

(1990)

# The development of cases and adpositions in Latin

Harm Pinkster  
*Department of Latin*  
*University of Amsterdam*

'Speech has no need of those additional words. So it is, it seems to me, with the speech of the Romans, which now is used by nearly all men, for it has eliminated all prepositions except for a few' (Plutarchus *24 Quaest. Plat. X,1010D*)  
'We have much more (prepositions) than the Greeks' (Prisc. 14,9)<sup>1</sup>

## 0. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that in Latin case plays an important role in marking the functional relations of nominal constituents of a clause, much more so than in the Romance daughter languages. Conversely, in the Romance languages adpositions (pre- and postpositions) are used with a higher frequency. Various explanations can be found for the change that took place, the most prominent among which is of a phonological nature: it is often said that the attrition of the inflexional endings and the ensuing merging of cases brought about the increase in the use of adpositions. In this paper I will examine the adpositional system and try to show that as early as the archaic and classical period the adpositions

---

<sup>1</sup> Plutarchus lived from ca. 45 - 120. Priscianus lived in the sixth century. I owe the reference to Prof. Dick Schenkeveld.

had certain characteristics of their own. From this we might conclude that adpositions are not simply analytical alternatives for case endings which may take over the functions of the case system if that system collapses.

### 1. From Latin to Romance: a preliminary survey

Latin had a mixed marking system in which both adpositions and 'bare' cases (i.e. cases not governed by adpositions) were used to indicate syntactic and semantic functions of nominal constituents. The relative frequency of both types of marking varies from author to author and from text type to text type. In one of Plautus' comedies (*Amphitruo*) adpositions constitute 3.75% of the vocabulary, whereas Caesar in his *de bello Gallico* has 8.61% (compare Pinkster 1990: 42).<sup>2</sup> There is also a distributional difference between the two types of marking. Bare cases are used for first, second and third arguments, as well as for satellites and attributes.<sup>3</sup> Adpositions are used for third arguments (ex. 1), satellites (ex. 2) and attributes (ex. 3), as is illustrated by the following instances of the preposition *de*:

- (1) qui ... de veneficiis accusabant  
 who<sub>nom</sub> of poisoning<sub>abl</sub> they accused  
 ('who accused <some people> of poisoning', Cic. *S.Rosc.* 90)
- (2) de vehiculo dicebat  
 from wagon<sub>abl</sub> he spoke  
 ('he spoke from a wagon', Nep. *Timol.* 4,2)
- (3) de collegio quis ... adfuit?  
 of college<sub>abl</sub> who<sub>nom</sub> was present  
 ('who was present of the college?', Cic. *Dom.* 117)

Adpositions are also used for marking second arguments, though not very frequently. In the case of satellites, adpositions are almost as frequent as bare cases, as we will see below (cf. Pinkster 1990: 65). There are a number of

<sup>2</sup> Elcock (1975: 34) observes that in Cicero's letters we find 'the increased reliance upon prepositions which is one of the decisive characteristics of Vulgar Latin'. As the percentages given in the text suggest, many factors may influence the frequency of adpositions. In Plautus the low percentage certainly is also due to the high frequency of adjectives. In Caesar the relative frequency of movement verbs may explain the relative frequency of directional and locative satellites and hence of directional and locative prepositions.

<sup>3</sup> 'Argument' and 'satellite' are used in the sense of Dik (1978), that is for obligatory and optional constituents with respect to the predicate, respectively.

expressions where adpositions and bare cases seem to be mere alternatives, for example with the verb *liberare* ('to release from'). I will come back to this below. However, there are also adpositional expressions for which no bare case expression exists. An example is the preposition *sine* ('without'). There is no bare case expression for 'withoutness'.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, adpositions are excluded in the case of first arguments.

In the Romance languages case marking plays a less important role. In fact, in most Romance languages - Rumanian being an exception - it disappeared almost completely. This can be shown easily with the help of the following two tables. 'Bare cases' in these tables means 'nominal constituents not governed by an adposition'.

Table 1: Proportion of bare cases and adpositions in Nepos *Milt.* 1-2 (Latin and modern translations)

	bare case	adposition
Latin	85%	15%
Italian <sup>5</sup>	40	60
French	50	50

Table 2: Distribution of bare cases and adpositions in Sall. *Hist.*, Or. Lep. 1-7 (Latin and Italian translation)

	1 arg	2 arg	3 arg	sat	attr	total
Latin bare case	25	13	6	16	15	75
adposition	0	0	2	10	0	12
Italian bare case	18	16	1	0	0	35
adposition	0	2	6	21	21	50

The two tables show that the increase of adpositions is most significant in the domain of attributes and third arguments, but there are also interesting instances of the use of adpositions for marking second arguments. This increase can be illustrated by the use of Romance successors of the Latin preposition *ad* ('to') for third arguments with verbs of giving and communication, and by the spread of successors of Latin *de* to all types of attributive noun phrases (cf. ex. 3). The intrusion of successors of *ad* with two-place verbs is most

<sup>4</sup> Adpositions without a bare case alternative can be found in particular in the 'secondary layer' of adpositions (Lehmann 1982: 94).

<sup>5</sup> The Italian translation is by V. Paladini (Bari, Adriatica Editrice, 1957). The French translation is the Budé edition.

remarkable: Fr. *nuire à*, It. *nuocere a* correspond to Latin *nocere*, which governs a dative. There is almost no sign for this development in our sources.<sup>6</sup> With these verbs the 'irregularity' of Latin (dative instead of accusative) continued in French and Italian. These languages adopted the *ad*-expression that had come into use instead of the Latin dative with verbs of giving and communication. In the domain of satellites there is an increase in the use of adpositions. However, adpositions were strongly represented in classical Latin as well.

## 2. Causes and mechanisms

The change that took place in Latin may be explained as being due to a reduction of the case system, as an expansion of the adpositional system (or as a mix of both).

### 2.1. *Reduction of the case system*

As I stated in the Introduction, the increase of adpositions is often regarded as a compensation for the collapse of the case system, which, in turn, is often ascribed to phonological and morphological changes. I start with the phonological changes.

The absence of final consonants in nominal forms can be documented from the archaic inscriptions onwards. It is found with the nominative *-s* ending of the nominative singular of the second declension (ex. 4, dated approx. 250 BC), but the most remarkable instances are those of absence of final *-m* in a wide range of occurrences (ex. 5, dated somewhat later), which brought Väänänen (1981: 66) to his neat formulation: 'le *-m* final était caduc dès l'époque archaïque'.

- (4) Cornelio  
Cornelius<sub>nom</sub> (CIL I<sup>2</sup>,8)

---

<sup>6</sup> However, there are a few interesting expressions in the *Mulomedicina Chironis*, especially if one compares them to the text of Vegetius, for which the *Mul. Ch.* was a source. Vegetius' Latin is much more 'classical' than his source text. Compare

haec res et *ad* febricantes prosunt (*Mul. Ch.* 115,29) with  
 quae potio etiam *febricitantibus* (dat.) prodest (*Veg. Mulom.* 206,9).  
 See Grevander (1926: 103-105).

- (5) *honc*    *oino*    *plourume*    *cosentiont*    *duonoro*  
*this<sub>acc</sub>*    *one<sub>acc</sub>*    *most<sub>nom</sub>*    *agree*    *good<sub>genpl</sub>*

*optumo* *fuise*                    *viro*  
*best<sub>acc</sub>* *have been* *man<sub>acc</sub>*

('Most people agree that this man has been the best of the good men',  
 CIL I<sup>2</sup>, 9)

Instances where final *-s* is lacking are not abundant in inscriptions and other texts (on the latter cf. Carlton 1973) even very late, although in poetry syllables ending in *-s* are peculiar in some way (cf. Allen 1978 : 36f.). On the other hand the evidence for the loss or absence of final *-m* is overwhelming and there are even early ancient testimonies to confirm the absence of the *-m* in the pronunciation of words ending in *-m* (cf. Allen 1978: 30ff. with references and the collection of ancient testimonies in Kramer 1976: 58-63). In the classical period a trace seems to have remained in the form of nasalisation and lengthening of the preceding vowel. The notation of *-m* in classical authors and documents of the classical period therefore can be regarded as an attempt to express the still existing phonetic difference between nasalized and plain final vowels in spelling. Later, probably not before 150 AD (Beckmann 1963: 180ff.), the presence of *-m* in writing is due to conservative spelling. The loss of final *-m* had serious consequences for the distinction of the ablative and accusative singular forms, sometimes also the dative singular forms. Accusative *mensam* and ablative *mensa* merged. This means that in the singular the amount of homonymy was much larger than would appear from our literary tradition. At first sight this may have been a fatal stroke to the case system. However, the formal distinction of accusative and ablative continued to exist in the plural. The occurrence of plural forms is not that much less than corresponding singular forms. Therefore, it cannot be easily assumed that the changes in the singular system dragged the plural forms along, witness table 3:

Table 3: Relative frequency of Accusative and Ablative forms of nouns in Caesar *Gal.*

	sg.	pl.
acc.	19%	12.5%
abl.	22%	12%

Furthermore, whatever happened to the accusative and ablative, there remained several forms which stayed outside the development mentioned above. Finally, the merging of ablative and accusative sg. did not take place with the same

speed in all declensions. In the second declension the changes of accusative (-om > -um > -o) and ablative (-o:d > -o: > -o) must have taken more time than in the consonant declension (Beckmann 1963: 180 ff.).

The conclusion to be drawn from this section, then, is that it is implausible that phonological developments alone, or predominantly, had left the case system with a problem to solve, which the system then solved by handing over some of its tasks to the adpositional system.

I now come to the morphological development. In Latin, different inflexional endings are used for different declensions. There is not only an evolution with respect to the differentiation of cases, but also with respect to the distinctness of the declension classes. In fact, the statistically infrequent *u*- and *e*- stems (as in *fructus* 'fruit' and *dies* 'day') tended to become absorbed into the more frequently used classes, e.g. *fructus* into the *o*-stems (as in *hortus* 'garden'). Inscriptional evidence shows that the declensional paradigms were not as straightforward as we are taught in school. Examples like *collegas* instead of *collegae* (nominative plural form of COLLEGA 'colleague') and *patris* instead of *patribus* (dative plural form of PATER 'father') (Gaeng 1984: 19, 81 resp.) show that inflexional endings were taken over from one declensional class to the other. The precise cause-effect relationship between the morphological and phonological developments is difficult to assess.<sup>7</sup> The very existence of morphological variation, however, confirms the insufficiency of a purely phonological approach.

## 2.2. *Expansion of the adpositional system*

Several explanations have been suggested for the increase of adpositions which are based on certain inherent properties or qualities of adpositions. I will now turn to these.

One quite general explanation - often tacitly understood and sometimes overtly expressed - that has been suggested for the development is based on the assumption of some sort of intrinsic 'drift' towards analyticity, which is sometimes linked to the assumption of a desire for expressiveness, in particular in the so-called 'Volkssprache'.<sup>8</sup> In such a view the evolution of the Romance languages is just a continuation of a similar development from Indo-European to Latin. However, given the fact that this putative drift does not manifest itself in all Indo-European languages and even in all Romance languages does not

<sup>7</sup> Carstairs (1987) gives some theoretical background for the relationship between morphological readjustments and phonological changes.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Svennung (1936: 362): 'Die Volkssprache liebt ja die expressive Ausdrucksweise'.

manifest itself in the same way and to the same extent, drift as an overall cause does not help very much.

A more specific mechanism mentioned in this context is the gradual replacement of a bare case expression by an adpositional expression which though not synonymous is very close in meaning, or at least in implication. Petersmann (1977: 90-1) is one of the scholars who point to a 'Verschiebung der Vorstellung' as an important factor for the spread of prepositional expressions in Latin. The spread of *ad* ('to') is a case in point. *Ad* as a substitute for the bare dative is well-known both in the case of purpose expressions (so-called *dativus finalis*, cf. Szantyr 1965: 86,93,220) and, most prominently, in the case of third arguments with verbs of communication and giving.

One of the early examples referred to in this context is (6):

- (6) uxor ... ad virum nuptum datur  
 wife<sub>nom</sub> to man<sub>acc</sub> to marry is given  
 ('a wife is given to a man in marriage', Pl. *St.* 140)

The example is interesting because the manuscript partly read *ad virum*, the adpositional expression, and partly *viro*, the bare dative. Petersmann, who later tended to date the substitution of *ad* for the dative rather late, defends the adpositional expression as *lectio difficilior*. Parallels cited in support of (6) are (7) and (9):

- (7) haec me modo ad mortem dedit  
 this<sub>nom</sub> me<sub>acc</sub> just to death<sub>acc</sub> gave  
 ('she has handed me over to be killed', Pl. *Am.* 809)

- (8) ibo ad medicum atque ibi me toxico morti dabo  
 I will go to doctor<sub>acc</sub> and there me<sub>acc</sub> poisonous<sub>dat</sub> death<sub>dat</sub> I will give  
 ('I'll go to a doctor and end it all with poison', Pl. *Mer.* 472)

- (9) facere ut det nomen ad Molae coloniam  
 to make that he gives name<sub>acc</sub> to Molae<sub>acc</sub> colony<sub>acc</sub>  
 ('to make him sign up as an emigrant to Millcolonia', Pl. *Pseud.* 1100)

- (10) ei ego urbi Gripo indam nomen  
 that<sub>dat</sub> I<sub>nom</sub> town<sub>dat</sub> Gripus<sub>dat</sub> I will give name<sub>acc</sub>  
 ('I will call that town Gripusburg', Pl. *Rud.* 934)

The difference between the *ad* expression in (7) and the dative expression in (8) is that in (7) an element of destination is involved,<sup>9</sup> in contrast with (8) where the handing over in its literal meaning is at stake. The difference between (9) and (10) is brought out well by the Loeb translation.

The same holds for verbs of communication, as in ex. (11):

- (11) quae ad patrem vis nuntiari  
 which<sub>acc</sub> to father<sub>acc</sub> you want to report  
 ('the message he's to carry to your father', Pl. *Capt.* 360)

Although *nuntiare* + dat. is quite normal, there is a difference in meaning between the two expressions. The *ad* expression conveys the idea of transportation towards someone, whereas the dative would mean 'to communicate to'. Similarly, *dicere* ('to say') + *ad* is not the same as *dicere* + dative. Apart from a semantic difference there may be a structural difference as well. In the former construction (with *ad*) *nuntiare* and *dicere* may be regarded as two-place verbs with an optional *ad* satellite. In the construction with the dative they are three-place verbs. The historical development might therefore be described as the grammaticalisation of the preference of the 'change of place' aspect over the 'coming into the possession of' aspect.

Another mechanism is the spread of an adpositional expression from one context where it is quite appropriate to another where it is at first sight out of place. The working of this mechanism has been illustrated by Beckmann (1963) in a detailed study on the development of instrumental expressions, for example with *ad* ('to'), *de* ('from'), *ex* ('out of') *in* ('in'). I take some of his examples of *ex*.

The earliest example of *ex* in an instrumental expression, disputed as it is, is nonetheless interesting to illustrate part of the development:

- (12) si forte <feras> ex nare sagaci sensit (canis)  
 if by chance animals<sub>acc</sub> from nose<sub>abl</sub> sagacious<sub>abl</sub> has noticed dog<sub>nom</sub>  
 ('if by chance a dog smells wild animals with his sagacious nose',  
 Enn. *Ann.* 341V(=333Sk)<sup>10</sup>

Particularly frequent in Celsus and other medical authors (cf. Englund 1935: 117-9) are expressions of *ex* with nouns indicating liquid material (like *aqua* 'water') in connection with verbs like *eluere* ('to wash clean') and *ungere* ('to anoint'). The plain ablative case is equally possible in these contexts. The *ex*

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *ad camificem* in Pl. *Capt.* 1019.

<sup>10</sup> For reservations about the validity of this example see Skutsch a.l.

expression can be understood as derived from either a partitive or a source meaning ('to clean with some water' or 'to wash by taking some water'). From this lexically restricted context it spread to other contexts, a late example of which is (13):

- (13) *ex digitis exploramus*  
 from *fingers<sub>abl</sub>* we investigate  
 ('we search with our fingers', Mart. Cap. 9,968)

The same mechanism (spread to other domains) can be demonstrated in the case of other Instrument/Manner expressions. A closer examination of the use of the prepositions *cum* ('with') and *per* ('through') in archaic and classical Latin may also shed some light on the function of adpositions in marking nominal constituents.

The difference between Instrument and Manner expressions is not always easy to establish. It is to some extent related to the lexical meanings of the nouns and verbs involved and often the presence of qualifying adjectives is a clue to the semantic function of the NP as a whole (cf. Vester 1983). By instrumental expressions I will here understand objects, actions and methods wilfully employed by some person in order to reach a specific goal (cf. Beckmann 1963). In Latin the ablative case is a very common means of marking Instrument/Manner constituents. However, from the earliest texts onwards the adpositions *cum* and *per* are used as well. Among the instances of *cum* in the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (s.v. 1363-1370), expressions with concrete nouns as their prepositional complement (type *gladius* 'sword') appear to be rare. I discuss a few of the examples:

- (14) *in solo tracta cum melle oblinito bene*  
 in *crust<sub>abl</sub>* *tracta<sub>acc</sub>* with *honey<sub>abl</sub>* cover well  
 ('cover the tracta on the crust thickly with honey', Cato R. 77)

- (15) *ista cum lingua... possis culos lingere*  
 that<sub>abl</sub> with *tongue<sub>abl</sub>* you can *anus<sub>acc</sub>* lick  
 ('with a tongue like that you might lick the anus', Catul. 98,3)

- (16) (*olea*) *melior ... quae digitis nudis ... quam*  
*olive<sub>nom</sub>* *better<sub>nom</sub>* *which<sub>nom</sub>* *fingers<sub>abl</sub>* *bare<sub>abl</sub>* than

*illa quae cum digitibus (legitur)*  
 that<sub>nom</sub> *which<sub>nom</sub>* with *gloves<sub>abl</sub>* is picked  
 ('the olive is better which is picked with bare hands than that one which is picked with gloves (Varro RR 1,55,1)

With the verb *oblinere* of (14) ('to smear') the thing used is normally expressed by the bare ablative.<sup>11</sup> This notable exception may be explained, however, because of the contrast with another similar recipe a few lines further on, which has *sine melle* ('without honey').<sup>12</sup> Something similar may be the case with ex. (16). The contrast is between *nudis* and *cum*. However, this example is not a straightforward instance of an instrumental expression either. Clothes can hardly ever be viewed as instruments. In this example the action of picking is performed with the hands, wearing gloves. It would be better to regard the *cum*-phrase as a Praedicativum (cf. Pinkster 1990: 146). Ex. (15) has evoked various explanations in the commentaries on Catullus. Quinn, for example, observes that '*cum* with the instrumental is an archaism', which cannot be true. Kroll regards the *cum* phrase as denoting a property of the subject: 'You with your...', which, in my opinion, is correct. Most of the examples in the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae receive similar explanations.<sup>13</sup> Examples with a concrete noun, in fact, come late, for example (17):

- (17) caede caudam cum tabula aliqua ponderosa  
 cut tail<sub>acc</sub> with plank<sub>abl</sub> some<sub>abl</sub> heavy<sub>abl</sub>  
 ('cut the tail with some heavy plank'. Veg. *Mulom.* 1,27,2)

We see, then, that the use of the preposition *cum* in its 'instrumental' meaning obeys quite narrow selection restrictions. The preposition is allowed with concrete nouns if the concept of instrumentality is to be emphasised or if an Instrument interpretation is not quite obvious. The latter explanation might also hold for Manner satellites: if the noun phrase has an adjective the interpretation normally seems to be clear enough. If it is lacking, potential ambiguity is avoided by using *cum*.

<sup>11</sup> I treat *oblinere* as a two-place verb, although there is some reason to regard it as a three-place verb on account of the existence of dat. acc. alternatives, just as with *circumdare* ('to surround')

<sup>12</sup> It is even conceivable that *tracta cum melle* is a noun phrase with a prepositional attribute.

<sup>13</sup> I mention a few of the more embarrassing ones.

(a) *cistella ... cum crepundiis quibuscum (quibus Fleckeisen) filiam inveni meam* ('a little casket of toys which enabled me to find my daughter', Pl. *Rud.* 1363). The Loeb translation makes clear that the casket and its content were not real instruments in the action of finding the daughter. This makes the presence of *cum* no less remarkable.

(b) *tibiae ..., cum quibus in funere canitur* (Paul Fest. 33,1). The *cum* phrase indicates the accompaniment, not the instrument, cf. Plin. *NH* 7,204 *cum tibiis canere voce*.

(c) *ut etiam cum acopo ... articuli perfricentur* (Cels. 4.31). Edd. read *tum* and Loeb translates: 'that also then the joints may be rubbed with an anodyne salve'.

(d) *quem cum manu tangeret* (Ps. Quint. decl. exc. Monac. 358,21 L) I do not fully understand the text.

(e) *per quod utaris cum eo utaris*. (Tert. *Resurr.* 7, p. 36,18). Some of the manuscripts omit *cum eo utaris*.

Something similar seems to apply to *per*. In Plautus this preposition is used in Instrument/Manner expressions<sup>14</sup> like (18) and (19):

(18) *urbe capta per dolum*  
 town<sub>abl</sub> capture<sub>abl</sub> by guile<sub>acc</sub>  
 ('after the town had been captured by guile', Pl. *Ba.* 1070)

(19) *haec vobis dixi per iocum*  
 these<sub>acc</sub> you<sub>dat</sub> I said through fun<sub>acc</sub>  
 ('this I said to you in fun', Pl. *Poe.* 542-2)

Bare case expressions parallel to the prepositional expressions in (18) and (19) do exist,<sup>15</sup> albeit with a much lower frequency. It seems that the adpositional expressions are highly idiomatic. Lodge mentions a few examples of instrumental *per* with concrete nouns in his dictionary (1924), but they are all questionable. I discuss one example given by Lodge:

(20) *strictim adtonsurum ... an per pectinem*  
 closely going to trim<sub>acc</sub> or through comb<sub>acc</sub>  
 ('is it going to be a close crop or just a trim', Pl. *Capt.* 268)

This is a particularly interesting example, since the prepositional phrase is coordinated with the adverb *strictim*, which is normally taken as a manner adverb. However, the comb is not the proper instrument with which the cutting is performed. The bare ablative *pectine* seems to be impossible. As far as I can see, the instrumental use of *per* is limited in the case of concrete nouns in classical prose. This is certainly true for Cicero<sup>16</sup> and Caesar. According to Muhr (1971: 95) Sallust prefers the use of *per* with abstract nouns, which sometimes could not be used in the bare ablative. The selection of the *per* expression is mainly due to either Sallust's aiming at variation in expression or the avoidance of possibly ambiguous ablatives in the same clause (see Muhr 1971: 97). Later on, Tacitus, who shares Sallust's preference for varied

<sup>14</sup> *Per* is often used with animate beings to indicate the intermediate agency, as in *an ab imprudente aut per imprudentem sit interfectus* (Quint. *Decl.* 248, p. 18,17). It also is used with a causal meaning ('due to'). It is not always easy to distinguish pure instrumental/manner use from these uses.

<sup>15</sup> For example *expugnare dolis* ('to capture by guiles') in Pl. *Mi.* 1157 and *ioco dixisti* ('you said this in fun') in Pl. *Am.* 964, taking up *per iocum* in the preceding line, and being in contrast with *serio ac vero*.

<sup>16</sup> In Cicero expressions like *per litteras* (as in Cic. *Att.* 12,14,3 *feci ut ipse me per litteras consolaretur*) are closest to the instrumental use of *per*. *per* expressions are quite frequent in the *Rhet.ad Her.* in definitions like *concessio est per quam nobis ignosci postulamur* (2,23).

expressions (Kučera 1882: 16), has a few examples which look similar to bare ablative expressions<sup>17</sup> indicating Instrument. In technical prose adpositions in general, and *per* in particular, seem to be more frequent. Englund (1935: 120-3) discusses various examples of *per* in Celsus. A clear example of a medical instrument expression with *per* is (21):

- (21) *adducta per hamulum vena praeciditur*  
 drawn<sub>nom</sub> by hook<sub>acc</sub> vein<sub>nom</sub> is cut off  
 ('the vein drawn forward by the hook is cut off', Cels. 7,13,3)

Two factors are mentioned by Englund which may explain the relative frequency of *per*. The first is the overall preference for adpositional expressions with pronouns.<sup>18</sup> The second is the avoidance of more than one ablative in a clause. I would like to add a third factor myself, namely the fact that in texts of this kind ('instructions') the agentless passive is used quite frequently (cf. ex. (21)). In such a context the ablative might be interpreted either as the Instrument used in performing the action or as the Force responsible for causing the action. The existence of such factors which may influence the choice of the adpositional expression shows that we are still far away from late examples like (22):

- (22) *si loca sancta per idola polluissent*  
 if places<sub>acc</sub> holy<sub>acc</sub> through statues<sub>acc</sub> they had polluted  
 ('If they had polluted the holy places by statues', Hier. *Ep.* 58,3)<sup>19</sup>

Generalising from these observations on *cum* and *per*, the division of tasks between bare cases and adpositional expressions with the function Instrument/Manner seems to be the following: concrete instruments have to be marked by the bare ablative, whereas with abstract nouns (including verbal nouns) both bare case expressions and adpositional expressions are possible, with a preference for adpositional expressions, especially in certain idioms. There is no real free variation. Selection restrictions may be ignored if the instrumental relationship is emphasised or if ambiguity might arise.

<sup>17</sup> For example *resumpta per arma dominatione* ('recovering their throne by force of arms', Tac. *Hist.* 5,8,3) and *servos per tormenta interrogari placuit* ('it was resolved to question the slaves under torture', Tac. *A.* 2,30,3 - cf. *tormentis* in 3,67,3). Parallels for the latter example can be found in legal texts.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Löfstedt (1942: 274,297f.), who assumes that the preference of adpositions is due to the small size of pronouns. However, the avoidance of ambiguity may have been a factor as well.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Goelzer (1884: 333)

### 3. Conclusion

In the final part of the preceding section I tried to show that adpositions are used with a much higher frequency with abstract than with concrete nominal expressions. This association between adpositions and abstract nouns has been observed in other fields as well. Théoret (1982) has examined verbs which allow alternative bare case and adpositional expressions and has noted a similar association between adpositions and abstract nouns for Cicero. The alternative expressions that occur with the verb *liberare* can be shown not to be interchangeable either (see Pinkster 1990: 267). According to Pitkaranta (1978: 48ff.) late Latin instrumental *de* is primarily found with abstract nouns in literary texts. Concrete nouns seem to be restricted to 'vulgar' registers. In all these cases we are dealing with nominal expressions closely connected to the predicate (as arguments) or to the nuclear predication (Instrument/Manner satellites, that is level 1 satellites in the sense of Dik (1989: 192)). We might hypothesise that the frequency of adpositions with abstract nouns derives from the fact that the semantic relationship between these nouns and the predicate (or nuclear predication) is less predictable than in the case of concrete nouns. In the case of satellites that have no close relation to the predicate or nuclear predication (level 2 or higher satellites) adpositional expressions were the normal thing. As I have observed before, there is no bare case expression for 'withoutness', in any period of Latin that we can study. We must conclude, therefore, that in archaic and classical Latin there was a clear, basically semantic, motivation for the use of adpositions, which, as such, is independent of phonological or morphological properties of the nominal expressions involved.

If it is correct that adpositions fulfilled a specific function in the structure of clauses, being more frequent the less they are related to the predicate or nuclear predication, and if, moreover, they were preferred in certain lexical contexts (abstract nouns, contrastive situations), then this might have some consequence for our idea of the nature and the chronology of the decrease of bare case and the increase of adpositional expressions.

Starting with chronology, scholars differ greatly in their opinion about the relative chronology of the replacement of bare case expressions by adpositional expressions. Salenius (1920: 96) holds that adpositional expressions existed under the surface of our literary tradition where they 'unter der Eisdecke der normalisierenden klassischen Prosa ein kümmerliches Dasein fristeten', an opinion which is shared by Mohrmann's (1947). Speaking about the prepositions used instead of the instrumental ablative she observes: 'Cette tendance remonte sans doute à des temps anciens' (= *Études* III, p. 220). Differences as exist between the vulgar Itala text of the Bible and its less vulgar counterpart, the Vulgata, and between the vulgar *Mulomedicina Chironis* and its less vulgar

adaptor Vegetius seem to point to some awareness among the more educated people that in certain expression types prepositions ought to be avoided. On the other hand, however, given the massive use of adpositions for all types of semantic relations it is very remarkable that the selection restrictions with respect to concrete nouns, including real instruments, were respected so consistently. This is an additional consideration for a rather late date of the replacement of bare case expressions by adpositional ones.<sup>20</sup>

The persistence of selection restrictions furthermore suggests the picture of a gradual spread of the adpositional expression type, which found its last victim, so to speak, in expressions which were quite understandable on the basis of their lexical meaning. With the verbs of giving and communication, for example, the verbs themselves are excellent indicators of the meaning relations involved. In the case of nouns meaning 'instrument' their possible relationship with respect to the action denoted by the verb usually is not very problematic. The existence of lexical restrictions on the use of adpositions may be regarded as an indication that the use of adpositions is not the result of phonological attrition or at least solely a result of this attrition. The attrition, on the other hand, may have been facilitated by the independent spread of the use of adpositions.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, W.S. 1978<sup>2</sup> *Vox Latina*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Beckmann, G.A. 1963. *Die Nachfolgekonstruktionen des instrumentalen Ablativs im Spätlatein und im Französischen* (Beihefte ZRPh. 106). Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Carlton, Ch.M. 1973. *A Linguistic Analysis of Late Latin Documents Composed in Ravenna between AD 445-700*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Carstairs, A. 1987. *Allomorphy in Inflexion*. London: Croom Helm.
- Dik, S.C. 1978. *Functional Grammar*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Dik, S.C. 1989. *The Theory of Functional Grammar*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Elcock, W.D. 1975. *The Romance Languages*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Englund, J. 1935. *Kasussyntax hos A. Comelius Celsus*. Diss. Göteborg.

<sup>20</sup> Gaudemet (1979: 58-59) places the development of *ad* far too early (I owe the reference to dr Klaas Worp). I quote two clear examples from the TLL:

(a) non quasi ad extraneam sed quasi ad uxorem fecit (scil. donationem) (Ulp. *Dig.* 24,1,32,27)  
 (b) munera dantes ad servientes ibidem (Itin. *Hier. Anton.* 30).

- Gaeng, P.A. 1984. *Collapse and reorganization of the Latin Nominal Flexion as Reflected in Epigraphic Sources*. Potomac: Scripta Humanistica.
- Gaudemet, J. 1979<sup>2</sup>. *La formation du droit séculier et du droit de l'Église aux IVe et Ve siècles*. Paris.
- Goelzer, H. 1884. *La Latinité de St. Jérôme*. Paris.
- Grevander, S. 1926. *Untersuchungen zur Sprache der Mulomedicina Chironis*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Kramer, J. 1976. *Literarische Quellen zur Aussprache des Vulgärlateins*. Meisenheim am Glan: Hain.
- Kučera, E. 1882. *Über die taciteische Inconcinuität*. Programm Olmütz.
- Lodge, G. 1924. *Lexicon Plautinum*. Leipzig (=Hildesheim, Olms, 1971)
- Lehmann, C. 1982. *Thoughts on Grammaticalization I*. AKUP 48.
- Löfstedt, E. 1942<sup>2</sup>. *Syntactica I*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Mohrmann, C. 1947. 'Quelques observations linguistiques à propos de la nouvelle version latine du psautier', *Vig.Chr.* 1, 114-28;168-82 (= Études sur le latin des chrétiens III, 197-225).
- Muhr, O. 1971. *Die Präposition per bei Sallust*. Diss. Graz.
- Pinkster, H. 1990. *Latin Syntax and Semantics*. London: Routledge.
- Pitkäranta, R. 1978. *Studien zum Latein des Victor Vitensis*. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica.
- Salonius, A.H. 1920. *Vitae Patrum*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Svennung, J. 1936. *Untersuchungen zu Palladius und zur lateinischen Fach- und Volkssprache*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells.
- Théoret, M. 1982. *Les discours de Cicéron. La concurrence du tour casuel et du tour prépositionnel*. Montréal: U.P.
- Väänänen, V. 1981<sup>3</sup>. *Introduction au latin vulgaire*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Vester, E. 1983. *Instrument and Manner Expressions in Latin*. Assen: Van Gorcum.