On the notion of linguistic influence in syntax.
Evidence from medieval Italo-Romance texts

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Abstract

This paper tackles the topic of Latin influence on Italo-Romance syntax by addressing the question how to combine the analysis of structural data with socio-historical reflections. It views the genre and discourse tradition of a given medieval text as governing the extent to which Latin is used as a model in this text. The paper proposes a methodology which incorporates consideration of the historical, cultural, and sociolinguistic context of language change, focusing on evidence from the development of present participles in Italo-Romance. The main conclusion is that, rather than talking about the general influence of Latin syntax on Italian, we should be examining the influence of particular Latin models on the syntax of different texts written in Italo-Romance varieties in a given historical period.

Keywords: Medieval Italo-romance syntax; Latin syntax; Language contact; Syntactic influence; Latin influence

1. Main aims and structure of the paper

This paper discusses some methodological issues concerning the notion of linguistic influence in syntax with a focus on the interactions between Latin and Italo-Romance varieties in the Middle Ages. In particular, we will be concerned with the question of how to combine the analysis of structural data with socio-historical reflections.

The text is organized in two parts. The first part (section 2) is devoted to the discussion of general and methodological issues regarding the analysis of the linguistic influence of Latin on the written Romance varieties in the Middle Ages. The characteristics of the Latin-Romance contact in that period are interpreted within the framework of historical sociolinguistics. In particular, we maintain that linguistic influence has to be understood as a complex and multifaceted factor, the impact of which varies not only in time but also between coeval texts. Thus, it can only be interpreted within the historical and cultural context of a given period. In the second part of the paper (section 3), we present a case-study on one of the verbal functions of the present participle in Italo-Romance texts written in the Middle Ages, namely the 'perception verb + present participle' structure. This construction also existed in Latin, and is generally known as the *Accusativus cum Participio* (henceforth AcP). The analysis is based on two corpora made up of a range of texts belonging to different literary genres: one is composed of Latin texts, and the other of medieval texts written in Italo-Romance varieties.

This case-study shows the importance of considering the methodological issues discussed in the first part of the paper when an investigation of the influence of Latin syntax on the Romance languages is undertaken. The Italo-Romance corpus includes translations from Latin as well as original documents. The Latin corpus is mainly

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composed of texts that are considered to have been models for Italo-Romance writers of the Middle Ages. It includes classical authors, as well as Late Antique and Medieval writers.

The analysis of the distribution of the occurrences of these participial structures in different types of Latin and Italo-Romance texts is presented to pinpoint the scope of the influence of Latin models on the Italo-Romance texts under investigation. Finally, the interpretation of these linguistic results within the framework of the socio-historical background in which these texts have been written enables us to highlight the main sociolinguistic factors that played a role in these interactions between cultural phenomena and linguistic facts.

2. Language contact and the syntax of medieval Romance languages

2.1. Latin and the syntax of the Romance languages: methodological premises and general remarks

The analysis of the influence of Latin on the syntax of the Romance languages entails the investigation of complex and multifaceted questions, such as the relationship between external and internal factors in language variation and change. We can take as our starting point the following statement by Blatt (1957)::

> Even if classical influence through the Roman Catholic Church and through Roman Law is by no means the only factor in the development of what Bally has well termed 'la mentalité européenne', Latin sentence structure will appear as a unifying element of considerable strength acting against the centrifugal forces of the national idioms. (Blatt 1957, 35)

In this sense, the role played by Latin syntactic models in the development of the syntax of the Romance languages (above all in their written varieties) has been fundamental and cannot be neglected: Sornicola (1995, 42) underlines that "both on the stylistic and on the syntactic level, Latin represented a force operating in favor of a process of linguistic convergence. It is as if the Modern European languages, the Romance as well as the Germanic languages, had all been subjected to a Latin 'curvature'" (my translation, PG).[1] Any descriptive and/or comparative study of the syntax of a Romance language should always take this aspect into consideration.

In this paper, we shall deal with this question and, more generally, with the notion of linguistic influence. We shall try to define in which sense and to what extent we can speak of Latin influence in the development of the syntax of the Romance languages. One of the issues that we have to address concerns therefore the very notion of 'linguistic influence' and of 'grammatical borrowing'.

2.2. Latin and Romance in contact: on linguistic influence and grammatical borrowing

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[1] The original Italian quote reads as follows: "Non si può non vedere come sia a livello di stile che a livello di sintassi vera e propria il latino abbia costituito una forza operante nella direzione di un processo di convergenza linguistica. È come se le lingue europee moderne, le romanze, ma del pari le germaniche, fossero state sottoposte ad una sorta di 'curvatura' latina" (Sornicola 1995, 42).

Grammatical changes driven by or related to language contact phenomena have been the subject of several studies in recent decades. However, for much of the twentieth century, this field has been neglected by linguistic research, because it was assumed that language contact could hardly (if at all) affect the grammatical level (see the overview provided in Thomason and Kaufman 1988, 13–20). From the 1980s onwards, a number of studies have shown that "essentially any part of language structure can be transferred from one language to another" (Heine and Kuteva 2005, 1).[2] Nonetheless, as we will see below, the notions of 'syntactic calque' and of 'grammatical borrowing' are still somewhat problematic.[3]

Until recently, these reflections on the effects of language contact on the syntactic level do not seem to have substantially influenced either the research on the influence of Latin on the syntax of the Romance languages, or, more generally, the studies on the transition from Latin to the Romance languages.[4] Indeed, the seminal paper by Blatt (1957) had already shown many of the potentialities, and the difficulties, of an analysis of some Romance syntactic structures in the light of the contact situation between Latin and the Romance languages. The Latin-Romance linguistic contact is a peculiar one, in that the model language (Latin), that has for centuries been the language of the higher culture in Romance-speaking areas, is also the mother language of the replica languages (the Romance languages).[5]

[2] See for instance Thomason and Kaufman (1988) and Campbell (1993), who claimed that intrinsic universal constraints on language contact could not be found as such. This view, however, is not universally accepted (for an account of the debate on the issue, see Muysken 2010).

[3] See the outline provided in Timofeeva (2010, 11–15) and the discussions in Cuzzolin and Molinelli (2013, 100–104), Cuzzolin (2014) and Mastrantonio (2017, 21–25 and 249–251). Heine and Kuteva (2005) prefer the expressions "transfer of grammatical meaning" or "grammatical replication".

[4] See Raible (1996, 125–126), who also provides a brief outline of the studies conducted on the subject, and Mastrantonio (2017, 27–29). Some remarkable exceptions in this context can be considered, for instance, the already mentioned paper by Blatt (1957) and the works by Segre (1963) and Dardano (1963). More recently, the question of the influence of Latin on the syntax of the Romance languages has been addressed in a number of studies: see for instance Sornicola (1995), Pountain (1998 and 2011, 643–658), García Turza (2013), Sala (2013), Mastrantonio (2017), and some of the contributions included in Kabatek (2008), in Castillo Luch and López Izquierdo (2010), and in the fourth number of the Spanish revue *Aemilianense*. The issue has also been discussed in papers devoted to the analysis of specific syntactic constructions (see for instance Meilán García 1991; Sanchis Calvo 2004; Pons 2008; De Roberto 2012, 2013; and Blázquez 2011), or to the study of the translations of Latin texts in different Romance varieties (see for instance the contributions included in Leonardi and Cerullo 2017, and especially Cerullo 2017 and De Roberto 2017, and del Rey Quesada 2016a, 2016b, 2017).

[5] See also Pountain (1998, 160–162). In this sense, the Latin-Romance contact is also different from the Medieval English-Latin contact qualified by Timofeeva (2010, 9) as "distant but institutional" (this expression refers to a kind of contact that "takes place when the acquisition of a foreign language is not part of community activities, unless in the domain of religion but is promoted through an institution such as school" [Loveday 1996, 19-20]). Some of the difficulties in determining whether a syntactic structure is a borrowing or an independent development in the case of two genealogically-related languages such as Greek and Latin are discussed in Cuzzolin and Molinelli (2013, 100–109) and in Cuzzolin (2013). The question is of course even more complex in the Latin-Romance contact. The case of Medieval Latin is also discussed in Kahane and Kahane (1979), in the context of a general overview of different language contact situations of the past interpreted in the light of a diglossic hypothesis. Kahane and Kahane's interpretation is stimulating, and we do acknowledge the fundamental role played by their reflections on prestige languages in the development of modern historical sociolinguistics (see also Kahane and Kahane 1986). However, we do not subscribe to a purely diglossic interpretation of the Latin-Romance contact in the Middle Ages. As for the terminology, the expressions model language and replica language were introduced by Weinreich (1953). Different (and sometimes more nuanced) terminologies have been developed in recent decades, but for the purposes of this paper Weinreich's classic distinction can be maintained.

This double path is at the basis of the traditional opposition between popular and learned developments in the Romance languages. We maintain that this opposition can have a heuristic value under certain conditions (for instance in many cases in the study of lexical and phonetic developments), but it has less explicative power when applied to the domain of syntax, where language and style, as well as the different sociolinguistic levels and registers, interact in a nuanced and complex fashion (see for instance Romaine 1981, 1982, 31–36, 1984; Sornicola 1989; Godard 1992; and Gadet 1992). In lexical diachronic analysis, the attribution of a word to the popular register or to the learned register can generally be guided by the different phonetic developments of a given sound.[6] In the field of syntax, however, the difference between an internal independent development (unrelated to any influence of Latin models) and a linguistic development supported by the influence of Latin models, is generally less sharp, and hard to clearly identify.[7] Besides, as is well known, syntax is a domain in which it is difficult "to distinguish clearly between syntactic borrowing and parallel independent development" (Sala 2013, 235).

However, even if we agree that, above all in language-contact situations in which the languages are typologically similar, "to date, we do not have at our disposal reliable methodologies or adequate interpretative models to distinguish between syntactic borrowings and internal developments of a language" (Cuzzolin and Molinelli 2013, 103; my translation, PG.),[8] we acknowledge that Pountain (1998, 161–169) has identified a series of criteria that can help us in determining the learned or inherited nature of a Romance syntactic structure.[9] Yet, in most cases, Romance syntactic structures only meet some of these criteria, and therefore it is hard to interpret them if we postulate a binary distinction between learned and inherited syntactic constructions. But, if we consider Latin influence as an inherent aspect of the development of the written varieties of the Romance languages in the Middle Ages, and if we accept a scalar interpretation of linguistic influence in syntax, Pountain's (1998) criteria can be included amongst the factors to be considered in determining the degree of the impact of Latin models on the development of most Romance syntactic constructions. After all, Pountain himself highlights that "because all our direct knowledge of the early Romance languages is based on textual evidence, learnèd syntax is in all probability

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[6] However, recent studies have shown that also in the field of lexical diachronic analysis the situation is more complex than it has generally been considered. For instance, Guadagnini (2016, 766–779) discusses the notions of "Rate of Connotation" and "Latent Latinism", which allows a more nuanced and articulated interpretation of the opposition between learned and popular developments (on the notion of Latent Latinism see also Burgassi and Guadagnini 2014).

[7] In this respect, Cuzzolin and Molinelli (2013, 109) argue that the less coherent the syntactic type of the target language, the more evident the borrowing from another language will be. Paradoxically, however, they also point to the fact that Greek syntax was perfectly integrated into that of Latin, to the extent that it usually escapes notice. Cuzzolin and Molinelli (2013) are focusing on the Greek-Latin contact, but the same can be said, and even more cogently, about the Latin-Romance contact. How can we draw a line between an internal independent development, a construction whose existence in the Romance languages was partially due to Latin influence, and one which was a purely borrowed syntactic construction?

[8] The original Italian quote is the following: "A tutt'oggi non disponiamo di una metodologia affidabile e tanto meno di modelli adeguati per distinguere un prestito sintattico da una costruzione interna propria di una lingua" (Cuzzolin and Molinelli 2013, 103).

[9] According to Pountain (1998, 161–169), learned influence should be evaluated on the basis of three main criteria: external, structural and stylistic. Among the structural criteria, the main parameters to analyze are structural congruency, structural need or advantage, supplantation, saliency.

never far away. We cannot confidently postulate that any stage of Romance history is free of learnèd influence" (Pountain 1998, 164).

We maintain therefore that Pountain's (1998) criteria, as well as other factors that have been pinpointed as possible markers of a learned syntactic structure in recent years, can help us determine the scope and the degree of the influence of Latin on a given Romance syntactic structure.[18] However, only an in-depth analysis of the different contexts of occurrence in texts pertaining to different discourse traditions and to different sociolinguistic levels can allow a more general reflection on the status of a given syntactic structure within the variational continuum of a given language. For instance, in order to evaluate the degree of Latin influence on the development of a certain Romance syntactic structure, we can rely on the analysis of some external factors such as the contexts of occurrence of the construction (a syntactic structure rarely attested before the Renaissance is generally a good candidate to be considered as a learned development), or we can rely on our knowledge of the further developments of the syntax of the Romance language under investigation. If a given syntactic construction disappears after the Renaissance or is mainly attested just in sophisticated writers, then it is likely that this construction is a learned development (of course, this is a simplification of a possible path of diffusion of a given syntactic structure or pattern. The development and the diffusion of syntactic patterns generally follows more articulate and complex paths. See for instance the Cuzzolin's (2016) discussion of the development of the so-called para-hypotaxis).

But then, even when we ascertain that the history of a construction falls within one of the above-mentioned patterns, and we postulate that its diffusion in the Romance languages was promoted by Latin influence, what do we know about the values and the functions of that construction within the context of the language under investigation? What do we know about its position within the variational continuum of that language?

Finally, the notion of Latin influence is not free of problematic aspects, and we wonder if the presence of one (or more) of the above-mentioned factors is sufficient to postulate that a given construction occurs in Romance texts only as a result of Latin influence. Even if we may not completely subscribe to the famous statement by Jakobson ([1938] 1962), according to which a language only accepts grammatical elements from another language when they are in accordance with its own independent development, it is indisputable that the presence of a tendency in the replica language towards a development compatible with some syntactic constructions used in the model language slightly enhances the possibility for these syntactic constructions to be accepted in the replica language (see Muysken [2013, 721], and respectively, on the Greek-Latin and the Latin-Romance contact, Calboli [2009] and Pountain [1998, 165]). [10,] For instance, the fact that a given construction rarely occurs in the early documents

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[10] In the actual French quotation Jakobson uses the expression *la langue.* This has often been translated into English as "a language", which we have also used (the original quotation is "[l]a langue n'accepte des éléments de structure étrangers que quand ils correspondent à ses tendances de développement"). However, this statement occurs in the context of a structuralist analysis, in which the opposition between Saussurean's *langue* and *parole* is overtly called into question. This context suggests that Jakobson on this occasion was using the word *langue* in the Saussurean's sense, and that therefore Jakobson was interested in the structural effects of the borrowing of a structural element (*element de structure*). The quotation goes on as follows: "[p]ar conséquent l'importation d'éléments de vocabulaire ne peut pas être une force motrice du développement phonologique, mais tout au plus l'une des sources utilisées pour les besoins de ce développement." ('as a result, the introduction of vocabulary items cannot be a motivating force for phonological development but serves at most as one of the sources used for the needs of this development'

and literary texts of a Romance language and then occurs more often in the Renaissance is in fact just a clue. The syntactic construction under investigation may well have been just a marginal, but independent, development of that Romance language. Such a development could have been taken into consideration by Humanists precisely because it was rarely used, and perhaps also because it was especially similar to the Latin syntactic constructions from which it originated. This would be a fairly common process, in which a marginal variant of the repertoire of a given language becomes more central for reasons of prestige. In some cases, the metalinguistic observations of educated people of the time can help us to develop hypotheses on the impact of Latin influence on the occurrence of a given syntactic structure in a text. However, as a general matter, we believe that the question of determining whether the development of a certain Romance syntactic construction was driven by the influence of Latin, or whether it was an internal, independent development of that Romance language originating from a Latin construction, is misconceived. If we consider, as we should, that in the Middle Ages Latin models have acted as a roof under which the syntax of all the written varieties of the Romance languages developed, then it becomes clear that in most cases we can describe a Romance syntactic construction in terms of its relationship with a corresponding Latin construction — a relationship that can be one of acceptance (with a stronger or weaker influence of the Latin models) or of denial (see Sornicola (1995), Drinka (2017) and the discussion provided in section 2.3). Within this framework, the influence of Latin models on the syntax of the (written) Romance varieties becomes a major and unavoidable factor in the description of the syntax of the Romance languages.

Therefore, we maintain that the question of the influence of Latin on the syntax of the Romance languages has to be considered from a different point of view than the traditional one. We should not ask ourselves if a given construction is a learned development or not. Rather, we should study the role played by the investigated construction within the linguistic system, or better, since we are dealing only with written texts, within the investigated *scripta*. In order to do so, we should aim at providing the best possible representation of all the available sociolinguistic variables. In this context, we maintain that a particularly important role is played not only (as is obvious) by diatopic and diachronic factors, but also by the 'cultural perspective' that lies behind the texts that we are investigating, and, in less abstract terms, by the discourse traditions to which the investigated texts are related.

The latter statement touches upon a crucial issue. The contact between Latin and any medieval Romance written variety cannot be conceived of as a monolithic and uniform system. Rather, it is the outcome of a complex, differentiated and multifaceted historical situation. Up until a certain age, and in certain cultural contexts, the contact between Latin and the Romance varieties was probably perceived more as the contact between two varieties at the extreme poles of a linguistic continuum than as the contact between two distinct languages. Furthermore, in certain social contexts, such as, for

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(Jakobson ([1938] 1962, 241) As is clear from the quotation above, Jakobson's point of view is purely structural here. Lexical borrowing cannot be the driving force of a linguistic development; at best, it can be one of the sources used for the needs of this independent development. Our point is in a way similar to the one raised by Jakobson, in that we maintain that the quantitative description of the presence of a construction can be considered as an epiphenomenon of a more general and wide linguistic development, but tells us nothing about either the values carried by that construction in the investigated language, or its sociolinguistic connotation.

instance, the notarial milieu, the two repertoires were not compartmentalized, and there was continuity in the use of Latin and Romance varieties in everyday professional life.[11] Finally, the Latin models were different for writers of religious texts, chronicles, technical texts and, of course, for epic or lyric poets.

What we have defined until now as the influence of Latin on the syntax of Romance texts would therefore be better described as the influence of certain Latin models on the syntax of certain Romance texts in the framework of a discourse tradition. In this context, a distinction that has been proposed for the Greek influence on Latin syntax turns out to be important in the analysis of the Latin-Romance contact, too. Cuzzolin and Molinelli (2013, 105–107) argue that the particular position of the Greek language in the Roman world (both a prestige literary language, and an actually spoken language in certain areas of the Latin-speaking communities) calls for a twofold interpretation of the influence of Greek on Latin syntax: on the one hand, the literary indirect learned influence (e.g. the influence of Thucydides on the Latin of Sallust), and on the other hand the direct influence of a living language in contact (e.g. the Graecisms in Petronius). The former phenomenon can be interpreted as the imitation of a prestige language, the latter as the outcome of a daily interaction between two different linguistic codes in a densely urbanized bilingual space.

Clearly, these two channels have a different impact on the replica language (in this case Latin), and in the former case it is perhaps more appropriate to use the definition of stylistic influence rather than syntactic influence. One of the conclusions drawn by the study of Cuzzolin and Molinelli (2013), relevant for the purposes of our analysis, is that under the first type of Graecism can be gathered all the examples in which a literary model influences a literary work, while all the cases in which a Graecism is the outcome of synchronic linguistic contact, in particular in highly bilingual contexts, can be traced back to the second type of Graecism. The two extreme poles are divided by a gradient of different intermediate possibilities not marked by clear-cut discontinuities (Cuzzolin and Molinelli 2013, 107).

The Latin-Romance contact that we are discussing is slightly different from the Greek-Latin contact described above. The genealogical relationship between Latin and the Romance languages inevitably changes the general background of the contact situation. However, some similarities can be observed. As in the case of the Greek-Latin linguistic contact, also in the Latin-Romance contact a learned influence of the Latin models on the *literati* (and thus on the Romance writers) is to be postulated. On the opposite side, we have the linear evolution of the vernacular languages independently from the Latin models. In between these two poles, different degrees of influence are to be found. We maintain that, as far as the written varieties of the Romance languages are concerned, Latin influence is pervasive, and almost all syntactic patterns inevitably developed vis-à-vis Latin models. This is why we prefer to talk of contact-influenced

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[11] These last statements are related to a fundamental issue that we have not overtly discussed, but which underpins our argument, i.e. the question of the boundaries between Latin and Romance varieties. We cannot clearly establish the boundaries between Latin and Romance varieties in contexts such as, for instance, the everyday linguistic practice of notaries. In this social milieu, in which there was a daily and working familiarity with (a certain kind of) Latin, the question of what was perceived as belonging to Latin, and what was perceived as belonging to the spoken Romance varieties, is a matter beyond our reach. Therefore, it would perhaps be more appropriate to talk of linguistic varieties more oriented towards the pole of Latin or towards the pole of the Romance varieties, instead of using a simplistic binary opposition between Latin and the Romance languages (see also Greco 2018 and the article of del Rey Quesada in this volume).

developments (with different degrees of Latin influence) rather than of syntactic calques or borrowings. In a way, many syntactic constructions can be described under this label, with some structures more oriented towards the pole of learned influence and others more oriented towards the pole of independent parallel developments.[12]

Within this framework, when we speak of Latin influence on the syntax of the Romance languages, we are normally referring to a contact situation very close to the 'first type' identified by Cuzzolin and Molinelli (2013), with some steps towards the pole of the 'second type', above all when analyzing the languages of texts produced in certain social contexts. It is therefore often more a stylistic variation than a properly syntactic one. Yet, we maintain that in the domain of syntax a strong relationship between language and style holds true, and that even apparently inert constructions participated in the overall variational architecture of the language and played a role in the development of the syntax of the (written) varieties of the Romance languages.

2.3. Latin and the development of the syntax of the (written varieties of the) Romance languages in the Middle Ages: theoretical assumptions

The *passage à l'écrit* of the Romance languages and the subsequent development of literary texts in the new vernaculars took place in a context in which the influence of the Latin tradition inevitably played a fundamental role.[13] European literatures unavoidably developed their own canons and traditions vis-à-vis Latin models, whether they (partially) rejected or fully accepted them. The same can be said about the development of the syntax of the Romance languages (or at least of their written varieties). Every Romance writer had to be familiar with Latin authors: the development of the syntax of the Romance languages was therefore constantly exposed to Latin influence, and can be roughly seen as a pendulum constantly oscillating between the two poles of the internal development of the languages and the influence of Latin models affecting Romance writers. In other words, we maintain that the development of the syntax of medieval written Romance varieties is the result of a constant tension between 'autonomous' developments, and the influence of Latin models.

In this context, it is probably worth recalling what has been argued by Sornicola (1995), who suggests that the influence of Latin models in the development of the (written) syntax of the Romance languages could be the basis of the different developments that are to be found in the syntax of these languages. For instance, it has often been pointed out that there are many differences in the syntax of medieval Italian and French texts. Segre's (1963, 271–300) analysis of the translations of Vegetius by Bono Giamboni and Jean de Meun has clearly highlighted that the syntax of the Italian version is more closely connected to the Latin original. However, Sornicola (1995, 56) maintains that the differences between the freer Italian syntax and the more linear order of French syntax might be explained through the long-lasting influence exerted by Latin syntax on Italian on the one side, and through the influence of cultural and rhetorical

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[12] Some syntactic patterns may also, at least partially, be interpreted in terms of a marked opposition to the Latin models. See for instance the interpretation suggested by Sornicola (1995) for the development of the French word order (see section 2,3,).

[13] See Sornicola (1995). For an up-to-date state of the art of the research on the transition from Latin to the Romance languages see the contributions in Maiden, Smith and Ledgeway (2011 and 2013), and especially Sornicola (2011), Pountain (2011), Varvaro (2013), Banniard (2013) and Kabatek (2013). See also the contributions included in Selig, Frank and Hartmann (1993), from which we borrowed the expression *le passage à l'écrit*.

attitudes that have played an important role in the development of French, on the other. These historically grounded traditions are key elements in the interaction between social and cultural phenomena and linguistic phenomena. In the end,

> what has for centuries been proposed by linguists as a 'natural' feature of the syntax of French, is only partially 'natural'. The precociously anti-latinate rhetorical tradition allowed French to adopt natural tendencies of speech without difficulty, and, in fact, to legitimize them, while Italian has, until a few decades ago, continued to reject them. (Sornicola 1995, 56; my translation, PG)[14]

If we go a step further, then, the cultural and rhetorical tradition to which a writer refers, can be considered to be key to understanding the syntax used by that writer. In this sense, all writers (and speakers) inscribe themselves in a tradition (made up of all the relevant linguistic and rhetorical models) every time that they produce a text. This perspective calls upon, of course, the Coserian view of linguistic change and the importance of traditions in linguistic variation and change (see for instance the classic Coseriu 1983).

Within this framework, factors such as the discourse tradition of the texts under consideration and the relationship of each text with its Latin models play a fundamental role.[15] In other words, as highlighted in Section 2.2., we maintain that, as far as the notion of 'linguistic influence' is concerned, what we can investigate is not the influence of Latin syntax on, say, Italian or Spanish syntax, but rather the influence of certain Latin models on the syntax of different texts written in a certain Romance variety in a given historical period.

As far as syntax is concerned, each individual text is affected by the influence of (different) Latin models in different ways. However, the discourse tradition factor has proved to be key to account for the similarities in the use of certain syntactic patterns that have been found in different medieval texts (see for instance Kabatek 2005 and Kabatek, Obrist and Vincis 2010). The impact of Latin models can obviously vary in texts of the same genre (and belonging to the same discourse tradition) written in different periods or in different areas. The interactions between diachronic, diastratic, diaphasic and diatopic variation must therefore be taken into account as well.

All the syntactic structures that occur in a given written text have to be interpreted within this framework: they all represent possibilities of the linguistic system of that period, variants that writers used more or less frequently depending on the context. This background can seem fairly obvious. Nonetheless, the implications of this framework are characterized by an inherent complexity: they call for studies on syntactic constructions founded on multifaceted analysis grids, mainly based on non-binary features. In other words, every structural analysis of the functions and of the values of a given syntactic structure also has to take into account all the possible historical, cultural and sociolinguistic factors affecting the use of the construction being

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[14] The actual Italian quotation is the following: "quello che per secoli nel pensiero linguistico è stato proposto come un fatto di 'natura' del francese, è tale, in realtà, solo parzialmente. Il peso della tradizione retorica precocemente anti-latineggiante è ciò che ha consentito al francese di portare a galla senza conflitti drammatici le tendenze naturali del parlato, anzi, le ha istituzionalizzate, laddove l'italiano, in fondo fino ad alcuni decenni fa, le aveva respinte". (Sornicola 1995, 56)
[15] On the notion of discourse tradition see Koch (1997) and Oesterreicher (1997). For an elaborated description of the discourse tradition framework (and a set of bibliographical references on this topic) see Kabatek, Obrist and Vincis (2010).

investigated (diachronic variation, diatopic variation, register and style variation, variation related to the discourse tradition and so on).

The main theoretical question is, in other words, how to combine structural analysis and historical sociolinguistic interpretations.[16] The relationships between these two poles have not always been straightforward. On the one hand, structural analyses often lack socio-historical backgrounds and interpretations; on the other hand, historical sociolinguistic interpretations are not always concerned enough with structural data, and mainly rely on other data, such as metalinguistic reflections, or general cultural assumptions.[17]

However, the use of sociolinguistic interpretative tools is also somewhat problematic. The risk of superimposing on medieval European societies the point of view provided by interpretative tools that have been developed on the basis of the characteristics of twentieth century industrial societies is very high.[18] We maintain that in order to analyze the syntax of a medieval European linguistic variety we should combine the actual analysis of syntactic structures with sociolinguistic interpretations based on a careful socio-historical analysis of the historical period under investigation and on a critical interpretation of the findings of modern sociolinguistics. Therefore, in the study of the influence of Latin models on the syntax of another language in a given historical period (for instance, Italo-Romance varieties in the Middle Ages) at least the following factors have to be considered:

    a. the historical and cultural context;
    b. the characteristics and the history of the discourse tradition of the (literary or non-literary) genre of the texts which are being investigated; and

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[16] This is of course a fundamental question, connected to an even more general theoretical question, namely the relationship between external and internal factors in language variation and change. These issues have been recently tackled by Drinka (2017) in her study of the periphrastic perfect in the languages of Europe: "the close examination of the interaction of sociohistorical and linguistic factors in the development of the periphrastic perfect allows us to speak to the larger theoretical argument presented here, that, while internal and external factors both affect the course that an innovation will take in a given language, external factors are a more essential trigger in setting such changes in motion, and are, indeed, an indispensable element in any linguistic change" (Drinka 2017, 9).

[17] See for instance Barbato's (2014) criticism of Wright (2013a, 2013b).

[18] On the uniformitarian principle, the risk of anachronism, and the theoretical and methodological limits of the 'uniformitarian doctrine' see Bergs (2012), Baldi and Cuzzolin (2015) and Putzu (2015). The latter contribution also contains a useful reflection on the genesis of the uniformitarian principle, and a survey of the criticisms received by this principle over time, in linguistics as well as in the research fields in which the principle itself was firstly elaborated. Even if we accept the basic assumption of the 'uniformitarian doctrine' (or of more nuanced formulations such as the general uniformity principle and the uniform probabilities principle by Lass 1997, 28), namely that the (very) general mechanisms of language change are stable over time, we maintain that this does not mean that languages have always changed in the same way, or, better, following the same patterns. It is only within the social, cultural and historical context that we can analyze and interpret historical sociolinguistic phenomena. When we come to the analysis of actual complex social, economic, cultural and historical factors that may have played a role in the internal linguistic variation of a certain linguistic variety in the Middle Ages, we are clearly facing factors that are much too complex and historically grounded to be considered as moved by rules similar to those operating nowadays. More generally, we posit that in every real historic situation, the processes of language variation and change are so tightly intertwined to historical, social, economic and cultural phenomena that the heuristic value of the uniformitarian principle is very limited.

c. the diffusion and the characteristics of the use of the constructions under consideration in Latin texts that have served as models for the considered authors.

This fairly ambitious program must guide our efforts towards the development of specific analytic and interpretative tools for (socio)linguistic studies of linguistic situations of the past. The methodologies developed for the analysis of the linguistic situations of twentieth century western industrial cities and the methodological research that has been carried out in the framework of synchronic sociolinguistics can help us in developing interpretative tools for the analysis of other linguistic situations. But we cannot simply adapt the findings of contemporary synchronic sociolinguistic research to the linguistic situation of medieval Italy (or France or Spain). The historical and cultural contextualization of (socio)linguistic analysis is essential (see also Oestrreicher 2004, Banniard 2013 and Kabatek 2013). We cannot expect diastratic variation to act in a similar way in twentieth century New York City, in sixth century Tours or in thirteenth century Florence. Indeed, we are rather sceptical about the possibility of developing general interpretative tools for historical sociolinguistic analysis at all. We maintain that every historical situation is different and must be studied in its context. Our theoretical models and our interpretative tools must be re-arranged and re-developed in the light of this background whenever we set out to analyze a sociolinguistic situation of the past.

3. Aspects of the use of the present participle with verbal functions in Italo-Romance texts written in the Middle Ages

3.1. Present participles in Italo-Romance varieties: a brief introduction

The evolutive path followed by present participles in the transition from Latin to the Romance languages is not straightforward. Since their first written appearance, we can observe in most Romance languages an overlap of the values of Latin present participles, gerunds and gerundives (see Ramat and Da Milano 2011). In some Romance varieties, as for instance in French, the overlap is also formal.[19] We maintain that the evolution of present participles in the different Romance varieties must be interpreted in the light of the more general re-arrangement of non-finite subordination constructions that took place in the transition from Latin to the different Romance varieties. In this complex process (that led to different outcomes in the various Romance languages),

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[19] The formal differences between gerunds and present participles that can be found in the descriptions provided by most contemporary French grammars were not established in the Middle Ages, and in many cases an -ant form could be interpreted as a gerund or as a present participle: "La distinction moderne (qui n'existait pas au moyen âge) entre adjectif verbal, participe présent et gérondif, fondée essentiellement sur un critère d'ordre morphologique (accord/non accord pour les deux premiers et non accord et présence de la préposition *en* pour le dernier) ne convient pas pour l'ancien et le moyen français" 'The modern distinction (which did not exist in the Middle Ages) between verbal adjective, present participle, and gerund, based especially on morphological rules (agreement/ non-agreement for the first two and presence of a preposition *en* for the latter) is not appropriate for Old and Middle French.') (Sarré 2000, 40; my translation, PG). Besides, the distinction between gerunds and present participles from both a theoretical and a typological point of view is not straightforward (see Ramat and Da Milano 2011). In this respect, gerunds and present participles can be accounted for within a unified framework also in modern French (see for instance Henrichsen 1967. See also the discussion in Arnavielle 1997 and 2003).

present participles are generally considered to have lost most of their verbal functions in favour of gerunds (in those varieties in which the two forms maintained a different shape).[20]

For instance, Egerland's (2010) discussion of present participles within the framework of the *Grammatica dell'italiano antico* starts with these words: "In old Italian, as in modern Italian, the present participle is an only marginally productive verbal form" (Egerland 2010, 898; my translation, PG).[21] Though we acknowledge that in the transition from Latin to medieval Italo-Romance varieties present participles lost most of their verbal values, we maintain that the evolution of the verbal uses of present participles in medieval Italo-Romance varieties still needs further investigation (see Cerullo 2017 and De Roberto 2017). In particular, in medieval texts:

> a) present participles with verbal values are not so rarely attested, above all in texts that have a strong relationship with Latin models (as for instance in the *volgarizzamenti*);
> b) the adjectival or verbal value of the present participle is often disputable, and in many instances the distinction is probably impossible and/or misleading;
> c) present participles occur in syntactic constructions in which they no longer occur today (as for instance in the constructions 'perception predicate + present participle').

In this section we will briefly discuss points (a) and (b), and will leave the discussion of point (c) to Section 3.2. As far as the point (a) is concerned, if we take into account three *volgarizzamenti* written in the 14th century such as the *volgarizzamento* of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Arrigo Simintendi, of Vergil's *Aeneid* by Ciampolo di Meo degli Ugurgieri, and of Ovid's *Heroides* by Filippo Ceffi, we get the following results: present participles with a possible verbal interpretation occur 227 times in the first five books of Simintendi's text; 160 times in the first six books of Ciampolo's translation; and 87 times in Ceffi's *volgarizzamento*. These data can be compared with the frequency of occurrence of the gerunds, the verbal form that mainly took over the verbal values carried by present participles in Latin: in the first five books of Simintendi's text we found 131 occurrences of gerunds; in the first six books of Ciampolo's *volgarizzamento* we found 554 instances of gerunds; in Ceffi's text we found 345 gerunds. Simintendi is the only author who used present participles more than gerunds (0.5 gerunds for each participle), but it is clear that in the other investigated texts as well, present participles

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[20] For instance, the present participle has disappeared in contemporary Spanish: "Recordemos que en el español actual - a diferencia del francés - no hay participio de presente y que el significado verbal activo a él asociado se expresa de forma productiva hoy a través de una oración de relativo y también, en ciertos contextos, por el gerundio" (Fernández Lagunilla 1999, 3454). 'Recall that in contemporary Spanish –as opposed to French– there is no present participle and that its active verbal meaning is productively expressed by means of a relative clause and also –in some contexts—by a gerund". The loss of verbal functions in Spanish is often dated back to the very birth of this language. Yet, up until at least the 15th century, present participles with verbal values do occur in some texts (see the examples provided in Fernández Murga 1979; Meilán García 1991; Sanchis Calvo 2004; and Blázquez 2011).

[21] The actual Italian quotation is the following: "In it. ant. [i.e. italiano antico], come in it. mod. [i.e. italiano moderno], il participio presente è produttivo come forma verbale solo in modo marginale" (Egerland 2010, 898)". It is also worth noting that Egerland's (2010) chapter on participial subordinate clauses in the *Grammatica dell'italiano antico* is composed of 21 pages: 17 are dedicated to the analysis of perfect participles, and only 4 to present participles. Moreover, only 2 of these 4 pages are devoted to the 'verbal use' of the present participle.

are not uncommon (three to four gerunds for each participle), and their verbal value is still clear (on Ceffi's and Ciampolo's *volgarizzamento* see also the linguistic analysis carried out, respectively, by Zaggia 2009 and Lagomarsini 2018). These numbers, however, should not be considered as the result of a mere computation, but rather as an interpretation, for the verbal or adjectival value of a present participle is often not entirely clear. If we have on the one hand clear cases of verbal uses of participles (example 1) or of adjectival uses (example 2), in many cases the distinction between these values is questionable, or at least not straightforward (see for instance example 3).

(1)   Ma *guardante* ora verso costui, e ora verso Perseo, non sae s'egli domandi costui o colui (Sim., *Met.*, V, 196, 25).[22]
        'But, looking first at him, and then at Perseus, he does not know if he wants [to hit] the former or the latter.'
        "Ille nihil contra: sed et hunc et Persea vultu / alterno spectans petat hunc ignorat, an illum" (Ov., *Metam.*, V, 30)

(2)   Dal principio il cielo e la terra e 'l mare, ed il *lucente* globo della Luna, e le luminose stelle, spirito dentro le governa (Ciamp., *En.*, VI, 724).
        'From the beginning a spirit within governs the sky and the earth, and the sea, and the shining globe of the Moon, and the bright stars.'
        "Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentis lucentemque globum Lunae Titaniaque astra spiritus intus alit" (Verg., *Aen.*, VI, 724-726)

(3)   Spesse volte volli costringere la mia *ardente* fiamma (Ceffi, *Her.*, XVI, 677, 8).
        'Many times, I wanted to restrain my burning flame.'
        The corresponding Latin text is the following: "Saepe mero volui flammam compescere, at illa / Crevit, et ebrietas ignis in igne fuit" (Ov., *Her.*, XVI, 231-232).

If in (1) the form *guardante* has a clear verbal value (it acts as a verb, and governs an object) and in (2) the form *lucente* is clearly an adjective (it is a modifier which specifies a quality of the moon), the situation in (3) is less clear-cut. Is *ardente* a permanent quality of the flame? What would be our interpretation if the sentence was *la mia fiamma ardente il cuore* (*my flame burning the heart*)? The difference between an adjectival and a verbal reading of present participles is very subtle, and in many cases blurred. We believe that examples such as those above call for a general and theoretical reflection on the notion of adjectival and verbal values of participles. One disambiguating criterion, as we have just shown, is sometimes seen in the relationship between the participial/adjectival form and the noun to which the form is related: the inherent (or at least stable) or passing nature of the quality indicated by the participial/adjectival form may be seen as one of the fundamental differences between, respectively, an adjectival or a verbal reading. We shall not enter here into a discussion that goes beyond the objectives of this paper, and we limit ourselves to suggesting that, in the light of the framework just presented, a binary distinction between adjectival and verbal values of present participles is possibly misleading, or, better, misconceived. We

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[22] All the examples coming from texts written in Italo-Romance varieties are quoted from the editions used in the OVI database. For each example, a translation in English is provided. Furthermore, when the Italo-romance example is the direct translation of a Latin original, the text of the Latin source is also provided.

maintain that a scalar approach to the values of present participles would better account for the transcategorization process that we can observe in medieval texts. In other words, some uses of the present participle are clearly verbal, some are clearly adjectival, and many seem to be in between.

3.2. Present participles governed by perception predicates in Latin and Italo-Romance texts

In this section we will discuss a clearly verbal use of the present participle in medieval Italo-Romance varieties: the structure 'perception predicate + present participle', whose roots can be traced back to the Latin AcP. This construction is no longer possible in contemporary Italian, where it has been replaced by (finite or non-finite) complement clauses (4) and pseudo-relative clauses (5). Infinitival constructions and predicative relative clauses are always interpreted as direct perception, while information provided by finite complement clauses can also be interpreted as indirect knowledge (6).

(4)   Ho sentito il cane abbaiare (direct perception).
        'I heard the dog barking.'

(5)   Ho sentito il cane che abbaiava (direct perception).
        'I heard the dog that was barking.'

(6)   Ho sentito che il cane abbaiava (direct perception, second-hand information or hearsay).
        'I heard that the dog was barking.'

All these structures were possible in medieval Italo-Romance varieties too. Furthermore, two other sentential constructions governed by perception predicates are used in medieval Italian texts. One is the already mentioned present participle construction (7), the other is a gerundial structure (8):

(7)   *Vedemmo il furioso Vulturno mescolante le sue acque*, piene di rena, con le marine (*Amet.* 82).
        'We saw the furious Vulturno mixing his waters, full of sand, with those of the sea.'

(8)   Come quelli ch'è in periglioso mare / e *vede la tempesta sormontando* / e non si turba (Chiaro Davanzati, 35, 3, 252, 8).[23]

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[23] These alternations are to be interpreted in the light of the restructuring of the functions on non-finite verbal moods in old Italian. In particular, two different tendencies appear to be relevant in the context of sentential constructions governed by perception predicates: the partial functional overlapping on the one hand between participles and gerunds (see Škerlj 1926; Herczeg 1972), and on the other between gerunds and infinitives (see De Roberto 2013). Even if the alternation between pseudo-relative clauses, finite and infinite complement clauses, gerundival clauses and participial clauses has been discussed in a number of studies (see for instance Škerlj 1926; Herczeg 1972; De Roberto 2010, 517-21; 2013; Ramat and Da Milano 2011; and Valente 2013, 44), to the best of our knowledge no study has ever been conducted specifically on the competition between these structures and on the evolutive diachronic path that eventually led to the loss of some of them.

'As one who is in a dangerous sea / and sees the storm rising / and is not frightened by it.'

As we have stated above, the participial and the gerundival structures highlighted in (7) and (8) are probably to be connected with the Latin participial construction known as AcP (9). AcP is one of the main sentential constructions attested after perception predicates in Latin texts (see Greco 2013, where this structure is qualified as an 'evidentiality strategy', in the sense of Aikhenvald 2004):

(9)   Sed hic quis est *quem huc advenientem conspicor* (Plaut., *Epid.*, 435).
        'But who is this man that I see coming?'

Since its first appearance in Latin texts, AcP occurs after perception predicates in alternation with the *Accusativus cum Infinitivo* (henceforth AcI) construction (10):

(10)   Posteaquam *id obstinate sibi negari vidit*, omni spe impetrandi adempta, principes Galliae sollicitare, sevocare singulos hortari que coepit, uti in continenti remanerent (Caes., *Gall.*, V, 6).
        'When he saw [his requests] obstinately denied, he lost any hope of reaching his aims, and he began to talk to the Gallic princes separately, stirring them up and asking them to remain on the continent.'

It has been generally considered that the alternation of the two constructions was based on the fact that "in the case of the AcP the aspect of 'perception' is central, and with the AcI that of 'cognition' and 'reflection'" (Pinkster 1990, 131). In the same line of reasoning, Machtelt Bolkestein maintains that in classical Latin perception predicates:

> may refer to either direct perception by the senses or to indirect perception. When they refer to direct perception, they have an OBJECT-constituent filled by either a noun […] or by a noun plus participle […]. The semantic relation of these constituents to the verb is that of Source. Therefore, they must denote directly perceivable objects, events or states. […] However, they may also refer to indirect perception. In that case the OBJECT-constituent is filled by a clause of the form accusative noun (as SUBJECT of the clause) plus infinitive (as PREDICATOR of the clause). (Bolkestein 1976, 287)

However, the occurrence of examples like the one presented in (11) shows that the AcI constructions were also used in cases of direct perception:

(11)   Illam, summa super labentem culmina tecti, cernimus Idaea claram se condere silva signantem que vias (Verg., *Aen.*, II, 696).
        'We watched it [a star] touching the top of the roof, and bright, vanishing in the Idea wood, showing the way.'

Previous studies have shown that AcP constructions spread in Latin above all in Christian authors and in certain literary genres.[24] In particular, I have observed in earlier work that "AcP is fairly frequently attested in the works of Plautus and Terence, it then becomes rare amongst classical authors, and finally returns to frequent use from at least the second century AD, and in particular since the Late Antiquity (with notable proliferation amongst Christian authors)" (Greco 2013, 184). Table 1, based on the quantitative results of Greco (2013, 2016), shows this trend: the lower the line, the higher the frequency of occurrence of AcP-constructions in the text.[25]
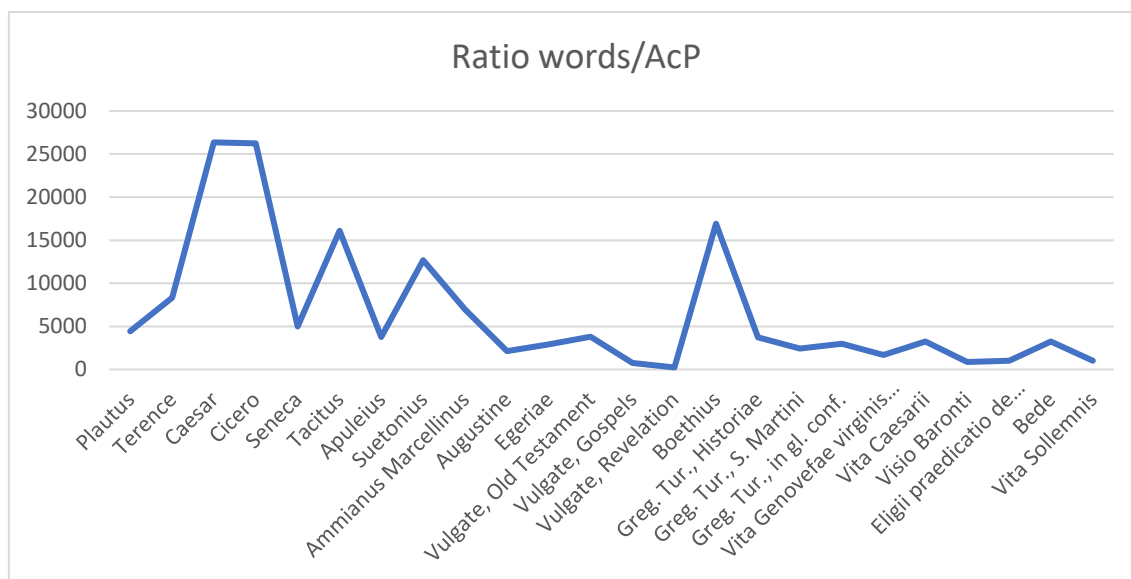

Table 1. Words/AcP ratio

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[24] See Greco (2013, 2016). The relevance of the model provided by the Latin version of the Bible for the spreading of certain linguistic features has been extensively debated in the 20th century, and has been demonstrated, for instance, for certain syntactic structures by Amenta (2003).

[25] The system used to identify the frequency of occurrence of AcP constructions in the texts is inherently imperfect. It is based on the mere calculus of the ratio between the number of words of the investigated texts and the number of AcP found in the texts. It does not take into account the quantity of contexts of possible occurrence of AcP in each text. Nonetheless, these data show interesting tendencies. The graph presented in Table 1 is based on the tables presented in Greco (2013, 197 and 2016, 375 and 380). The texts on which the analysis is based are the following: Plautus: *Amphitruo*, *Asinaria*, *Aulularia*, *Bacchides*, *Captivi*, *Casina*, *Cistellaria*, *Curculio*, *Epidicus*, *Menaechmi*, *Mercator*, *Miles gloriosus*, *Mostellaria*, *Poenulus*, *Pseudolus*; Terence: *Adelphoe*, *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, *Heautontimorumenus*, *Hecyra*, *Phormio*; Caesar: *Commentarii belli gallici*, *Commentarii belli civilis*; Cicero: *De officiis*, *Epistulae ad Atticum*; Seneca: *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*; Tacitus: *Annales*, *Dialogus de oratoribus*, *Germania*, *De vita Iulii Agricolae*; Apuleius: *Apologia*, *De Deo Socratis*, *De mundo*, *De Platone et eius dogmate*, *Florida*, *Metamorphoses*; Suetonius: *De vita Ceasaribus*, *De grammathicis et rhetoribus*; Ammianus Marcellinus: *Rerum gestarum libri*; Augustine: *Contra Academicos*, *Contra Donatistas*, *Sermones novissimi* (*Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*); *Itinerarium Egeriae seu Peregrinatio ad loca sancta*; Vulgate: *Old Testament* (from *Genesis* to *Ruth*), *New Testament* (*Gospels*, *Revelation*); Boethius: *De divisione*, *De fide catholica*, *De institutione arithmetica*, *In Categorias Aristotelis libri IV*, *Liber contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, *Philosophiae consolatio*; *Vita Genovefae virginis Parisiensis*; *Vita Caesarii*; Gregory of Tours: *Historiae*, *Liber de virtutibus S. Martini*, *Liber in gloria confessorum*; *Visio Baronti*; *Eligii praedicatio de supremo iudicio*; Beda: *Acta et passio beati Anastasii martyris*, *De arte metrica*, *De ortographia*, *Vita sancti Cuthberti*, *Vita sancti Felicis*, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*; *Vita Sollemnis*. The analysis has been carried out on the basis of the texts included in the LLT (Library of Latin Texts) and in the E-MGH (Electronic Monumenta Germaniae Historica).

My previous analyses have also shown that literary genres had some influence on the use of AcP (certain literary genres have structural characteristics that do not favour *per se* the possible contexts of occurrence of AcP). Furthermore, the possible influence of Greek has to be acknowledged (at least for certain authors, such as Ammianus Marcellinus). However, the major source of influence for the spread of the AcP construction from Late Antiquity onwards is to be found in the Vulgate, and particularly in the New Testament. In the Gospels, and above all in the Book of Revelation, AcPs are very frequently attested. In the Book of Revelation, in particular, they are the most frequent construction used to describe mystical visions (and they occur at the astonishingly high ratio of one AcP every 240 words) (12):

(12)   Et post haec *vidi alium angelum descendentem* de caelo (*Vulg.*, *Ap.*, 18, 1).
        'And after these things, I saw another angel coming down from the sky.'

We maintain that the frequent occurrence of AcP constructions in a key textual model for many discourse traditions such as the New Testament, and specifically the systematic use of AcP in the Book of Revelation in the particular context highlighted in (12), substantially influenced the whole of Christian literature in the Middle Ages. It is therefore not by chance that AcPs are particularly frequent in hagiographies (13), and above all in the *Visio Baronti* (14), a text in which visions play a fundamental role:[26]

(13)   Accedensque ante lectulum eius, *vidit agnum inmensae claritatis super pectus eius quiescentem* (Greg. Tur., *conf.*, 77, 344, 21).
        'And in front of his bed, he saw an immense shining lamb sleeping above his chest.'

(14)   Ut autem venimus inter paradysum et infernum, *vidi ibi virum senem pulcherrimum aspectum, habentem barbam prolixam, in alta sede quietem sedentem* (*Bar.*, 16, 390, 17).
        'When we came between heaven and hell, I saw there a beautiful old man with a long beard, sitting quietly in a high position.'

We now move on to the use of the complex syntactic construction 'perception verb + present participle' in Italo-Romance texts. We performed a range of analyses. Firstly, in December 2014 we carried out a study on the lemmatized part of the OVI (*Opera del Vocabolario Italiano*) corpus. We looked for the participial and the gerundial clauses governed by the verbs *vedere*, *sentire* and *udire*.[27] Neither construction occurred frequently: we only found 43 participial clauses and 31 gerundial clauses. In this context, complement clauses (both finite and non-finite) and predicative relative clauses

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[26] Karlsen (2001, 41–44) shows that in the *Revelaciones* of Saint Bridget of Sweden (a 14th century text), AcP constructions are still the standard structure to describe mystical visions. In Greco (2013, 2016) we have pinpointed that also in other discourse traditions the Biblical model played a role in the use of AcP-constructions, not only in quantitative terms, but also in functional terms. A similar path of diffusion has been described by Amenta (2003) for certain aspectual periphrasis.

[27] The corpus at the time was made up of 1,998 texts (it was not fully lemmatized) written in different Italo-Romance varieties before the 15th century.

are much more frequently attested.[28] Participial structures occur above all in translations from Latin (the so-called *volgarizzamenti*, 42 % of the total), and in some works by Boccaccio (23 % of the total), one of the most sophisticated writers of the time (in this context, it is interesting to note that all the examples come from the *Teseida*, the *Filocolo* and the *Ameto*. None from the *Decameron*). Gerundial clauses show a more varied distribution: only 20 % of the occurrences come from *volgarizzamenti* and 15 % from Boccaccio's work.In December 2015 we came back to the corpus, and performed a new search. This time we also included the verbs *ascoltare*, *intendere* and *guardare*, but we limited our analysis to a subcorpus of the OVI database. Our subcorpus was made up of around 300 texts (for a total amount of around 3,000,000 words) of three textual genres: historical texts, hagiographies and legal documents. Again, the result was that both structures (participial and gerundial clauses) are very rare, and that they mainly occur in translations from Latin. We only found two examples coming from chronicles (15, 16):

(15)   E questo anno vene messer Carlo di Francia, et *vidise* per segno una istella *fumante* (*Cronica di Lucca*, 191, 16).
        'And this year Carlo di Francia came and a smoking star was seen as a sign.'

(16)   Questo Gracian, con zo fosse chossa che 'l *vedesse* inextimabile multitudine de inimisi contra sì *vegnando* (*Cronica del imperadori*, 196, 14).
        'This Gracian saw an inestimable multitude of enemies coming against him.'

The role played by a close contact (or even a direct one, as in the case of the *volgarizzamenti*) with Latin models seems therefore crucial, even if not absolutely necessary, for the selection of participial clauses governed by perception predicates.

    For this reason, we performed a third analysis, this time based on the ClaVo corpus (*Corpus dei classici latini volgarizzati*). This is a parallel corpus made up of 42 Latin works that have served as sources for 88 *volgarizzamenti*. We searched for all the occurrences of AcI and AcP governed by the predicates *videre*, *audire* and *invenire* (in previous analyses, such as Greco 2013, 2016, these verbs governed between 80 % and 90 % of all AcP constructions). Here, we will briefly discuss data related to the AcP governed by *video* only. In the 42 Latin texts included in the ClaVo corpus we found around 400 AcP governed by this predicate. In principle, these are contexts particularly suitable for the occurrence of a participial structure also in the Italo-Romance translations of the Latin texts. Yet, the most frequently selected structures in Italo-Romance are by far the infinitival clauses, followed by the finite complement clauses and by the pseudo-relative clauses. We only found 50 cases of participial clauses, and 40% of them occur in Simintendi's *Metamorphoses*. Only gerundival constructions occur less frequently than participial clauses (9 occurrences).

    All these data show that the perception predicate + present participle construction is used above all when when the Latin model shows a high frequency of the same constructions. Yet, even in translations, the majority of Latin AcP constructions are not directly converted into participial clauses. A clearer difference

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[28] De Roberto (2010, 517) highlights that 10 predicative relative clauses depending on perception verbs and 35 infinitive complement clauses are to be found only in the *Tristano Riccardiano*. As far as finite complement clauses, only in the first five books of Simintendi's *volgarizzamento* of the *Metamorphoses* we found 12 complement clauses of this type.

between Italo-Romance texts with a direct Latin model (such as the *volgarizzamenti*), and Italo-Romance texts not directly connected to a Latin text can be observed in the selection of participles or gerunds after perception verbs. While in the latter type of texts gerundial constructions are more frequent than participial clauses, in translations the frequency of occurrence is inverted.[29]

4. Conclusions

In this paper we have tried to set up a methodological framework for the study of syntactic influence in the context of the Latin-Romance contact in the Middle Ages. In particular, we have tried to highlight a number of issues and problematic aspects of this extraordinarily rich field of research, showing that only multi-layered and multi-faceted approaches that take into account cultural, historical, linguistic and sociolinguistic factors can help us analyze complex phenomena such as those related to the influence of Latin syntax on the Romance languages.

First, we discussed the relationship between Latin and the Romance varieties in the Middle Ages, starting from and elaborating on the position held by Pountain (1998), who qualifies this influence as a learned influence. Secondly, we discussed some of the fundamental aspects of the notion of linguistic influence, particularly in linguistic situations of the past. In this context, we have pointed out that, when it comes to medieval linguistic varieties and the peculiar contact situation between Latin and the Romance languages in the 14th century, we can only deal with a limited set of texts (which have survived for very different reasons). Therefore, in our analysis, we have maintained that what we can investigate is not the influence of Latin on a given medieval language, but rather the influence of certain Latin models on the syntax of Romance documents produced in a certain geographical area, and in the framework of a certain discourse tradition. Finally, we have also pinpointed the relevance of the issues raised by this particular historical language-contact situation for the general theory and methodology of historical sociolinguistics. We maintain that a revision of historical sociolinguistic interpretative tools is needed. Historical sociolinguistics needs a methodology which is open to the differences and the peculiarities of different historical, cultural and linguistic situations: it has to be grounded in the findings of modern sociolinguistics and of cultural history, but also ready to question those acquisitions on the basis of the issues raised by the actual historical and linguistic data.[30]

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[29] Of course, this statement, and also the overall picture that we have just presented, only describes a general tendency. The *volgarizzamenti* do not constitute a homogeneous genre, and their sociolinguistic level is very differentiated. It is not by chance that 40 % of participial clauses occur in Simintendi's translation of the *Metamorphoses*. Simintendi's style is renowned for being particularly oriented towards Latin models.

[30] Notions like bilingualism and diglossia, for instance, have been extensively used, with slightly different values, to describe various phases of the contact situation between Latin and the Romance languages in the Middle Ages. Sornicola (2012) has convincingly shown the problematic aspects of applying the notions of bilingualism and diglossia to the analysis of ancient languages, and particularly to the linguistic situation of Southern Italy during the Byzantine and Langobardic period. In what follows, we shall briefly discuss some issues regarding the use of the notion of diglossia in the description of the relationship between Latin and the Romance languages in the Middle Ages. First of all, we have to remember that modern sociolinguistic reflection has shown that even in synchronic analysis bilingualism and diglossia are complex and problematic notions. And, of course, they become even more problematic when applied to ancient languages, to which we have only limited access. Yet, diglossic interpretations have been proposed for the linguistic situation preceding the Carolingian reform, but also for the period that starts with this reform, and

In the second part of the paper we presented a case-study on the use of the complex syntactic construction 'perception predicate + participial clause' between Latin and Italo-Romance languages. Through this case-study we have pointed out some of the difficulties of determining the evolutive trajectory of the verbal values of present participles from Latin to the Italo-Romance varieties. It is a complex evolutive pattern, that involves some of the major changes that took place in the Latin-Romance transition, such as the general restructuring of non-finite verbal moods.

Furthermore, the evolution of the use of present participles, and particularly of the complex construction 'present participles governed by perception predicates' followed complex trajectories in Latin, too. We have pointed out that the linguistic model offered by the Vulgate, and particularly by the Book of Revelation, played a fundamental role in the spreading of the use of AcP constructions in Latin texts throughout the Middle Ages, both in quantitative terms and in the functions associated with the use of this construction. More generally, we maintain that the syntactic structures that occur with a high frequency in the Latin Bible (in the *Vulgate* and/or in the older Latin version of the Bible) must have represented, at the time of writing, possible variants of the repertoire, with a varied sociolinguistic status. The fact that those variants were accepted and systematically used in a text the prestige of which was unchallenged during the Middle Ages in Europe, probably played a decisive role in the diffusion of the use of these constructions.

As far as the Italo-Romance *scriptae* are concerned, we have pointed out that, despite the general reduction of the verbal values of present participles, the complex syntactic construction 'perception predicate + present participle' is not only attested, but is also comparatively more frequent than the corresponding gerundial construction, at least in certain textual types. In particular, in translations from Latin, present participles governed by perception predicates are generally more frequent than gerunds. Of course, the direct contact with the Latin source plays a fundamental role in this context. Yet, participial clauses do not occur only in translations, and we maintain that the influence of Late antique and Medieval Latin (where, as we have seen, AcP constructions were fairly frequent also because of the influence of Biblical Latin) went beyond the mere correspondence between the structures of the Latin source and those of the *volgarizzamenti*. It is likely that the influence of Latin models was far more pervasive at the boundaries between language and style.[31]

In the context of the progressive loss of verbal values of present participles, participial clauses governed by perception predicates are a case in point of the importance of linguistic and cultural Latin models for the survival, albeit in a marginal fashion, of a linguistic structure. Structures like those that we have analyzed represented marginal constructions in the variational continuum of the Italo-Romance *scriptae*. Yet, these marginal possibilities of the repertoire could be activated, and become more central, above all in contexts in which the Latin models were particularly important for the language and the style of a writer.

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also for the relationship between Latin and the Romance languages in the Low Middle Ages and in the Early Modern period. The use of the term diglossia for these situations seems to us problematic: how can we know to what extent the two varieties in contact were socio-functionally differentiated and the two repertoires compartmentalized? Can we really speak of diglossia for linguistic situations in which we can only try to reconstruct, in a partial and fragmentary fashion, the actual relationships between the different varieties in contact in everyday communicative situations?

[31] Besides, the different attitudes of the various translators towards the source also fosters this interpretation. On the attitudes of translators towards their sources see the classic works of Segre (1963) and Folena (1991).

The data we have presented are still incomplete, and a long road is still ahead of us before we reach a comprehensive and exhaustive description of the different use of present participles in Italo-Romance *scriptae* in the Middle Ages.[32] Nonetheless, we hope that our data and our (initial) results point to a fruitful path to follow.

Acknowledgements

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[32] An aspect that has been neglected in this study for reasons of space, and that seems to play an important role in the alternation between participles and gerunds after perception predicates, is, for instance, diatopic variation.

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