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7 Evidence for SVO in Latin?

Harm Pinkster

The main claim of this chapter is that our knowledge of Classical Latin word order is limited to such an extent that conclusions with respect to the date and the evolution of Romance word order are premature.

WORD ORDER IN CLASSICAL LATIN

Evidence for a syntactic order SOV in Classical Latin

The standard view in Latin linguistics is that Latin essentially had a S(ubject) O(bject) (finite) V(erb) word order. This view can be found in the grammars of Kühner-Stegmann (1912) and Hofmann-Szantyr (1965), but also in Marouzeau (1949) and in recent studies like those of Oniga (1988) and Ostafin (1986). However, as my use of the word 'essentially' suggests, many deviations from the basic SOV word order are recognized. These deviations are of various types. In the first place it is common knowledge that in imperative sentences (in which subject constituents as a rule do not occur) the verb is frequently found in initial position. Furthermore, it has been observed that in subordinate clauses finite verb forms occur in final position with higher frequency than they do in main clauses. (Incidentally, one would not expect otherwise: in subordinate clauses the initial position is reserved for subordinating devices; also subordinate clauses, being 'heavy material', tend to come late in the sentence, while usually not containing 'heavy material' themselves.) We see, then, that sentence type and clause type are responsible for deviations from the assumed basic order. A second type of deviation has to do with the internal structure of constituents. The tendency of 'heavy material to the right' has been mentioned already. Related

to this is the opposite tendency of placing 'light' constituents in the first possible position of the sentence. This tendency holds for anaphoric elements as well as for so-called clitical elements (recent discussion in Wanner 1987). Parallels can be found in a wide range of languages. I only refer to the LIPOC rule in Dik's (1989) functional grammar and to Hawkins (1988).

Both types discussed so far have in common that they are of a formal nature. In this formal respect they differ from a third commonly acknowledged type of deviation, which I will discuss now. The initial position, which is claimed to be, in principle, reserved for the subject of the sentence, may be occupied by another constituent for the purpose of 'emphasis', for example in the case of contrast between a constituent in a sentence B and a constituent in the preceding sentence A (excellent illustrations in Schneider 1912). Conversely, the verb may be moved away from its final position by other constituents that convey new or important information. The formulation of the phenomena given here looks like descriptions of fronting phenomena in fixed-word-order languages such as English: deviation from a basic syntactically defined word order for pragmatic purposes. In fact, this is almost a paraphrase of the conclusions of a recent transformational account of Latin word order (Ostafin 1986).

What evidence is there for assuming a basic SOV order in Latin? Not much. In fact, no major grammar, like the ones mentioned, is based on research about the relative order of the S, O, and V. Until recently, we possessed numerical data about a number of authors as far as the position of the verb is concerned (Linde 1923, especially). And we have a witness (in the person of Quintilian) who says

> verbo sensum cludere multo si compositio patiatur optimum est. in verbis enim sermonis vis est. si id asperum erit, cedet haec ratio numeris, ut fit apud summos Graecos Latinosque oratores frequentissime.

> ('If the demands of artistic structure permit, it is far best to end the sentence with a verb: for it is in verbs that the real strength of language resides. But if it results in harshness of sound, this principle must give way before the demands of rhythm, as is frequently the case in the best authors of Greece and Rome.')
> (Quint. *Inst.* 9.4.26)

However, Quintilian's statement in all probability is a normative one meant for oratorical (written) prose, not based on observation of actual speech. Linde, as I have stated already, gives percentages

of the occurrences of finite verb forms in final position (also on first and intermediate position). I give some of his figures about main clauses: (a) first century BC: Caesar 84 per cent; Cicero 33–54 per cent, depending on the work chosen; Sallust 76 per cent; Varro 33 per cent; (b) Late Latin: Augustine (AD 354–430) 42 per cent (see Muldowney 1937); *Peregrinatio ad loca sancta* (late fourth century AD) 25 per cent; Victor Vitensis (late fifth century AD) 37 per cent. What is most striking in these data is the enormous variation not only between authors, but even in one and the same author: in Cicero's philosophical dialogue *De republica* only 33 per cent of the finite verbs are in final position. From Linde's account (which presents an overall count, in which distinctions as to sentence type, complexity of sentences and constituents, etc. are not made) it is even difficult to conclude that Latin was a verb-final language at the classical period, let alone conclude that Latin at that period was an SOV language. It is also not possible to conclude from Linde's figures, as he wanted us to believe, a constant decrease of the verb-final position (see Koll 1965: 262–3). Yet, Linde's article has become a classic and his figures about the *Peregrinatio* still play a role in the assumption of a development from a classical SOV into a SVO order in the late fourth century AD (as in Harris 1978; Renzi 1984). The existence of so much variation itself in our texts should warn us against assuming a syntactic basic order. The variation can be explained much better if we assume the existence of several different orders reserved for specific situations (text type, sentence type, constituent type, etc.) or assume other (pragmatic and/or semantic) factors to determine the order of constituents. At any rate, the statistical variation should encourage us to search for qualitative explanations of that variation. We will come to that later.

The relative order of Subject, Object, and Verb

In the last few years several scholars have published data about the relative order of S, V, and O in various texts. It is difficult to compare these data, since they differ in the way the S, O, and V constituents are defined and sometimes it is not clear at all which definition has been used. Whereas in Pinkster (1988), for example, only nominal Subjects and Objects in non-complex sentences are taken into account, Metzeltin (1987) also counts sentential complements functioning as Subject or Object. The samples used in most of these studies are very limited and the numbers of appropriate

sentences very low. The low numbers can be explained to some extent by the stylistic preferences of most Latin authors. Apart from that it must also be due to the fact that sentences of the type *Dog bites man* are extremely rare. In cohesive texts nominal constituents referring back to entities mentioned earlier are usually marked by some anaphoric device. One such 'device', very frequent in Latin, especially in the case of Subject constituents, is zero-anaphora. Similarly, parallels for *I love you* are difficult to find in Latin, since Subject pronouns are only used in the case of Topic shift or Focus. However, in spite of these limitations, Table 7.1 shows the results of some {S, O, V} counts, both of classical and non-classical texts.

What can we learn from these data about the word order in Classical Latin? I suggest that the most significant aspect is the variety that appears from Table 7.1. Although even in these small numbers there is some support for claiming that S preferably takes an initial position and that O precedes V more often than the other way around, no order is excluded in principle. Notice, for example, the OVS and VOS orders in Celsus' medical treatise. So even in a well-defined sample of sentences, with many variables excluded, as is the case for the material taken from Cicero, Celsus, and Vitruvius, variation exists. It is quite different from fronting phenomena in fixed-word-order languages like Dutch and English. In these languages fronting of a specific constituent does not (or not much) affect the order of the other constituents. Once more, the data do not suggest a syntactic basic order and call for a more

Table 7.1 {S, O, V} ordering[1] (absolute numbers except in the case of Petronius)

	SOV	SVO	OSV	OVS	VSO	VOS
Cicero *Att.* 1	17	—	2	—	1	—
Caesar *Gall* 1–7+*Civ.*	360	22	120	33	6	27
Vitruvius 1.1–4	7	4	2	1	—	—
Celsus 1–6	51	4	6	15	—	7
Petronius (in %)	46	19	15	6	6	6
Claudius Terentianus	3	10	1	1	1	4
Passio Ss Scilitanorum	1	1	—	—	—	—
Peregrinatio (1)	22	35	6	4	15	22
(2), 2nd part only	10	16	3	1	14	29
Vulgata (100 sentences)	15	8	—	—	—	—
Acta conv. (direct speech)	2	—	—	4	2	—
*idem (reported speech)	2	1	1	1	—	1

* 2 sets each of 200 sentences

qualitative approach to discover the rules determining the observed variation. This impression of variation is supported by the data presented by Koll (1965: 246–7) on {S, V} and {O, V} orderings. I take from his study only the figures about Cicero to illustrate this variation: (a) Cic. *Catil.*: SV/VS 30/0; OV/VO 14/7; (b) Cic. *Leg.*: SV/VS 32/6; OV/VO 18/4.

Typological inconsistency

Before turning to an examination of pragmatic and semantic correlates of word-order patterns, I briefly discuss one explanation in syntactic terms of the observed variation. Adams (1976a) has written a typological approach to Latin word order, in which he suggests that Classical Latin texts show two conflicting ordering patterns: SOV on the sentence level on the one hand, with the governed constituent O preceding V; prepositional (instead of postpositional) phrases on the other. This conflict does not exist in the Romance languages where the ordering 'preposition – NP' corresponds to the ordering 'Verb – Object'. Classical Latin data, in this approach, seem to show inconsistency. This typological inconsistency can be understood, according to Adams, by assuming at least two different registers: one of colloquial Latin, in which the typical Romance SVO pattern emerged quite early, maybe already in Plautus' time; the other one of conservative or literary language, in which the old SOV order was preserved. Representatives of the 'old order' are the *Leg. XII.* with 34 OV examples against 0 VO, and the *Sen. Cons. de Bacch.* showing 11:0 (Adams 1976a: 96ff.). Evidence for the old order may also be obtained by looking at the formation of compounds like *causidicus* ('pleader', cf. *causam dicere*) (see Oniga 1988: 88, 155ff.). Caesar should, in Adams' view, be regarded as the prime representative of the conservative register. Other authors, like Plautus and Cicero, show a mix of the old and new patterns. This approach calls forth a number of questions. One set of questions is of a methodological nature: what is the strength of typological observations for resolving problems in individual languages; what does 'typological consistency' mean? A second set of questions regards Caesar: why should he adopt this feature of the language of his ancestors; what other conservative features does his language show; how does this stylistic principle relate to his stylistic theory? And, thirdly, in Adams' approach too, it may be asked what the value is of merely statistical observations and what, if any, are the rules that can account for the statistical distribution of word-

order patterns. Assuming *two* syntactic orders is no solution for the problem of Latin word order either.

A pragmatic approach

It is time now to turn to non-syntactic explanations of Latin word order. We will explore the extent to which word order in Classical Latin can be explained on pragmatic and semantic grounds. We have already seen that pragmatic factors play some role in the older literature (for example, Schneider 1912). However, they are mentioned there to explain deviations from a 'normal' word order that itself is formulated in syntactic terms, in statements such as: 'The Subject may be removed from its initial position by an emphatic constituent.' However, observing that in for example Cic. *Att.* 1.5 only three out of twenty-seven sentences start with a Subject constituent, there is not much use in pragmatically modified syntactic rules. It seems better to ask questions like: 'Where do emphatic constituents go?', or 'Which constituents occupy the initial position of the sentence?'.

At this moment several theoretical notions are available for a pragmatic analysis of Latin texts. Panhuis (1982) adopts the framework of Functional Sentence Perspective. Sentences, according to this theory, are normally ordered on the basis of the principle of communicative dynamism. This principle means that sentences usually start with a highly thematic constituent, while ending with a highly rhematic constituent, independent of the type of constituent. This can be expressed in the following formula: Theme proper > Theme > Transition > Rheme > Rheme proper. The following two examples taken from Panhuis may serve to illustrate the principle:

(1) ego   dabo   ei   talentum
    I-nom. will-give him-dat. talent-acc.
    'I will give him a TALENT' (Pl. *Mos.* 359)
(2) bonan fide?   # siquidem tu   argentum   reddituru's
    good faith-abl. if   you-nom. money-acc. plan to give back
    'In good faith, you say? # If you DO plan to give the money back' (Pl. *Mos.* 670–1)

In (1) the most salient element in the discourse is the Object constituent 'talent', indicated by capitals. In (2) what is most important is the returning of the money (finite verb). In both sentences we observe a progression from a thematic constituent (*ego*, *tu*) towards a rhematic constituent. Instead of the notions

'Theme' and 'Rheme' other notions are used in other frameworks. I will henceforth use the notions 'Topic' and 'Focus', as developed in Dik's (1978; 1989) functional grammar. The main difference between the Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP) theory and other theories is the postulation of a continuum from known/given to unknown/salient in FSP and the assumption that individual constituents are ordered along this continuum. It is this aspect which I find most difficult to apply and, therefore, will avoid in this chapter.

Leaving apart connecting particles, etc., the first possible position of a declarative sentence is occupied by (i) 'framing' or 'situating' constituents of various types (examples (3) and (4), respectively);[2] (ii) Topic constituents (examples (5) and (6)); or (iii) constituents with 'contrastive' or 'replacive' (Dik 1989) Focus (example (7)):

(3) *de   forma,* ovem   esse oportet corpore   amplo
    about form-abl. sheep-acc. be   ought body-abl. wide-abl.
    'As to form, sheep should be full-bodied' (Var. *R.* 2.2.3)
(4) *Apud Helvetios*   longe nobilissimus   fuit . . . Orgetorix
    among Helvetians-acc. by far most-noble-nom. was   Org.-nom.
    'Among the Helvetians the noblest man by far was O' (Caes. *Gal.* 1.2.1)
(5) *Quintum   fratrem*   cotidie   expectamus
    Quintus-acc. brother-acc. everyday we-expect
    'We are expecting Q. back any day' (Cic. *Att.* 1.5.8)
(6) *Terentia*   magnos   articulorum dolores   habet
    Terentia-nom. heavy-acc. joints-gen. pains-acc. has
    'Terentia has a bad attack of rheumatism' (Cic. *Att.* 1.5.8)
(7) An vero . . . Scipio . . . Gracchum . . . interfecit? #
    Q indeed   Scipio-nom. Gracchus-acc. killed
    Catilinam   nos   consules   perferemus?
    Catiline-acc. we-nom. consuls-nom. shall-tolerate?
    'Shall Scipio have killed Gracchus, and shall we, consuls, put up with Catiline?' (Cic. *Catil.* 1.3)

In example (3) we see a so-called Theme-constituent (Dik 1989), which creates the framework for the message about the bodies of sheep. In (4) the Place Adjunct *apud Helvetios* serves to introduce Caesar's episode on the Helvetians. In (5) *Quintus*, being an Object constituent, was well known to Cicero's correspondent Atticus, just as his wife *Terentia*, in (6). Both are Topics and in initial position, as is the rule in such concluding messages about his family in Cicero's letters. Sentence (7), finally, is a fine example of double contrast:

Catilinam is in contrast with *Gracchum*, but there is also a contrast between what Scipio did and what *nos consules* maybe will do. *Catilinam* is, of course, already introduced into the discourse and therefore, in a sense, topical information. Its initial position instead of the even more topical *nos consules*, however, serves the contrast with respect to *Gracchum*.

Proceeding now to the final position in sentences, we may note in examples (3)–(7) above some clear examples of the tendency for Focus-constituents to occupy the final position of the sentence. Sentence (3) is an example of a Subject Complement (*corpore amplo*). A good example of an Object constituent is (8):

(8)   quem   relinquam . . .?   ratio . . .   postulat *fratrem*
       who-acc. I-shall-leave-behind? reason-nom. requires brother-acc.
       'Whom am I to leave (in command)? In principle, my brother is the man' (Cic. *Att.* 5.6.1)

Here, *fratrem* is the answer to the question 'who?', clearly a Focus constituent. Example (4) has a final Subject, which, however, I prefer to discuss later. Good examples of Focal Subjects are given in (9) and (10):

(9)   prensat   unus   *P. Galba*
       shake hands alone-nom. P. Galba-nom.
       'canvassing is done only by P. Galba' (Cic. *Att.* 1.1.1)
(10) stomachum   autem infirmum   indicant *pallor*,
       stomach-acc. but   weak-acc. indicate paleness-nom.
       macies
       meagreness-nom.
       'Weakness of the stomach is indicated by pallor, wasting' (Cels. 1.8.2)

In (9) Cicero is reporting about the elections, a ritual part of which is canvassing. New and important is the message that *Galba* is doing that. Example (10) is typical of the fifteen OVS instances from Celsus referred to in Table 7.1. The message can be understood as an answer to the question 'which are the symptoms for a weak stomach?' The same explanation holds for six out of seven VOS sentences.

We have seen so far nominal constituents in various syntactic functions occurring at the end of the sentence and carrying Focus function. In examples (5) and (7) the verb forms (*expectamus*, *perferemus*) may be said to carry Focus function as well. However, (6), while having a final verb form, cannot be explained along the

same lines. *Habet* can hardly be Focus (meaning something like 'she has indeed'). On the other hand, (6) is not the answer to the question 'What does Terentia have?' either, which explains why the Object does not occupy the focal final position. Rather, the combination of Object and Verb constitutes the answer to a question like 'How is Terentia doing?' The pragmatic structure of (6) can be formulated in the following way:

(6′)   Topic (*Terentia*) Focus (*magnos articulorum dolores habet*)

In examples like (6), where Object and Verb constitute a pragmatic unit, two options are open for ordering the two constituents: either both orders (OV, VO) are possible or one order is preferred. Suppose OV were preferred: in that case the OV order would be the expression both of the combination of an Object and a focal verb, and of a verb phrase consisting of Object and verb, behaving as a pragmatic unit, as in (6). OV might thus cover Object+VERB and Object+Verb, as opposed to VO, which is only the expression of Verb+OBJECT (capitals indicating Focus). This situation would resemble what we find in noun phrases, where the order N–Adj. is the expression both of the combination of noun and non-focal adjective and of the combination of focal noun and adjective. Good examples of Object–Verb combinations acting as a pragmatic unit are expressions like *bellum gerere* ('to wage war'). They may be regarded as complex predicates in which the noun has little 'individuation' (de Jong 1989: 533) and is not likely to be focalized. At this moment, there is no detailed information available about the order of constituents in Object–Verb combinations. However, it is evident that if some order were normal in these combinations (suppose OV) authors with a high number of such combinations would also have a high overall percentage of that particular order (OV). Caesar's plain narrative may be expected to have a high percentage of Object–Verb combinations and, maybe, here is the clue for his remarkably 'stable' word order.[3]

So far I have only presented examples of sentences in which it is possible to identify some constituent as having the pragmatic function of Topic and another one having the function Focus. However, there are sentences that cannot be described as giving additional information about some topical element. One might even hold that making a distinction between topical and focal constituents in certain sentences is pointless, since the entire information is new, without being anchored in the discourse in an obvious way. Sentences of this kind are normal in answer to a question like 'What

happened?'. Ulrich (1985) has studied this type of sentences in Rumanian and other Romance languages. A typical answer to the question just mentioned could be:

(11) Italian: mi ha morso un cane
     Spanish: la ha mordido un perro a mi madre

Such sentences, which Ulrich calls 'thetic' sentences, look like so-called 'presentative sentences', which serve to introduce new entities into the discourse. In such sentences the Verb has a relative early position in the sentence, whereas the Subject has a relative late position. Latin seems to make the same distinction between 'all-new' and pragmatically 'split-up' information. Our example (4) could be an instance of a presentative sentence (unless one wants to call *apud Helvetios* Topic). Other examples are (12)–(15):

(12) relinquebatur *una   per   Sequanos   via*
     was left   one-nom. through Sequani-acc. road-nom.
     'There remained one other line of route, through the borders of the Sequani' (Caes. *Gal.* 1.9.1)
(13) erant in ea   legione *fortissimi   viri*
     were in that-abl. legio-abl. very brave-nom. men-nom.
     'In that legion there were two most gallant men', Caes. *Gal.* 5.44.1)
(14) intrat *cinaedus*
     enters sodomite-nom.
     'At last bolted in a pansy-boy' (Petr. 23)
(15) venerat iam   *tertius   dies*
     had come already third-nom. day-nom.
     'The third day had come already' (Petr. 26)

Notice that not only stative verbs (like *esse*) occur in this sentence type, but action verbs (*intrare*) as well. Notice also that (12) is a passive sentence. Adams (1976b) gives examples of final Subjects in passive sentences in the Late Latin text of the Anonymus Valesianus. Vincent (1988: 60–2) suggests that especially Patient NPs occur in final position. However, as example (14) shows, any Subject of a one-place predicate can be found in that position in the pragmatic setting discussed above.[4]

It is time for an interim conclusion about Classical Latin. We have seen that it is useful to make a distinction between two types of pragmatic structure. In 'split-up' sentences the initial and the final position seem to be reserved for specific pragmatic purposes. In this type of sentence special attention should be given to the relative order of constituents within larger pragmatic units. In 'all-new' sentences the order VS seems to be quite common.

WORD ORDER IN LATE LATIN AND EARLY MEDIEVAL LATIN

The *Peregrinatio* has received much attention in studies on the development of Latin word order. The number of VO instances is higher than encountered so far in Classical Latin. The number of final verb forms is low (see above). Here again the question is how the statistical findings should be evaluated. Haida (1928) and Koll (1965: 252–6) have demonstrated that many of the statistically deviant cases can be explained perfectly well. Two examples may suffice:

(16) locum,   ubi . . . montes . . .   faciebant *vallem*
     place-acc. where   mountains-nom. made   valley-acc.
     infinitam,   ingens, planissima   et valde pulchram
     endless-acc. vast-acc. very-flat-acc. and very beautiful-acc.
     'a region, where the mountains formed an endless valley, vast, very flat and extremely beautiful' (*Per.* 1,1)
(17) et trans vallem   apparebat *mons   sanctus*
     and across valley-acc. appeared mountain-nom. holy-nom.
     Dei   Syna
     God-gen. Syna
     'and across the valley appeared the holy mountain of God, Syna' (*Per.* 1,1)

The first of these – successive – sentences contains a relative clause with a heavy Object constituent, which also constitutes the most important information (Focus). The second starts with a locative setting constituent, also topical information, followed by a presentative-like *apparebat mons*, where the VS order was shown to be normal in Classical Latin as well. Moreover, the Subject constituent is rather 'heavy'. The conspicuously high number of final Subjects is perfectly explainable in this travel and discovery story. Other texts from roughly the same period offer a different picture as far as the order of O and V, or the position of V, is concerned. In the *Acta conventus carthaginiensis* final position of the verb is normal, followed in frequency by initial verbs (Wolffs 1987). Interestingly, this work contains verbatim reports of the conference. In these parts VO is only slightly more frequent than in the narrative parts. In the medical text *Mulomedicina Chironis*, usually regarded as a typically

Vulgar Latin text (c. AD 400), there are seventeen SOV instances as opposed to two SVO (method of counting as in note 1), a proportion that is higher than that found in Celsus. The overall picture is one of variety, just as it was in the classical period. In our texts there is no support for claiming that by AD 400 word order had changed into SVO. Koll (1965) has also examined texts from a later period including texts from the Merovingian and Carolingian period. OV order can be found until the end of the period and the picture of variety persists.

The facts reported on above are difficult to interpret. A familiar interpretation, which can also be found with respect to other topics, is that the written texts cannot be taken as reliable sources for the actual stage of the development of Latin into the Romance languages. The higher the frequency of (S)OV is in a certain text, the more, it is often claimed, the author followed the stylistic principles of classical authors. The authors mechanically put the verb in final position, applying a rule that was easy enough. There are several problematic aspects with respect to this interpretation. (i) Classical authors did not simply put the V in final position. Maybe Caesar did, but this has not yet been investigated in a satisfactory manner. (ii) There is much variety between authors and text(type)s. Here, too, more than statistical analysis has hardly been undertaken. (iii) The greatest difficulty, however, for assuming more or less successful obedience to the 'verb-final rule' is that deviations from that rule can be explained by reference to the same factors that are shown to be valid for classical authors.

MORAL

The moral to this paper in the context of 'Latin and the Romance languages in the Early Middle Ages' is the following: there is no reason for assuming a SOV order in Classical Latin, nor is there one for assuming a SVO order by AD 400. Continued pragmatic analysis will bring to light more factors that determine the orders found in our texts. The last decade has brought an increased insight into the extent to which pragmatic factors are involved in the word order of individual Romance languages. There is more than SVO order in Romance. In fact, to quote one recent statement by Lambrecht (1988: 135) about French: 'The "canonical" transitive clause of the SVO type . . . hardly ever occurs in actual speech.' It is, moreover, quite probable that the individual Romance languages developed from Latin at a different speed (see Politzer 1958). Students of Early Medieval Latin need not hurry to find SVO.[5]

NOTES

1 The data on Caesar come from Ch. Elerick (unpublished) 'Word order in Caesar: SOV/V-1'. The data on Petronius are taken from Hinojo (1985); those on Claudius Terentianus (early second century AD) from Adams (1977: 74–5). The data on the *Vulgata* are taken from Metzeltin (1987). The first count on the *Peregrinatio* is taken from Väänänen (1987: 106). Those on Cic. *Att.* 1 are from Pinkster (1990), taking only declarative non-complex sentences, only nouns and proper names as S and O, no anaphoric elements, simple finite verb forms. The same method has been applied to the other texts mentioned in Table 7.1. The *Passio Ss. Scilitanorum* dates from AD 180, the *Acta conventus carthaginiensis* are from AD 411 (alternative figures from Wolffs 1987, using a less limited way of counting are as follows: SOV 9, SVO 1, OSV 4, OVS 9, VOS 1).
2 'Framing' or 'situating' constituents may also precede Topic constituents.
3 On Subject–Verb combinations acting as complex predicates see de Jong (1989: 534). In Celsus there seems to be a slight preference for OV in Object–Verb combinations that form a pragmatic unit.
4 De Jong (1989: 536–7) gives instances of 'all-new' clauses in which the Subject takes the first position.
5 I thank Helma Dik and Luisa Collewijn for their assistance in collecting data.

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8 The collapse and replacement of verbal inflection in Late Latin/Early Romance: how would one know?*

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In most manuals of Romance linguistics and philology, and in most histories of individual languages, one finds quite a long section on the elimination of the Latin case and declension systems, probably including discussion of the chronology of the development, the remnants it left (as in the personal pronoun system), the replacement structures, and maybe speculation on the causation of the shift (see, for instance, Elcock 1975: 69–110; Ewert 1943: 125–35; Pope 1952: 308–14). In most of the same manuals, one looks in vain for a comparable section on the loss of the Latin synthetic passive (compare Elcock 1975: 116–17; Ewert 1943: 176; Pope 1952: 332). Many, indeed, content themselves with a mere throw-away remark to the effect that the synthetic passive had disappeared without trace by the time of the first Romance texts. Yet the amount of inflectional morphology lost is at least equal to that lost from nominal declensions, and the concomitant adjust-ments to the grammatical system are arguably just as extensive. At a more scholarly level, there is a large literature on the loss of nominal inflection, including analysis of minute variations in epigraphic records with a view to establishing the chronology and spatial diffusion of the changes (see, for example, Gaeng 1979, 1984): but the demise of the passive is far less well documented. Is this an unjust neglect? Or is there simply no more to be said? This chapter argues that the neglect is indeed unjust, but that the challenge of interpreting the available data is quite formidable.

Table 8.1 exemplifies the five complete paradigms of the synthetic passive for typical first- and third-conjugation verbs, together, for each, with a simple morphological analysis based on the surface form. A marginally more abstract analysis would account for most of the remaining irregularities, notably those in vowel length. The five tense forms given here represent the imperfective aspect, and