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Developments in Latin syntax after the publication of Szantyr (1965)

Pinkster, H.

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PROBLEMI E PROSPETTIVE DELLA LINGUISTICA STORICA

Atti del XL Convegno
della Società Italiana di Glottologia

*Testi raccolti a cura di
Patrizia Cordin e Alessandro Parenti*

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info@ilcalamo.it

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DEVELOPMENTS IN LATIN SYNTAX AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF SZANTYR (1965)

HARM PINKSTER

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1965 Anton Szantyr completed his re-edition of, Hofmann's volume II (*Syntax und Stilistik*, 1928) of the *Lateinische Grammatik*, itself part of the multi-volume *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*. The work constitutes a monumental compilation and critical assessment of the majority of publications on Latin syntax that were available at that time. The descriptive framework is more or less the same as the traditional one that has been used from Antiquity onwards. The approach is diachronic, with much attention to Indo-European roots and to so-called vulgar and late Latin phenomena. The diachronic developments are often described from a psychological and social perspective, which has received special attention in Hofmann's classic *Lateinische Umgangssprache* (1951³).

Since Szantyr finished, and indeed already when he was in the process of finishing his work, there have been many developments in linguistics in general and in the linguistic study of Latin in particular. In the first place new data have been discovered, such as the Banker's archive from Pozzuoli found near Pompeii (1959), the Vindolanda tablets (from 1973 onwards), and the *Senatus consultum de Gn. Pisone patre* (end of the eighties).¹ Secondly, new instruments for doing research have become available, of which digital corpora are perhaps the most notable. Thirdly, numerous monographs and articles have been published on a wide range of syntactic subjects, both along traditional lines and with a specific theoretical approach. Fourthly, there are new linguistic theories and models, and new methodologies have been developed. In this article I will concentrate on the third and fourth points.

1. Brief comments on these findings can be found in Pinkster (2015a).

2. LINGUISTIC THEORIES AND MODELS

I will pay attention to a few linguistic theories that have been used for the description and analysis of Latin syntactic phenomena. They are: generative grammar, dependency grammar, functional grammar, and formal semantics. In the following sections attention will be given to specific aspects of these theories that have been used to deal with Latin syntactic phenomena.

2.1. *Generative grammar*

Generative grammar in its various versions has inspired a number of studies on Latin syntactic topics, notably on word order. In the initial stage of the theory, the flexibility of the order of constituents was problematic, even though a distinction was made between a “basic” and a “surface” word order. The source of the problem lay in the fact that it is difficult to formulate syntactic rules for the derivation of the surface order from the basic order. So what to do with the famous line from Ovid (1), instead of the supposedly regular or basic order (1a)?

- (1) *Grandia per multos tenuantur flumina rivos [...]*
 ‘Great streams are channelled into many brooks [...]’ (Ov. *Rem.* 445)
 (1a) *Flumina grandia per multos rivos tenuantur.*

To account for the difference between the surface order in (1) and the basic order in (1a) Ross (1967: 41-43) developed the concept of “scrambling”.² In more recent studies (Polo (2004) and Devine / Stephens (2006)), in addition to the notion of scrambling, pragmatic notions such as “topic” and “focus” and the structure of information at the discourse level in general are taken into account in order to explain deviations from the assumed basic order. Thus in (2), Devine / Stephens assume that there is a “Discourse operator” (actually, the “covert subject”), which «forces the verb to be placed in a functional head position in the CP area».

- (2) *Desponderat (scil. L. Verginius) filiam L. Icilio tribunicio, viro acri et pro causa plebis expertae virtutis.*
 ‘He had betrothed his daughter to the former tribune Lucius Icilius, an active man of proven courage in the cause of the plebeians’ (Liv. 3.44.3)

2. See Pinkster (1990: 186, n. 45).

This is represented graphically in figure 1 and paraphrased as «The situation was that he had promised his daughter in marriage to L. Icilio».

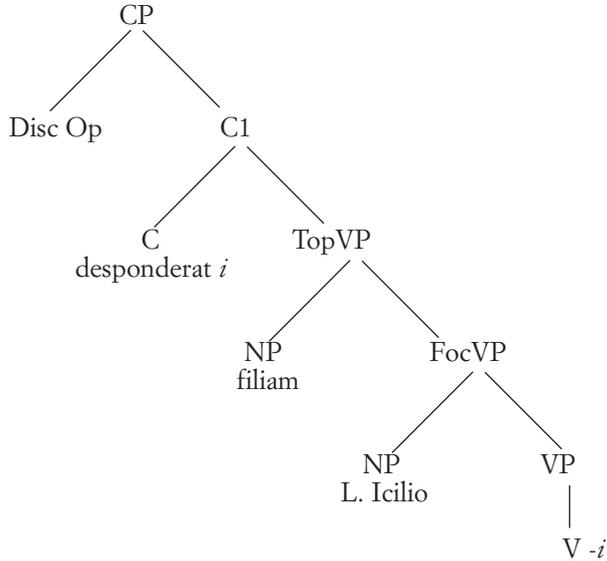


Figure 1. CP operator analysis of initial verb *desponderat filiam L. Icilio* (Liv. 3.44.3) (Devine / Stephens 2006: 167-172).

2.2. Dependency grammar

Certain elements of the *Dependenzgrammatik* have played a role in syntactic studies of Latin, especially the notion of valency, which was developed by Tesnière and is also used in other theories, for example in Functional Grammar (see below). The distinction between constituents required by the valency of the verb (arguments, in my terminology) and optional elements (satellites) plays an important role in Scherer's (1975) Syntax. A very thorough study of the valency of verbs and of verb frames is Happ (1976). For a more recent contribution I refer to Torrego (2003). Dressler (1970) was, as far as I know, the first to apply the notion to a particular topic of Latin syntax, viz. the case system. If one ignores the details, the Classical Latin cases can be divided into three classes: the nominative, accusative and dative cases serve to mark the first, second, and third arguments, respectively; the ablative marks all sorts of satellites; the genitive marks attributes at the noun phrase level. This is shown in Figure 2.³

3. See also Pinkster (2015b: Chapter 12).

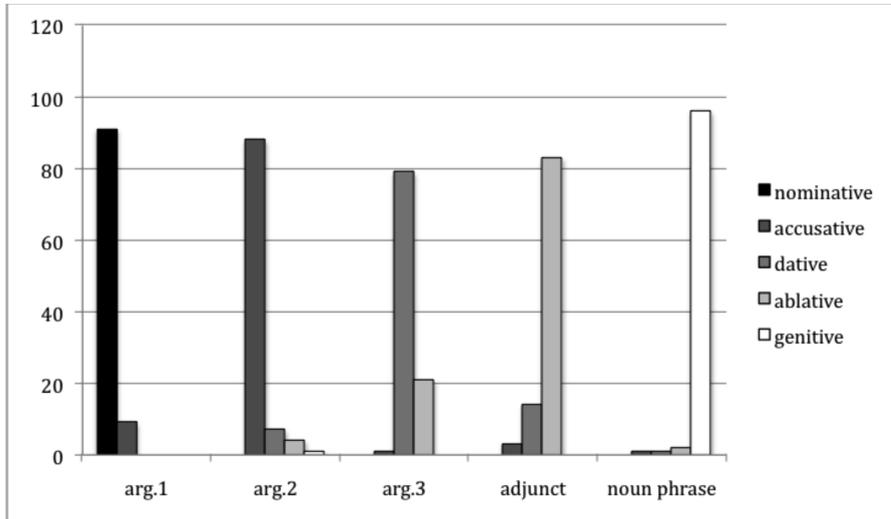


Figure 2. The use of cases at the clause and noun phrase levels in a number of Latin texts (in percentage).

2.3. *Functional grammar*

Functional approaches to language have in common that they regard language as an instrument for communication and social interaction. Because of this social aspect, it is necessary for an adequate understanding of language to integrate a pragmatic component into the grammar alongside more formal components such as syntax and morphology. An early variant is the so-called Prague School of Linguistics, which developed, among other things, the notion of “communicative dynamism” for the analysis of word order. This notion was applied to Latin word order by Panhuis, especially in his book published in 1982. An important element in his analysis is the distinction between “non-emotive” word order and “emotive” word order, which is also a feature of the Prague model and which has a long history in linguistics in general (see Panhuis 1982: 7-9; Spevak 2010: 4-6).

In Functional Grammar in the sense of Dik (1997) the pragmatic component contains finer distinctions *viz.* more types of topic and more types of focus (see Table 1).

Topicality and focality	
Discourse topic	Completive focus
Given topic	Contrastive focus
New topic	Counter-presuppositional focus
Resumed topic	Expanding focus
Subtopic	

Table 1. Types of topic and focus.

These distinctions appear to be relevant with respect to participant tracking in Latin, as has been shown by Bolkestein (1994, 1996) and Fugier (1991). Bolkestein (and van de Grift) demonstrated that the coding of noun phrases correlates with the type of topic: given topics require the lowest degree of coding (zero), new topics the highest (a full noun phrase): \emptyset , *qui*, *is*, *homo*, *ea res*, *ille*, *ille vir*, NP. Relative connexion in Latin, illustrated by (3), presupposes a higher degree of givenness than the anaphoric pronoun *is*. A typical context for *is* is shown in (4), where the pronoun refers to Orgetorix, who is introduced in the preceding sentence for the first time.

- (3) Multas ad res perutiles Xenophontis libri sunt; **quos** legite quaeso studiose, ut facitis
 ‘Xenophon’s writings are very instructive on many subjects and I beg you to go on reading them with studious care’ (Cic. *Sen.* 58)
- (4) Apud Helvetios longe nobilissimus fuit et ditissimus Orgetorix. **Is** [...] coniurationem nobilitatis fecit [...]
 ‘Among the Helvetii the noblest man by far and the most wealthy was Orgetorix. He formed a conspiracy of the nobility [...]’ (Caes. *Gal.* 1.2.1)

Fugier showed that *is* is the determiner to relate a hyponym to a hyperonym, whereas for the reverse situation *hic* must be used; this can also be covered by the notion of subtopic: *toga* > *ea vestis*; *vestis* > *haec toga*.

Another feature of Functional Grammar, in which it is not unique, is the assumption of a “layered”, hierarchical, or multi-level structure of the clause, in fact a structure with four layers. This can be illustrated by figure (3), which shows a composite clause in which the attested sentences (5) and (6) are combined and *certe* is added.

- (5) At enim illi noctu occentabunt ostium [...]
 ‘Well, they’ll serenade your door at night [...]’ (Pl. *Per.* 569)

- (6) Ut vero iam ad illa summa veniamus, quae vis alia potuit [...] homines unum in locum congregare [...]
 ‘To come, however, at length to the highest achievements of eloquence, what other power could have been strong enough [...] to gather [...] humanity into one place [...]’ (Cic. *de Orat.* 1.33)

The clause consists of a *nucleus*, the verb and its arguments, and a number of satellites, two of which are adjuncts that specify the content of the nucleus. There are also two disjuncts, one that indicates the degree of certainty with which the content of the combination of the nucleus and its adjuncts is uttered (an attitudinal disjunct), another that indicates the position of the entire utterance in the ongoing interaction (an illocutionary disjunct).

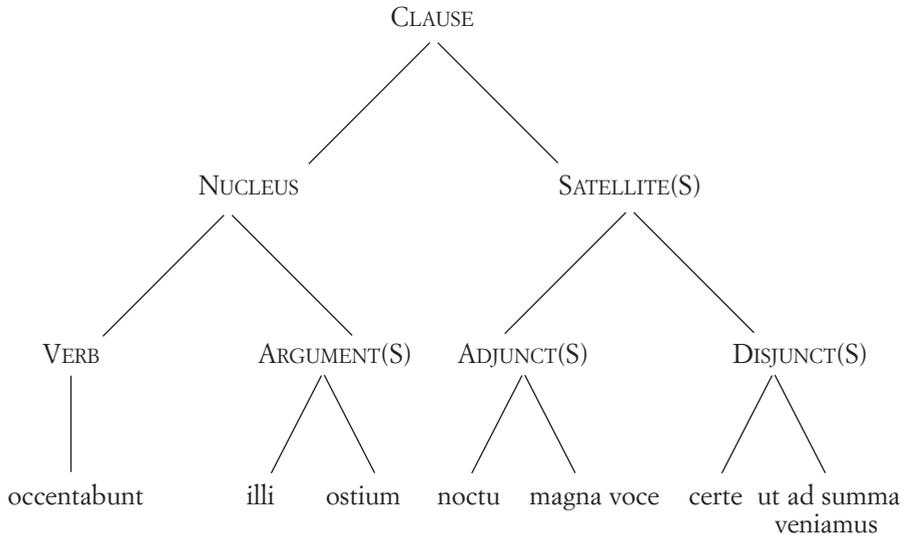


Figure 3. The hierarchical structure of the clause *Ut ad summa veniamus, certe illi noctu magna voce ostium occentabunt* (taken from Pinkster 2015b: 25).

The relevance of the distinction between the adjunct level and the attitudinal disjunct level has been demonstrated by several authors⁴ for the causal subordinators *quia* ‘because’ and *quoniam* ‘since’, ‘as’. In Classical

4. See, for example, Fugier (1989).

Latin the former marks adjunct clauses, while the latter marks attitudinal disjunct clauses. An example of *quoniam* is (7).

- (7) [...] explicabo potius, **quoniam** otiosi sumus, nisi alienum putas, totam Zenonis Stoicorumque sententiam
‘Instead of that, as we are at leisure, I will expound, unless you think it out of place, the whole system of Zeno and the Stoics» (Cic. *Fin* 3.14)

For the application of the notion of layered structure to adverbs, see Ricca (2010) and, for satellites in general, Pinkster (2015b: Chapter 10).

2.4. *Formal semantics*

Formal semantics has been a source of inspiration to the “Bologna school”, consisting of Gualtiero Calboli, Alessandra Bertocchi, Mirka Maraldi, and Anna Orlandini, who have produced a rich collection of articles, as well as a fundamental work on negation in Latin (Orlandini 2001). See also Devine and Stephens (2013).

3. AREAS OF RESEARCH

In the sections that follow, I will mention a number of areas in which much progress has been made, partly because of the influence of linguistic theories such as those mentioned above. The most prominent areas in my view are the following.

Text type
Discourse structure
Hierarchical structure of the sentence (see above)
Illocution
Word order (see also above)
Typology
Modality, for example Bolkestein (1980) and Núñez (1991)
Pragmatic functions, for example Cabrillana (1999) on “Theme” constituents and Bolkestein / Risselada (1987) on the pragmatic foundations of the structure of the clause
Scalarity, for example Bertocchi / Maraldi (2010)
Grammaticalization, for example Fruyt (2011)
Standardization, for example Rosén (1999)
Stratification of the Latin language, for example Adams (2007, 2013)

In the sections that follow, I will discuss some of the areas of research from this list in more detail.

3.1. *Text type*

The decisive role of the type of text in the formation of particular syntactic structures has been, and still is, underestimated in Latin grammars. This can be shown by summarizing the findings of Spevak (2005) on word order in the late fourth century *Peregrinatio Egeriae*, a text that plays an important role in discussions about the changes in Late Latin that led to the situation in the Romance languages. The standard view is that in this text the order Subject Verb Object (SVO) is predominant, as opposed to Classical Latin SOV. Thus, according to this view, the text already shows the transition to the dominant word order of the Romance languages. Apart from other considerations (Pinkster 1991), the interesting point of Spevak's study is that even though statistically for the entire *Peregrinatio* SVO is in the majority, the two parts of the text are different in respect of word order. The detailed findings are shown in Table 2.

Model	First part			Second part			Grand total
	1/2 person	3 person	Total	1/2 person	3 person	Total	
A ₁ VA ₂	3	8	11	–	8	8	19
A ₁ A ₂ V	1	11	12	–	6	6	18
A ₂ A ₁ V	(1)	3	4	–	2	2	6
VA ₁ A ₂	–	2	2	–	5	5	7
VA ₂ A ₁	–	3	3	–	14	14	17
A ₂ VA ₁	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Total			32			37	69
A ₂ V	15	3	18	4	7	11	29
VA ₂	28	18	46	1	24	25	71
Grand total	48	48	96	5	68	73	169

Table 2: The order of first argument, second argument, and verb in the *Peregrinatio Egeriae* (bivalent verbs).

Spevak's conclusion is as follows (2005: 260): «Les deux parties de l'Itinerarium [= *Peregrinatio*; H. P.] sont différentes quant au type de texte: la première décrit des entités et comporte de nombreux éléments assignés comme topiques, la seconde décrit des événements et le degré de topicalité est plus faible. Cet aspect se manifeste, de façon importante, dans l'ordre de mots».

3.2. Discourse structure

In the area of discourse structure several issues have received particular attention, *viz.* connecting devices, tense, active/passive variation, and participant tracking.⁵ As for connecting devices (general discussion in Kroon (2011)), many of these are traditionally called particles and/or adverbs. A finer distinction is that between particles that create a 'linear' relationship between successive sentences or paragraphs, such as *nam* 'for', *igitur* 'then', and *quippe* 'for', and particles that ask for the collaboration of the addressee, for example his or her agreement, such as *enim* 'of course', *ergo* 'so', and *nempe* 'to be sure'.⁶ A different category is formed by causal, concessive, adversative connecting adverbs, such as *tamen* 'yet', *contra* 'on the other hand', *idcirco* 'therefore', and *nihilominus* 'none the less'. Different again is the use of temporal adverbs as discourse organization markers.⁷ A well-known example is Virgil's use of *interea* 'in the meantime', as in (8).

- (8) Tum Cererem corruptam undis Cerealiaque arma / expediunt fessi rerum, frugesque receptas / et torrere parant flammis et frangere saxo. / Aeneas scopulum **interea** conscendit [...]
 'Then, wearied with their lot, they take out the corn of Ceres, spoiled by the waves, with the tools of Ceres, and prepare to parch the rescued grain in the fire and crush it under stone. Meanwhile Aeneas climbs a peak [...]' (Verg. *A.* 1.177-180)

Participant tracking has already been mentioned above. An important difference between Latin and the Romance languages is that Latin has no article to mark noun phrases as accessible knowledge. For most Romance languages the article is derived from the Latin determiner *ille* 'that, in Italian *il*, in French *le*. The search for cases of *ille* in Latin that cannot be easily understood on the basis of the normal rules of its use started more than a century ago. A very good contemporary diachronic study is Selig (1992). There can be no doubt that in our texts the frequency of *ille* as a determiner increases (at the expense of the anaphoric determiner *is*), but the question is when it became obligatory for a correct understanding of the noun phrase it determines as definite. Here, again, the *Peregrinatio*

5. Discussion of the discourse aspects of tense and active/passive variation, and references, can be found in Pinkster (2015b).

6. See, among others, Kroon (1995), Krylová (2003), Rosén (1994; 2009), Schrickx (2011).

7. See, among others, Hilton (1989), Risselada (1998), and Rosén (2009: 319-21).

Egeriae is often mentioned as manifesting the transition to the Romance situation.⁸ However, Table 3 shows that there is no sign of an increase in the need to mark a definite noun phrase by a determiner/article in the period between Caesar and the *Peregrinatio*: on the contrary, there are more definite noun phrases without a definiteness marker in the passage of the *Peregrinatio* than in the passage taken from Caesar. The development of the article belongs to a much later stage.⁹

			Caesar <i>Gal.</i> (N=378)	<i>Peregrinatio</i> (N=306)
Non-referring NP			10	8
Referring NP			90	92
	Indefinite NP		15	16
	Definite NP		75	76
		Proper names	28	14
		Common noun + definiteness marker	27	29
		Common noun + Ø	20	33

Table 3. Marking of definite noun phrases in Caesar *Gal.* 1.2-12 and in the *Peregrinatio Egeriae* 1-4 (in percentage). Legenda: N = number of noun phrases. Definite markers also include possessive adjectives and noun phrases in the genitive. Ø means ‘no marking’.

3.3. *Illocution: directive utterances*

The distinction between sentence type and illocution has been applied to Latin in a number of studies, the most important of which are, in my opinion, by Risselada (1993) and Unceta Gómez (2009), both dealing with directive utterances.¹⁰ Examples of directive utterances are shown in (9)-(12).

8. I ignore the fact that the author is rather fond of the use of the intensifier *ipse* ‘self’, which is also often regarded as showing the need to mark the noun phrase as definite.

9. See Pinkster (2015b: 1091). For a related approach to the development of the English definite article, see Sommerer (2012).

10. See also Pinkster (2015b: Chapter 6).

- (9) Ohe, iam satis, uxor, est.
‘Hey there, my wife, it’s enough now’ (Pl. *Cas.* 249)
- (10) Poti’n [est] ut apstineas manum?
‘Can’t you keep your hands off?’ (Pl. *Am.* 903)
- (11) Quid nunc? # Argentum des, abducas mulierem.
‘Well then? # Give me the money and take the woman away’ (Pl. *Ps.* 1015)
- (12) Quor non illam huc transferri iubes?
‘Why don’t you have her brought over here?’ (Ter. *An.* 952)
Quid stas? Quin intro is? – ‘Why don’t you go in?’ (Pl. *Mil.* 1387)
Non taces? – ‘Won’t you be quiet?’ (Pl. *Am.* 700)
Etiam tu taces? – ‘Won’t you be quiet?’ (Pl. *Per.* 515)

Ex. (9) is a declarative sentence, which in its context is understood as a request to the wife to stop what she is doing. Thus it has the indirect illocutionary force of an order. Ex. (10) is an interrogative sentence which by convention is also understood as an order. Ex. (11) is a proper imperative sentence in the subjunctive. The subjunctive is preferred over the imperative in this kind of context, in which the request is more or less invited by the preceding question *quid nunc?* Indirect orders vary in the degree of bindingness. The four lines in (12) differ in this respect. Whereas the first question can be understood as advice, the last one represents an expression of impatience and is meant as very binding.

3.4. Word order

According to the generative discussions of Latin word order dealt with in § 2.1, Latin is supposed to have a basic syntactically defined word order SOV which can be modified by pragmatic factors; however, there are several studies from a functional perspective in which Latin word order is regarded as primarily governed by pragmatic principles.

Hoffmann (2010), using a corpus that consists of Cicero, Catullus, Virgil, Livy, and Seneca, has selected 474 sentences in which there is a finite bivalent verb with both the subject and the object expressed (a relatively uncommon situation in Latin). The orders found in that collection of sentences are shown in Table 4.

OSV	OVS	SOV	SVO	VSO	VOS
24.7	9.9	37.75	15.2	5.45	7.0

Table 4. The order of subject, object, and verb in a sample of 474 Latin sentences (in percentage).

Although the order SOV is the most frequent, it is by no means a “dominant” order: it is only 50 % more frequent than the order OS, and it constitutes only slightly more than one third of the six orders together. In the light of this data there is no reason to assume that Latin has a basic syntactically defined order with pragmatic deviations. This conclusion finds further support in Hoffmann’s analysis of the pragmatic structure of the sentences involved (2010: 270–273). In a random sample of 15 OSV sentences the following pragmatic patterns were found (Table 5).

Object = Topic	Object = Topic	Object = Topic	Object = Topic
Subject = Focus	Satellite = Focus	Verb = Focus	Negation = Focus
11x = 73.3%	2x = 13.3%	1x = 6.7%	1x = 6.7%

Table 5. Pragmatic patterns of the syntactic type OSV.

An example of an OSV sentence is (13).

- (13) Metellum (O) enim multi filii filiae nepotes neptes (S) in rogam inposuerunt (V) [...] ‘For a company of sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters placed Metellus upon the funeral pyre [...]’ (Cic. *Tusc.* 1.85)

In a similar sample of SOV sentences the most frequent pattern «is the one in which the subject is topic and the object is focus». The inevitable conclusion is: «The Latin language has a word order that is mostly pragmatically rather than syntactically governed.»

One of the standard views of Latin word order is that in imperative sentences the verb often has the first position of the sentence. This view has been challenged by Spevak (2010). She observes that it is necessary to distinguish the following types of imperatives: (i) “proper” imperatives, exemplified by (14) and (15), (ii) imperatives of verbs of saying, thinking, and perceiving, as in (16), and (iii) “periphrastic” imperatives, as in (17).

- (14) Recta **perge** in exilium.
‘Go straight into exile’ (Cic. *Catil.* 1.23)
- (15) “Catonem” tuum mihi **mitte**.
‘Send me your Cato’ (Cic. *Fam.* 7.24.2)
- (16) **Dic**: quid addidit?
‘Tell me: What has he added?’ (Cic. *Ver.* 1.143)
- (17) **Cave** ignoscas!
‘Take care you do not pardon him’ (Cic. *Lig.* 16)

In a sample of 963 imperative sentences only 32% are proper imperatives. In these the verb normally is not in the initial position; in the two

other types (39% and 29%, respectively), by contrast, the verb is almost always in first position. In the proper type the first position is normally taken by the constituent with topic function, just as in declarative sentences.

The record of the acts of the conference that was held in Carthage between catholic and donatist priests in AD 411 contains interesting material that shows that the position of the object constituent with respect to the verb was still not syntactically determined. The two parties were bitter enemies and this is reflected in the verbatim report that has come down to us. The proceedings start with the verification of the presence of the invited persons. Each of them is asked to indicate whether in the territory for which he is responsible there is also a representative of the other party. The general format is *habeo X* or *X habeo*. X here represents several types of reference: his name, his rank, or a subjective expression. The most common expressions are shown in Table 6, with the order indicated (in absolute numbers).

	<i>habeo X</i> (48)	<i>X habeo</i> (61)
<i>Marcianum</i>	13	2
<i>episcopum</i>	18	5
<i>presbyterum/os</i>	2	9
<i>traditorem/s</i>	0	10
<i>adversarium</i>	6	26

Table 6. The order of the object with *habeo* in the *Gesta conlationis Carthaginiensis*.

It is interesting to note the difference in the numbers between the first two and the last two, between the more neutral expressions and the more aggressive ones. The former have “completive” focus in the terminology from Table 1, the latter “contrastive” focus. Completive focus constituents are often placed at the end of the clause and contrastive focus constituents at the beginning. The difference between *episcopum* and *presbyterum* can be explained by assuming that the former is the expected situation, whereas the latter represents “counter-presuppositional” focus. What is also interesting to note is that the aggressive expressions are uttered by donatists. Whatever explanation covers the facts best, it is not a syntactic one.¹¹

11. See Pinkster (1995).

A final remark on Latin word order concerns Wackernagel's Law. Wackernagel drew attention to the fact that certain particles, personal pronouns and forms of *esse* 'to be' seem to be attracted to a position early in the sentence, often the second position. When in this position, the particle follows a "prominent" or "emphatic" constituent. Adams (1994a, 1994b) has shown that this attachment to a "prominent" constituent occurs in other positions in the sentence as well. This is illustrated by (18) and (19).

- (18) Mitto ereptam libertatem populis ac singulis qui erant adfecti praemiis nominatim, quorum nihil est quod non **sit** lege Iulia ne fieri liceat *sanctum* diligenter
 'I say nothing of your robbing both communities and individuals of their liberties, though they had received them expressly as rewards – all offences which are explicitly forbidden by the law of Julius' (Cic. *Pis.* 90)
- (19) Quae quidem tum mutatio (*sc.* vestis) non deprecationis **est** causa *facta* sed luctus
 'This change of dress, indeed, was not made then for the sake of intercession but only to show sorrow' (Cic. *Sest.* 27)

In (18) *sit* is separated from *sanctum*, and it follows *non*, which is a contrastive focus constituent. A similar separation can be seen in (19), where *est* follows *deprecationis*, which is also a contrastive focus constituent, in contrast with *luctus*.

3.5. Typology

From 1979 onwards Christian Lehmann has examined Latin syntactic structures from the typological point of view. Typology is an explicit aim of Philip Baldi and Pierluigi Cuzzolin's four-volume work with contributions on the history of the Latin language (2009–2011). The first study inspired by the early typological work by Greenberg is Adams (1976) about Latin word order. Greenberg had on the basis of a sample of thirty languages formulated a number of "universals". Three of these were relevant to the study of Latin: (i) if a language has prepositions, the genitive follows its head noun; (ii) if a language has SOV word order, it has postpositions; (iii) if a language has SOV and the genitive follows the head, the adjective follows the head. On the assumption that Latin has SOV word order (which is not the case, see above) it is obvious that some of these universals do not apply, especially insofar as it has prepositions (against universal (ii)). In order to solve this "conflict" Adams concluded that already Early Latin had the order SVO, as in the Romance languages.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study of Latin syntax has taken new directions from the early sixties onwards. It has been stimulated by linguistic research on other languages, its methodology has become clearer, and it has profited from the availability of new instruments.

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