to his memory.

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I

**ROMANCE LINGUISTICS AND HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS: REFLECTIONS ON SYNCHRONY AND DIACHRONY**

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In remembrance of Eugenio Coseriu, József Herman, Yakov Malkiel

1

**Introduction**

I discuss here some problems of Romance diachronic morphosyntax in the light of theoretical and methodological considerations on the relation between diachrony and synchrony, and the question of linguistic change.

I first attempt to demonstrate a thesis that is perhaps not obvious, and rather goes against the grain of contemporary thinking: Romance linguistics has rather more to offer general linguistics in its thinking on the synchrony–diachrony relationship and the problem of language change than contemporary general linguistics has to offer Romance linguistics. Our discipline not only possesses an extraordinary stock of data, but also has long had a rich array of methodological and theoretical tools, which make it a particularly ideal platform for tackling the intellectual problem of diachrony. Romance linguistics foresaw aspects of the modern debate, and in some respects offered solutions ahead of that debate. In particular I shall be concerned with the following issues:

(a) 'Laws': are there laws of transformation through time, besides laws of analogy? In other words, do diachronic structures exist, in addition to synchronic ones?

(b) The form–function relation: does this relation have the same properties in diachrony as in synchrony?

(c) Syntactic factors in morphosyntactic change: is their role active or inert?
2 Between general and Romance linguistics

2.1 Introduction

Are the power and potential of Romance diachronic linguistics obvious? That they are not seems to me to be shown by the arguments that have arisen in recent years in North American Romance linguistics, as well as in schools of thought rooted in different theoretical and methodological approaches, such as diachronic typology, grammaticalization theory or generative diachronic syntax. Following a preoccupation dear to Yakov Malkiel, founder of an authoritative American school of Romance linguistics, Stephen Dworkin has repeatedly called for a 'rejuvenation' of Romance linguistics, through openness to new theories and methods, and promoted stimulating exchanges of views between Romanists from different countries (see also Malkiel 1988:20). But how feasible is this? And what should this rejuvenation consist of? Are we to rethink old problems and domains of enquiry, or should we identify new ones, from the perspective of recent theories? Theories, of course, are never neutral with regard to the data they assume. In fact, theories impose their own specific empirical domains.

This could be one of the crucial points of the question. Take the Chomskyan distinction between E-language (‘External language’) and I-language (‘Internal language’), nowadays widely used in diachronic generative syntax. From the outset research has focused on changes in I-Language; moreover, the primary explanandum is taken to be changes in grammars, mental entities represented in the minds/brains of individuals. E-languages, and the changes they undergo, are of little import, being considered mere epiphenomena (see Lightfoot 1999:74; 2003). Typical issues are: Why do French children have V(erb)-to-I(nflection) raising, while English children do not, and lower their ‘I’ (Lightfoot 2003:499). Or: How does the category change from noun to preposition (e.g., Lat. CASA > Fr. chez) conform to an acquisitional principle such as ‘Minimize feature content’ (see Longobardi 2001:294f.)?

Such questions and the kind of data they involve are very different from what the traditionally trained Romanist is used to. To apply the Chomskyan distinction again, the data may be said to involve E-language, which look, to boot, like rather restricted technical questions which some may regard as unexciting, such as: If the medieval geographical extension of derivatives of IPSA in the function of ‘nascent article’ was much greater than today, how did it subsequently get reduced diachronically, both diatopically and diachronically? And how, conversely, did the continuants of ILLE in the same function gain ground, eventually establishing themselves over most of the Romania (see Aebsicher 1948)? And are the plurals in -i of Italian and Romanian masculine nouns direct continuants of the Latin second declension nominative plural inflection -i, or must we postulate a more complex, less ‘economical’ and multi-staged, development (see Sabatini 1965)? Much of the strength of Romance linguistics resides in such questions, and in answers to them which harness together the multiple dimensions of spatial, social and historical enquiry, the interplay of which forms a leitmotif of the whole discipline (see Coseriu 1973; 1981; Malkiel 1988:20).

Yet further, more wide-ranging, issues have also been raised. In 1978, in an article on the problem of language change (reprinted in Herman 1990), the eminent Hungarian Latinist and Romanist József Herman had discussed some ‘cluster changes’, mainly morphosyntactic and syntactic, and datable between the second and seventh centuries, which had major repercussions on the structure of the noun phrase and the sentence. These phenomena appear to have occurred in parallel: (1) simplification of Latin declension; (2) replacement of some case forms with prepositions; (3) appearance of new prepositional elements with a more definite spatio-temporal meaning; (4) tendencies to changes in word order; and (5) loss or weakening of word-final, consonantal and vocalic, segments. Herman was convinced that what was particular to historical explanation lay in: (a) the interrelations and mutual causes of changes; and (b) the possible connections between linguistic change and the circumstances of linguistic transmission (Herman 1978a=1990:362). Of course, different models of diachrony contain the idea of interconnected clusters of changes, reflecting deep structural adjustments (in the language or the grammar), yet these models all share the aim of rationalizing change. Think, for example, of the typological representation of clusters of adjustments affecting languages understood as objects external to the speakers, or the generative models which hypothesize ‘cascades of changes’ which grammars may undergo (see Lightfoot 1999; 2003; Longobardi 2001). In a more or less direct way both hark back to the functionalist conceptions of the early twentieth century, according to which change is not made up of independent adjustments, but occurs as part of a system of interrelated changes. If Herman generally follows this point of view, his position is clearly distinguished by its distance from typological and generative conceptualizations of the past few decades.

I concur entirely with Malkiel, who held that Romance linguistics contains a ‘reservoir of priceless data’ and considered its diachronic domain one of ‘truly inexhaustible possibilities’ (Malkiel 1988:19). There is no reason to think that he was in any way calling for the abandonment of the
traditional preoccupations of the discipline. This is clear from a dream he evoked, at the end of a resonant address in 1988 on the complex history of Romance linguistics, which appeared to him to take the form of a three-faced Janus. He called for the new generations of Romanists who had stayed away (to Malkiel’s regret) into synchronic studies, to return with renewed interest to the classic themes of diachronic linguistics, but to do this without ignoring twentieth-century developments. In terms that, perhaps, reflected his direct exposure to the world of North American linguistics, where diachronic studies had been reshaped by synchronic studies, Malkiel (like Herman) focused our attention on the essentials of history and diachrony, asserting their specific and autonomous nature.

Yet is this wealth of data and historical problems, in space, society and time, of itself a strength of Romance linguistics, or is there a risk of its becoming a kind of locked strongbox, to which only tiny cliques of specialists hold the key, and whose treasures must lie largely unexploited? There is also the risk that diachronic Romance linguistics could become a mere auxiliary to synchronic speculation, a kind of ‘empirical data dump’, on which theories whose ‘historical’ nature is dubious could draw as they please. This risk may be emblematic of a new phase in the history of linguistics in which the unresolved contraposition of synchrony and diachrony in Saussurean structuralism, and the attempts to reconcile them within European and then North American functionalism, appear to have resulted in the abolition of both synchrony and diachrony, in favour of a universal grammar lying outside time, space and society.

2.2 The riches of the historical world: new and old paths in historical linguistics

The classical problems of Romance linguistics may still be valid, but how are they to be addressed from a novel perspective? The study by Herman mentioned above seems to me to offer an excellent vantage point from which to assess the distance between an authoritative point of view subscribed to by many Romanists, and some recognized approaches in diachronic linguistics which are conspicuously concerned with language as a whole.

One initial difference lies in the fundamentally sceptical view of diachronic theories manifest in Herman’s work. This is not to say that he did not attempt to give an organic and coherent representation of change, but he did have a clear awareness of the limits of representations of historical facts. He may have hypothesized that the five (morpho)syntactic changes mentioned above were manifestations of a single complex structural change, involving encoding of NP-internal relations and the relation of the NP to the rest of the sentence, but he did not think that this was a matter of causal determination in one direction or another. He concluded therefore that ‘there is no reliable and generally acceptable answer to the question of how these processes determine each other or indeed whether any of them takes priority of causal type over the others. We could refer, at most, to a negative conjecture: an old and simplifying causal solution can in all probabilities be excluded’ (Herman 1978a; 1990:365). The point is that Herman was convinced that historical linguistics had to be found specific and adequate models, quite different from physical–causal ones, and that the very concept of ‘historical explanation’ in linguistics lay largely unexplored.

This fundamental scepticism also involves more specific but not unimportant issues, such as the chronological delimitation of changes. Herman makes extremely cautious use of periodizations, knowing that the date of first attestation is relative and that even frequent occurrence cannot be taken as evidence of the passage from one stage to another. The issue arises of interpretation of sources, especially written sources as reflections of spoken language — an exquisitely historical problem with enormous consequences for the analysis of change. For this reason, more or less accurate periodizations have for Herman a less central role than appears from some contemporary discussions, which retain the legacy of Neogrammarian-style positivist conceptions, apparent also in the widespread idea that the locus of change is language acquisition over successive generations of speakers (see Lightfoot 2003). Even further removed from Herman are models, such as diachronic typology and grammaticalization theory, which, in different ways, view change in terms of linear cycles. These are not historical cycles in the sense of modern historiographical debate, but rather evolutionary cycles. The concepts of ‘evolution’ and ‘history’, albeit often nowadays considered interchangeable, are profoundly different. Recall that in historical sciences this terminological fusion had already been successfully criticized, and superseded, in the final decades of the nineteenth century (see Tessitore 1991), as had the idea of the predictability of change, which in many theories was allied to a biological–evolutionary view of linguistic development. Herman’s approach is concerned neither with the origin nor the future development of a given phenomenon. From its origins Romance linguistics has been aware that a truly historical conception of language is a very different matter from a biological–evolutionary one. Consequently, however much one might agree with some recent generative critiques of typological–evolutionary models (see Lightfoot 1999:210), they look like
an extremely tardy recognition of ideas that have been argued for in the theory and practice of Romance linguistics for two centuries.

But the greatest split lies in the synchrony–diachrony relationship. Herman (1978a; 1990:357) rightly stressed an issue which still seems highly important twenty years on: the theoretical literature approached the problem of diachrony from the perspective of synchrony, 'either by applying theories established within synchrony to the history of language, or by denying the possibility of a substantial distinction between synchrony and diachrony with reference to obviously perceptible traces of historical changes in synchronic state'.

2.3 **Synchrony and diachrony**

The subordination of diachrony to synchrony (or their interchangeability, which is only apparently different) has deep roots, but emerges distinctly in various North American groups of scholars in the 1960s. A thesis such as Hoenigswald’s (1960:3), that 'much time and effort could have been saved if historical theory had been built on more explicit synchronic foundations', although characteristic of conceptions of reconstructionist historical linguistics, has continued to this day to influence other domains of general linguistics concerned with diachrony (see Lightfoot 1999:266).

At the Austin congress of 1967, Lehmann outlined the programme for a new diachronic linguistics, built on modern descriptive linguistics and concerned primarily not with structural units, or states, but the operations or processes which characterize the working of languages. Taking his inspiration from Praguean models of dynamic functionalism, he stressed the concept of the fluidity of languages with respect to synchrony and diachrony, a concept which, he held, emerges conspicuously if one looks at operations and not states. Yet the synchronic roots of such a programme are hard to deny, for various reasons: (a) it takes as basic the conception of an active 'participant' in change; and (b) the operations or processes are, after all, representations of events which express more or less broad movements in time, through descriptive schemas. In other words, the priority of synchrony over diachrony is reformulated as the priority of descriptive over truly historical linguistics (see Lehmann 1968; 1982). Such has been the mould of diachronic typology and, in different ways, other approaches to diachrony, over the last forty years.

The 'neofunctionalist' programme had to contend with some fundamental difficulties, and there may have been excessive optimism about solving them: (a) the problem of the metalanguage, i.e., of the comparability of different linguistic phenomena in terms of universal analytic categories; (b) the problem of how to treat the form–function relationship in diachrony; and (c) the problem of whether theoretical models and sophisticated phylogenetic practices were really compatible. Perhaps the greatest difficulties lurk in this last problem, which is only apparently methodological: theoretical paradigms (whatever their nature) and historical–philological paradigms are far from easy to mesh together, without banal (or distorted) treatment of one or the other set of paradigms.

At Austin, morphology and syntax, banished to the realm of synchrony by early structuralism, were put forward as new directions for research on language change: diachronic syntax was brought into the study of the impact of morphological paradigms on sound change, and both in turn were brought into the examination of the impact of sociolinguistic facts on linguistic structure. While Lehmann wanted wholesale transplantation of operational–descriptive models into diachrony, Malkiel's Austin speech pointed in the opposite direction, with a clear attempt to bend synchrony towards diachronic investigation, in line with the dream of grafting some new branches on to the sturdy roots and the trunk of the old tree of Romance linguistics. Analogical–synchronic factors are considered as the limit of regular diachronic development, bound by so-called sound laws. These factors present both a source of phonetic irregularity, on the historical level, and a structural explanation of diachronic irregularities, on the theoretical level (see Malkiel 1968). Yet it seems certain that for Malkiel the historical perspective was to remain central and unchanged, with all its attendant array of technical and methodological tools, and conceptual problems.

In a different way from typological and grammaticalization-based approaches, generativism has also defined a programme where synchrony (description) controls diachrony (historical representation). The study of diachrony is part of a broader programme of biological research on mind, centred on the theory of Universal Grammar (UG) and its relations with individual grammars (see Lightfoot 1999:266f.). The object of enquiry is change occurring in grammars as an effect of the 'resetting of parameters', on the basis of primary (external) linguistic data, which constitute the 'triggering experience', whilst changes in the external linguistic environment, considered accidental, are of secondary interest. Change is thus conceived as a different setting of parameters, occurring under particular conditions, which give rise to a discontinuity (or 'catastrophe' – see Thom 1975). The discontinuity is an event which occurs in synchrony, in individuals' minds.
In this mentalist framework the dependency of historical linguists on synchronic linguists is clearly spelled out. Only a synchronically based theory of grammar, a theory capable of accounting for the grammar of any natural language as emerging from normal childhood experience, would be able to explain which changes are fortuitous (i.e., attributable to environment) and which are necessary (i.e., grammatical and thus justifiable), while historians were bound to have but an uncertain answer (Lightfoot 1999:265f). Possible change is therefore necessary change, imposed by the laws of UG. Whatever such laws are, there are good reasons to hold that change is only partially and perhaps marginally connected with such general principles.

Lightfoot’s theory has some unresolved problems, such as the relation between ontogeny and phylogeny, which contains an unjustified leap of logic. The properties considered specific to phylogeny are defined in terms of a conceptual inheritance in historical linguistics which recycles late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideas. What sets off the trigger remains particularly obscure. Lightfoot (1999:266), well aware of these difficulties, sets out the possible contribution of historical linguistics to synchronic theories:

Syntacticians are embarrassingly silent on what it takes to set the parameters which they define. What makes historical studies so interesting is that one can sometimes identify cases where grammars change at some stage in the history of the language. If we are lucky, we can then identify changes taking place in the language just prior to the emergence of the new grammar. In that case, if our records are good, we are in a position to identify just what it took to trigger the new grammar. In fact, it seems to me that we can learn more about the nature of the triggering experience from language change than in any other way. This is no small claim, because unless syntacticians start identifying how their parameters get set by children, somebody is going to call their bluff and show that the emperor has no clothes.

This places a heavy burden on historical linguistics, for which it does not seem to get due recognition. This theory still implies historical movement, albeit implicitly, but only insofar as it can rationally be represented within the grammar as a point of major change (catastrophe). A more radical theory is that of inertia or diachronic minimalism. According to the generativist Giuseppe Longobardi (2001:277):

A priori [...] the ideally restrictive theory of language change should probably claim that diachronic change does not exist. This is so because, if diachronic change exists, we are faced with a dilemma: either one must assume that at least some primitive change is unmotivated (i.e. largely beyond the scope of scientific inquiry), which is incompatible with the ideal theory; or one loses any understanding of why the previous synchronic state was possible at all. Since it seems to be a fact that changes exist (and previous synchronic states, too, of course), the ideal (or perfectly minimalist) theory cannot be fully pursued.

Consequently, the number of primitive causes must be reduced to a minimum, some of them being cast out to the very edge of grammatical systems, or beyond. This logical operation is accompanied by another: the assignment of an explanatory role to social, material and cultural changes, which are external to or independent of the grammar. And it is a Romance phenomenon with which Longobardi shows this, namely the development of French chez as an element with a prepositional function. This is the type of change traditionally represented in terms of ‘grammaticalization’ (passage from one grammatical category to another: Lat. CASA(M) > Fr. chez), which within a generative framework constitutes a prime example of the problem of the resetting of parameters. Longobardi ingeniously attempts to combine etymological and general linguistic analyses. Drawing on numerous works in Romance historical linguistics, he describes a broad range of nominal constructions with continuants of Lat. CASA. His originality lies in comparing such Romance types with the Semitic ‘construct state’ type (cf. Hebrew ha-moresh, ‘the teacher’s home’), while he does, ‘the home of the teacher’), and deriving them from principles of UG. But the set of universal properties of the construct state is only the starting point, perhaps going back to a ‘predocumentary common Romance stage’, of a development that in the case of chez involves in all five diachronic changes:

1. the two lexemes MANSO ‘abode, dwelling’ and HOPITALE ‘abode, asylum’ develop the meaning ‘house’ in the Gallo-Romance area;
2. the noun chies, the phonetically regular development of CASA, disappears;
3. Lat. CASA(M) also follows a different phonetic development, representable as *kas > chies > chez;
4. NOUN > PREP;
5. the meaning ‘house’ is transformed into that of ‘general and abstract position’.

Longobardi (2001:298f.) concurs with various Romanists in seeing a relationship between (1) and (2), which he expresses, however, in ‘causal’ terms ((1) caused (2)). His thesis is that change (2) is responsible for the
whole set of changes (3)-(5) and that consequently (1) is the original change, external to the grammar, which gave rise to all the others.

The notion that the triggering condition is external to the grammar opens the way to conclusions laden with theoretical implications: in the syntactic history of chez there was no resetting of parameters, and even syntactic change (4) might be considered a secondary consequence of a semantic change which occurred in another lexeme (Longobardi 2001:297–99). In effect, at the syntactic level nothing happened. This representation invokes continuity, as more generally expressed in the theory of inertia: 'language is diachronically inert unless proved otherwise'. This model of reanalysis of a grammatical category has its attractions, especially when compared with the analyses offered by grammaticalization theory, which represent this type of change in terms of fluctuations – it matters not whether diachronic or synchronic – at the end of which there is a definitive 'leap' from one category to another. Neither approach is unproblematic. The analysis of the diachrony of chez is scarcely 'historical', in the sense, particular to Romance linguistics, of a systematic description of the characteristics of linguistic structures in their distribution in time, in space, in society and in the culture of individuals, and in the sense of an understanding of how such structures interact with external factors. The historical method adopted is really more of a typological–reconstructive one. And historical factors are exploited, simplistically, to demonstrate a given assumption. On the level of the diachronic model represented, the result is clever, rather than convincing (as I intend to show elsewhere).

It is in Romance linguistics that the idea of the non-existence of language change has received a major theoretical formulation, at the hands of Coseriu. But his argumentation is quite different, being of a historical–empirical nature. As for diachronic minimalism, some questions arise. If language is diachronically inert, what is the point of turning to diachrony, from the point of view of grammatical investigation? Does the theory of inertia not deliver the coup de grâce to what was left of the notion of diachrony as a process of historical transformation dominated by grammar? And does it not amount to an unconditional surrender to external factors, which on this account are still haphazard and accidental? In that case, grammatical rationalism, taken to its logical extremes, would give rise to an evident paradox: the belief that everything in diachrony is purely contingent.

The apparent supremacy of external factors in the generative theory of inertia is deceptive, for the logic of the theory does not favour the identification of such factors. Its ultimate aim is to represent grammar unaffected by the perturbations of change, so as to conform as far as possible to an ideally restrictive theory of change. Hence, unlike Lightfoot's proposals, the 'triggering' factors of change are banished to the periphery of the grammar and even beyond. It is remarkable that, once this is done, the grammar may become indifferently a synchronic or a diachronic model. Yet another paradox seems to be that this leads by another route to the same general conclusion as the functionalists on the non-distinctness of synchrony and diachrony. This conclusion is reached in many respects from the opposite direction: the diachrony of the inertia model is by definition static, while functionalist models are based on the concept of the dynamic potential of the activity of speaking.

The difficulties of generative approaches show how difficult it is to reconcile biological and historico-cultural paradigms. They cannot simply be combined together and the historical is ultimately distorted by the predominance of the biological, and reduced to a mere epiphenomenon (see Lightfoot 1999:265). Many Romanists would find this worrying. Herman's concerns about the lack, since Saussure, of broad engagement with the historical dimension of language on its own terms, seems today more relevant than ever.

The 1980s have been said to mark a turning point in linguistics, with the attempt to bring down the wall between general and historical linguistics which had stood for the best part a century (see Matthews 1991:3F). But this may be less straightforward than the collapse of the Berlin Wall. To grasp the potential of Romance linguistics, we need to examine why.

Saussure's reflection on synchrony and diachrony appears nowadays, thanks to the publication of notes from the Cours, edited by Constantin, Patois and Riedlinger (in Komatsu and Harris 1993; Komatsu and Wolf 1996; 1997), much more multifaceted and complex than what emerged from the edition edited by Bally and Sechehaye (Saussure 1922). The debate of the 1960s on new directions of research in diachrony may have been influenced by the earlier edition. We need to review the main points of this debate to assess the import of the critical revisions which were subsequently proposed, and to grasp what is specific and characteristic of the perspectives offered by Romance linguistics. Fundamental are: (a) the idea of the link between system and consciousness; (b) the problem of teleologism; and (c) reflection on the concepts of phenomenon and law.

The need to contrast synchronic and diachronic phenomena, as Saussure held (Riedlinger, Quire II [Komatsu and Wolf 1997;36F]), is rooted in a theoretical conception born of thoroughly philosophical assessment of the notion of system and that of événement. Crucial is the idea of the
speaker’s linguistic ‘feeling’. A synchronic fact exists only as an element in a network of psychological relations (dependencies) which lie in the consciousness of speakers in a collectivity (see Constantin, Quire IX [Komatsu and Harris 1993:120f.]). There, feeling and meaning are indissolubly linked (Riedlinger, Quire III [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:49]). In other words, for there to be a synchronic fact there must be speakers who perceive and feel it as an entity clear and distinct from other facts, which are nonetheless connected to it. Only such feeling gives value to synchronous facts.

The aspects of this model which post-Saussurean structuralism and functionalism in its various manifestations have most emphasized are the logical and formal ones, i.e., the logical, differential and oppositional relations between the elements of linguistic associative networks. Yet it is the relation between synchronic fact and individual speaker which has fundamental theoretical consequences. A synchronic fact is not a mere linguistic ‘phenomenon’ or ‘event’ in abstract space, divorced from any speakers for whom it has ‘value’, and speakers’ awareness stands as the only yardstick for determining the degree of reality of a phenomenon in synchrony and the possibility of representing it as a structure.

The epistemological status of diachronic facts is quite different. Such facts ‘are opposed to synchronic facts as are events to a system, are only events’ and ‘we do not speak via events’ (Riedlinger, Quire II [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:46]; see Herman 1978a; 1990:361f.). As an événement, every diachronic fact is determined and exists outside the loop of linguistic, logical and psychological relations which lies in the awareness of speakers in a collectivity. It is an independent fact, in series with other diachronic facts (Riedlinger, Quire II [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:45]). It is not brought alive by the speaker’s feeling, and thereby lacks direct interpretation and structural value.

Yet the distinction between the two orders of facts raises a number of unresolved questions. The consequences for synchrony of the centrality of the speaker’s perspective were not all followed through. For this point of view can be thoroughly and coherently applied only within a time frame in which observer and speaker coexist, and of which the linguist–observer is a direct witness. Saussure’s thinking displays a rather blurred overlapping between the concept of ‘observer’ who infers the characteristics of a given état de langue and that of ‘speaker’ in whose feeling and consciousness they are reflected or experienced. The failure to think through the logical leap from speaker to linguist–observer prevents further exploration of a central question: the attribution of meaning and value for états de langue in the past which the observer does not witness can only be a matter of conjecture.

Moreover, the divorce between observer and speaker’s feeling, with regard to past phases of the language, means that the description of past states may be considered more like the process whereby an observer infers (describes conjecturally) what caused the passage from one state to another. In other words, theoretically and methodologically, it is only the synchrony of the observer’s present that is radically different from diachrony.

The centrality assigned to the speaker throws some light on the idea that the study of grammatical and semantic facts belongs to synchrony, while non-grammatical facts belong to diachrony (Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:67]). Grammar and meaning live only in the consciousness of speakers. They decay and melt away into mere events if we try and study them from the perspective of the transformations they undergo in time, for which we generally have only the material documentation which survives individuals. There are problems and contradictions in this polarization, due to lingering nineteenth-century syntactic and phonological concepts, but the status of grammatical and non-grammatical facts in relation to the speaker’s linguistic feeling and to the role of time in language retains its great interest. And all the more interesting are Saussure’s doubts about the possibility of associative and syntagmatic facts having a history, and the implications for the separation of diachrony and synchrony, if indeed they did. The conclusion that synchrony and diachrony are harder to distinguish in the domain of meaning and syntax than in that of phonetics, points up an awkward theoretical problem.

In any case, the distinction mentioned above has an important theoretical corollary, frequently stressed by Coseriu: the notion of ‘historical grammar’ is a contradiction in terms, because ‘no system can straddle a succession of periods’ (Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:62]. In other words, structural laws of change are unthinkable. Diachrony is the realm of événements occurring one after the other in an unstructured way and whose logical links only the speakers’ linguistic feeling can provide. By the way, studying different états de langue one after the other does not mean that one is moving in the domain of diachrony (Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:48f]). This is a conclusion of major theoretical significance, which has been ignored in many subsequent models of diachrony. But Romance linguistics has never forgotten it.

Saussure’s thinking also has major consequences for the relationship between the two dimensions, involving the paradox of a close mutual dependency alongside radical independence and irreducibility (Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:36f]). The two domains are incommensurable, and any attempt to reconcile them is chimerical and fraught
with perennial pitfalls (Constantin, Quire IX [Komatsu and Harris 1993:112]). For example, a phonetic change might be considered a natural event in itself, lying outside speakers’ consciousness, yet it becomes a synchronic fact when the resulting phonetic variants are assigned a meaning. But the synchronic fact is not explained by the diachronic one.

The conception summarized here goes hand in hand with a profoundly antiteleological outlook (Constantin, Quire IX [Komatsu and Harris 1993:111]):

"It is a mistaken idea we have that the language appears to be a mechanism created with a view to and in accordance with the concepts to be examined; we see how the state was never destined to express the meanings it acquires or to mark them according to a convention governing the terms employed. A fortuitous state occurs and is taken over. Nothing is more important from a philosophical point of view. But the state must be carefully distinguished from what changes it.

The antiteleological position has a significant link with ideas of the concept of law, and the need to distinguish between synchronic and diachronic laws (Constantin, Quire IX [Komatsu and Harris 1993:117f.]):

In the diachronic domain a law is imperative and dynamic. It abolishes one thing and introduces another. It makes itself felt by its effect. It has a force. A diachronic law expresses an imperative which is carried out whatever the resistance. A synchronic law expresses an existing order. It is a law of the same kind as when one asks: on what plan were trees planted in the garden? This law captures a state of affairs, an arrangement.

<Not imperative, not dynamic>

Two kinds of general problem emerge, which still deserve our attention today: the role of sound change in diachrony and the concept of the imperative nature of laws. In both cases the conclusions are of wider importance than may at first seem. This is apparent, for example, in the idea that the term ‘law’ should be applied with much greater care to diachronic than to synchronic facts (see Riedlinger, Quire III [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:48]). And the idea of a non-imperative, non-dynamic synchronic law, that merely describes a state of affairs, is not after all far removed from the concept of synchronic rule found in subsequent models of theoretical linguistics. But there remains a major difference: in these latter developments synchronic rules are *ipso facto* projectable onto diachrony, while for Saussure such an operation could by no means be taken for granted.

It is thus clear why one of the major critical points in diachronic theory is the problem of the postulability of structural laws of language change.

Recent typological and grammaticalization-based models answer in terms of structural cycles (or laws) of transformation, with an evident intellectual debt to the early twentieth-century thought of the Prague School, which stressed the complementarity of permanence and change, the interaction of synchrony and diachrony and the interchangeable nature of diachronic and synchronic laws themselves. Rejecting the sterile and fictitious method of the history of isolated facts (Thèses 1929:9), the Prague School had affirmed the need for historical linguistics (and other evolutionary sciences) to move from a conception of facts produced arbitrarily and accidentally, regular as they may be, to a nomogenetic conception of concatenation of evolutionary facts according to laws (Thèses 1929:9). Not only synchrony, but also evolution is taken to have structural laws which can explain both phonological and grammatical changes (Thèses 1929:8). In this view, linguistic changes are indeed not destructive forces operating by chance and in an unstructured way, but often aim at stabilizing and rebuilding the system (Thèses 1929:8). On the other hand, synchronic description cannot entirely dispense with the concept of evolution, for ‘in even a sector envisaged synchronically there exists an awareness of the stage which is disappearing, of the present stage, and of the stage which is coming into being’ (Thèses 1929:8). As in neo-functionalism diachronic models, in this approach there are no longer any insurmountable barriers between the synchronic model and the diachronic model. Moreover, the notion of functional system may be used, in different ways, in both dimensions (Thèses 1929:7–8). At the base of this conception is the idea that the foundation of movements in synchrony and diachrony is the speaker understood as a participant and protagonist in the functioning of the language. But this model has its theoretical problems: the actions of speaking individuals in the synchronic function and the diachronic transformations which affect language overall belong to mutually incompatible dimensions: the former are on a small scale, the latter on a large scale (see Herman 1978a; 1990:360).

In sum, even if Saussure’s thinking bears the hallmark of an inheritance of opinions common in late nineteenth-century historical linguistics, his discussion of the concept of law, and particularly his rejection of the imperative nature of laws, shows that he has really advanced beyond a positivistic viewpoint which likened linguistic laws to those of physics. Actually, it might be better to say that in recognizing the importance of value/meaning as a guiding epistemological principle for the study of synchrony, Saussure already belongs to an age that has adopted function as the interpretative key in historical enquiry, but that in limiting this principle to synchrony he shies away from the conceptual leap that others
with perennial pitfalls (Constantin, Quire IX [Komatsu and Harris 1993:112]). For example, a phonetic change might be considered a natural event in itself, lying outside speakers' consciousness, yet it becomes a synchronic fact when the resulting phonetic variants are assigned a meaning. But the synchronic fact is not explained by the diachronic one.

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Romance linguistics and historical linguistics

So the retrospective, or comparative, point of view is indispensable (Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:65]). In Romance linguistics this conclusion, even at the time of the Cours, would not have been subscribed to by everybody (see Varvaro 1968:133–64).

Theoretical thinking on synchrony and diachrony in Romance linguistics has played an appreciable role in clarifying the terms of the early twentieth-century debate, with obvious consequences for the work of the Romanist. As early as the late 1950s Coseriu had rightly pointed out the confusion caused by greater stress being laid either on methodology, or on ontology or definition:

What is independent of diachrony is synchronic description, not the real state of the language, which is always a result of another earlier stage, and is even for Saussure a product of historical events. The problem arises because Saussure talks about description, even if he does not clearly distinguish the 'real' and the state of the language as projected. Thus the Saussuran antinomy when mistakenly transferred to the level of the object is quite simply the difference between description and history, and in this sense no longer has anything Saussurean about it except the terminology, and cannot be suppressed or annulled, because it is a conceptual necessity. (Coseriu 1973; 1981:13)

Of prime importance is the stress laid on the complementary, rather than antithetical, relation of description, history and theory and the fact that 'description and history are mutually exclusive not from the point of view of the object, but as operations; that is, they are distinct operations' (Coseriu 1973; 1981:18). In this sense, the idea of the non-separability of diachrony and synchrony seems to receive a more lucid formulation than the Prague version: the existence of a diachrony in synchrony and a synchrony in diachrony is a matter of the real state of the langue, not the method or the observer’s point of view (see Coseriu 1973; 1981: ch. 6).

Equally important is the central position given to the concept of linguistic ‘tradition’, defined as the ‘transmission’ of common and current modes of speaking which form the idiomatic inheritance of a language (Coseriu 1973; 1981:31, 34). This concept, profoundly imbued with a sense of history, has numerous implications. Insofar as it refers in turn to the idea of ‘traditional knowledge’, quite different from abstract universal knowledge (Coseriu 1973; 1981:38–40), it may offer a concrete historical point of contact between the fortuitous and irregular nature of diachrony, inaccessible to speakers’ consciousness, and the array of associative relationships which define a language at a particular period and which

were to make shortly after, that of using the concept of function as a tool for understanding how historical change happens. This is a major issue. It makes us face the daunting task of imagining, on the basis of sources which are perforce indirect, a complex of interrelated processes, with the aim of identifying an overarching reason for their development. It is the task of the ‘resuscitation’ of the past by historians. But at this point the problem is what ‘resuscitation’ means.

This difficulty is conspicuous in those parts of the Cours dealing with the prospective and retrospective viewpoint in diachrony – yet another issue which has retained its interest to this day. The former ‘is equivalent, if we could apply it without difficulty, to the complete synthesis of all facts which concern the history, the evolution of language’ (Riedlinger, Quire III [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:63a]). The latter places the observer at a particular period and leads him to ask ‘not what the result of a form is, but what forms gave rise to it’ (Riedlinger, Quire III [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:64a]). This is in effect the reconstructive method. The distinctions echoes that made some years earlier by Meyer-Lübke in his Einführung in das Studium der romanischen Sprachwissenschaft (Meyer-Lübke 1901), who distinguished in Romance linguistics a ‘horizontal’ method (synchronic, in Saussurean terms), from two ‘vertical’ methods, one from ancient to modern, the other from modern to ancient, and who considered the latter to be ‘the real history of linguistics’ (see Varvaro 1968:149 and n.24).

The prospective approach is ideal, and difficult to apply, largely because ‘here the document is no longer the observation of what is more or less present to speakers’, but something indirect (Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:63]): ‘We would need an infinite mass of photographs of the language, of exact notations from one moment to the next in order thus to move forward following the course of time’ (Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:63]). Significantly, in observing that this methodology may be applied to some languages and not others, Romanists are cited as scholars whose field allows the best application of this approach:

Romance scholars are in the best position imaginable because they have, in the slice of time which concerns them, the point of departure. But even in exceptional conditions, at every moment in an infinity of compartments there will be none the less enormous gaps which will have to be filled by abandoning narration and synthesis so as to give another direction to the investigation, and this investigation will generally fall within the retrospective point of view.

(Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:64])
exist only in the perception of speakers of that period. This traditional knowledge, inherited by speakers initially as an impenetrable linguistic tool to which they give new life, is a key to comprehending why the 1-language and E-language dichotomy is ill-suited to an understanding of historical processes. This model artificially polarizes abstract and more or less universal mechanisms of linguistic knowledge and the textual objectification of languages as external products. But the concept of linguistic tradition also has a crucial theoretical implication for the modelling of change. Change does not concern phenomena taken as mere physical or mechanical facts, but the creation of linguistic traditions, defined as 'the historical objectivization of what has been produced in speech' (Coseriu 1988:149). Therefore 'linguistic change is the historical process by which a language disappears or arises, by which linguistic traditions die out or come into being, and by which often new traditions partially or wholly take the "place" of those dying out in the system of traditions which we call a language' (Coseriu 1988:150). For many Romanists, this viewpoint can hardly be avoided.

There is a final component characteristic of Coseriu's diachronic thinking which strikes a cord with many Romanists: the centrality (alongside traditional knowledge) of speech understood as textual production, in its multiple dimensions as general or historical activity, and as 'knowing how to speak' (Coseriu 1973; 1981:32, 38). It has long been a widely held conviction that studying the processes at work in spoken language at a particular synchronic stage may help linguistic change 'shed its contradictory nature and its alleged mystery' (Coseriu 1973; 1981:42).

3 Some case-studies
3.1 Old French declension

A prime showcase for the difference between the diachronic and synchronic perspectives, and the problematic interaction between them, involves a classic topic of Romance linguistics, the genesis of the nominal inflectional systems of old Gallo-Romance. The early Romance case systems show up as anything but homogeneous and regular. They appear to be constructions haphazardly cobbled together from the remains of an old, collapsed building. The continuities seem sometimes to involve phonetic form, sometimes morphological structure. Romance historical linguistics has variously stressed the role played by formal, or by functional, characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First declension (F)</th>
<th>Second declension (M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nominaive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSA 'rose'</td>
<td>ROSAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accusative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSAM</td>
<td>ROSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genitive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSAE</td>
<td>ROSARUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSAE</td>
<td>ROSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ablative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Singular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSA</td>
<td>ROSIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain facts about this system are very salient in discussions of the evolution of the Romance case system, notably aspects of the distribution of the inflectional ending -s and the nature of the nominative and accusative forms:

- -s characterizes all accusative plurals;
- -s characterizes both nominative plural and accusative plural in the third declension;
- -s also characterizes nominative singular in second (and many third) declension nouns;
- many third declension nouns show formal distinctions between nominative singular and the rest of the paradigm. Notably, fewer syllables in nominative singular than elsewhere ('imparitylicity'), and sometimes differences of stress (e.g., NOM.SG IMPERATOR 'ruler' vs. IMPERATORE- everywhere else);
first declension nouns are predominantly feminine; second declension nouns are predominantly masculine. The third declension contains both masculine and feminine nouns, without formal distinction of gender; 
- M, the marker of accusative singular, was early subject to deletion, leading, for example, to formal identity between the nominative singular and accusative singular in the first declension.

Over the final decades of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth, the collapse of Latin declension and the transition to the nominal inflectional systems of Romance was discussed in detail by the major figures of Romance historical linguistics, who were aware, sometimes acutely, of the implications for linguistic theory. Aspects of this debate remain relevant to this day for our understanding of the relation between syntactic-semantic factors and formal (i.e., phonetic and morphological) factors in the relevant diachronic developments, and also have considerable implications for the thesis that the changes brought about by the most widespread process of morphosyntactic change involved generalization of the accusative case form. Indeed, this issue was the arena for two opposing theories on the principles of linguistic change.

The first theory, asserted and defended by Diez and Meyer-Lübke, could be labelled ‘hypostatization of form and predominance of mental processes’. In it, systemic changes are examined by taking the forms and functions of the CLat. case system as the terms of comparison, and focusing on any functional deviations with respect to each particular form. This approach was adopted towards both late Latin and Romance forms. The following are characteristic of this approach:

- Form is an absolute parameter, in terms of which comparability under change can be assured.6
- Mental processes are assumed to be a more characteristic aspect of change than are substantive phonetic changes associated with production.
- The perspective is ‘teleological’, in that various forces are assumed to be in play leading towards the emergence of a single universal case, the accusative. Teleologism often goes hand in hand with functionalist approaches, but in the present instance it seems rather to be associated with the sharp separation between form and function.
- Change is studied through the comparison of successive synchronic stages in each of which the system appears stable and fully articulated.

The second theory, maintained variously by D'Ovidio and Schuchardt, could be called the ‘theory of transitional forms and functions’. The changes between Latin and Romance are considered as processes in which form and function maintain a certain degree of stability during the transformation, and form is taken as the ‘external’ locus (or symptom) of change.

Form and function are closely bound together, yet:

- In the processes of change, phonetics and morphological form are accordingly considered more influential than — or at any rate preconditions for — mental representation.
- There is wariness about the possible teleological implications of diachronic processes.
- The overall model focuses on the examination of individual facts, or the specific (accidental) characteristics of the transitional forms which gradually dismantle the Latin edifice.

The second theory in no way implies that the entire process is fortuitous. To follow the diachronic dismantling of a system requires an understanding of the incidence of certain forms as relics, each with its own raison d'etre, which, like the remains of an older edifice, will form a new one, where the individual parts still bear the traces of their past, yet have been, or are being, reassembled into a new construction. The ‘reasons’ are inextricably bound up with the nature of the historical processes. In history nothing is created and nothing destroyed. Cataclysmic changes excepted (but not always, even then), innovation always passes through the remodelling of pre-existing structures: the material and the structures persist, albeit often in altered form, but their functions are redefined.

These principles are only apparently reflected in the first theory, which considers the persistence of forms from an absolute, rather than relative, stance and interprets functions exclusively in semantic terms. The two sides of the sign, the static signifier and the dynamic signified, are separated by diachrony. The accusative form is seen as having ‘usurped’ the functions of the other case-forms. But such an approach is profoundly anti-historical, in that entities are still postulated which exist only relationally (inasmuch as they are defined in relation to one another), when they no longer survive. Here all the unresolved contradictions of a structural diachrony are plain.

Characteristic of these problems are the kinds of methodological and theoretical positions assumed in a debate which involved many front-ranking Romanists (such as Schuchardt, Ascoli, Mussafia, Tobler, Meyer-Lübke), especially with regard to D'Ovidio's (1873) thesis on the origin of Latin nominal inflection. D'Ovidio had rejected Diez's thesis that the
Rosanna Sornicola

accusative was the basic form underlying the OFr. and OPrv. object case, as well as the single case form of Italian and Spanish. D'Ovidio had asked whether the two-case stage had occurred not just in French and Provencal, but also in Spanish and Italian. His fundamental thesis, based on reflection on Italian, was that the simplification of Latin declension had been the product of a gradual reciprocal levelling of all the cases. A valuable article by Schuchardt gives a positive analysis of D'Ovidio's argument and all its implications, surveying each of the various positions in the ongoing debate at that time, and drawing a wide-ranging and sharply observed picture of the process by which the Latin declensional system disintegrated, and of the various stages in the development of the Romance inflectional system. His summary of D'Ovidio's thesis contains numerous pithy observations of considerable theoretical and methodological weight. Schuchardt observes (1874:167f.) that, in D'Ovidio's view, Diez was guilty of setting unadulterated Latin side by side with the Romance paradigm and seeking the most direct link between them, rather than patiently tracing the gradual dismantling of the Latin system. Schuchardt acknowledges that D'Ovidio's demonstration is seductively clear. Italian campo 'field' may derive from the nominative CAMPUS, accusative CAMPUM or dative- ablative CAMPO (but not from genitive CAMP[)]i amo: more 'love' only from accusative AMOREM, dative AMORI or ablative AMORE (but not from nominative AMOR or genitive AMORI); corp0 'body' only from the nominative or accusative (both CORPUS), but not from genitive CORPORIS, dative CORPORI or ablative CORPOR. So far as all three Italian forms have a common origin, they can only come from the accusative. Various sound changes - loss of Latin final -<, postulated loss of -s, merger of long O with short Ù - would have led to CAMPUM and CORPUS becoming campo and corpo. But in this case, D'Ovidio observes, campo can also come from CAMPUS: so is it really right to say that the accusative form campo usurped (replaced) both the nominative and the dative- ablative forms, which were identical in form (campo) to the accusative?

Schuchardt further synthesizes two important principles: that in change there are no mysterious forces at work inexorably leading towards definite results and that, in general, mental (functional) processes are subordinate to physiological (phonetic) processes. He asks (1874:168) where the impulse to replace Latin cases with just one or two forms might come from, and suggests that it is rash to assume that such a mysterious linguistic impulse is really at work, for mental processes are subordinate to physiological ones. D'Ovidio is right in saying that there is always a mental process at work in morphological transformations, but (Schuchardt proposes) the 'tracks' along which the mind moves are laid down by phonetic transformations.

At this point we need to summarize the division into declensional classes common to many grammars, and reflecting the application of different criteria: gender, morphological structure (A, B, C, E, F, below) and declensional patterns (G, H, below). Yet the various accounts are noticeably heterogeneous, using these criteria in different ways, giving greater weight to synchronic and analogical aspects (such as classification on the basis of the morphological characteristics of word structure), or stressing a diachronic approach (by considering the original membership of a noun in a particular Latin declensional class). Some accounts interweave the various criteria and perspectives. In many, especially of the synchronic-structural type, gender acquires special importance not only descriptively, but also as a tool for explaining change on the basis of analogy. Actually, the role of gender evolved gradually and in a by no means linear fashion. There is a considerable diachronic continuity. The Latin first and second declensions, the lexemes which belonged to them and their respective inflectional patterns survived in an etymologically regular way in OFrench. They were already clearly linked with gender in Latin (the first declension was largely feminine, the second largely masculine), and therefore they could have exercised analogical attraction not only on Latin nouns belonging to other declensions, but also on French third declension F and M nouns. But the historical reality may have been much more complex. In any case, we see here another aspect of the clash between diachronic (see Paris 1872) and synchronic (see Meyer-Lübke 1894:§21-24) perspectives. This clash also brings out the important issue - often overlooked - of the mismatch between Latin and Romance cases: for example, it is inappropriate to label the 'subject' 'nominative', and 'subject' is itself an unsatisfactory label since the case-form in question encodes more than just the subject function.

Here are the basic facts about OFrench declension classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>fille</td>
<td>fille (FILIA/FILIA(M))</td>
<td>fille</td>
<td>filles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This class contains the continuants of the Latin first declension largely composed of feminines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>fin'end</td>
<td>FINIS/FINE(M), medre 'mother' (MATER/MATRE(M)), cité 'city' (CIVITAS/CIVITATE(M))</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>fille, medre</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>fin', medre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Romance linguistics and historical linguistics
This class contains the continuants (largely feminine) of the Latin third declension, comprising both originally parasyllabic and originally imparasyllabic forms. However, the latter had already been remodelled into a parasyllabic pattern in late Latin, through generalization of the oblique stem (such as maìson 'house', from MANSIO/MANSIONE(M), città 'city' from CIVITAS/CIVITATE(M), etc.). Nouns of this class do not consistently conform to the declensional pattern.

Class C. Feminine. Type nonne/sore/nain 'nun', suer/sore/or 'sister' (sore/or) SG nonne, suer OBL nonne, suer (suer) PL nonnains, serors (suers)

This class also comprises a number of proper names. It lumps together different patterns of case alteration (the Germanic type -el-ain against the Latin type -OR/-ORjs). And there are some irregularities in the alternation between the subject stem and the oblique stem.

Class D. Masculine. Type murs 'wall' (MURUS/MURU(M))

This class is generally characterized by the fact that its members have a rather regular and specific inflectional pattern for case. By synchronic and structural criteria this class might be described as that of masculine parasyllabics whose stem ends in a consonant, but it is in fact often defined by diachronic criteria: it comprises continuants of the Latin second declension, or of lexemes assimilated into that declension. The potential for clash between diachronic and the other criteria is clear from some accounts which include in this class continuants of nouns in -ER from the second declension and some from third declension imparasyllabics in -OR, which had developed as parasyllabics (e.g., arbre 'tree', from ARBOR/ARBORE(M)). Nouns of this class conform to the declensional pattern in an inconsistent fashion. Moreover, the plural subject case form is clearly not an etymologically regular development from Latin. To justify this pattern appeal has been made to analogical attraction by the subject case form of the class D masculine declension.

Class F. Masculine. Types cons/ladron 'count' (COMES/COMITE(M)), enfes/enfant 'child' (INFANS/INFANTE(M))

This class comprises masculine nouns which have conserved the Latin alternation between parasyllabic and imparasyllabic stems, the former being specialized as the subject case form and the latter as the oblique. Nouns of this class may also show stress variation: invariant (e.g., cons/comte) vs. variant (e.g., ledre/ladròn). Where Latin stem alternants are thus preserved, structural and diachronic description coincide. But the picture is complicated by the fact that an originally second declension noun such as prestare (PRISBYTER), and nouns derived from Germanic bases in -o, -one [...] are included here. And the inflectional pattern is only partly...
etymological. Beside the lack of correspondence between the plural subject case form and the Latin nominative forms (where once again analogical attraction by the masculine class D has been invoked), it needs to be stressed that many lexemes are notably erratic in their adoption of zero or -s as the singular subject case inflection.

Class G. Feminine indeclinables. Type *paie* 'peace', *voie* 'voice'

Class H. Masculine indeclinables. Type *nei* 'nose', *sens* 'sense'

The unsystematic nature of OFrench declension is clear from many irregularities, involving various kinds of theoretical issues, which can be labelled as structural irregularities (lack of structural isomorphism between the various nominal classes) and empirical irregularities (the numerous cases of failure to conform to the paradigms, in the manuscripts which preserve the texts). Halfway between these are 'lexical singularities', where some lexemes constitute obvious exceptions within a paradigm which is otherwise clearly characteristic. For example, the MSG *fils* 'son' (< *filius*), invariant for case and revealing lexicalization of the originally second declension nominative -s. These outcomes demonstrate that even continuants of the Latin second declension, which at every stage of OFrench constitute the most unwaveringly regular class of masculine nouns, do not form a unitary bloc.

Such anomalies are of considerable theoretical interest in that they allow us to induce more general developmental principles, with regard to semantic factors such as [+animate] and [+human]. But the role of such factors can hardly have been regular either. Pope (1934:805) notes, in the paradigm of parasyllabic nouns the appearance of -s and -e 'came to be regarded as the characteristic flexion of the Nom. Sing. Masc.', but this affected names of things somewhat earlier than proper names. Even more irregular is the development of proper names, making it difficult to invoke the influence of the Animacy hierarchy (Schosler 2001b:174, 102).

There is also considerable case variation according to syntactic context. As Woledge et al. (1967) have shown for the *Chanson de Roland*, some syntactic structures, particularly those in apposition or lacking an explicit predicate, tend to favor the oblique case form over the subject form (see also Moignet 1966:346–49). Yet, in the same syntactic contexts, some noun classes (imparisyllabics) tend to stay closer to the regular use of case forms than others, while parasyllabics like *rei* 'king', and even more masculines in -e, and feminines, are less sensitive to the effects of syntactic context. Feminines are virtually indeclinable. These are idiosyncratic lexical developments, reflecting complex formal and semantic factors, at times collaborative, at times antagonistic (see Woledge et al. 1969). There is also evidence that metrical considerations could prevail over syntactic ones, case forms of a given noun being used (as already seen in the *Chanson de Roland*) indifferently, according to requirements of assonance and metre (Woledge et al. 1967:166f.; Vising 1882:6 for Anglo-Norman). Geographical differentiation is also important. Indeed, Stanovita (1993) attributes the great variability of OFrench declension not to a 'system', but to remnants of a destroyed declensional system, preserved in some *scriptae*, and rearranged in others. Overall, we can hardly postulate a 'system'.

The hybrid nature of the case markers also shows that we are dealing not with a coherent system, but with relics of an older array of forms which have been extended and remodelled in different ways according to place and textual traditions. The inflectional system seems to have atrophied in the ending -s, which is associated with the singular subject function (originally mainly masculine, but later spreading into third declension feminines), or an oblique plural function, or simply plural. But in addition to case-endings there is also – diachronically notably persistent – allomorphy of the root, originating in Latin imparisyllabic masculine third declension animates.

In all, case marking is better preserved in the singular than the plural (see Schosler 2001b:170); and there is syncretism between the subject singular and oblique plural case forms in -s. Syncretism, like allomorphy, is inherited from Latin, but as fragments which are reorganized according to new patterns of paradigmatic relations. Comparison of the Latin and OFrench paradigms may show the extent of what has changed, but scarcely constitutes an explanation. Rather, we may perhaps say that the condition mentioned above resulted from and abetted greater unpredictability and instability. And the lack of alternation between subject and oblique case forms derived from the first declension, both in the singular and the plural (showing the characteristic western Romance opposition between zero in the singular and -s in the plural) constitutes a gap in the system.

The role of analogy in the relation between diachrony and synchrony is crucial and problematic. Analogy is really a synchronic factor whose diachronic use may clash with other mechanisms of transformation, and whose explanatory force remains very uncertain. Nor is it clear in what relation it stands to the various chronological sequences of events or exactly what its role was in the various diachronic stages under examination.

All scholars agree on the analogical nature of the neutralization of case distinctions in continuants of the Latin first declension, based on loss of singular -m and loss of case distinctions in the singular, but not on the origins of plural -s. Some trace Gallo-Romance -s back to the Latin accusative
This class contains the continuants (largely feminine) of the Latin third declension, comprising both originally parapsyllabic and originally imparisyllabic forms. However, the latter had already been remodelled into a parapsyllabic pattern in late Latin, through generalization of the oblique stem (such as *maison* 'house', from *MANSIO*/MANSIONEM(M), *cité* 'city' from CIVITAS/CIVITATE(M), etc.). Nouns of this class do not consistently conform to the declensional pattern.

Class C. Feminine. Type nonne/nonnain 'nun', suer/seror 'sister' (*SOROR/SORORE(M))

This class also comprises a number of proper names. It lumps together different patterns of case alternation (the Germanic type -el-ain against the Latin type -OR/-ORIS). And there are some irregularities in the alternation between the subject stem and the oblique stem.

Class D. Masculine. Type murs 'wall' (*MURUS/MURU(M))

This class is generally characterized by the fact that its members have a rather regular and specific inflectional pattern for case. By synchronic and structural criteria this class might be described as that of masculine parapsyllables whose stem ends in a consonant, but it is in fact often defined by diachronic criteria: it comprises continuants of the Latin second declension, or of lexemes assimilated into that declension. The potential for clash between diachronic and the other criteria is clear from some accounts which include in this class continuants of the Latin third declension (parapsyllables such as reflexes of CANIS, PANIS, or imparisyllables which have become parapsyllables, such as the reflex of LEO/LEONE(M); see Brunot 1966, 1:181). Clearly in this case the criterion for inclusion in class D is the fact that these nouns conform to the declensional pattern of the type muri, characterized not only by a particular structure but also by relative regularity. It must also be stressed that the overall inflectional structure of this class is an entirely etymologically regular development from Latin.

Class E. Masculine. Type pedre 'father' (*PATER/PATRE(M))

This class can be defined, on structural criteria, as parapsyllabic masculines whose stem generally ends in a vowel. Diachronically, these are continuants of Latin third declension parapsyllables, plus some continuants of nouns in -ER from the second declension and some from third declension parapsyllables in -IR, which had developed as parapsyllables (e.g., *arbre* 'tree', from ARBOR/ARBORE(M)). Nouns of this class conform to the declensional pattern in an inconsistent fashion. Moreover, the plural subject case form is clearly not an etymologically regular development from Latin. To justify this pattern appeal has been made to analogical attraction by the subject case form of the class D masculine declension.

Class F. Masculine. Types coni/conte 'count' (*COMES/COMITIÌ(M)), ledre/ladron 'thief' (*LATRO/LATRONE(M)), enfes/enfant 'child' (*INFANS/INFANTE(M))

This class comprises masculine nouns which have conserved the Latin alternation between parapsyllabic and imparisyllabic stems, the former being specialized as the subject case form and the latter as the oblique. Nouns of this class may also show stress variation: invariant (e.g., *coni/contè*) vs. variant (e.g., *lédrelladrótrì*). Where Latin stem alternants are thus preserved, structural and diachronic description coincide. But the picture is complicated by the fact that an originally second declension noun such as *prestare* (*PRI/SINTER/BER), and nouns derived from Germanic bases in -o, -one [...] are included here. And the inflectional pattern is only partly
plural -s,\textsuperscript{14} while others believe that this inflection cannot be connected with any Latin case form (see Schuchardt 1874:163).

The continuants of the Latin second declension with nominative -s are, on the whole, a rather regular and consistent locus of conservation of morphological and phonetic structure. Thus:

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<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
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<td>S</td>
<td>-s</td>
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<td>OBL</td>
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<td>-s</td>
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The major diachronic problem is the development of the Latin third declension (see Paris 1872:110). Diachronically, the main division is, in the singular, between nouns of imparisyllabic and parisisyllabic origin. The former show different forms for subject and oblique singular (e.g., consome, homiche); the latter (e.g., the continuants of frater, pater) lack case allomorphy, and some have invoked analogy and paradigmatic levelling to account for the remodelling of their inflectional pattern on class D (singular subject mur / oblique mur), giving rise to an alternation between subject li peres, li freres and oblique le peres, le frene.\textsuperscript{15} Such levelling appears variably in Anglo-Norman texts.\textsuperscript{16} Yet later -s was allegedly added even to imparisyllabic nouns which already displayed allomorphy for case (e.g., hons, empereres, sire; see Paris 1872:111f.). For some this addition of -s never took root in the French introduced into England (thus Paris 1872:111f.), but the available evidence shows a more problematic situation. In the Cambridge Psalter -s is usually lacking in the subject case form of imparisyllabic nouns, although there are a few counterexamples, especially sires 'sire'. See (Brekle 1884:8) for the Veraye Saint Brandan.

Other scholars hold that -s originally appears in the singular only in words where it is etymologically justified, its extension being a rather late phenomenon fundamentally due to analogical adjustments, and more characteristic of Anglo-Norman and western French texts, so that careful poets like Wace and Chrestien only knew forms without -s\textsuperscript{17} - a view contradicted by Woleadge's findings (1979:18f.) from the manuscript tradition of Chrestien de Troyes.

Contrary to what one would predict from Latin, from the very earliest Gallo-Romance documents we find no -s in the subject plural form. This does not necessarily mean that third declension subject plural -s had already been lost in the lower sociolinguistic registers of late Latin.\textsuperscript{18} We could, again, be dealing with attraction by the Romance paradigm comprising nouns derived from the Latin second declension.\textsuperscript{19} Clearly these are speculations which stress synchronic analogical mechanisms: Schuchardt (1874:161, n1) saw that this could not be taken for granted. After all, in Merovingian documents both the nominative and accusative plural forms of the third declension are well preserved, and indeed the nominative has about a 10 percent higher rate of conservation than the accusative.\textsuperscript{20} Problematic as the testimony of such documents may be, it is by no means proven that nominative plural third declension -s was lost in late Latin.

Even more problematic is the development of Latin third declension feminine nouns (OFrench class B) conserving Latin root-final consonants (dolor(s), genzigen, flor(s), maison(s), vertez/veitez, defension(s)). Here too we find marked inflectional variability according to region, period and text. As for second and third declension masculines (classes E and F), Chrestien de Troyes has a fairly regular two-case system: in the singular (with a few idiosyncratic exceptions) we have -s in the subject form and no -s in the oblique; in the plural, like First declension feminines (class A), -s appears in subject and oblique forms alike. The long-standing discussion as to whether this reflects an ancient state of affairs\textsuperscript{11} has been complicated by competing etymological and analogical arguments, obscuring the fact that between Classical Latin and Romance multiple transformations - far from regular either in time or space - must have occurred.

Chrestien shows conspicuous changes with respect to Classical Latin. Firstly, levelling of Latin imparisyllabic stems on stems with a greater number of syllables, i.e., remodelling of the nominative stem on the basis of the oblique stem. So Latin allomorphy of the type

| NOM FLO-S | GEN/DAT/ACC/ABL FLO-  |
| NOM MANSO | GEN/DAT/ACC/ABL MANSO- |
| NOM UIRTU-S | GEN/DAT/ACC/ABL UIRTU- |

gives way to the stems FLOR-, MANSON-, UIRTU-, whence nominatives FLOR(E), MANSON(E), UIRTU(E), alongside oblique forms with the same stem. The documentation suggests that this phenomenon must already have been characteristic of late, and especially Merovingian, Latin.

The second change concerns non-etymological subject singular forms in -s and built on the oblique root (e.g., flor, vertez vs. Lat. FLOR, UERITAS). But is this an analogical development that arose during the twelfth century and established itself in Chrestien and others, or a survivor of late Latin popular forms? The picture has been further complicated by the discussion of the problem in the context of investigating the dissolution of the two-case system. In fact the earlier phases need to be examined on their own terms.
The direction of the diachronic process does not emerge clearly from an examination of the documentation, highly variable both geographically and textually. But, despite appreciable differences both in and between texts, some Anglo-Norman texts actually do show a notable incidence of -s. The Oxford Psalter, and the Cambridge Psalter (mid twelfth century) have plenty of forms in -s, with some morphological distinctions: thus in the Cambridge Psalter subject -s occurs in 40 percent of derivatives of the Latin type -as/-atis, and in nearly 80 percent of derivatives of the type -of/-onis. Much lower percentages are found in all other types (see Fichte 1879:81). Subject -s is frequent in later Anglo-Norman texts (see Vising 1882:96–98; Brekke 1884:21).

This textual and geographical distribution makes Meyer-Lübke’s (1894:§ 21) and others’ division between an Anglo-Norman and a French and Provençal dialect area look implausible. The latter area, from antiquity, allegedly distinguished subject flor from oblique flor, held to conserve a vulgar Latin situation, while Anglo-Norman deviated from it by keeping -s. This resurrects the thesis that Galloromania should be divided into areas that preserve the late Latin situation and those that rapidly broke away from it. The thesis (see Vising 1882:12f; Schössler 1984:171–73), that this situation is due to imperfect learning of French in England, has some sociolinguistic justification but should not be followed uncritically as an explanation of inflectional vacillations in the earliest Anglo-Norman texts.

The real interest of such vacillations is that they allow us to glimpse differences in the reorganization of the ‘ruins’ of an earlier inflectional system so that perhaps we should make a critical reappraisal both of the ‘continuity’ thesis (FSG, OBL -s in finir and maisons etc. goes back directly to late Latin types with remodelled subject -s) and of the thesis which ascribes it to analogical innovation in OFrench Here, differing attitudes of the writers towards existing linguistic traditions might be decisive. That the Oxford and Cambridge psalters have many class B feminine forms with singular subject in -s might be related to their Latinizing orientation (see Trotter 2007). Similar considerations might hold for the regular presence of -s in Chrestien. Such orientations, characteristic of particular scriptoria or cultural environments, should not immediately be assigned to a particular area, let alone to a line of diachronic development.

Analogical innovation has been extensively invoked. Both Paris and Meyer-Lübke concur that the singular subject case forms without -s in the second declension and third declension feminine, as found in the earliest Anglo-Norman texts and continental texts after Chrestien de Troyes, are due to the influence of the OFrench paradigm of first declension feminines (class A). and both postulate analogical developments to justify forms in etymological or non-etymological -s.

Paris’s model invokes analogical mechanisms in which gender is explicitly specified as a powerful attracting force. Analogy, which yielded a distinct plural subject case form in OFrench nouns of classes E and F, to make them like the plural of class D, also caused the disappearance of the singular subject case form of feminines of class B, bringing them in line with class A feminines, so that all feminine words declined in the same way, or rather that feminine declension consisted of no more than a gender distinction (see Paris 1872:114). This is strongly teleological, and it is not clear at what diachronic (or diastatic?) point such mechanisms might have operated. Latin or Romance? Moreover, Paris (1872:114) assumes that the spread of -s into OFrench feminine singular nouns of class B must have occurred late, according to an analogical influence exercised by masculine singulars in -s on feminine nouns, but this seems to involve a quite implausible inversion of the priority accorded to gender in the mechanism of the analogy (see Schuchardt 1874:161, n).

Yet the analogical model might have an interesting diachronic basis in the plural. Some have held (e.g., Paris 1872), that identity between feminine plural subject and oblique case forms (in -s) faithfully conserves the Latin morphological structures, while the masculines had deviated from their Latin antecedents. This view may have its attractions, but the differential role attributed to analogy in respect of gender seems excessive. On the other hand, the model itself implies that if ‘attractors’ were at work, these cannot have been purely semantic, but also formal (morphological).

To conclude, the limits to the analogical hypotheses seem to lie in the fact that they postulate abstract synchronic states which are difficult to determine historically, and cannot easily be reconciled with the actual complexity of the data. For example, on the analogical account, the spread of -s to feminine singular subjects with root-final consonants was due to the influence of the masculine singular subject form in -s. But we have seen that the ancient core of such forms comprised continuants of the Latin second declension, while continuants of the third declension underwent considerable vacillation in acquiring -s. So the hypothesis of simultaneous and identical analogical attraction on feminines and masculines alike seems even less satisfactory than a chain of analogies beginning with masculines and then affecting feminines. In any case, significant traces of forms in -s, for both masculines and third declension feminines, are already to be found in Anglo-Norman texts. Analogical explanations seem inadequate to account for the diachronic process.
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The role of syntactic factors in these complex developments is equally controversial. For Schuchardt (1874:161), subject and oblique case forms were kept sharply distinct, in the respective functions of subject and object/complement, in the earliest French texts. Schuchardt (1874:162) also believed that since the oblique case form was gaining ground from the nominative in early medieval Latin documents, we have genitive, accusative and ablative case forms in place of the nominative. But it is hard to see that syntactic factors, let alone functional ones, such as differentiation of subject and object, had been at work here, for one would expect to see a much more regular paradigmatic distribution of case allomorphs. In fact, the two-term opposition is partial and asymmetrical. No such opposition had existed in feminine singular nouns derived from the Latin first declension since very early times (see Schuchardt 1874:163; Schössler 1984; van Reenen and Schössler 1988). There have also been considerable oscillations in nouns from the Latin third declension, both parasyllabic and imparasyllabic. In the plural, the two-way opposition is all but extinct except in forms derived from the second and third declensions (see Schössler 2001b:170). But whatever the role of syntactic factors (see Moignet 1966; Woledge et al. 1967–69), they cannot have been the 'engines' of the construction of the precarious OFrench system: conservation of phonological structures and the attractive force of morphological patterns were also at work.

3.2 The role of syntactic factors in the collapse of Latin declension

The role of syntactic factors in determining other types of linguistic change is one of the most complex and controversial questions in diachronic linguistics. Once again, early twentieth-century thinking has implications which have still to be fully taken on board. Indeed, Saussure actually wonders whether syntagms and psychological associations, typically assigned to synchrony, do not also have their own history, and observes:

As soon as we get outside of pure phonetics it is in fact much more difficult to draw the limit or to state a radical opposition. This is the most difficult part of the general division, but I cannot insist on it without getting into delicate considerations. However, in an infinity of cases we will see that facts we think are grammatical reduce to phonetic facts.

(Riedlinger, Quire IV [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:67])

The fate of Latin declension is Saussure's main example. The thesis that the complex transformation of Latin declension in Romance can be reduced to a simplification due to confusion of final segments was as controversial then as today. For Saussure, this is hard to prove but not wholly implausible. He holds that one has at least to acknowledge an ordered sequence of two facts: the phonetic and diachronic confusion of final segments, and the introduction of a grammatical – hence synchronic – system (Riedlinger, Quire V [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:68]). This model is consistent with the more general theory of the relation between synchrony and diachrony. Yet Saussure also seems to be trying, without success, to find a way out of a problem which he sees very clearly. If, as is the case, we can talk of a 'history of declension' (and more generally of the history of syntagmatic groups), we also have to recognize that it has an uneven hybrid quality, including 'a multitude of isolated facts some of which will be clearly phonetic and which will join others which have a different character' (Riedlinger, Quire V [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:68]). Phonetics intrudes at every turn, inevitably, yet there is a 'residue', which seems to justify a grammatical history' (Riedlinger, Quire V [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:69]). This contradiction cannot be resolved:

Everything that is grammatical has to be referred to a state, and there is a contradiction in saying that a grammatical fact has a history in time. The question of what to think of the evolutive view for things which are not purely phonetic is not clear; we will not find this to be a simple matter, and phonetics will have some role to play in it.

(Riedlinger, Quire V [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:68f.], my italics)

This pithy conclusion might be shared by many Romanists, both of the old school and products of modern linguistic training.

The transformation of Latin declension has long proved a rich and privileged testing ground for hypotheses about the relation between syntactic and phonetic factors in language change. A fine example is a work by Herman on structures apparently having accusatives instead of nominatives (see also the discussion of the extended accusative in Ledgeway, this volume, chapter 8, §6.2.2.1), in contexts where the relevant NPs are not governed by the verb, in which he discusses their implications in respect of the phonetic conditions governing vacillation in noun inflection. At issue are sequences of imprecatory from the Tabulae Defixionum of Hadrumetum (short inscriptions containing curses) in which an optative mood predicate is expressed by the present subjunctive of intransitive (or intransitively used) verbs. Such predicates are preceded by proper names in -u (second declension) and -j (third declension). The second declension forms suggest accusatives, but this is not uncontroversial.

As Herman himself recognizes, it is unclear whether these structures are subjects or accusatives of enumeration (a type of accusative used in lists of
objects, particularly in agricultural or medical treatises). His conclusion that in the *Tabulae Deficiens* the accusative nominals are in an extra-syntactic position seems quite convincing. This position, like the enumerative structures, seem to have been the locus of functional alternation between nominative and accusative – for the late second century in the intensively Romanized areas of Africa. Structurally, this interchangeability cannot have applied to the traditional functions of the accusative or other oblique cases.

Herman (1987:102) says that the alternations -us/0 occurred with relatively high frequency only with nominative singular -us. Thus, with all due epigraphic caution, Herman states that rather than being an orthographic reflection of phonetic changes in the spoken language, this phenomenon corresponds to a more deeply rooted and complex morphosyntactic conditioning. What is being suggested is that the variability in the occurrence of -s really reflected a functional perturbation in the use of case forms in -s, primarily in the nominative.

But what is the synchronic status of the execution tablets of Hadrutnetum, within the wider diachronic development? At that time (late second to early third century) was -s-variation an African peculiarity, or is this impression a mere fluke due to the distribution of the texts that happen to have survived? And may we really assume that the rarer examples of -u for -us in 'popular' inscriptions of the imperial epoch, in Africa, Italy and elsewhere, are also nominative-accusatives with mobile -s? Herman says that we can but speculate. Given that in Africa length oppositions in vowels may have been lost earlier than in the rest of the Empire, and that this happened especially in unstressed (and particularly final) syllables, Herman speculates, with due caution, that complete homophony between *servum* and *servo*, *filum* and *filius* may have been relatively early in Africa.

Herman appears to give credence to the theory that the accusative became extended as the general case form, at least in the singular (Herman 1987:106). This allegedly began with the interchangeability of nominative and accusative, and gained momentum from the phonetic perturbations mentioned above, leading to homophony between the accusative and other case forms. The growing frequency in typically 'unmarked' contexts, such as detached, extra-sentential structures, then further facilitated the equivalence with the nominative (Herman 1987:106).

Herman's account fully displays the complexity of marrying a phonetic-phonological conception of change to a syntactic one, and more generally of reconciling historical and descriptive-synchronic models. He seems to have recourse to the theory of the accusative as universal case form, while giving chronological (and phenomenological?) and logical priority to phonetic and phonological aspects, arguing that since in the inscriptions most occurrences of nominatives are in syntactically independent positions, the -u of the accusative is there competing with and substituting the nominative form (Herman 1987:106). The Hadrutnetum tablets are merely unusually clear and rich examples of a morphosyntactic vacillation which generally, a little later and perhaps less often, would also emerge elsewhere.

Whether forms resulting from phonetic erosion of classical case structures can be considered 'accusative' is doubtful. Recall D'Ovidio's and Schuchardt's criticisms of using classical forms as an absolute reference point for fully formed Romance forms, without interpreting the intermediate remnants of older forms according to different criteria, those of the processes of change. The fact that forms in mobile -s, typical of second declension nouns, appear in the same texts alongside third declension imparisyllabics in -e, whose case-value is even less certain, suggests that none of these forms can any longer be described in terms of 'nominative', 'accusative', etc.

At the end of his study, Herman asks a fundamental question: Is the morphosyntactic alternation -us/-u wholly unrelated to the later, phonetic, disappearance of all instances of final -s in the East and in most Italo-Romance dialects? Did the loss by final -s of its morphosyntactic function in nominative morphology contribute to the loss of -s elsewhere in the grammar? Herman admits he does not know, but could anybody ever really know? He has at least given us a way of framing the basic problem: What is the relation between phonetic and syntactic factors in the disappearance of Latin declension? We will never know if the supporters of the 'extended accusative' theory were right or whether some other theory is. In his research deals perforce in hypotheses rather than certainties, thereby placing a limit on the observer's capacity to understand the historical processes. Once again we come up against the full force of the epistemological divide between synchrony, representable in terms of structure, and diachrony, where structure can be represented only in an uncertain and tentative way.

### 3.3 The prepositional object

The Romance prepositional object offers a further example of the need to distinguish the synchronic perspective associated with typology from the event-oriented perspective of diachrony. It has typological counterparts in numerous unrelated languages, leading some to establish actual patterns of formal correspondence across languages (see Bosson 1991; Nocentini...
The idea of a link between differential subject and object marking and syntactic type has been reinforced through typological approaches of this kind, but this may not help us much in our search for a diachronic 'explanation'. The semantic properties of the modern synchronic situation have simply been projected onto the past, both descriptively and in terms of explanation, often without asking whether the modern semantic properties have any real relevance to the diachronic explanation.

The early Romance situation must have been appreciably different from today. Fourteenth-century Sicilian and Neapolitan are illuminating in this respect (see Sornicola 1997). The object NP is by no means regularly [+human], [-referential]. If we seek a 'regular' occurrence of the semantic parameters found today, the medieval texts offer a confused and chaotic picture. But two sets of properties do stand out clearly:

(1) whenever it is a personal pronoun it is always preceded by a preposition;

(2) if it is any other type of pronoun (relative, indefinite, etc.) it is often, but not always preceded by a preposition;

(3) if its head is a full name, the preposition is not always present. Despite differences between texts, prepositional object marking is more common with NPs whose heads are proper names (and therefore [+human], [+referential]), than with those whose heads are [+human], [-referential]. But there are also many cases in which NPs with [+human], [-referential] heads are marked prepositionally.

This is exactly the situation that emerges for the Ibero-Romance area (Meyer-Lübke 1899:§50; Reichenkron 1951; Martín Zorraquino 1976; Villar 1983). Stimm (1986) shows that for Engadine Romansh, too, the phenomenon occurs with lexical verbs that took a dative construction (or AD + accusative) at some point in the history of Latin, or where the NP is a personal, relative or indefinite pronoun. There are therefore at least two different factors triggering the structure which appears at later synchronic stages: the constructional properties of certain verbs, and personal pronouns.

Traditionally, a great deal of emphasis has been put on the role of various functional factors, such as the need to differentiate subject and object (see, for example, Bossong (1991), who adopts in typological perspective an intuition already formulated by Diez in the Grammaire des langues romanes), and foregrounding of the object. These syntactic 'explanations' are multiply problematic. Both blithely project a synchronic structural model onto the past. In particular, the hypothesis of differential subject and object marking attributes to grammatical relations universal values which are far from being demonstrated, especially given that 'grammatical relations' are themselves one of the most controversial areas in modern syntactic theory. Even at the descriptive level for individual languages, one cannot always unequivocally assign a particular function, such as direct object or indirect object, to a given constituent (see Sornicola 1997). The government properties of the verbal lexemes have a crucial role here, for they may affect the structure of grammatical relations in ways incompatible with theoretical expectations. In recent years these problems have been addressed in some models (e.g., 'structural Case' and 'inherent Case' in generative grammar), which, as we shall see, have particular relevance for the study of the diachrony of the prepositional object.

Even if these problems were solved, could we really maintain that differentiating subject and object is the 'explanation'? Is it any more than a mere...
'description' of a tendency present at a more or less recent synchronic stage? And as an explanation it is problematic even on the synchronic level. Typological studies have shown that morphological case marking is not essential to encode the subject-object relationship, given the availability of word order and semantic or contextual cues associated with the head of the NP. So the much-invoked role of ambiguity resulting from loss of case marking from Latin to Romance requires some caution. It seems a reasonable hypothesis that word order may have acted as a major synchronic differentiating factor of the subject and object relationship even in the past. In other words, appeal to ambiguity needs to be treated with the same caution for the past as for the present. Care may be needed with appeal to object foregrounding, which textual studies of various stages in the history of the Romance languages show to be not especially frequent.

What role has been played by the other triggering process, involving the pronominal properties of the NP? Here we have to consider the multiple successive layers of morphosyntactic properties of personal pronouns, over a long period stretching back perhaps as far as Latin, unfolding through the complex transition from Latin to Romance and reaching into the formative period of Romance literary languages. To simplify here greatly an extremely complex issue, we may identify at least three phases. The first may be described as late Latin, and shows a conservative tendency with regard to the declension of personal pronouns. In Romance languages pronouns have generally maintained decensional distinctions better than nouns (Löfstedt 1961:225). Thus in late Latin texts the functions we may label 'dative' were expressed synthetically in pronouns and analytically in nouns (using the AD + accusative construction). The survival of Classical Latin dative forms is confirmed by the fact that in many Romance languages the stressed oblique pronouns, whose formal development is more easily identifiable than for unstressed pronouns, have preserved a morphological structure which evidently goes back to a historically underlying dative form, as is apparent in the Spanish and northern Italian mi and ti (< DAT mibi, tibi) – see also the discussion in Smith, this volume, chapter 6. Romanian preserves a personal pronoun paradigm which distinguishes nominative/accusative/dative. Generalization of dative forms as stressed oblique pronouns, attested in some modern Romance areas, must have gone through periods of waverning between use and overuse of dative forms, endemic throughout the Romani between the sixth and the seventh century, the period of 'decadence' of Latin, but chiefly represented later by the Iberian area. Of the Cartulario de San Vicente, for example, Jennings (1940:150) observes that not only was the use of the dative conspicuous and well preserved in the expected contexts in

Latin, but that the pronominal paradigm shows dative case, even when the noun is preceded by AD.

The situation described by Jennings seems to characterize a more advanced phase of the development of the personal pronouns. This suggests a second phase which we will call 'pseudo-dative'. Oscillations between competing morphological types and the overuse of dative forms are also well attested by some relic stressed personal pronouns forms, both in Ibero- and in Italo-Romance. Such forms must have existed between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries, only to disappear almost everywhere. These relics are particularly interesting for an understanding of how the development of the pronouns may have come to bear on the formation of what we now call the 'prepositional object'. They have unequivocally 'dative' morphology, etymological in the second person, analogical in the first, but they are used in a general way for the oblique case. These forms are well documented by Menéndez Pidal. In tenth-century cartularies from Spain we frequently find the type 1SG mine, mine, analogical on Latin 2SG tibi, used as stressed oblique pronouns. Later this type is documented in the famously conservative Mozarabic and Sephardic Spanish varieties. The first person singular oblique form myb was still in use in the Mozarabic speech of Judá Ha-Levi around 1100; a myby 'to me' is still documented in the thirteenth-century Spanish of Don Todros, a rabbi at the courts of Alfonso X and then Sancho IV; a myb occurs in an Arabic mawaliyaha by the blind man of Tudela (died 1126). Note also the type teue (cunteue 'with thee') documented in 1034 in Leon, looking very much like the southern Italian forms meve, teve, seve (Menéndez Pidal 1956:340f.). These, too, show morphological continuity with Latin, the first person singular form being obviously analogically remodelled (see D'Ovidio 1905:50). For other Italo-Romance examples, see the references in Monaci (1955:639b). Although such forms survive to this day in some dialects of Salento and Basilicata (see Rohlf 1968:139), they may, like the Ibero-Romance forms, be considered relics, supplanted in Italo-Romance by rival types which have existed since the earliest literary attestations. These are the pairs meve, tene and mia, tia, nowadays widespread in central and southern Italy. Whatever their etymology, they have presumably followed different developments: meve and tene come from accusative forms with the addition of -me; mia and tia come from original dative forms (on this, see D'Ovidio 1905). What seems significant is that they share the property of being long, disyllabic forms. In the phase we are calling 'pseudo-dative', then, dative morphology had completely lost its old case value and had been refunctionalized in the light of a prosodic tendency to prefer longer forms over shorter ones.
The observation that in old Ibero- and Italo-Romance texts the preposition \emph{a} (like \textit{pe} in Romanian) is especially frequent with object NPs having first and second person pronouns as their heads may be viewed in a new light. The obligatory occurrence of prepositions before personal pronouns may be assigned to a third phase. While they are unlikely to have been exactly synchronous structural developments, the expansion of the prepositional structure may well have been a concomitant of the rise of the stressed monosyllabic pronouns \textit{mi} and \textit{ti}, which in Ibero-Romance took place at the expense of the pseudo-dative disyllabic forms. In Italo-Romance, the process must have been more complicated and locally differentiated – as witness, first, the notable polymorphism of early texts (e.g., copresence of Sicilian \textit{mi} and \textit{mia} even in the same text), and second, the modern differences between northern dialects where the type \textit{mi}, \textit{ti} is widespread, and central-southern dialects which display in some regards a more locally fragmented situation. The preposition \emph{a} may initially have established itself before first and second persons stressed object pronouns as a mere expletive element, due to the prosodic lengthening of monosyllabic forms. This expletive element may then have been propagated, perhaps subsequently, to disyllabic pronominal forms, as is suggested by the fact that the preposition also occurs with the southern Italian types \textit{mene} and \textit{mia}. However that may be, the proliferation of the preposition could be taken to be a different effect of the same prosodic principle which was at work in the first two phases. So in all three phases a unitary principle could be said to have been at work, structurally realized in various different ways.

The hypothetical 'explanation' (better 'comprehension') offered here for the pronominal manifestation of the prepositional object in early Romance texts might be taken to imply an autonomous development of the \textit{signifiant} with respect to the \textit{signifié}. Yet during the long, multi-layered process described, semantic and referential factors may also have played a role, such as the person hierarchy. Both the southern Italian texts I have examined and the old Spanish texts examined by Reichenkron (1951), Martín Zorraquino (1976) and Villar (1983) clearly show that the object pronouns involved in prepositional structures are preponderantly first and second persons, something which may not be accountable for in purely 'formal' terms. Actually, it may be that semantic factors contributed more to the propagation than the genesis of the type. In Ibero-Romance and southern and central Italo-Romance, the fact that numerous verbs govern the dative, and the prosodic tendencies at work on personal pronouns, have gelled into a particular structural type due to the propagation of \emph{a} into contexts with nouns specified as [+animate], [+human], [+referential], a phenomenon where semantic factors undoubtedly played some role.

We are now in a position to sketch out some further hypotheses on the diachrony of this syntactic type. Indeed, it seems that two phases ought to be distinguished: the genesis and the propagation of structural conditions. What in modern synchrony appears to us as a unitary type must have had a long and heterogeneous gestation, with multiple lines of genesis and development. In particular, while the two conditions identified for the initial phases (the verb governing the dative and prosodic tendencies at work on the personal pronouns) were presumably so widespread in the Romance world as to crystallize into manifestations which appear over wide areas separated by time and space, propagation itself may have followed different routes at different times. Thus in the French and northern Italian linguistic area, the initial conditions have always remained endemic and in some sense distinct from each other, without ever gelling into a unitary type, whilst in central and southern Italy the two initial conditions came together to form a structural type; finally, in some varieties of Spanish the preposition was generalized into contexts whose NP contains a noun with the features [-animate] and/or [-referential].

Of the two 'triggering' conditions, the prosodic factors acting on the personal pronouns must have been the strongest and most pervasive in the activation of the type, as witness the fact that it occurs in other Indo-European languages and even beyond.

Thus the modern synchronic description has a somewhat accidental, epiphenomenological, relation with the genesis of the type and is only partially linked to its propagation. This is perhaps unsurprising, given what the great general linguists and Romance linguists of the past used to say: that the synchronic dimension and the diachronic dimension involve different problems and methods.

But the diachrony of the prepositional object has further implications for the more general problems discussed in this chapter. What has emerged are conditions dependent on different textual and historical circumstances, at different periods in time. In addition, different 'principles', prosodic and semantic, have been hypothesized. Can these sets of conditions and principles really be considered 'causes'? The conditions are, precisely, no more than conditions, and the linguist can do no more than speculatively attempt to link them to historical sequences. As for the principles, their validity can only be discerned 'locally', in relation to the case in point. It does not seem logically valid to project a (universally active) global principle on the basis of these local contexts. Of course, general explanations of change will always be a
generalization of particular explanations advanced for individual phenomena (see Coseriu 1973; 1981), but one has to admit that such a procedure still contains a good deal of approximation and uncertainty.

The conditions attending the "origin" of the historic process which has shaped the Romance prepositional object type show remarkable stability, and confirm the force and permanence of certain structures through time. The dative-governing properties of some Latin verbs are continued through structures with AD + NP or through the refunctionalization of the debris of old pronominal forms. The 'propagation' phase, both to larger classes of verb lexemes and to NPs lacking the original semantic and referential features, is, of course, a different matter. Such analogical extensions or syntactic reanalyses can be brought about only within given synchronic states. But then, perhaps diachrony without change actually does exist?

4 Universal explanations and historical explanations

4.1 Laws, principles and explanations

The problems discussed so far raise anew the issue of the meaning and extent of recourse to 'laws', 'principles' and 'explanations' in diachronic morphosyntax. Actually a good many contemporary diachronic (and synchronic) models still bear traces, more or less explicitly, of notions of 'naturalness' and 'scientificness' which had already been the object of controversy in the early twentieth century. Positive conceptions of forces or principles allegedly acting as causes of linguistic phenomena both in synchrony and in diachrony nowadays occur in various, and more or less subtle, guises. To simplify greatly, five groups of principles or causes are commonly invoked as explanatory factors:

(i) Reasons relating to the speakers' 'mind', meaning the capacity for understanding or an abstract mechanism underlying linguistic production. In addition to traditional principles of analogy, which level paradigms, there are also cognitive factors, of the type modelled in generative grammar (e.g., structural syntactic properties assumed as abstract properties of the mind), or principles of various functional kinds, which project characteristics of the organization of utterances (topic-focus structure, information structure) or characteristics of structural relations (e.g., subject vs. object) as explanatory generalizations.

(ii) Reasons relating to typological micro-parameters, such as patterns of linearization of constituents and their harmonization. The theoretical basis of such constructs is unclear, although they have been objectified by postulating as metaphysical entities overarching the classical framework of langue vs. parole, syntagmatic vs. paradigmatic, synchrony vs. diachrony.

(iii) Reasons relating to the degree of complexity or naturalness (markedness) of a given feature or phenomenon, on the basis of its cross-linguistic frequency.

(iv) Reasons which, while they bear on speakers, are of an eminently extrinsic, pragmatic nature (e.g., optimization of communication).

(v) External social reasons, which assume a more or less direct relationship between extra-linguistic characteristics and the presence or development of linguistic phenomena.

In any case it is worthy of note that recent years have seen a confluence of these principles in many studies of various theoretical and methodological stances. Whether any of these principles has real explanatory power, rather than being essentially descriptive, is doubtful.

The risk of circularity is great. For example, are the harmonizations of linearization in structural configurations, defined on the basis of the synchronic states of individual languages (and with a degree of irregularity which simply cannot be ignored) really a 'causal' factor, or just a mere description imposed on diachrony? These are epistemological issues characteristic of so-called 'genetic explanations' (see Amsterdamski 1981:372; also Popper 1957). And the validity of general laws for languages has often been criticized with regard to synchronous states (see Matthews 1982). On top of these difficulties are others more specific to diachronic syntax: the transmission of syntactic traditions is unlike the transmission of traditions of other levels of analysis, in that extra-linguistic, historical factors weigh more heavily on syntax (see Sornicola 1995).

4.2 Diachronic explanations in Romance linguistics

Before the North American developments discussed in §2, there had already been wide-ranging and penetrating reflection on the problem of diachronic explanation within Romance linguistics. For Coseriu (1973; 1981:80), 'explanation certainly goes beyond mere description, to motivate or justify changes, and find the reasons for them'. But Coseriu stresses that that these 'reasons' are not 'causes', in the sense of necessity, but conditions, circumstances or determining factors within which speakers have freedom to make linguistic choices. Such factors do not trigger change, but condition it and
above the phenomenon at issue, they bear directly on the logical structure of two types of argumentation perennially recurrent across different theoretical models. The morphological explanation holds that the lack of a regular paradigm of synthetic forms in the Classical Latin future led to recourse to periphrastic forms, especially bearing in mind that sound change in so-called vulgar Latin would have made the morphological patterns dysfunctional. The semantic/stylistic approach links the advance of the periphrastic future to an expressive need which conveyed modal affective values rather than temporal ones. Both explanations have been reckoned inadequate and vulnerable. Coseriu (1973; 1981:115) holds that:

There are three facts to be explained: a) the general instability of the forms of the future (not of the category of future); b) the periodic re-formation of the future by forms with originally modal or prospective value which ultimately become 'temporal'; c) the re-formation of the Latin future at a particular point in history. The first two are not particular to one language or a particular point in history, and thereby require a universal explanation. Nothing is explained by stating that the forms of the future are re-formed because they are 'grammaticalized', because this is at best a mere attestation, which cannot account for the direction in which the re-formation of the future takes place.

The dual nature of the future is a universal, intrinsic structural feature of this category, perennially wavering between the temporal and the aspectual (modal) poles: 'temporal forms are replaced by modal ones which in turn become temporal'. Coseriu stresses that 'in any case a universal explanation is not of itself a historical one', for 'to explain why the Latin future was replaced by modal forms at one particular time, it is inadequate to assert that it is something which "usually happens", pointing to the universal reason for the phenomenon. You have to explain why this universal (and permanent) reason came to operate precisely in the period of so-called vulgar Latin: in other words, the universal expressive need must be justified as a historical need.' For Coseriu, the determinant circumstance lies in attitudes and expressive needs brought to the fore by a phenomenon of great social cultural import - Christianity; Christianity marked a profound historical rupture with linguistic as well as other implications. Note that this explanation is very different from those commonly used in sociolinguistics, which appeal to differences of social level. Such differences do not express causes but rather the point or direction of diffusion of a phenomenon. What is being emphasized here is the role played by Christianity in bringing to the surface latent structural possibilities which predated any contemporary historical circumstances.
critiques of historical models as mere representations of single, accidental facts harks back to the old positivistic conception of history. Such critiques seem curiously ignorant of the wide-ranging debate about the intrinsically non-predictive and non-causal nature of historical explanations. For some, attempting to conceive a theory of history is a contradiction in terms. Central to this perspective is the role of different epistemological paradigms, founded on concepts of ‘comprehension’ and ‘interpretation’, on the ability to make sense of situations (see Momigliano 1974; 1987:22–23; Tescitore 1991). Others have argued that the leap from the documents of the past, which are never more than historical ‘rubble’, to making sense of them, can only be done by being something like a prophet, a medium or an interpreter of dreams (Benjamin 1997). Everyone recognizes that the unreliability of this type of knowledge and the scope for multiple and relativistic interpretations just come with the terrain. Yet such things form the basis of new models of genetic or historical explanation, which point up how ‘even if the explanans of a genetic explanation seems to be a mere “historical narration” without mentioning any law linking the successive stages of the evolving system, it yet presents a theoretical structure’ (Amsterdamski 1981:372).

Freed of its causal value, the notion of ‘theory’ is here understood as a set of general but clearly delimited principles, justifying some of the major events in an evolutionary process.

This perspective does not claim to be a theory of history, but simply acknowledges the inevitably theoretical nature (that is, the fact that it is relative to a system of hypotheses) of any historical explanation. It transcends not only the positivistic conception of diachrony as the domain of événement and the accidental, but also the functionalistic view of diachrony as a dimension in which there are at work principles of concatenation of phenomena belonging to successive diachronic stages, governed by teleological laws. The key issue is the representation of the passage from one state of a system to another. This idea of ‘passage’ centrally defined Saussure’s and early structuralism’s concept of diachrony. It was precisely in this respect that Saussure felt the need to differentiate the idea of diachrony from that of history, and to a lesser extent from that of evolution, both being considered not entirely suitable for use in linguistics (Riedlinger, Quire II [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:34];81). On the other hand, some historians have criticized the appeal to both concepts of synchrony and diachrony because of their limited character, which misses the essential feature of historical research (see Braudel 1967–68; 1969). In effect, to this day diachronic linguistics and the history of the language present themselves as different domains with different presuppositions and methods. But both

5 Conclusions

It is almost a century since Saussure and the Prague School formulated models of diachrony. Their perspectives still reflected different stages in the wider debate about history. The terms of the debate within the humanities have since changed greatly and linguistics may have remained rather cut off from other disciplines and stranded on issues which are now outdated. Some contemporary diachronic linguists’ (especially syntacticians’)
contain unresolved contradictions (these have been discussed for the history of the language by Varvaro 1972–3).

Saussure realized full well how difficult describing and justifying that 'passage' could be. He clearly perceived (without developing the point) the special diachronic status of syntax, where the passage from one diachronic state to the next is more strongly subject to the interaction of internal and external forces. He fought shy of developing theories on the subject and the best he could manage was to appeal to the concept of événement—which came down to admitting there was an insuperable limit to explanation. Equally noteworthy is the fact that he was convinced of the need to avoid imposing a priori categories or units indiscriminately valid both for synchrony and diachrony (Riedlinger, Quire II [Komatsu and Wolf 1997:34f.]), a fact which may be considered another effect of the difficulty of modelling diachrony. The Prague School were prepared to envision explanations of the passage, but they were trapped inside a realistic, immanentist, ahistorical conception of the principles or laws regulating it, like many of the theorists who subsequently drew inspiration from the Prague School. Such mindsets, nowadays prevalent in many areas of linguistics, are very different from what emerges from theoretical thinking on contemporary historical research. Here, recognition of the intrinsically theoretical character of any historical narration or explanation has long been divorced from naively realist conceptions, and the discussion of the principles and models of analysis has reached a level of critical awareness which verges on ironic, disillusioned, detachment.

This is a standard to which modern diachronic Romance linguistics, caught as it is between the cognitive paradigms of history and diachrony, can come close to achieving. In their different ways, D'Ovidio, Schuchardt, Coseriu and Herman maintained the need to conceptualize the principles and 'causes' of the dynamics of change in a fashion opposed to any kind of metaphysical approach. In searching for the 'passage', they maintained a kind of sober equilibrium with regard to the possibilities and limits of diachronic research, which was perhaps due precisely to the fact that they were Romanists, and so researchers in a discipline distinguished by the most imposing 'mass of photographs of the past' of any linguistic domain, too imbued with the historical mentality to be oblivious to the razor's edge between history and diachrony. Even a scholar who, like Malkiel, had explored the more strictly diachronic end of this polarization had no doubts about the importance of the 'hard toil of historical preparation'.

At the close of the nineteenth century, Schuchardt held that a Romanist should be a general linguist before addressing problems of historical linguistics, an idea that was very modern at that time and long remained so. In the twentieth, in different ways, Coseriu and Malkiel attempted the difficult task of reconciling general linguistics and historical linguistics. But their work shows the importance of being a Romanist before being a general linguist. A Romance diachronic morphosyntax, just as much as a Romance diachronic linguistics, may be different from other diachronic syntaxes and other types of diachronic linguistics not so much because Romanists have available a mass of photographs of the past which lets them get closer to reality, but because they know that the photographs of the past and those of the present may let them dream a less fragmented, and rather richer, dream.