ADAM LEDGEWAY, *From Latin to Romance. Morphosyntactic Typology and Change,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, 407 p.

Adam Ledgeway's book opens a new series at Oxford University Press, namely *Oxford Studies in Historical and Diachronic Linguistics,* whose generals editors are Adam Ledgeway and Ian Roberts from the University of Cambridge.

The first chapter, *From Latin to Romance: introduction* (pp. 1−9), contains the relevant information about the historical background that favoured the expansion of Latin in a large geographical area and, consequently, the emergence of the Romance languages, a process which started in the 9th century. The main research question of this book is: "What were the changes that occurred in the morphosyntax of the speech of the populations of the formerly Latin-speaking regions which led to the wide typological variation witnessed in the Romance languages and dialects written and spoken in the past?" (p. 3). The preliminary answer to this question is that the significant changes of the emerging Romance languages concern: (i) the nominal group (the gradual reduction/loss of the Latin morphological case system, the emergence of determiners), (ii) the verbal group (the rise of auxiliaries), (iii) the sentence (the gradual shift from (S)OV to a fixed (S)VO/V(S)O order). The guiding lines of the book are the following: the Latin evidence and the study of substandard and regional Romance varieties can offer a proper understanding of the Romance picture, and typological distinctions (such as head- and dependent-marking, (non-)configurationality, and active-stative alignments) do not necessarily exclude formal syntactic approaches; by contrast, several competing analyses are often presented, compared and critically evaluated.

In the second chapter, *Syntheticity and analyticity* (pp. 11−29), the author underlines the problems of the traditional dichotomy from the title: (i) the terms *analytic* and *synthetic* cannot properly describe a language as a whole, but rather certain particular constructions; for example, while the Latin nominal inflection left only a few isolated residues in Romance (in early Gallo-Romance, Raeto-Romance, and Romanian), the verbal conjugation is almost intact in Romance and has even accommodate new forms (e.g. the future, the conditional); (ii) this distinction offers no explanation for the changes occurring from Latin to Romance (a notable exception is considered to be Coşeriu's work on "internal" and "external" structure). Furthermore, the author shows that there is no necessary causal relation between analyticity and morphophonological erosion (the data supporting this statement are related to the growing use of prepositions which was parallel to the loss of the final consonants in nominal forms) and that the emergence of analyticity in Romance should be understood as a gradual change, as a vast period of complementarity between the two competing models (illustrated, for example, by the Latin comparative constructions or the future). All the synthetic to analytic changes can be accounted for in the general theory of grammaticalization, which exhibits the cross-linguistic tendency to give rise to analytic structures. In conclusion, analyticity is not the cause of the syntactic change occurring in the development from Latin to Romance, but rather a surface effect of deeper changes (such as the emergence of full configurationality and related functional structure, or a change in the head-branching parameter).

The third chapter, *Configurationality and the rise of constituent structure* (pp. 30−80), presents the first main deep syntactic change that occurred in the transition from Latin to Romance. The reduced configurationality of Latin can be observed at three levels: (i) in the nominal domain, a dedicated position for articles and other determiners is missing; (ii) in the verbal domain, the lack of

BDD-R22 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:55:43 UTC)

auxiliaries marking tense, aspect, and mood correlates with the lack of grammatical tense, and consequently of a dedicated TP position; (iii) at the sentence level, Latin word order was considerably freer than Romance word order, but still conditioned by pragmatic factors. However, it is impossible to admit that configurationality is completely lacking in Latin, since from the earliest attestations CP and PP structures can be identified. In the development from Latin to Romance, the rise of configurationality should be understood as the appearance of a hierarchical structure (that can be described in terms of c-command) of the nominal phrase (NP > DP), the verbal phrase (VP > TP/IP) and of the sentence (CP), after a period (late Latin and early Romance) in which the two grammars (configurational and non-configurational) were in competition.

The guiding line of the forth chapter, *Configurationality and the rise of functional structure* (pp. 81−180), is that the rise of Romance functional structure is directly linked to the emergence of configurationality. Several linguistic facts are discussed in this light. First, the rise of DP structure in Romance is clearly proved by the appearance of the definite and indefinite articles in all Romance varieties. Alongside this fact, the author also clarifies the debate regarding the existence of determiner-like elements in Latin: "the definite article is a Romance innovation with no recognized forerunners in the Latin of any period" (p. 96). A special section is dedicated to the Romanian demonstrative and possessive articles. Second, the direct link between configurationality and functional structure is also supported by the grammaticalization of Romance auxiliaries and the emergence of an IP projection, filled either with auxiliaries or, if there is no auxiliary, with the lexical verb raised in the functional domain. The discussion about auxiliaries gives the author the opportunity to put forth interesting explanations for the split-auxiliary selection phenomenon in Romance and for the modal values acquired by the synthetic future in the Romance languages. Finally, the C domain existed since archaic Latin, as the existence of overt complementizers (such as *ut,* competing with the Accusative with Infinitive complementizerless construction) demonstrates. The Latin CP structure is reinforced in Romance, for example by the consolidation of Focus and Topic positions in the CP area and by the emergence of non-finite complementizers derived from the Latin prepositions *de* and *ad.*

The fifth chapter, *From Latin to Romance: a configurational approach* (pp. 181−283), demonstrates that the same empirical generalizations discussed in the two previous chapters can be also captured if one considers that both the configurational structure and the functional structure existed already in Latin. Thus, the changes happening in the development form Latin to Romance can be explained by the change in the directionality parameter: the diachronic syntactic fluctuation is between a conservative head-final organization (inherited by archaic Latin from Indo-European) and an innovative head-initial organization (of late Latin and early Romance), classical Latin reflecting the competition between these two types of structures. The author highlights the idea that the head-final characterization of archaic Latin should be understood statistically: archaic Latin displays more head-final characteristics than classical and postclassical Latin. The head-initial order is illustrated since the earliest Latin texts by complementizers and adpositions; in the later stages, other constructions become head-initial in their (pragmatically) unmarked form: comparatives, relatives, adjectives and genitives in the NP, coordination, etc. The change in the directionality parameter can also explain the transition from OV (Indo-European, conservative written Latin) to VO (early Latin and spoken Latin from any period, and then the Romance languages); the preferred postverbal position of the object-like subjects (namely the Undergoer-subjects of unaccusatives and passives); and the disappearance from Romance of the Accusative with Infinitive construction headed by a null final complementizer among other facts.

The sixth chapter, *Head-marking and dependent marking* (pp. 284−311), offers another possible account of the contrast between Latin and the Romance languages and for the emergence of functional head categories (Det, Aux-Infl, Compl): what occurred is a gradual (and incomplete) shift from dependent-marking towards head-marking, which also correlates with the progressive change from (S)OV to (S)VO. Thus, while Latin is a prototypical example of dependent-marking strategies (illustrated, for example, by the person and number agreement of the verb with the subject, by the participial agreement with the subject in the middle voice or by the Accusative with Infinitive construction), modern Romance varieties show a strong tendency towards head-marking (the finite

BDD-R22 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:55:43 UTC)

and non-finite subordination, the differential object marking which is frequently associated with a head-marking construction, namely clitic doubling, the inflected non-finite forms found in Ibero-Romance and Old Neapoletan, the loss and replacement of *esse* with *habere* or *tenere*, the emergence of the Romance causative construction, the Romance dual complementizers system, etc.). An extreme situation extensively discussed towards the end of the chapter is the dialect of Ripatransone (central Italy), that has extended head-marking, often in conjunction with dependent-marking, to almost all the areas of the grammar.

The last chapter, *The rise and fall of alignments* (pp. 312−352), explains some of the developments characterizing the transition from Latin to Romance as involving two competing alignments in the marking of arguments: the nominative-accusative orientation (found in classical Latin and Romance) interfering at some point with the active-stative orientation (found in late Latin and early Romance). The active-stative orientation, stronger in the northern area but short-lived in the southern area of the Romània gave rise to some structural oppositions between the north and the south areas: (i) prolonged retention vs. early loss of V_2 syntax, (ii) marking of transitive and intransitive subject (subject clitics, generalized preverbal positions) vs. marking of the object (prepostional accusative, object clitic doubling), (iii) prolonged retention vs. early loss of binary (or ternary) case system, (iv) *habere/esse* auxiliary alternation vs. generalized auxiliary (*habere* or *esse*), (v) retention vs. loss of participial agreement, (vi) loss vs. retention (and reinforcement) of the preterite.

In conclusion, this book represents a model of how modern diachronic syntax can re-think the traditional descriptive distinctions and can incorporate the latest benefits of generative grammar theorizing, without throwing into relief the theory in expense of the data.

Adina Dragomirescu
"Iorgu Iordan − Al. Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics, Bucharest
Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest

ANDRÉ HORAK, *L'Euphémisme. Entre tradition rhétorique et perspectives nouvelles*, München, Lincom Europa, Edition Linguistique, 2010, 110 p.[1]

Beginning with the title, André Horak's recent monograph on euphemism places itself at the crossroads of "new perspectives" in linguistics. The author sets out in the "Introduction" to realize a study of euphemism, considering that this "linguistic phenomenon" (p. 7) has not been, so far, correctly situated in the field of linguistic theory and that a truly scientific definition of it has not been drawn. Between the rhetoric treaties of neoclassicism and the more recent input of communication theory and study of conversational tropes, the author faces a difficult task. However, his preference for the theory of illocutory tropes remains evident, and his lack of interest in cognitive linguistics, which also recently approached tropes[2], narrows the range of the "perspectives nouvelles" that his title indicates.

The first chapter, "Tabou et euphémisme: bases terminologiques", starts with the acknowledgement that taboos change with the epoch, culture and social context in general, so that euphemism has a contextual nature and individual usage, verging on the idiosyncratic. In accordance with this awareness will be arranged the entire argument of the book.

[1] This paper is a result of the project „Transnational Network for Integrated Management of Postdoctoral Research in Communicating Sciences. Institutional building (postdoctoral school) and fellowships program (CommScie)" – POSDRU/89/1.5/S/63663, financed under the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

[2] Javier Herrero Ruiz, *Understanding Tropes. At the Crossroads between Pragmatics and Cognition*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2009.

BDD-R22 © 2012 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:55:43 UTC)