

In Search of Coefficients in Diachronic Morphological Analysis: /i/ as an Increasingly Dominant Vowel in Spanish Inflectional Morphemes

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IN SEARCH OF COEFFICIENTS IN DIACHRONIC MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
 /i/ as an increasingly dominant vowel
 in Spanish inflectional morphemes
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1. Preliminaries

Past events, the way historians have learned to piece them together, are characterized, first, by their uniqueness, despite the ever present possibility of their circular or spiral arrangement, in cycles as it were; and, second, by the analyst's inability to predict them with any degree of accuracy, beyond the disappointing haziness of probabilistic statements. What is attainable in diachronic analysis of human affairs, under optimal conditions, is then a cogent reconstruction of happenings by hindsight, ex post facto, or -- to use a term of fairly recent coinage -- through post-diction, via the identification of the cause, or of the bundle of interacting causes, that have produced a certain result, namely the change from an earlier stage S1 to a later stage S2.

While the causation of a given shift, not unlike the shift itself, may be unique, it does not follow from this state of affairs that it must necessarily be simple; there surely exists such a thing as uniqueness of a complex interplay of causes. It is, therefore, disappointing to learn that certain scholars engaged in explicative diachronic linguistics have insisted, in an almost dogmatic vein, on the pervasive superiority of internal, or structural, forces while others, of equal competence, sophistication, and, yes, stubbornness, have with comparable fervor stressed the unmatched validity of external forces. (By the latter term they usually have meant the chosen speech community's contacts with other ethnic groups favoring a variety of languages, related or unrelated, and the implications of such contacts for the change of speech habits under investigation.) After all, the most satisfactory solution of the given problem could well be the demonstration of joint action of deeply embedded structural trends, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the so-called sub-, ad-, and superstrata activated by a prolonged state of bi- or plurilingualism, including the sudden impact of one social dialect on another within the confines of one and the same language.

Let us briefly cast a critical look at the classic flaw of sound correspondences -- vertically, from parent language to daughter language, and horizontally, between hierarchical peers -- in whose establishment the pioneers of the past century, especially their second and third waves, took such pride. As every tyro knows, the peak of the Neogrammarians' confidence and self-sufficiency was reached when Karl Verner (whom no one would want to call a deft or inspired plumber) so fixed the leaky

Grimm's Law as to eliminate, by virtue of a single well-aimed qualification, a real master-stroke, the vast majority of the presumed exceptions. This was, one hundred and six years ago, one legitimate, very elegant way of coping with some such leaks. And even earlier, in 1862, Hermann Grassmann swung his magic wand to explain away another set of suspected irregularities by showing how speakers of Greek and Sanskrit, through parallel -- presumably independent -- appeals to the same dissimilatory mechanism, had parted company with the speakers of cognate languages, indifferent to the advantage, or lure, of such consonant dissimilation. But granted the merits of certain trail-blazers in having discovered qualifications of this sort, we are still saddled with the question as to what other remedial analyses remain available to us.

Several new ideas have been ventilated of late, including the possibility of mutually clashing tendencies which apparently are apt to block each other's way, with the result that changes so thwarted or stunted fall short of penetrating the entire depth of the lexicon, of reaping the full benefit of the opportunity extended to them, so to speak. Even this challenging proposal does not exhaust the range of strong possibilities. By allowing, in principle, for the off-chance that one impetus conducive to a sound change, or to some other modification, may be endowed with greater force than another; by agreeing to distinguish (if I may put it somewhat differently) between strong(er) and weak(er) shifts, one might find one plausible answer to the apparent paradox that, within the confines of a single language history, a given Change X seems to work on a sweeping scale, under virtually any set of circumstances, whereas one of its counterparts or rather companions, let us call it Change Y, materializes on a discernibly smaller and, one is tempted to argue at first blush, seemingly erratic scale. Conceivably the margin of sheer randomness of its materialization might be substantially reduced if only it could be demonstrated that, for the change aimed at to take place unhindered, the coöccurrence of two tendencies, T1 and T2, was required at the crucial juncture, over against the chances of success of Change X, strong enough to assert itself on its own. This way of thinking might lead us, with a measure of luck, to the discovery of occasional partnership or solidarity of forces and causes, to be placed at the opposite pole from instances of their reciprocal antagonism and subsequent blockage.

Where, in today's perspective, an intricate ensemble of forces, or causes, appears to have been at work, it is more than likely that past generations of intelligent and well-informed scholars came up with rival solutions which to them and to their contemporary readers and audiences seemed mutually exclusive. In the vast majority of instances a clear-cut decision has since been taken by their successors, frequently on the basis of freshly-tapped sources. But in a residue of less clear-cut

instances one can, I submit, under favorable conditions still succeed in exploding the myth of the incompatibility of such hypotheses by showing that, individually, either one of, let us say, two such rival solutions so far advocated has no doubt been partially correct, but that their combined championship by a resourceful mediator bids fair to lead us to an even more satisfactory answer. Expectations of such eventual reconcilability of apparently disparate explanations must not, I repeat, be carried to any extreme. Errors stemming from gross inaccuracy or wishful thinking deserve to be mercilessly exposed, extirpated, and buried without any pomp, to be remembered henceforth only in the narrow context of a circumstantial history of research.

Onto a separate axis of measurement one can project the following situation, which promises to take us closer to the announced topic of etiological coefficients. Let us assume a student of inflectional endings strung out in diachronic projections examines in searching detail a series of processes -- involving again and again the gradual prevalence of one pattern or paradigm over another. For the exploration of such a fairly typical state of affairs -- a collision of morphological rivals -- there exists a tested, well-established modus operandi: a technique which, despite numerous minor improvements and refinements newly introduced, as a whole goes back to the late 19th century. As the abovementioned imaginary student reaches the verb, he detects, by dint of sifting, a variety of seemingly disconnected problems, of which one is likely to bear on the infinitive, another on the gerund, yet another on the present or past participle, etc. Each of these sharply silhouetted problems is burdened with its own set of unknowns and can, the aforementioned student hopes, in the end be satisfactorily solved through appeal to such discrete forces as agency of regular sound change, impact of the given language's total sound pattern within the frame of "economy", avoidance of the threat of harmful homonymy (and conceivably of the menace of cacophony as well), deference to the innate craving for symmetry, supervenient pressure of a lingering learned tradition, infiltration from a neighboring "socially superior" dialect, marginal effects of sound symbolism, etc.; or to any of the numerous conceivable combinations of such agencies. Suppose the investigator next discovers that, no matter how pervasive the diversity of dynamic motivations, a single feature characteristic of one rival form in each encounter, perhaps a concomitant not infrequently overlooked at first glance, consistently emerges as victorious in the course of the resolution of such a chain of conflicts. This feature, not necessarily salient (I repeat), undergirds all the outcomes of the drawn-out competitions under scrutiny; it may well be an individual phoneme; or a class of phonemes; or a prosodic, suprasegmental characteristic: a pitch contour, the position or heaviness of stress; or something else, on the same order of generality. Such a state of affairs, which cannot long elude an experienced worker's

attention, to be sure may be due to mere coincidence, an explanation most linguists justifiably frown upon, dismissing it as evasive. Now, if the recurrence happens to be observable on a wide scale, the chance of sheer coincidence diminishes sharply; it dwindles even more dramatically if the newly-suspected factor had a rival of its own, which from practically no identifiable context emerges as having scored a success.

One is tempted to conclude from such a network of findings that the previously-invoked, discrepant reasons for the series of morphological changes -- let us call them a, b, c, d, e, etc. -- were not necessarily wrong within the frame of atomistic inquiry, but that, in addition to them, there presumably operated *qua* coefficient one, at first, less visible but doubtless potent factor x, so that the full range of causation might be symbolized by some such formula as $\underline{ax} + \underline{bx} + \underline{cx} + \underline{dx} + \underline{ex}$, and so forth. This formula, or some variation thereupon, would tend to do justice to both the recurrent ingredient and the alternating, diversifying elements in the total picture of forces at work. Given the broad slant of our inquiry, the coefficient thus isolated could also be called the (or a) codeterminant of the change under investigation. Technically less accurate, but perhaps more soothing to the ears of those somewhat lax about mathematical metaphors might be some such label as 'common denominator'.

2. The Problem in its Broad Outline

After these a shade theoretically tilted preliminaries let me for a few minutes switch to an autobiographic perspective. Several years after having engaged in a succession of narrow-gauged inquiries into the reorganization, at the medieval level, of certain inherited constituents of the Spanish conjugational paradigm, I noticed, in regard to inflectional endings, that -- whatever else can be shown to have occurred -- the vowel i, to the extent that it had been at all involved in rivalries, almost invariably had scored a victory over its competitors. The individual monographic studies which in the end yielded this conclusion had borne on many varieties of the infinitive and the present tense; of the imperfect tense; also, of the preterite;² and had, in addition, involved some thinking about the past participles and the gerunds. The closest rivals of the victorious vowel were the monophthongs e and u, plus the rising diphthong ie. The other rising diphthong so characteristic of Spanish at all times, namely ue, and the meagerly represented falling diphthongs, such as ai, au, ei, eu, oi, ui, do not enter at all into the traditional configurations of inflectional suffixes. The rising diphthong io /jo/ appears at a single spot of the present-day paradigm, being the 3d sg. preterite ending of certain categories of verbs; also, in the Middle Ages there coexisted for a while a -- regionally limited -- plural counterpart, namely -ioron; neither

form is relevant to the present inquiry. To revert to monophthongs, the parsimonious representation of /o/ among grammatical tools is a well-known idiosyncrasy of Romance traceable in the last analysis to the Latin verb system. To be sure, a long o was found in the parent language as the marker of the 1st sg. of the pres. ind.: flōreō 'I blossom', legō 'I collect, read', capīō 'I capture, seize', and in the end, through vowel contraction, also laudō 'I praise' -- a peculiarity preserved by the majority of Romance languages, Spanish included (except that, where stressed, -o gave way to -oy). It is also true that, through change of y into /o/ or /o/ and through compression of the diphthong au into /ow/ and eventually into /o/, a few more verbal endings involving that latter vowel came into existence and that, at least on two occasions, the presence and ready availability of o made themselves felt in innovative experiments, including one successful and one abortive attempt.³ Nevertheless, the balance sheet for o has remained very unfavorable; one can, at best, dub it a marginally successful vowel in the Latin-Romance tradition, ill-starred from the start, one which barely stood its own (e.g., as the unstressed component of long suffixal endings: -amos, -aron, etc.), and practically never crossed the path of i. These subtractions would seem to leave only a unaccounted for, a formidable counterpart indeed; speaking in a facetious vein, one could label a and i the two superpowers in the chosen domain, mutually comparable indeed except that the prerogatives of a have remained virtually the same throughout, neither substantially increased nor radically diminished, whereas the ultimate rise of i to that pedestal of power, through a succession of dramatic skirmishes with e, ie, and u, is precisely the topic of tonight's talk.⁴

If this suspicion, borne out by examination of details, hardens into certainty and is further supported by stray observations of morphological facts made outside the province of conjugations (e.g., in the domains of declension, grading, and derivational affixation), then one could defensibly claim that speakers of Spanish were, over a long period of time, aspiring to, and step by step approaching -- without, however, having reached their target completely -- a conjugational pattern revolving, with respect to endings, around a single major vocalic contrast, namely that of /a/ and /i/. The contrast thus aspired to -- involving, I repeat, a goal rather than any actual achievement -- was on a discernibly more ambitious scale than a number of minor morphophonemic alternations familiar to every neophyte, such as the one of stressed ie and unstressed e in a limited number of radicals, on the order of pierd-o 'I lose' vs. perd-emos 'we lose' (inf. perder).

The process which I herewith invite you to focus upon stretched, from prelude to last reverberations, over at least a millennium. The earliest stirrings are traceable to late Antiquity in its transition to the Middle Ages, in part on the basis

of overtly datable and localizable evidence, such as inscriptions, in part judging from indirect clues, such as those provided by reconstruction of loosely connected varieties of provincial colloquial Latin from incipient stages of Romance vernaculars, through comparative analysis. At the opposite end of the arch, the concluding phases of the processes here scrutinized fall, again, into a period of flux and transition, namely the one that extended from the fading Middle Ages to the advent of modern times, roughly from 1400 to 1600. At that juncture the developments here envisaged did not, of course, come to a complete standstill, but lost a good deal of their previous momentum, at least in Standard Spanish, where further potential advance was slowed down by the consolidation of a new powerful literary tradition. In spontaneous dialect speech the impetus was not nearly so strongly blunted, let alone blocked.

It follows from this temporal segmentation that the initial push given to a still inchoate, hazily delineated polarization of the vowels /a/ and /i/ as carriers of a grammatical message preceded by a sizable margin the crystallization of the Spanish language as a separate, neatly profiled entity. The conditions that presided over the entire reshuffling were rooted in Latin, as it evolved in the successive periods of the Republic, the principatus, and the late Empire. The first manifestations of a bolder development must have occurred at a time of weak regional differentiation of the parent language, judging from the traces they left in several Romance languages, in part contiguous, in part geographically distant from Proto-Spanish, as was Proto-Rumanian. But while elsewhere the development did not advance very briskly (and in a few instances, as a matter of fact, is plausibly assumed to have gone in reverse), it picked up momentum in Spanish and Portuguese. Also, a detail worthy of emphasis, it underwent a far more conspicuous acceleration in Castilian proper than in adjoining Galician-Portuguese and in the non-Castilian dialects of Spanish as well. To that extent it seems legitimate to center one's attention selectively about Spanish as the language in which a broader tendency faintly adumbrated elsewhere in the end became very sharply silhouetted: Was this accentuation an isolated evolutionary line, or can it be smoothly integrated with others into some higher unit?

3. Two Implications of the Favored Approach

Before becoming immersed in details, however vital, I have asked myself whether there are any hidden implications or overt presuppositions in the chosen approach of which I should keep myself, and the audience, constantly aware. It seems to me that two such preferences -- be they matters of taste or articles of faith -- deserve to be here at once identified.

First, there is no denying the admixture of ingredients of teleological thinking in the formulation of the problem on hand,

and I thus find myself in the by no means unenviable company of such scholars as Otto Jespersen and, more recently, Roman Jakobson, without necessarily sharing every feature of their respective credos.⁵ At least part of a given development can, in my experience, be regarded as goal-oriented or goal-determined, which is not tantamount to claiming that the target ever comes close to being actually reached, or to affirming that the speakers involved are conscious of the direction in which the chain of events is taking them; still less that they would know how to formulate any such awareness; and, least of all, that they could ever so slightly on purpose influence (e.g., reinforce, accelerate, or slacken, slow down), let alone deliberately alter, the course we shall soon start to extrapolate from a number of so far disconnected observations.

The second point that I feel should be made here is that the very wisdom of singling out the vogue of a separate vowel phoneme as being characteristic of a phase of a language growth may be shrugged off as being inherently problematic. Moreover, one is left wondering which scholars in the past -- and how many -- have experimented with such an approach; and with what results, in the opinion of posterity.

Interestingly, the founding father of comparative Romance linguistics, Friedrich Diez, in the 1836 edn. of the opening volume of his pioneering historical grammar,⁶ used such verbs as vorziehen 'to prefer' or begünstigen 'to favor' in characterizing the leanings of certain speech communities brought to bear on a common heritage. Specifically, in reference to the local vicissitudes of short stressed i he remarked (135): 'On the whole it can be said that the Italians, the Southern French, and the French favor e, and all the others i' ("Im ganzen läßt sich sagen, daß der Italiener, Provenzale und Franzose e, die anderen i begünstigen"). Elsewhere in the same book he referred to the tilt of the French language toward diphthongization (127). Seventeen years later, in the Preface to the original edition of his comparative etymological dictionary, Diez credited the Romance languages familiar to him, viewed in diachronic perspective, with eight "Gefühlsänderungen", of potentially greater relevancy, he elaborated, to the etymologist than to the phonologist.⁷ One of these ill-defined affective orchestrations, as he saw them, was the speakers' tendency to change some other vowel to a a in the first unstressed syllable, as in It. danaro 'money' from Lat. dēnāriū 'Roman silver coin', or in It. maraviglia 'wonder' (shared by Spanish and Portuguese, let me add on my own), from Lat. mīrābilīa 'things causing wonderment'. Diez went on to state that such a shift occurs frequently ("am liebsten"), but not mandatorily, when the next, usually stressed syllable contains an etymological a, and supplied several examples. Then he added a striking remark: "This happens most frequently in French, a language which otherwise leans toward weakening the a into an e", and cited balance, dauphin, farouche, marchand, sauvage,

apparently expecting his well-prepared readers to know that the respective bases were *bilancia (from bi-lanx, a substitute for lībra 'scale'), delphīnu, Low L. forasticu, *mercātante, and silvātīcu (influenced by salvāre).

Presented in such emotionally overarched, rather than soberly undergirded, fashion, Diez's stray observations stood little chance of impressing his hard-boiled successors. As a matter of fact, the entire issue of singling out an isolated phoneme as being highly characteristic of a chosen language quickly receded into the background, so far as advanced research was concerned. To be sure, it remained henceforth legitimate to invoke whole series of phonemes as being peculiar to a given language; indeed, nothing hinders us from including nasal vowels among the highly characteristic features of French and Portuguese, or from listing glottalized consonants among the idiosyncrasies of the Mayan family (and even of the Spanish of Yucatecos), or to illustrate emphatic consonants with Semitic tongues, especially Arabic. But impressionistic remarks on any isolated vowel in a single position within the word, unsupported by statistic computations and unintegrated into some overview of a whole system of sounds, seem bizarre from today's vantage: Even the rise of Fr. /ü/ is best examined in conjunction with the parallel development of /ö/, mainly from /we/; and, as regards a, why not concentrate on the post-tonic syllable, a decision that would tend to place Spanish far ahead of Italian, to say nothing of French, in the development of primitives such as cámara vs. camera (as well as of words containing the 'augment' or 'excrescences' ´-ago, ´-alo, ´-ano, etc.).

Forewarned of such risks, we shall, I think, succeed in skirting the trap into which an inadvertent Diez fell by limiting our search, from the start, to grammatical morphemes, to the strict exclusion of root morphemes. We shall next argue that Spanish, after passing through a stage of tetradic and triadic arrangements of vowel gamuts nourishing such morphemes, at a certain point began to move in the direction of a dyadic arrangement, which could be capsulized in the formula "A vs. NON-A". There were, in the Middle Ages, certain candidates among the vowels which, in retrospect, give the impression of having vied for the position of that polar opposite of /a/. It might have been the monophthong e, the monophthong i (i.e., either one of the two front vowels available in the local arsenal), or the rising diphthong ie, akin to those front vowels. Had e at that juncture had an edge over i and ie, it could very well have tended to absorb its rivals and, thus reinforced, might have effectively counterbalanced the a; alternatively, the diphthong ie could have "sucked in" its competitors and thus qualified for the role of confronting /a/ in a system presided over by the goal of, basically, dyadic oppositions. Conceivably it was, at the outset, simply a matter of coincidence that i, in its sheer numerical representation, slightly outweighed e and ie.

Such a slight margin would hardly have given it the momentum to overrun its rivals were it not for the additional, more deeply embedded fact of the speech community's latent striving for a basic duality of verbal (and, more broadly speaking, grammatical) endings. It is tempting to assume that the tendential switch from a triadic to a dyadic array of nuclear vowels in conjugational suffixes paralleled the shift from a three-gender to a two-gender system in the ranks of adjectives and nouns (if not of pronouns), but we are not equipped to demonstrate any such connection, esthetically pleasing and seductive as the thought may be. Moreover, those willing to champion this additional link would also incur the obligation of making it unassailably clear that Spanish reacted far more strongly to such a stimulus than did its sister languages, a flash of thought by no means implausible, but, realistically speaking, not (or not yet) demonstrable in scientific discourse.

4. Infinitives and Conjugation Classes

We are now ready to plunge into some concrete illustrations of these propositions. For a variety of reasons it seems advantageous to start out with the broadest morphological problem: namely the assignment of individual verbs to conjugation classes.⁸ For the gross classification of Latin verbs it has been customary, from time immemorial, to be guided by the endings of the present infinitive, specifically by the vowels that precede the last syllable, namely -re (originally -se), in conjunction with the endings of the 1st sg. pres. ind. Thus, to review here briefly very elementary facts, Latin had infinitives in -āre (such as laudāre 'to praise'), in -ēre (such as habēre 'to have'), in -ĕre (such as agĕre 'to drive'), and in -īre (such as finīre 'to end'), a state of affairs which at first glance justifies the appeal to an over-all four-conjugation pattern. If one adds to the infinitive another so-called "principal part", namely the aforementioned opening form of the pres. ind. set, the resulting picture is bound to look more complicated: The partner of a verb shaped like laud-āre will be, foreseeably, laud-ō 'I praise'; hab-ēre will be accompanied by hab-eō 'I have'; and fin-īre by fin-iō 'I end'. But as one reaches the contingent of -ĕre verbs, easy predictability, from the infinitives, of the respective present-tense forms comes to an abrupt end for the unsophisticated learner: He cannot possibly guess that from ag-ĕre 'to drive' and bib-ĕre 'to drink' one is supposed to arrive at ag-ō, bib-ō, while from fac-ĕre 'to do, make' and fug-ĕre 'to flee' one is expected to reach fac-iō and fug-iō, in this order. The Indo-Europeanist, who sees Latin in a radically different perspective, will support the layman in declaring that the -āre verbs are presided over by the thematic vowel ā, while the -ēre verbs are similarly controlled by the thematic vowel ē. But for reasons understandable only to a thoroughly trained comparatist he will assign a short i as the

thematic vowel to the -īre verbs, and a combination of ě and ō to the -ēre verbs, witness such 3d pl. forms as ag-unt 'they drive', bib-unt 'they drink'. Finally, there remains an exiguous residue of athematic verbs, with infinitives ending in -rre, -sse, or -lle, which it seems advisable to sweep into one small corner of the field, tagging them anomalous: ferre 'to carry', esse 'to be', ēsse 'to eat', yelle 'to want, wish'.⁹ These infinitive forms (as against certain finite counterparts) did not survive into Romance and may thus be safely disregarded in what follows.

In the overwhelming majority of Romance languages and dialects, at their medieval and modern stages alike, the four ancestral varieties of the infinitive -- to some extent symptomatic of the conjugational pattern involved -- have survived with astonishing fidelity. Thus, French boasts such diversity of infinitive classes as lou-er 'to praise', av-oir 'to have', fui-re 'to flee', and fin-ir 'to end'; Italian echoes this wealth with lod-are, av-ere, and bev-ere (at present mostly bere), fin-ire; and far-off Rumanian chimes in, except for having sloughed off the -re syllable (unless the verbal abstract, i.e., a noun, rather than the infinitive proper, entering into a verbal paradigm, is at issue): laudā 'to praise', aveā 'to have', face 'to do', muri 'to die', from parental deponential mor-I meanwhile transformed, under self-explanatory circumstances, into mor-īre.

Spanish and Portuguese, however, went their separate way, allowing -ēre and -ēre to coincide. Thus, habēre emerges in Old Spanish as aver; bibēre as bever; and facēre as fazer, mod. hacer. All infinitives, as a result, become oxytonic. (In Old Provençal parental -ēre and -ēre also coalesced, but in favor of the latter -- consequently, without the fringe benefit of prosodic equalization.)¹⁰

This initial impression of a neat, quasi-geometric design starts to become blurred once we revert to the 1st sg. pres. ind. forms which, we surely remember, at the starting-point significantly co-determined the assignment of any verb to a conjugation class. Let us wend our way back to the pairs hab-eō/hab-ēre, fūg-iō/fūg-ēre, fīn-iō/fīn-īre: In colloquial Late Latin habēō was pronounced /avjo/, fūgiō sounded /fujo/, and fīniō /finjo/. That is, the once salient contrasts between the endings of three out of the four extant conjugational classes were at that stage abolished in this crucially important form, on which the entire pres. subj. and yet other parts of the verbal paradigm hinged; once /avjo/, /fujo/, and /finjo/, plus their respective satellites, stood side by side, it became easy for speakers to move a verb from one conjugation class to another (-āre excluded), endowing it in the process with a new infinitive ending. Accordingly, fug-ere 'to flee' was almost everywhere (except in Gaul) transmuted into *fug-īre, thus: Ptg. fugir, OSp. fuir (mod. huir), It. fuggire, Rum. fugi. Cad-ēre 'to fall' sporadically remained unchanged, witness Cat. cāurer and a few Italian dialect forms; elsewhere one encounters caer, choir, cheoir, chazer,

cadere, cădea (with modern Portuguese, uncharacteristically, going one step farther and switching from attested caer to cair).

At that fairly advanced stage, the development becomes truly relevant to our thesis, for two originally distinct, but intersecting and gradually merging reasons. First, within the mainstream of events, i. e., within the transmission of Latin by word of mouth, Spanish emerges from the abovementioned flux with a sharply-pronounced preference for -ir infinitives, regardless of Latin antecedents. Thus, where the parent language wavered between fervēre and fervōre for 'to boil, seethe', Old Spanish opted for fervir, mod. hervir; over against Classical (impers.) p(a)enitēre 'to experience displeasure or regret' stand Old and Mod. Sp. (reflexive) (a)rrepentir 'to regret, repent', with newly-acquired religious overtones. Lat. recutere 'to strike back, reverberate' and succutere 'to fling aloft, toss up' clash with OSp. recodir 'to recoil, rebound, recover one's senses', old sacodir beside secodir, mod. sacudir 'to shake'; analogically, the road leads from implēre 'to fill' to OSp. fenchir, mod. henchir 'to fill, stuff'. The examples could be easily multiplied. Sometimes the speech community stops at the midway point; thus, from cernere 'to sift' the direct descendant was, and has remained, cerner, even though a minority of speakers have elected to advance to the cernir point along the evolutionary line. Interestingly, in some more clear-cut instances the medieval texts favor almost in unison -er, but later generations have switched to -ir, as holds for medieval eñader, mod. añadir 'to add', from in + [n]addere. For a while, complete homonymy between the products of trahere 'to draw, drag, haul' and trādere 'to hand over, deliver' was foiled, despite the comparably deep erosion of intervocalic h and d, precisely by appeal to this selectively operative mechanism: trahere gave rise to traer 'to bring', while trādere engendered obs. trair 'to betray', witness to this day the derivative traidor 'traitor' (the verb itself was subsequently replaced by circumlocutory traicionar 'to commit treason'). In many instances where Spanish opted, or ended by opting, for the -ir class, Portuguese in this sector of the lexicon favored the -er class: hence ferver, arrepender, (pre)encher, and about ten additional pairs of cognates, similarly contrastable. In search of greater geographic precision one may contend that the farther one moves away from the Atlantic Coast, the better one's chances to encounter an -ir infinitive lacking a direct prototype. A single example should suffice: colligere 'to gather, assemble' has yielded colher in Portuguese, coger (/koʒer/, later /koʒer/) in Castilian and its offshoots, but cullir in Old Navarrese-Aragonese, at the foot of the Pyrenees; cf. Fr. cueillir.¹¹

The second prong of -ir is, I repeat, unrelated to the first in its moorings: It involves not specimens of folk speech characterized by oral transmission, but the learned, humanistic borrowing of samples of Latin lexical material by bookish,

sophisticated users. These avid readers and writers, somewhere between 1400 and 1700, discovered hundreds of Latin verbs, chiefly of the -ĕre conjugation, that had fallen into desuetude and decided to absorb them into literary Spanish -- visibly a case of planned lexical adoption -- with a grammatical dimension. These highly intelligent and purposeful users, in carrying out their scheme of adaptation, had the choice between the -er conjugation, transparently closer to Latin prototypical -ĕre, and the phonically more distant -ir counterpart, to say nothing of the far removed -ar. The obvious move would have been a leap from parental -ĕre to filial -er; but this elitist group unhesitatingly chose the gambit to -ir instead, so that to this day Spanish offers us a whole bouquet of -ir verbs: atribuir, competir, construir, distinguir, erigir, resistir, retribuir, sustituir for which Latin, with equal if not superior consistency, presented the infinitival series attribuĕre, competĕre, cōstruĕre, distinguĕre, erigĕre, resistĕre, retribuĕre, substituĕre. Significantly, pre-Renaissance French vacillated between -er and -ir, but -- except for a small residue -- in the end chose -er, the direct descendant of Lat. -āre, hence attribuer, distinguer, ériger, résister, rétribuer, substituer, in rhyme with louer < laudāre. Cōstruĕre, by way of contrast, when transplanted onto the soil of France, was patterned after its semantic opposite dĕstruere, which had survived in the mainstream of word-of-mouth transmission (cf. dĕtruire); hence, construire rather than *construer. There was, significantly, no way, for the French, to squeeze attribuĕre, etc. into the mold of prendre, rendre, and the like, a small, strictly residual class incapable of the slightest expansion. What was impossible of attainment in French, however, could with relative ease be carried out in Italian, where the inherited -ĕre class continued to flourish; hence Tusc. competere, distinguere, erigere, resistere. However, the sequence /uere/, presumably for phonotactic reasons, turned out to be undesirable, leading to the entrenchment of attribuire, retribuire, sostituire, by way of nearest alternative, as it were; and costrurre, as in French, joined vernacular destrurre, exploiting to the hilt an opportunity for effective "lexical polarization". So a possibility rejected by French, after a brief spell of hesitation, and admitted into Italian only for an exiguous subclass, i.e. grudgingly, prevailed effortlessly and on a sweeping scale in Spanish, an evolutionary peculiarity best understood on the assumption that there was a morphological tilt in the direction of /i/.¹²

You have heard me hint that these two vogues, notwithstanding their fundamental disparity, upon occasion supported each other. Here is an example of such interaction: Ancestral confundere 'to mingle, combine, confuse', fig. 'confound' cast off cofonder, -honder in Old Spanish, with a built-in tendency to move farther in the direction of cofondir, etc., and even of cofundir (witness sacodir > sacudir, above). Simultaneously, confundere, endowed

with a different semantic specialization, was picked by late-medieval elitist speakers and absorbed as confundir, with laborious restoration of the first nasal and parallel gravitation toward nuclear u and inflectional -ir, though for entirely different reasons. I doubt that this is a severely isolated example.¹³

Spanish stood almost alone in allowing it to happen that the push toward -ir in newly-adopted Latinisms proved demonstrably stronger than the cohesion of word-families. Take the case of rumpere 'to break', which survived organically into most vernaculars: Fr. rompre, Sp. romper, It. rompere, etc. Conversely, interrumpere 'to interrupt', at the outset a term of such exclusive crafts as rhetoric and poetics, was absorbed at a late date, with the wave of Renaissance terms. The preëxistence of romper did not hinder the Spanish from shoving the newcomer in the direction of the -ir class, hence interrumpir. Elsewhere the primitive preconditioned the form of the compound, lending it such shapes as Fr. interrompre, Ptg. interromper, It. interrompere.¹⁴

5. The arrhizotonic past participles in -ado, -ido, -udo

After having familiarized ourselves with the active present infinitives we are better prepared to address the vicissitudes of the passive past participles, because the two systems, while far from coinciding, show a good deal of overlapping. Perhaps one should, breaking with an inveterate tradition, invoke here a class of verbal adjectives marked by a -t- suffix predominantly, but not exclusively passive in message: If laudātus indeed designated 'one who has been praised', cēnātus, conversely, referred to 'one who has dined'. In the daughter languages, such forms quickly rose to much greater prominence through vigorous development of compound tenses. True, this special use, endowed with major potentialities, was not unknown to Antiquity, confined to the outer rim of the verbal paradigm (e.g. to a portion of the passive voice, or to the exceptional categories of deponential and semideponential verbs: ausus sum 'I have dared'); but the Romance vernaculars, from the start, showed its dramatic extension to the newly-shaped compound tenses habēō (or teneō) amātu 'I have loved', habēbam (or tenēbam) amātu 'I had loved', and the like. While certain important syntactic dimensions of this innovation are irrelevant in the context of tonight's talk, its morphological consequences will before long surge to the surface.¹⁵

Initially, the t participle was attached directly to the verbal root, without any reference to the "infectum" (i.e., present tense) or the "perfectum" stem; the root would frequently end in a short vowel or a consonant. For instance, in the paradigm of the verb serĕre 'to sow', the choice of the p. ptc. form sātus 'sown' is independent of the selection of sē-vī 'I sowed' for the perfect tense; the favoring of dātus 'given' (from dāre

'to give') has nothing to do with the preference for reduplicative dedī 'I gave'; similarly, stātus 'stood' (from stāre 'to stand') remains uninfluenced by stētī (from *stestī) 'I stood'. But before long a network of secondary associations began to spring into existence. In certain particularly productive verb classes, those marked by infinitives in -āre and -īre, there stood side by side (a) these infinitives, (b) the perfecta in -ā(v)ī and -ī(v)ī, and (c) the past participles in -ātū and -ītū, thus: laudāre, laudā(v)ī, laudātū; and, from the verb signifying 'to hear', correspondingly: audīre, audī(v)ī, audītū. To complete the tripartite gamut, the verbs in -ēre, to be sure, were numerous enough, but, asymmetrically, few of them happened to have perfecta in -ēvī and past participles in -ētū, so that they fell short of qualifying for the role of a center of attraction, while the representation of -ōtū was quantitatively even more meager and qualitatively more blurred (one isolated example that comes to mind is nōtus 'notorious' alongside ignōtus 'unknown'). In contrast, -ūtus, originally confined to a verb or two, namely statuere 'to set up, set, station', and perhaps tribuere 'to distribute, bestow, assign', underwent a significant extension within the confines of Classical Antiquity and, thereafter, an explosive growth in colloquial Latin underlying the Romance vernaculars. On the authority of A. Ernout¹⁶ one is free to assume that, from solvere 'to set free, release' and volvere 'to turn', there cut loose, on the analogy of the statuere/statūtus model, the innovative forms solūtus and volūtus, which, in turn, exerted sufficient pressure on loquor/loquī 'to talk' and sequor/sequī 'to follow' for these verbs to have developed, as their shares in the slow reshuffling process, locūtus and secūtus. At this point one is tempted to pause and raise the question: Why this sudden and early (namely pre-Classical) fecundity of -ūtus, as against the aforementioned sterility of -ētus and -ōtus? Such a question the Latinist can deftly parry by pointing out that there existed, in Latin conjugation, a great many closely-connected perfecta in -uī, as against only few and severely isolated ones in -ēvī and -ōvī, so that the concomitancy of appropriately similar perfectum forms emerges as the only tangible clinching factor in favor of -ūtus. And for any skeptics wondering about the cogency of this argument Latinists will have at their fingertips an excellent parallel: As was independently established, the s suffix, originally alien to the participial domain and idiosyncratic only to a certain category of perfecta (those known as sigmatic), spread, within the bounds of that peculiar group of verbs, from its original niche to the corresponding past participles, as is taken for granted in such instances as mānsus, from manēre 'to stay, remain', after mānsī; sparsus, from spargere 'to scatter', after sparsī; etc.¹⁷ At this turning point the curtain falls dramatically on the uninterrupted record of Antiquity; and, when it goes up again, the landscape of the Middle Ages will hold additional surprises for the observer.

When the curtain went up and the dust had settled, a remarkable past-participial landscape became visible: Almost everywhere the once so sparingly represented -ūtu type had become the major winner, especially in the ranks of verbs descended from Latin prototypes recognizable by their -ēre and -ēre infinitives. Thus, from taceā 'to be silent', a descendant of parental tacēre, Rumanian has produced tăcut, as against Classical tacŭtu; and from face 'to do, make', which echoes Lat. facēre, it has generated făcut, over against ancestral factu, preserved almost everywhere else. Italian overwhelms the learner with forms such as avuto, from avere 'to have'; dovuto, from dovere 'to owe, be obliged to', and battuto, from battere 'to strike', which stand in sharp contrast to Lat. habŭtu, dēbitu, and to a gap in the paradigm of batt(u)ere; and French, a language in which -ūtu in the end assumed the form -u /ü/, not only places at the disposal of its speakers, let us say, plu from plaire < placēre 'to please', tu from taire < tacēre 'to be or keep silent', and rendu from rendre < reddere 'to return, give back' (contaminated by prendre < praeendere 'to seize, grasp'), but will allow -uto to make its appearance at intervals, under unusual sets of circumstances, even inside the domain of -ir verbs, as can be illustrated with tenu from tenir 'to hold' and venu from venir 'to come'.¹⁸

Under these conditions, one is hardly surprised to watch Old Spanish and Old Portuguese follow suit. With negligible exceptions, all verbs with -er infinitives (as a rule, traceable to prototypical -ēre or -ēre) displayed past participles in -udo -- so far as we can judge, on all levels of discourse and in all literary genres, with every single regional dialect fully included, at least until ca. 1350. Thus, from aver 'to have' a speaker of medieval Spanish would develop avudo 'had', and from entender 'to understand' he would extract entendudo, where the Latin tradition had left off with radically different habŭtu and intēnsu. Old Portuguese chimed in, also using avudo and entendudo, identical in spelling if not in the finer points of actual pronunciation, although in certain instances different constraints of sound development produced morphologically inessential phonetic deviations; e.g., through a succession of nasalization and denasalization, successive generations of speakers arrived at tēudo > teúdo, beside less erratic OSp. tenudo,¹⁹ which parallels OFr. tenu.

What is the most cogent explanation for the fact that -ūtu fared so remarkably well in Rumanian, Italian, French, Old Spanish, and Old Portuguese, plus some of their congeners? To be sure, the initial impetus to its rise, within the confines of Latin, had been given, we recall, by the felicitous concomitancy of the thriving -uī perfect tense, with statuī lending support to stat-ūtu and the like. At the Palaeo-Romance phase, the category of the so-called -uī perfecta scored here and there further successes, but also suffered a comparable number of setbacks, so

that, on balance, one scarcely observes any real increase, let alone break-through. Had the -ūtu past participle, then, meanwhile developed a momentum of its own, regardless of the inconclusive records of its erstwhile partner, the perfect tense, or had it encountered new allies? I venture to think that a new pattern of solidarity indeed had been allowed to sprout, involving this time an alliance with the past participles of two other, increasingly powerful conjugation classes -- those marked by -ar and -ir infinitives. In Rumanian tăcut and făcut gained strength through contrastive association with lucrat 'worked' (from lucră) < Lat. lucrātu, lit., 'gained, profited', and with auzit 'heard' (from auzi) < audītu. And much the same is true, mutatis mutandis, of the cognate languages adduced, and of others from which it would be easy to supply matching examples. To limit myself to Old Spanish, loado 'praised', from laudātu, and oído 'heard', from audītu, pulled in their wake avudo and entendudo. A vague appeal to analogy no longer satisfies any analyst at present, I suppose. It seems more adequate to saddle, specifically, the rise of vocalic gamuts with the responsibility for this state of affairs.

In early Romance, tetradic and, especially, triadic, vocalic gamuts pervade the entire domain of suffixal derivation; cf. the mass-nouns and abstracts in -āmen, -īmen, -ūmen; -āgō, -īgō, -ūgō, and the like. Characteristically, the conspicuous vowels in such a triadic gamut arrangement were, for centuries, ā, ī, and ū, to the near-exclusion (a) of ē and ō; (b) of the short counterparts of all five; (c) of the diphthongs, whether rising or falling; or (d) of zero, on the model of Lat. agmen 'crowd, mass, train', segmen 'bit, shred', and the like. To put it differently: The past participles, straddling as they did the form classes of verbs and nouns/adjectives, for a while tended to participate in the consolidation of a sweeping morphological pattern geared to an a-i-u gamut.²⁰

Even if the hearer should declare himself convinced by such analysis of the past participle, the concluding link in this chain of transmutations is apt, at first, to baffle him. For, by the middle of the 14th century, the -udo forms all of a sudden disappeared from Spanish with unforeseeable speed, yielding ground to -ido; one hundred years or so later, Portuguese followed suit -- the delay is rather precisely measurable and significant, allowing one to recognize at a glance the focus and the periphery of the new development.²¹ Catalan, incidentally, never joined this last phase of the movement and has kept -ut; e.g., (h)agut 'had', more reminiscent of OSp. avudo, It. avuto and typologically, of OFr. ëu than of mod. Sp. (h)abido.²² The situation that ensued involved considerable widening (actually doubling) of the scope of -ido, which from then on, uninterrupted, has matched both -er and -ir infinitives, as every tyro has been encouraged to learn: comido 'eaten', from comer, and temido 'feared', from temer, rhyme with dormido 'slept', from dormir. (One finds a handful of

exceptions, e.g. abierto 'opened', from abrir, and dicho 'said', from decir, but not one of them exemplifies -udo, protected from the onslaught of -ido.) This partial conflation of conjugation classes II and III, as they are labeled in elementary language teaching, to be sure is not unparalleled; Not only do the gerunds in -iendo (comiendo, durmiendo) and the adjectivally or substantivally colored present participles in -iente (puiente 'wealthy', akin to poder, beside durmiente 'sleeper') agree with this trend, but, far more important, two simple past tenses, namely the imperfect and the preterite, preceded the past participle by a wide margin along this path of commonality of inflectional endings. The fact that one of the past participle's chief functions has from time immemorial been to enter into the past composite (he temido 'I have feared') and into the pluperfect (había temido 'I had feared') in rivalry with the paradigms of those simple tenses (temía and temí) -- a state of affairs to which we shall yet revert -- may, indeed, have been one major reason for the shift from temudo to temido. Still, the late date as well as the striking speed and thoroughness of the change cause surprise: We have very eloquent testimony to this effect, as when an inspired poet composing a quatrain around 1320 allows, say, atrevido 'emboldened' to rhyme with agudo 'sharp' or mudo 'dumb', while an uncouth copyist toiling a half-century later and insensitive to the effect of rhyme unhesitatingly mutilates the stanza by changing atrevido to atrevido, in deference to the new colloquial standard familiar to him, while leaving agudo and mudo unaltered.²³

One can, of course, by dint of searching for such obstacles, stumble across a verb from which the expected -udo participle would unavoidably have sounded very awkward and argue that the pervasive change in the direction of -ido may well have started at that point; W. Meyer-Lübke, at the turn of the century, was skillful at providing such explanations. Thus, from roer 'to gnaw', which echoes Lat. rōdere, it was -- for phonotactic reasons -- clumsy to extract *rōudo; consequently, speakers may well have favored roído by way of experimental alternative, and other verbs in -er could plausibly have followed suit and preferred -ido to -udo. In criticism, one is tempted to reply that it would have been far simpler for speakers to treat roer as a defective verb, divested of any past participle. A well-informed and otherwise judicious Romanist active on the present-day stage, Heinrich Lausberg, not so long ago launched a hypothesis unworthy of his fine scholarship: He argued that -ido beside -er had been all along in existence, subterraneously as it were, with -udo representing merely a sort of overlay in the Hispano-Romance literary register, little more than an episode due to the infiltration of a Gallo-Romance ending.²⁴ But, first of all, be it said in rebuttal, we know practically nothing of Hispanic conjugation models -- Catalonia excluded -- that were borrowed from across the Pyrenees; and second, there is not a shred of evidence to the effect

that literary genres affected by Old French models succumbed to the influence of foreign -udo, while autochthonous folk literature steadfastly clung to -ido. Because, also around 1350, certain other profound changes occurred in the morphology of the verb -- they will yet briefly occupy our attention --, changes which also involved the triumph of an i-marked ending over some inveterate rival, it seems to me more realistic to argue that about that time Spanish was switching from a, predominantly, triadic to a dyadic vowel gamut: A vs. NON-A, with more and more speakers tacitly agreeing to groom /i/ for the latter role. Since Portuguese was more sluggish in adopting this pattern of sharp vocalic polarization (recall its acceptance of encher, ferver, interromper vs. Sp. henchir, hervir, interrumpir), it switched from -udo to -ido late and, one gathers, under lateral pressure from its more dynamic neighbor; also, it allowed for one residual exception: conteúdo 'content' -- unlike its medieval Spanish counterpart contenido -- failed to undergo restructuring into *cont(e)ido (cf. těudo → tido) because it had meanwhile cut loose from the verb.

Even more significantly, a quasi-homonymous set of straight adjectival affixes, namely a-ado suggestive of similarity (as in aindiado 'resembling an Indian'), -ido indicative of lack or dearth (as in resequido 'thoroughly dry, deprived of sap'), and -udo stirring visions of comic excess or exuberance (as in Sp. orejudo, Ptg. orelhudo 'equipped with huge ears') preserved their triadic array, not least because the choice of a, i, or u by the speaker in this context unmistakably could convey a separate, readily isolable message.²⁵

6. The Imperfect Tense in -ía

Though fully corroborative of everything that has been expounded so far, the record of the imperfect tense in Latin, in Romance as a whole, and particularly in the bundle of Hispanic dialects here at issue stands apart insofar as it illustrates, not just once but at two separate junctures widely distant in time, the agency of forces of heightened concern to us.

From one's elementary Latin class everyone surely remembers that the imperfect tense of that language had such sets of endings (if one limits himself to the singular) as -ābam, -ābās, -ābat; -ēbam, -ēbās, -ēbat; and -ībam, -ībās, -ībat, in partial harmony with the gamut of infinitive endings and, beyond that constraint, with the subjacent pattern of thematic vowels. In substandard Latin speech that accord was further sharpened through complete jettisoning of the uncharacteristic, hence by then probably unwelcome, -īēbam set. Where the infinitive ending was -īre, an alternative imperfectum in -ībam emerged (there are inelegant texts testifying to this substitution), while all -ēre verbs -- including those behaving like faciō/-ēre and fugiō/-ēre --

acquired an imperfect tense displaying plain -ēbam in lieu of the jarring diphthongal form inculcated into college students, hence *fac-ēbam, *fug-ēbam, on the evidence of reconstruction based on comparison. Independently, -ēbam continued to be favored, as before, by -ēre verbs. Toward the close of the Latin period one can therefore reckon with three parallel sets, symmetrically structured: -ābam..., -ēbam...., and -ībam..., all three apparently in good health, thus: laud-ābam 'I praised', hab-ēbam 'I had' beside *fac-ēbam 'I did, made', and fīn-ībam 'I finished'.²⁶

And yet even this seemingly insuperable system, despite its structural balance, was not destined to last long everywhere, because certain vital cross-connections were here and there critically impaired, to the detriment of the master design. Thus there developed a widespread tendency, among untutored speakers, to drop the pivotal b where its loss would entail few harmful side-effects. Consequently, because the elimination of -b- from -ābam threatened to cause a conflation of the newly-adjacent a's, and thus ultimately the collapse of the tense's syllabico-accentual system, speakers stopped short of letting the -b- disappear in this particular context. But in -ēbam and -ībam the same consonantal pillar was not protected by any anticipation of, or recoil from, such a hazard, and thus the -b- was allowed to disappear from the imperfect-tense paradigms of whole blocks of -ēre, -ēre, and -īre verbs, judging from their reflexes in medieval vernaculars. The reason for this far-reaching loss is not entirely transparent; the long-accepted appeal to eliminative consonant dissimilation, which allegedly started with habēbam and dēbēbam, is scarcely satisfactory;²⁷ I for one am tempted to assume that the -b- of the imperfect tense was sacrificed in the wake of the across-the-board abandonment of the -bō future tense, given the syntactico-semantic solidarity between these tenses: With the loss of laud-ābō 'I shall praise' and dēl-ēbō 'I shall destroy' the vogue of the -b- as a constituent of inflectional endings must have declined very sharply.²⁸

This state of business (i.e., the immediate consequences of the loss of b, without further reverberation) is best observed in Old Italian, where -ēre and -ere infinitives typically accompanied imperfect-tense forms in -ea, thus: dovea 'he owed', from dovere (Lat. dēbēre), piangea 'she was weeping', from piangere (Lat. plangere 'to beat the breast, bewail'), while a verb such as finire would just as smoothly develop a counterpart in -ia. Tuscan dialects have to this day preserved traces of this usage and even of its sporadic extension to -āa < -ābat, whereas literary Italian, moving in the same groove of analogical plays but in opposite direction, has conversely restored the -y- in the ranks of -ere and -ire verbs, using the -are paradigm as its operational base; hence doveva, piangeva, finiva after, say, lava-va '(s)he washed'.²⁹ In Old Provençal, however, which distinguishes among infinitives in -ar, -re, and -ir, both -re and -ir

infinitives demand an imperfect tense in -ia, to the strict exclusion of *-ea.³⁰ Hence the superb material for rhymes supplied by auzia 'I heard', from auzir (< audīre), moria 'I was dying', from morir, on the one hand; and, on the other, crezia 'I believed', from creire, and vendia 'I was selling', from vendre. That is to say, the /i/ has been measurably favored over the /e/; the movement may plausibly have started with verbs represented by doublets, e.g. expandre ~ expandir 'to pour out', resplandre ~ resplandir 'to shine, sparkle', segre ~ seguir 'to follow'. Basically, the very same situation is observable in Portuguese, both medieval and modern, except that here the stimulus provided by doublets can no longer be caught by the observer's lens: vender 'to sell' and seguir 'to follow' have at all times shared an imperfect in -ia.³¹ One hits upon no reason for the prevalence of /i/ over /e/ more cogent than the local predilection among speakers of Luso- and Hispano-Romance for the high front vowel in grammatical morphemes, since, within the far-flung Latin tradition, -ea was by no means doomed: It even has encroached on -ava in certain Central Italian dialects, and it has scored a major success in French where all verbs, without exception (though not yet uniformly at the medieval stage), parade identical imperfect tense endings: j'allais..., j'étais..., je venais..., je finissais, until 1800 or so spelled -ois rather than -ais and, in the last analysis, traceable, of all conceivable sources, to -ēbam (via OFr. -eie > -oie).³²

But this is not all. One's first impulse is to declare the development in Spanish presumably parallel to the evolutionary curve of Old and Modern Portuguese and not radically different from the growth undergone by Provençal: In all three languages one observes, in this nook of the grammatical edifice, the speakers' marked preference of -ía over -ea. Hence ten-ía from ten-er 'to hold, have' echoing mor-ía from mor-ir 'to die'. It stands to reason that such unanimity of results should point to a conspicuously early innovative convergence; but, in sober fact, things are discernibly more complicated. As Federico Hanssen, ninety years ago, demonstrated in a brilliant memoir, with the help of rhymes culled from medieval poems,³³ there occurred, at the height of the Old Spanish period, a cataclysmic interference with a deeply-entrenched tradition by an intrusive type of diphthongal verbal ending, known under the code name "DEDĪ, STĒTĪ type", whose ultimate source and itinerary were reexamined in 1959 painstakingly enough to obviate any need for yet another circumstantial discussion.³⁴ Suffice it to state that, through a unique conspiracy of conditions (temporary vogue of the rising ie diphthong, lateral pressure exerted by certain forms containing that diphthong on the functionally germane preterite tense, etc.), the dominant variant of the imperfectum paradigm of, say, vender 'to sell' was for, at least, two long centuries (roughly 1200-1400): (yo) vendía, (tu) vendiás, (él) vendié; and, in the

plural, vend-iémos, -iédés, -ién. All of this notwithstanding, certain less characteristic scribal idiolects of the period continued to favor -fa over -iê. Only toward the conclusion of the Middle Ages did the pendulum begin to swing back, with vendíamos rather than vendiémos, to adduce one random example, emerging as the dominant form (and, in the literary standard, as the sole admissible member of the paradigm). Several forces must have been at work in this ultimate recoil, as baffling as had been the unheralded intrusion; one such factor surely was the prosodic symmetry vis-à-vis the -ava set. Whatever the circumstances, the eventual prevalence of i, this time over iê, as the nuclear vowel of a set of verbal endings can here be watched almost under laboratory conditions; it amounts to another link in the chain of arguments proffered.

7. The 'Weak' Preterite

The relevance of the vicissitudes of the preterite endings to the broader problem here under investigation can be sketched out with utmost brevity. In this context we are concerned with the so-called 'weak' preterite, conventionally so called in Romance quarters (in somewhat lame imitation of Jakob Grimm's imagery) because all six members of its paradigm carry their main emphasis on their endings rather than on their stems. This tense is still very much in use, on every level of discourse, to the south of the Pyrenees and overseas, whatever may have happened to its status in Parisian French of late. The "weak" variety alluded to goes back in a straight line to such Latin models as -āvī, -āvistī, -āvit,...; -ēvī, -ēvistī, -ēvit,...; -īvī, -īvistī, -īvit,... It has been known to scholars for almost a century that in actual Roman folk speech (the sermo plebeius), the respective forms of laudāre 'to praise', dēlēre 'to destroy', and dormīre 'to sleep' sounded thus, after part of the endings had been tententially sloughed off: laud-ā(v)ī, -ā(vi)stī, -āv(i)t,...; dēl-ē(v)ī, -ē(vi)stī, -ēv(i)t,...; dorm-ī(v)ī, -ī(vi)stī, -īv(i)t,...³⁵

Spanish and Portuguese clash significantly in their respective modes of preserving these slices of inherited suffixal material. As is well known, Spanish -er and -ir verbs alike, to the extent that they are "regular", share one and the same set of endings for the -er and the -ir class preterites; to hardly anyone's surprise at this advanced stage of our inquiry, I suppose, it is the i-dominated set that has, once more, been generalized, so that, from corr-er 'to run', one extracts: corr-ī, -iste, -iô,...; and from sal-ir 'to go out', in perfect rhyme with the forms just adduced: sal-ī, -iste, -iô,.... In contrast, speakers of Portuguese have established three, rather than two, parallel sets, displaying, except in the 1st sg., the thematic vowels that can also be peeled off from the infinitives, thus: louv-ei (orig. -ai), -aste, -ou (orig. -au),..., from louv-ar 'to praise';

corr-i, -este, -eu, ..., from corr-er (with /e/ rather than /ɛ/ throughout); and sa-í, -íste, -íu, ..., from sa-ir. Should one assign the extra set of endings that Portuguese displays and Spanish lacks, to a more faithful preservation, along the Atlantic Coast, of the original state of affairs in the common parent language; or should one, alternatively, surmise that -este, -eu, etc. have been secondarily restored, "by way of analogy" (to use an antiquated terminology), on the model of -aste, -ou, ... and -iste, -iu, ...?

Most scholars are willing to bet on the second conjecture, on account both of the evidence of cognate languages (cf. Fr. je rendis, from rendre, on a par with je finis, from finir) and of conspicuous parallels within the edifice of Portuguese, as when that language offers a pattern of three gerundial endings: louv-ando, corr-endo, sa-indo, as against only two in Spanish (lo-ando vs. corr- and sal-i-endo); observe a similar contrast in the ranks of parsimoniously transmitted pres. part. endings (-ante, -ente, -inte vs. -ante and -iente) -- true, in both instances with a rising diphthong, for a change, prevailing over the expected monophthong. So there was, to revert to the former argument, a certain edge of i over e, for a number of Romance languages, in this wing of their grammatical edifices, including French, Spanish, plus -- conjecturally -- Proto-Portuguese. Spanish here behaved merely like a disciplined member of a group.

But this state of business does not exhaust the problem. Old Spanish, once more, upon closer inspection exhibits an astonishing interlude, whose traces have since been almost effaced in the standard, except for a single tell-tale vestige. Mention has already been made of an aggressive, intrusive rival type of simple past tense which, cutting loose from reduplicative dědī 'I gave' and stětī 'I stood', for a while, through its encroachments, threatened to distort the smooth steady flow of events. Interference by this type produced the, for a while, highly popular rising diphthong -ie- /je/ in the core syllable of the conjugational suffixes, which, once that segment had been recognized as characteristic, lent itself to a rather neat transfer to most members of the "weak" i set of endings, thus: 2d sg. com-ieste, and pl. com-iemos, -iestes, -ieron, in keen and fairly prolonged rivalry with com-imos, -istes, -iron.³⁶ The fashion may have lasted three hundred years, as can be demonstrated with datable texts, especially those geared to unequivocally tidy rhymes. In the end, the vogue receded; com-ieste, after ca. 1400, was jettisoned, for the benefit of com-iste, which, incidentally, had never completely gone out of use.³⁷ It is arguable that the presence of monophthongs in the a set: -é, -aste, -ó, -amos, etc., without acting as a straitjacket, may nevertheless have dampened the speakers' enthusiasm for the rising diphthong in the virtually parallel i set. Perhaps so; independently, and without any mutual exclusiveness, one is free to add one more strike to the

impressive desinential record of the vowel i, which has been haunting us for a while.

The one exception -- a minor one -- in the paradigm of this tense that remains to be accounted for is the prevalence of -ieron in the 3d plural instead of the anticipated return to -iron, with the late-medieval swing of the pendulum away from the dedi type. Here one is tempted to support those who have invoked a different, conflicting cross-connection as the most plausible cause for the retardation hinted at -- namely the powerful link that ties the 3d pl. to the 3d sg.: The rising diphthong /je/ of corr-ieron 'they ran' was protected from the threat of replacement, as it were, by the similarly-shaped, if not exactly identical, /jo/ of corr-ió '(s)he, it ran'.³⁸

8. Conclusion

In sum, four cases have been here cursorily presented -- all four bearing on members (not necessarily the finite ones) of the verbal paradigm -- in which the assumption of a latent tendency of Spanish toward the hegemony of the vowel /i/ in stressed inflectional suffixes either made, per se, the speakers' choice for the first time readily understandable or, if superadded to other factors which had been previously cited, transmuted a meager, barely adequate explanation into a richly orchestrated one. Actually, as many as five processes were examined, because in the long drawn-out history of the imperfect tense the assumed agency repeated itself, after an interval of possibly one millennium.

Had more time been available, several anticipated questions might have been answered and a number of foreseeable objections could have been parried. One such query is: What is the sum total of relevant processes so far observed, including such as transcend the realm of the verb? The tentative answer is: approximately a dozen, involving tell-tale shifts in the morphology of adjectives and pronouns as well as zigzags in the growth of miscellaneous derivational suffixes; these issues, skipped tonight, will some day have to be ventilated separately.³⁹ Next: What is the total time stretch involved? One should think, I repeat, that the temporal arch extends from late Antiquity until shortly after the conclusion of the Middle Ages, with the interjacent so-called Dark Age obviously affording some of the finest opportunities for such subliminal, spontaneous shifts, and with a crescendo discernibly characterizing the last centuries. Finally: To what extent are these processes significantly peculiar to the record of Spanish, and of Spanish alone? The answer is that they are indeed observable, in an inchoate state, in several Romance languages; in Spanish and Portuguese jointly, more commonly so than in the congeners of these two languages. Also, in Spanish proper they are more sharply silhouetted than in Portuguese, and sometimes occur at a distinctly earlier date, as was particularly true, to the point of measurability along the time axis, of the

replacement of past-participial -udo by -ido. The fact that for the inchoative interfix Hispanophones and some Southern Italians opted for -ēsc- in preference to -isc- (highly characteristic of French; je fin-is and Tuscan: fin-isco) may be related to the fact that the opening phase of the luxuriant growth of the inchoatives was the lexical influence exerted by cr-ēsc-ere, with the center of gravity ever after slowly moving toward -isc-ere; the emergence of -ecer looms, then, as an archaic feature.⁴⁰

The theoretical foundation for the assumption of the phoneme /i/'s role as a coefficient is the same that is invoked in establishing sound correspondences; It is probabilistic, resting on the idea that the recurrence of a certain relationship or distribution of bare forms, or of forms vs. meanings, is simply too pervasive to be plausibly attributed to, or explained away as due to, mere chance.

Does any distinctive "magic" quality attach to the vowel /i/ that might have groomed it for the role here proposed? Limiting oneself to the examples scrutinized, one is tempted to answer with an emphatic: No. We are here very far removed from the treacherous, if tempting, ground of phono- and morpho-symbolism.⁴¹ What mattered most, for the development adumbrated to have actually taken place, was the language-community's sharply-pronounced bent toward maximum economy of grammatical resources, a tilt which led speakers to veer toward a single dyadic contrast, /a/ versus /non-a/, without however having, in fact, allowed them to reach such a beckoning goal. It could have been sheer coincidence, an initially slight numerical or structural margin of /i/ over /e/, /je/, etc., that set things rolling in this, rather than in any alternative, direction, or else the fact that morpho-phonemic alternation of /a/ and /i/, at least in the precinct of inflection, happens to be virtually nonexistent in Spanish, whereas /a/ and /e/ do occasionally so alternate, in stressed and unstressed syllables alike.⁴² Whatever the details, the /i/ superbly qualified for the expanding role of a /non-a/ phoneme, and since the wind, we recall, was blowing in the direction of a tightening of grammatical resources,⁴³ a long chain of generations of Spanish speakers hastened to avail themselves, by hook or by crook, of any such welcome opportunity. Our task has been to examine, under a lens, the hooks and the crooks.

FOOTNOTES

¹ On competing and potentially conflicting sound changes -- a state of affairs conducive to the crystallization of a residue -- see Wang (1969: 9-25). Malkiel advocated the concept of a 'weak sound change' (1962: 263-75) and later pointed out its relevancy in etymological analysis (1975a:101-20, esp. 112-3).

² (1942: 53-67). Further refinements and elaborations were introduced on later occasions, e.g. in reference to OPtg. erger (mod. erguer) 'to lift' vs. OSp. erzer (but mod. erguir); see 1969: 505-8. The label has subsequently been used by S.N. Dworkin.

³ The addition of -o to the 3d sg. of strong preterites (fiz-o 'he made', pud-o 'he could', pus-o 'he placed', tov-o 'he had', vin-o 'he came', etc.) became a hallmark of Old Spanish and has been retained since; it occurs very seldom in Portuguese (veio 'he came'). Scholars are agreed that it serves to produce or to reinforce the differentiation between the 1st and the 3d persons of the singular, against the background of similar polarization in hundreds of weak preterites. Portuguese produces the same effect through vowel alternation: fiz 'I made' vs. fêz 'he made'. A peculiar segmentation of tovo, namely t-ovo, enabled medieval speakers to generate and-ovo 'he walked', from andar, and est-ovo 'he stood, stayed', from estar; temporarily also mand-ovo 'he bade', from mandar, and similar offshoots from crecer 'to grow', creer 'to believe', seer 'to sit', and (refl.) trever 'to dare'. These processes have been adequately studied in standard historical grammars; cf. Hanssen (1913: §§250, 255); Menéndez Pidal (1941: §120: 3); and Williams (1962: §203: 9).

⁴ Of my earlier attempts to grapple with the rise and eventual recession of the diphthong ie /je/ in Spanish perhaps the following three were the most pertinent to the present study: 1979: 123-38; 1980: 48-63; 1982b.

⁵ Jespersen's book (1909), severely criticized in many quarters (B. Bloch, J.H. Greenberg, and others), has been colored by the fact that the doctoral dissertation (of which it represents an outgrowth) was originally confined in its scope to the growth of English. The comments on goal-directedness in Jakobson's paperback owe much of their weight and originality to the attention the author, here even more than in his other writings, paid to other disciplines, including natural sciences (1973: 55-6).

⁶ The author's pattern of thinking and style of formulation did not undergo any major change on this score in later years.

⁷ 1853:xx (repeated in later editions). For a point-by-point analysis of this Preface see my talk on the occasion of the Diez Centennial Celebration at UCLA (1976: 1-15).

⁸ Over the last ten years or so, the vicissitudes of -er/-ir doublets, the relations of -er and -ir verbs to their respective Latin prototypes, and the interplay between the stem vowel and the thematic vowel have all three been submitted to close scrutiny by scholars as far apart from each other's position as S.N. Dworkin (forthcoming), T. Montgomery (1976: 281-96), D.A. Nelson (1975: 143-86), R.J. Penny (1972: 343-59), and the late K. Togeby (1972: 256-64). A balance sheet of their separate, but inevitably convergent, efforts remains to be drawn.

⁹ In my presentation of the Latin opening scenes for all four of the developments here individually sketched out I have relied rather heavily on A. Ernout's masterly presentation of Latin inflection, in diachronic projection, without worrying about the possible obsolescence of some of its sections. On the anomalous verbs here hinted at see (1953: 175-86).

¹⁰ See O. Schultz-Gora's skillful presentation (1924: §128). The unstressed -er ending of certain verbs, such as ināisser 'to rage', nāisser 'to be born', vēnsēr 'to conquer', is an environmentally-conditioned allomorph of the far more common -re, as in perdre 'to lose' and vendre 'to sell'; the clinching factor was the following consonant cluster, either /sk/, as in īrāscī, nāscī; or /nk/, as in vincere. On this difficult point of diachronic phonology see further C. Appel's fine-meshed analysis (1918: §4ld), where the outcomes of /rk/: pārser 'to spare', tōrser 'to twist', /ng/: cēnher 'to gird', frānher 'to break', and /lv/: sōlver 'to solve', vōlver 'to turn' are also illustrated.

¹¹ Only a few highlights of the extensive literature on these processes -- basically, available as word biographies -- can be listed here. On OSp. deçir 'to go down' (later dislodged by bajar), Ptg. descer (its spelling and pronunciation influenced descender) the opinions of etymologists have been divided; with the passage of time R. Menéndez Pidal switched from banking on dēcidere 'to fall down' to sponsoring discēdere 'to move away' (1944-46: 617-8, 1229-30). Since there was widespread confusion already in Antiquity between certain offshoots of cadere 'to fall', caedere 'to fell', and scindere 'to cleave, split' (see Ernout & Meillet [1959-60: 81b], with clues to other loci), it is not surprising that -scendere as an allomorph of scandere 'to climb, mount' should eventually also have been dragged into this imbroglio. On OSp. troçir 'to pass', a synonym of passar traceable to trādūcere on the assumption that the latter's compositional design

at a certain point ceased to be transparent, there exists a vignette (Malkiel, 1956: 385-95); some day a joint study of deçir and troçir could be advantageously undertaken. Over the years I have further busied myself with the vicissitudes of cundir 'to spread' (1954-55: 247-64), from condire 'to season'; Sp. morir vs. Ptg. morrer 'to die' (1955: 84-128); and OSp. eñader 'to add' > mod. añadir (1975b: 512-20).

12 This large-scale transfer of Latin -ere verbs into the -er < -are class, confined to Middle and Modern French, and peculiar to the layer of Latinisms, must not be confused with the individually motivated transfer of a few -ere verbs into the -are class at the Vulgar Latin level, a long-drawn-out shift which affected the Romance reflexes of combūrere 'to burn', meiere 'to urinate', minuere 'to diminish', tremere 'to tremble', as well as those of several members of the family of sternere 'to stretch out, lie down' (through recoil from its near-homonym sternuere 'to sneeze?'), a many-pronged process long ago described by Meyer-Lübke (1909: §169). In the wake of A. Risop's monograph, now over ninety years old, Meyer-Lübke (1913: §§281-2) cited as "Buchwörter" OFr. afligir, discutir, distribuir, exercir, contrasting them with a later crop of -er variants; all of which would make of agir, frémir, gémir, languir, régir, vomir (plus, let me add on my own, quérir) a sort of residue of the medieval preference. On the state of affairs in Italian see Rohlfs (c. 1952: §§614-5) who, however, shows greater strength in exemplifying -ere > Tusc. -ire (apparire 'to appear', sparire 'to disappear', etc.) and the present-day dialectal wavering between -ere and -ire in the South of the peninsula than in analyzing learned (including camouflaged learned) formations. As I believe to have demonstrated elsewhere (1982c), no significance attaches to Henry R. Lang's rash conjecture (which briefly influenced Menéndez Pidal and Hanssen) of the existence of "heteroclitic verbs" in Old Spanish.

13 On this point Catalán offers more than enough documentation (1968: 427-30).

14 One can make similar observations on correr 'to run' and verter 'to pour' and their respective compounds, except that Spanish tolerates, side by side, recorrer 'to go over' and recurrir 'to resort, have recourse to'. One can observe the anatomy of the process in the case of older Sp. querer 'to want, love' beside adquerir 'to acquire' (reminiscent of Fr. acquérir), conquerir 'to conquer', and requerir 'to request, summon, urge': The first was shifted to adquirir (with some help from Cl. Lat. acquirere), the second yielded to periphrastic conquistar, the third remained intact,

15 While the Romanist, in his workaday operations, need not heed the distinction between supine/past participle, on the one hand, and, on the other, the verbal action nouns in -tus and -sus, the Indo-Europeanist specializing in Latin tends to see things in a different perspective. For references to research conducted by K. Brugmann, E. Bernert, E. Schwyzler, and É. Benveniste see E.S. Georges (1968:370; 1970:2).

16 (1953:222f.). The constraint upon the crystallization of an -ūtu past participle within the paradigm of an -ēre verb was the denominative character of that verb.

17 The classic treatise on the bonds ('reciprocal analogical actions') linking the perfectum to the past participle is the Uppsala dissertation by E. G. Wahlgren (1915, rev. 1920). It was reviewed favorably, but not in depth, by L. Foulet, A. Meillet, G. Millardet, L. Spitzer, and A. Wallensköld, among others. A reconsideration of certain facets of the problem seems to be overdue.

18 Classical Latin used tentus, ventus; since the respective infinitives were tenēre but venīre, it is plausible that the -ūtu form infiltrated first the paradigm of the former.

19 The existence of an obsolete -udo participle was well known to the older Hispanists and comparatists, and some of them knew how to pinpoint its starting point (diffusion from, e.g., atrevudo 'bold' < attribūtu, batudo 'beaten' < battūtu). What they failed to probe, let alone diagnose correctly, was the reason for its successful spread. Cf. the reasoning of, among others, A. Zauner (1908:§121).

20 The foundation for the study of vocalic gamuts was laid long ago, e.g. in the Coimbra lectures C. Michaëlis de Vasconcelos delivered shortly before World War I; part of them appeared posthumously. My own interest in the issue was aroused on the occasion of the 1970 dialect monograph (*passim*) and of the forthcoming article dating back to 1974 and slated to appear this year in a Copenhagen journal. The 1970 experiment should be judged in conjunction with various thorough reviews it, fortunately, triggered, including that by Karen H. Kvavik (1975:57-66).

21 Information on the anatomy of the replacement of -udo by -ido can be gleaned at best from scattered philological (exegetic) comments on rhymed medieval texts, such as the "Danza de la Muerte", the "Libro de buen amor", Santob's "Proverbios morales", the "Libro de José" (or "de Yúguí"), and the "Rimado de palacio". Unfortunately for today's linguist, not all those engaged, in the

late Middle Ages, in recasting or copying texts entrusted to their care were so dumb as to distort rhyme patterns, with the result that a text like the "Poema de Fernán González", in the only -- deplorably late -- form in which it happens to be available to us, to be sure uses throughout -ido past participles from -er verbs (e.g. avatydo 'beaten down', descreydo 'unbelieving, infidel', movydo 'moved', vencido 'conquered'), but leaves one wondering what the no longer available model text, which may have displayed an entirely different metrical garb, actually offered. Judeo-Spanish texts collected in the Balkan peninsula consistently offer -ido: abatido, conocido, escondido, etc., especially in the ranks of inchoatives; adormecido, amudecido, see C.M. Crews' glossary (1935:273-319), s.vv.

What one gathers from the perusal of, say, J.D.M. Ford's Notes and Etymological Vocabulary attached to his Readings (1911:73-312) is that the strongest rivals of -ado and -ido past participles in Old Spanish were not, as one might have assumed, their "weak" counterparts in -udo, but the "strong", i.e., rhizotonic, participles directly inherited from Latin; e.g. bendicho 'blessed', malquisto 'disliked', maltrecho 'ill-treated', and the like. By the time these fell into desuetude, only substitutes in -ido, to the exclusion of any in -udo, were available, so that scribes would tend to replace nado 'born' (inferrable from rhyme and meter) by nacido (Ford, 1911:175), although nad- continued to figure outside the precinct of the verb, e.g. as the stem of nada 'nothing' and nadi(e) 'nobody'; similarly, repentido 'repented' directly dislodged older repiso.

One vestige of -udo remained intact, because there was no coexistent verb to betray it as having once functioned as a past participle, namely menudo 'small, diminutive', lit. 'diminished' < minūtu (alongside the adv. a menudo 'often'); note Ptg. amiúde 'id.' < ad + minūti(m).

The more learned character of certain compounds, in -ir, flanking thoroughly vernacular simple verbs, in -er, may likewise have reinforced the position of -ido. Thus, OSp. escorrido (mod. es-, tras-currido) 'passed, elapsed' (Berceo, "Santo Domingo", 367a) may have stimulated speakers to have recourse to corrido, from correr (as against escurrir).

The entire multidimensional problem here sketched out remains to be explored in depth. Menéndez Pidal's two-line descriptive comment, in his historical grammar (1941:§121.2), is disappointingly meager; as if by compensation, one finds some meaty morsels in his "Cid" grammar (1908:§97), on the rivalry between -udo and -ido in the paradigms of meter 'to place' and vencer 'to conquer', and on a few cases of hypercorrection engaged in as a result of protracted wavering, with -udo trespassing erratically on the territory of -ir verbs; then again in his Orígenes (1950:§72.3), with some conspicuously old attestations of -udo forms from out-of-the-way notarial sources.

On the marked delay of Portuguese in carrying out the substitution see Williams (1962:§159,2) and, additionally, the grammatical sketches ushering in certain textual studies by his closest disciples Henry Hare Carter (1938:29) and Richard D. Abraham (1938:7, 35). Within the ranks of the -er class, the former identified (without, unfortunately, capitalizing on his discovery) five verbs offering -udo, while four preferred -ido; there was not a single instance of duplication, and the incidence was nine and ten, respectively. The latter's analysis involves an attempt at dating the chosen text (late 14th century), through comparison with J. Leite de Vasconcelos' earlier statements (1906: 120-1) on relevant discrepancies between "A demanda do Santo Graal" (ed. K. von Reinhardstoettner) and his own critically established text of "O livro de Esopo".

22

To a certain extent the Catalan pattern of generating past participles: cant-at, -ada (from cantar 'to sing'), tem-ut, -uda (from têmer 'to fear'), and sent-it, -ida (from sentir 'to feel') is reminiscent of the state of affairs in 13th-century Spanish. However, precisely in the ranks of the -er/-re verbs (which jointly constitute the "2d conjugation class"), the velar infix -- adopted from the simple past, as in Old Provençal -- blurs the initial impression of tidiness and symmetry: It so happens that begut (from beure 'to drink'), caigut (from caure 'to fall'), conegut (from inchoative con-èix-er 'to know'), corregut (from córrer 'to run'), cregut (from creure 'to believe'), degut (from deure 'to owe'), jagut (from jeure 'to lie down'), etc. significantly outnumber the "regular" verbs, such as cabut (from cabre 'to be contained'). In addition, Catalan has inherited its share (larger than that of modern Spanish) of radical-stressed participles, such as après (from aprendre 'to learn'), dit (from dir 'to say'), dut (from dur 'to carry, take, wear'), and escrit (from escriure 'to write'), and there is no dearth of pertinent niceties for the learner to commit to memory, as when coure 'to cook' is flanked by cuit, while coure 'to smart' (cf. Sp. coita, cuïta 'worry, sorrow') demands cogut. See Joan Gili (1967:72-9); also, for a diachronically slanted analysis, F. de B. Moll (1952: §303), who provides the intermediate stages feyt and treyt for fet < factu 'done, made' and tret < tractu 'pulled, dragged' and shows how speakers have tended to favor dut at the expense of duit, without quite rejecting the latter.

23

Thus, F. Lecoy (1938:55) insinuates that the rhymes of the "Libro de buen amor" testify to the substitution of -ido for -udo and, more noteworthy, to replacements carried out in the reverse direction, without, it is true, supplying concrete examples. A. Gassner's discussion of -udo (1897:§459) is vitiated throughout by the fact that he fails to discriminate between the genuine past-participial ending (as in ardudo, cernudo, defendudo,

etc., from arder, cerner, defender) and the homonymous suffix of -- sometimes comical -- exaggerations found in adjectives ordinarily derived from anatomical terms (OSp. barvudo, cabeçudo, cornudo, forçudo, orejudo, pescoçudo, sannudo, from barva, 'beard', cabeça 'head', cuerno 'horn', etc.) For details see below.

24 See (1963: § 912) and (1965: § 378).

25 The seminal study, apparently, was my own piece on OSp. bellido, OPtg. velido 'handsome, sweet, attractive', in which I recognized a trace of Lat. mellitus 'sweet', lit. 'honeylike', a derivative strengthened by the availability of a reflex of melligō 'honeylike substance', namely Sp. melindre (m.) 'honey fritter, ladyfinger', (pl.) 'finickiness, prudery' (1946:284-316); see also the addendum inspired by an epistolary comment made by H. Kahane (1947:429-30). In later studies I stumbled across (refl.) remilgar 'to be trim and finicky' < *re-mellicāre. My brief excursus on substantival -ido (1946:309-10) led to the inquiry, by J.R. Craddock and E.S. Georges, into the Hispanic 'sound suffix' -ido, an investigation conducted under my direction (1963:87-107). Similarly, my parallel excursus on adjectival -ido (1946:302-9) found an excellent exegete and continuator in Steven N. Dworkin; see the impressive string of relevant elaborations from his pen (1977:220-5; 1978:605-17; 1979:130-7; 1980:1905-205; 1982:in this issue of BLS, and forthcoming). As follows unequivocally from my editorial post-script (1982a) to Eric P. Hamp's counterproposal (1982) in regard to OSp. sencido, I regard Dworkin's 1979 solution as preferable on balance.

With respect to the three adjectival schemata a-ado, -ido, and -udo, I can trace my own incipient curiosity to certain juvenilia, including (1941a:278-95) and (1941b:34-42). This curiosity peaked at a much later date, however: (1973:177-89) and (1974:1-32), in response to my closer acquaintance with vocalic gamuts (1970).

26 In summarizing these well-known facts, V. Väänänen (1981:§332) reminds his readers that from īre 'to go' the impf. indic., at all levels of discourse, had from time immemorial been ībam. (OSp. yya, mod. iba are conspicuous on account of the retention, at the low price of a slight adjustment, of Lat. /b/, over against Ptg. ia.) Merovingian Lat. -ebat in narrative texts, in lieu of Class. -iēbat, presages the peculiar course of events in Old French, as Väänänen might have pointed out.

27 This conjecture -- a wild guess formulated for the first time approximately a century ago by R. Thurneysen (1883:30-2) -- has become ineradicable from our textbooks. One of the latest endorsements was made by Väänänen last year (loc. cit.). More surprising is the fact that a scholar of the finesse of Knud

Togebly should have repeated it in his searching review (1964a: 662-3) of R. Posner's dissertation.

28

An attempt to link the tendential loss of -b- in the impf. ind. to the impact on that tense by the newly-devised conditional was made by Togebly, on the understanding that the dissimilatory loss of the -b- could have started with cantāre habē(b)am (1964a:663 and 1964b:3-8); wittily, the author argues that the preservation of ancestral b as /v/ in Italian coincides with the different configuration of the conditional in that language, where it is based on cantāre habuī. Unfortunately for Togebly's thesis, the record of Old and even of modern dialectal Italian bespeaks the loss and eventual restoration of the -v-. Despite numerous disagreements on specifics and priorities, Togebly and Posner (1961b:17-55) both saw a causal connection between the number of Latin conjugation classes preserved in the individual daughter languages, and the varying degrees of retention (with appropriate adjustments) of the ancestral -b-. Their controversy, incidentally, did not stop at this point; for the last salvo see Posner (1965 :3-10).

This is, obviously, not the proper place for a critical review of recent or fairly recent studies on the substitution of a new, modally-colored future tense for the heterogeneous forms used in Classical Latin (laud-ābō vs. ag-am, -ēs, etc.); some of the more vocal participants in the closing rounds of the debate have been E. Benveniste, J.L. Butler, and P. Valesio). For a good midway report see Patricia Clancy (1975). One important side-issue has been the rise of periphrastic futures, modeled like vādō (ad) + INFINITIVE; see the Michigan dissertation (1978) by J.J. Champion and the very thorough appraisal of it by Suzanne Fleischman (1981: *144-*151). Further light may be thrown on this bundle of thorny issues by Fleischman's forthcoming book on a closely related subject. In any event, if the ideal of a connection here merely tossed off as a seductive possibility is someday validated, the original locus for the collapse of the two Latin -b- tenses will surely be placed inside the paradigm of the future, in terms of both language-specific conditions (lack of an across-the-board inflectional uniformity) and of language universals (instances of similar overlap of temporal and modal messages in anticipation of future events found in numerous languages, starting with English).

In addition to bracketing the future and the imperfect tenses scholars may some day decide to cross the line separating the inflectional sector of morphosyntax from suffixal derivation, and to declare the vicissitudes of the suffix -ābilis and its close congeners (-ēbilis, -ībilis, etc.) discernibly related to those of the aforementioned tenses; significantly, this cluster of suffixes serves to generate adjectives from verbs. In neat contrast to other derivational suffixes, which tended to jell in

fairly neat patterns of vocalic gamuts, no such proliferation occurred in the ranks of -bilis adjectives. Could it have been mere coincidence that -ybilis fared well where the -Ibam imperfect in the end, prevailed, as is true of It. -evole (known for its productivity) alongside -evo/-eva? In Old French the heavy predominance of the descendants of the -āre class may have conditioned the prevalence of -able over -ible, cf. the similarly caused preëminence of -ance over -ence, affecting another set of derivational suffixes closely linked to the verb. (The hegemony of -able and -ance has spilled over into English.) It remains problematic whether the long resistance to dislodgement of the -ābam imperfect in certain Old French dialects (witness the traces of -eve, -oue) lends itself to smooth connection with the exceptional vitality of -able on Gaulish soil. In any event, joint consideration of (fut.) -ābō, (impf.) -ābam, and (deriv.) -ābilis -- not yet experimented with -- involves an unusually promising approach.

29 Some relevant data have been collected by G. Rohlfs (1949: §§550-4 and Addenda, p. 586); the conflation of -e(v)a and -i(v)a in Sicily, Calabria, and Southern Apulia occurred in response to a sound change and thus reflects no morphological trend. For the fullest information on the zigzagging line of the forms culled from older literature see B. Migliorini (1960:130, 140, 159, 226, 289, 291, 375-6, 470, 542, 630-1, 707); here one learns that the Old Sicilian school of lyrical poetry favored such forms as avia 'I had', putia 'I could'; that the Old Tuscan poets followed suit, etc.

30 See Schultz-Gora (1924:§§129, 131). The process may -- at least, in part -- have been phonological in nature; thus, Appel (1918:§32) regards the development -ea > -ia as peculiar to /e/ in hiatus, citing by way of illustrations via 'way', envia 'he sends', sia 'may be', and dia 'day' -- to the exclusion of any imperfect-tense forms, though. The missing link in our corpus of data is the chronology of the disappearance of /b/ (or subsequent /v/) from -ēbam.

31 See E.B. Williams (1962:§164), with many references to earlier hypotheses formulated by G. Gröber, A. Gassner, C.H. Grandgent, and others, not exclusively in reference to Portuguese. The one arresting interpretation adduced is W.M. Lindsay's parenthetically stated suspicion (1894:493) to the effect that the coexistence, in Latin, of future-tense forms with and without -b- in the third and the fourth conjugations could have triggered the coinage in Vulgar Latin of imperfects without b. Lindsay's fine scholarship greatly impressed Meyer-Lübke, with the result that the latter, gratifyingly enough, refused to succumb to Thurneysen's facile dissimilatory formula (1909:§171).

32 In Old French the situation was different, insofar as -ābam survived as -oue in most of the territory and as -eye in the East and Northeast, except that in the 1st and 2d pl. -i-iens and -i-iez, transplanted from the -oie paradigm, had already succeeded in ousting their counterparts originally found -- on circumstantial evidence -- in the -oue column. Meyer-Lübke draws a cogent picture of the further development (1913:§327). For clues to regional differentiation in Old French see Schwan & Behrens (1909:§341). F. Brunot's historical grammar, as revised by C. Bruneau, is at its strongest in bracketing details of Middle French with those of Early Modern French usage (1949:342-3).

33 (1893-4:655-94). For the immediate reactions to it see the first of the two papers cited in the following fn.

34 Contrast the fully-documented first of my two discussions (1959:435-81) with the skeletal presentation of the most salient features of the problem in the second (1964:402-5).

35 As the Latinist clearly sees the situation, the contractions started where the -v- /w/ was flanked by identical vowel phonemes, e.g. /i:/; cf. the case of audīvī. After the loss of the /v/ the first of the two -- by then neighboring -- /i:/s was shortened, thus: -īī. From -ī(v)ī the process expanded gradually to -ē(v)ī and -ā(v)ī; see Ernout (1953:§§299-300).

36 I would lean toward bracketing the temporary vogue of the rising diphthong in -ieste and the other verbal flexions with its erstwhile prevalence -- long since pared -- in numerals (siete 'seven' and diez 'ten' have survived, while siesto 'sixth' and diezmo 'tenth' have been abandoned except in their secondary function of nouns), in proper names (Dīdācu > Diago was transmuted into Diego), and elsewhere.

37 As I have tried to show, beginning with the mid 'seventies, in several papers bearing on diphthongization and secondary monophthongization in Old Spanish, the eventual prevalence of -iste over -ieste, etc., in the verbal paradigm may have concomitantly led to such processes as OSp. ariesta 'fishbone' > mod. arista (against the background of ancestral aresta > Fr. arête), and the like. This point was not yet clearly understood by me at the prelude to the debate (1968:23-64), nor was it firmly grasped by my critics.

38 Students of Romance verb inflection have observed that groups of speakers have, independently, resorted to all sorts of 'tricks' to prevent personal endings, especially within the paradigm of a single tense, from completely coinciding, as when Spanish distinguishes between eres (a form borrowed from the

Latin fut. eris) 'thou art' and es < est 'he, she, it is' (Portuguese achieves the same degree of differentiation, at the steep price of another irregularity, by adopting ês vs. ê); Italian, in its imperfect tense, contrasts 1st sg. -avo, etc. with 3d sg. -ava; Old French pits, in its imperfect, 1st sg. -oie against 3d sg. -oit (rather than expected *oiet); Old Spanish opposes fiz(e) 'I did' to fizo 'he did', with unetymological -o, while Portuguese uses another device to produce the same effect: fiz vs. fêz; etc. On the other hand, any excessive distance between members of the same paradigmatic set is studiously avoided, judging from the eagerness of many Old Spanish writers and copyists to favor, in the preterite of the -ar class, 2d sg. -este over expected -aste in deference to the entrenchment of 1st sg. -ê. The frequent appeal to -iô could thus be adduced as one force behind the retention of -ieron, quite apart from the evidence of an even stronger bond to -iô detectable in the var. -ioron.

39 In anticipation of detailed monographic probings let me cursorily identify some of the problems at issue: the eventual clear-cut prevalence, in Portuguese adjectival abstracts, of -ice over expected -ece < -ÿtie, despite the protracted coexistence of both forms (OGal.-Ptg. velh-ece ~ -ice 'old age'); the transmutation of the compound derivational suffix -ârîciu into OPtg. -ariço, OSp. -arizo, over against its smoother development into OFr. -erez, It. -ereccio; the ultimate acceptance, even at the conversational level, of the superlative-degree suffix -ísimo, initially adopted through learned channels (cf. coll. buênf-simo 'very kind', feísimo 'extremely ugly'), as against the nearly-unanimous rejection -- except in pompous and mock-pompous discourse -- of its running-mate -érrimo; the switch to conmigo 'with me', contigo 'with thee', etc., a choice riding roughshod over foreseeable and, at the outset, actually recorded meço < mêcu(m), teço < têcu(m), etc.

40 The role of crēscere has been rightly emphasized by Andrew S. Allen in various recent publications, including his 1980 Berkeley dissertation and a cluster of short notes either closely preceding it (1977:203-11) or following upon it (1981:79-88).

41 The variety of phonosymbolism I have in mind here was consecrated by two classics from the pen of O. Jespersen. The first experiments with an independent category of expressivity labeled 'morphosymbolism' were conducted just a few years ago.

42 E.g. habl-ê 'I spoke' vs. habl-aste 'thou spokest' (which won out over late medieval -este); or habla '(s)he speaks' vs. hable 'he may speak'; etc.

43 Witness the obsolescence and tendential abandonment of various tenses, the simplification of adverbial suffixes, and the like.

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