

## The Semantic Development of the Latin perfect (R. Crellin)

Latin verbs are typically marked for tense (present, past, future), voice (active and passive) and mood (indicative, subjunctive). In addition to this there are two stems, the *infectum* and the *perfectum*. The *perfectum* is held to be the product of the merging of the inherited perfect and aorist stems (Clackson and Horrocks 2007, 20, 64, 98f.). Thus inherited perfect stems showing reduplication, e.g. *pepigi*, from *pango* ‘fix’, sit side by side in the same paradigm with inherited aorist stems in -s-, e.g. *dixi*, from *dico* ‘say’. By the time of our earliest Latin texts, the merging of the former perfect and aorist paradigms is complete. While the inherited synthetic perfect stem had no voice distinction, as the perfect was integrated into the rest of the verb system, an analytic form was developed for it, consisting of a finite form of *esse* ‘be’ and a participle in -*tu-* (inherited \*-*to-*). The general scheme, in the indicative, is given in the following table:

	<b>Active</b>		<b>Passive</b>	
	<i>Infectum</i>	<i>Perfectum</i>	<i>Infectum</i>	<i>Perfectum</i>
<b>Present</b>	am-o	ama-v-i	am-or	amatus sum
<b>Past</b>	ama-bam	ama-v-eram	ama-bar	amatus eram
<b>Future</b>	ama-bo	ama-v-ero	ama-bor	amatus ero

The distinction between the *infectum* and *perfectum* does not lend itself to a clear split in terms of aspect: while the *infectum* is used to describe imperfective aspect, the *perfectum* clearly encodes *anteriority* as often as it encodes perfectivity, these terms defined per Bybee et al. (1994, 55f.) and Klein (1992; 1994). The perfectivity or anteriority of the perfect has a concrete effect on the sequence of tenses in dependent clauses (Mountford 1984, 76):

- [1] statuerunt [perf. ind.]... maiores nostri ut... sortito in quosdam animadverteretur [impf. subj.]...  
 [F]or our forebears determined that... against a few punishment should be brought by lot... (Cic. *Clu.* 46.128) Text: Clark (1908); trans. RC.
- [2] ... hoc statui [perf. ind.], ut... a me mos gestus esse videatur [pres. subj.].  
 ... I have considered, that... it seems the precept has been obeyed by me. (Cic. *Att.* 2.16.3) Text: Purser (1903), trans. RC.

This anterior / perfective ambivalence is also present outside of the present perfect, as these future perfect examples show:

- [3] cum perspexero [fut. perf. ind.] voluntates nobilium, scribam ad te.  
 When I have seen the wishes of the nobles, I will write to you. (Cic. *Att.* 1.1.2) Text: Purser (1903), trans. RC.
- [4] 'ego certe meum rei publicae atque imperatori officium praestitero [fut. perf. ind.].'  
 "I for certain will do my duty to the republic and my general." (Caes. *BG.* 4.25.3)  
 Text: Rice Holmes (1914); trans. RC.

Further complicating the picture are certain verbs which in the perfect and pluperfect describe the state of the subject at reference time without necessarily referring back to a prior event (Allen and Greenough 1887, 198). This is true not only of defective verbs, that is verbs without a present stem, such as *odi* ‘hate’ and *memini* ‘remember’, but also of a number of change of

state or location verbs with full paradigms, such as (*co-g*)*nosco* 'know', *consuesco* 'accustom (oneself)', *obsolesco* 'wear out, become obsolete'.

The same range of use can be seen in the passive system. The 'perfect passive', as attested in Latin, thus carries resultative-anterior and perfective semantics.

[5] *mox clientes... in Pannonia locati sunt* [*pres. perf. ind.*]...  
soon his followers... were settled in Pannonia. (Tac. *Ann.* 12.30) Text: Fisher (1906);  
trans. after Church & Brodribb (1942).

[6] ... *castra Sabina, quae pro moenibus sociorum locata erant* [*plpf. ind.*]...  
... the Sabine camp, which was located in front of the walls of their allies... (Livy  
2.53.1) Text: Weissenborn & Müller (1898); trans. after Roberts (1912).

If one adopts the framework proposed in Bybee et al. (1994, 68ff.), of a development cline of resultative > anterior > perfective, the natural inference is that, prior to the merging of the inherited aorist and perfect stems, the inherited perfect in Latin had only resultative-anterior semantics. The attested Latin present perfect indicative may be said, therefore, to be in an intermediate, anterior-perfective, stage along this cline (Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994, 78). By the advent of Romance, this develops fully into a perfective / preterite, as the anterior value is taken over by the *have* / *be* perfect.

However, outside of the present perfect indicative, the development path is by no means as clear. It is generally assumed (Clackson and Horrocks 2007, 211ff.; Pinkster 2015, 1:466) that the sense of the future perfect develops from a perfective in Old Latin into an anterior in the Classical language. Yet the development of an anterior from a perfective is, according to Bybee et al. (1994, 12), unknown. While other hypotheses are possible, specifically, that for reasons of style and conservatism, the innovative perfect use of the future perfect never 'made the grade' in official Latin, *a priori* at least the future perfect in Latin provides an example of retrenchment from an anterior-perfective to an anterior only.

Some parallels may be observed in the development of the perfect passive system. Thus while it is clear that the perfect passive in all stages of Latin is capable of resultative, anterior and perfective use, in Romance, at least outside of unaccusatives, this form is used with resultative or present passive sense, not past / anterior:

[7] *Ce monde, tel qu'il est fait, n'est pas supportable.*  
'This world, such as it is made, is unbearable.' (Camus, *Caligula*)

[8] *sono lodato* 'I am praised' (Drinka 2013, 606)

Here, it seems, that a form capable of anterior and perfective denotation in an earlier stage of the language develops into a specialised resultative in a later stage.

Reasons for both developments are sought within the structural development of the verb system as a whole. As far as Latin is concerned, the evidence does not support inexorable development along Bybee et al.'s cline, and an approach looking in greater detail at the particular semantic range, syntactic use, and sociolinguistic context of particular forms, and the verb system in which they sit, is in order.

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