LATIN VULGAIRE
LATIN TARDIF X

Actes du Xe colloque international
sur le latin vulgaire et tardif

Bergamo, 5-9 septembre 2012

Édités par Piera Molinelli, Pierluigi Cuzzolin
et Chiara Fedriani

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Indice generale

VOLUME II

SEMANTICA

LESSICO

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In Search of the Regional Diversification of Latin: Changes of the Declension System According to the Inscriptions*

Abstract

In order to discover chronological and/or geographical differences in the Latin of the Roman Empire, this paper analyses the distributional structures of the nominal morphosyntactic 'errors' which have been to date recorded from Latin inscriptions and concern the changes of the declension system. The present investigation, which is based on the very methodology of József Herman, will demonstrate that Roman provinces (Moesia Inferior, Moesia Superior, Dalmatia, Venetia-Histria and Gallia Narbonensis selected for survey) can show conclusive differences in the distribution of morphosyntactic phenomena both chronologically and geographically, and that this way they can be classified dialectologically. According to the inscriptional material of later periods, Gallia Narbonensis and Venetia-Histria can be classified as belonging to an area where the linguistic system has only two cases, the same way as Old French and Old Occitan does, while Dalmatia displays a preform of another two-case system, of the Balkan type. Regarding Moesia Inferior and Superior, it can be asserted that a three-case system emerged in both areas, but the lack of any inscriptional evidence from the later periods makes it impossible to determine the direction in which the three case-system would have developed: towards the Gallic type represented by Gallia Narbonensis and Venetia-Histria, or the Balkan type represented by Dalmatia.

0. *Introduction*

According to József Herman, morphosyntactic phenomena in inscriptional texts are less suitable for statistical treatment in Latin dialectology than phonological ones (Herman 2000a: 126). However,

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here the sharp distinction between phonology and morphosyntax, and the implicit resignation from the morphosyntactic investigation of inscriptions is due to practical rather than theoretical considerations. The great majority of the data, i.e. the 'errors' that can be recorded from inscriptions are of phonological nature. This way, for Herman, only phonological data seem to be of sufficient frequency, therefore phonology is the primary subject for the statistical treatment of inscriptional texts.

This low proportion of morphosyntactic 'errors' found on inscriptions is also obvious in the data collected to date in the "Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age". If we exclude the 'errors' of technical origin[1] and consider the general distribution of phonological and morphosyntatic data[2], we get the following distribution[3]:
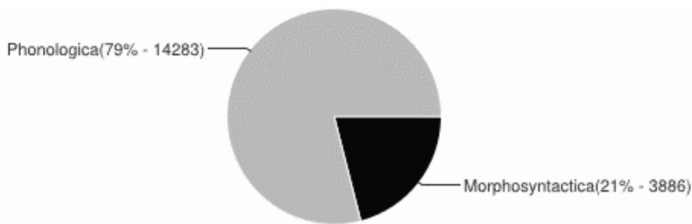
Chart 1: *General distribution of phonological and morphosyntatic data*

It is clear from this chart that the great majority of the 'errors' recorded in our Database from the timespan reaching from the first to the eighth century is indeed of phonological nature (14,283 = 79%), while morphosyntactic 'errors' are in obvious minority (3,886 = 21%). This 21% rate is considerably higher than that found by Herman's

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[1] Labelled as *Errores non grammaticae* in the Database (see: http://lldb.elte.hu/); for a general description of the Database see Adamik (2009).

[2] In the charts 1-3 we consider only those data forms in our Database that do not have an alternative code (i.e. we exclude the data of alternative interpretation). As for definition of data and data form, on which the data are recorded in the Database concerned see: http://lldb.elte.hu/admin/doc_guidelines.php

[3] All the charts displayed in the study are prepared with the charting module of the Database and represent the status on 31.12.2012.

investigation, where it was only 12%[4]. Although this difference may not seem to be too significant (21% vs. 12%), it nevertheless encourages and entitles us to survey this relative minority of morphosyntactic data in order to decide whether or not they are of sufficient frequency and thus suitable for statistical analysis in Latin dialectology.

In order to answer these questions we first have to analyse the linguistic distribution of the data set of morphosyntactic 'errors' in more detail, irrespective of their chronological and territorial distribution.
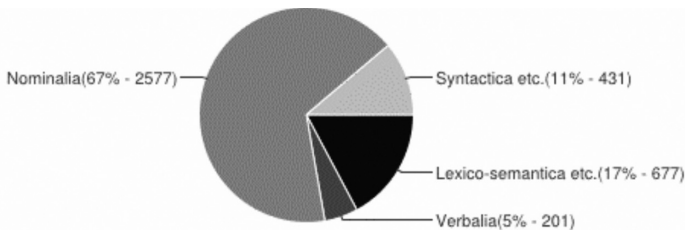
Chart 2: *General distribution of morphosyntatic data*

If we consider the internal distribution of morphosyntactic data (in all 3,886 cases, displayed in Chart 2), it becomes obvious at first sight that the nominal morphosyntax (labelled as *Nominalia* in the chart) can serve as an object for statistical treatment due to its high proportion (67%, 2,577 items). Thus henceforth we merely deal with the nominal morphosyntactic data, that have the following, interesting distribution:
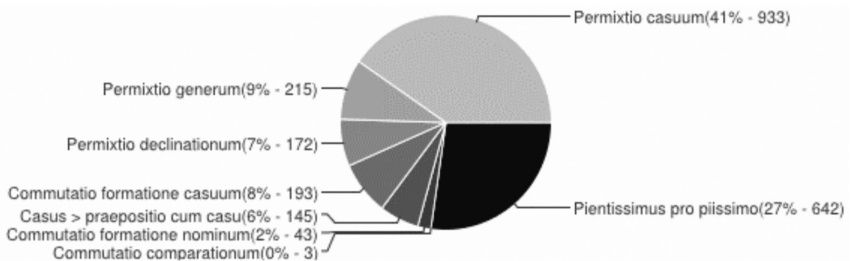
Chart 3: *Distribution of nominal morphosyntactic data*

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[4] See the charts of Herman 2000a: 129-133 (cf. also Adamik 2012: 136-137); in Herman's investigation there are 869 occurrences (= 88%) of phonological phenomena (AE~E included), and 123 occurrences (= 12%) of morphosyntactic phenomena.

Chart 3 shows that the majority of the nominal morphosyntactic data concerns the changes of the declension system (71% = 1,658 items), including the confusion of the cases (*Permixtio casuum*: 41% = 933 items), genders (*Permixtio generum*: 9% = 215 items) and declensions (*Permixtio declinationum*: 7% = 172 items); innovations regarding the case endings (*Commutatio formatione casuum*: 8% = 193 items); and the use of prepositional phrases instead of inflections without prepositions (*Casus > praepositio cum casu*: 6% = 145 items; including the inverse counterparts as well), which is a symptom of the dissolution of the case system. If we disregard the relatively few incidences of pure morphological changes that concern the formation of nouns (*Commutatio formatione nominum*: 2% = 42 items), in some isolated cases the transformation of the grades of comparison in adjectives (*Commutatio comparationum*: 0% = 3 items) and especially the numerous instances of the practically lexicalized irregular superlative of the adjective *pius*, i.e. *pientissimus* instead of *piissimus* (*Pientissimus pro piissimo*: 27% = 642 items), it becomes clear that the investigation of the changes concerning the case system (41% = 933) may be the most promising research field.

Consequently henceforth we only deal with the confusions of the cases (41% = 933 items) and the non-classical preposition usage (6% = 145 items), which together adds up to a promising proportion of 47% (= 1,078 items) of the nominal morphosyntactic data. We will also consider the instances of the first-declension nominative plural ending -*as* (18 items). The group of data thus obtained (1,078 in total) demonstrates the transformation of the case system, especially the confusion of the cases (933 items). They hopefully create a solid basis for the further investigation of the changes of the case-system and their territorial and chronological distribution.

Throughout our investigation on the transformation of the declension system, we will consider all types of confusion of the cases recorded in our material, with particular emphasis on the substantial confusion of the accusative and the ablative, of the genitive and the dative, and of the nominative and the accusative. The blending of these cases led to the emergence of the Vulgar Latin declension system, where only two or three cases (depending on the region) were in use, as opposed to the classical declension system of five cases (Cf. Herman 2000b: 49ff). Apart from these confusions, we will also consider the

instances of the first-declension nominative plural ending -*as,* which is the result of formal morphological confusion, rather than of a more general confusion of the nominative and accusative (Cf. Herman 2000b: 55). In addition, we will consider the instances of using prepositional phrases instead of the classical usage of inflections without prepositions, because the slowly dissolving case system was gradually replaced by prepositional phrases (excluding Rumanian to some extent); see Herman 2000b: 61.

Throughout our investigation, we will only consider those territorial units, i.e. Roman provinces, from where the inscriptional data is already uploaded to the Database, and where the amount of morphological data is sufficient for a meaningful statistical analysis. We will treat the respective Roman provinces one after the other, in two chronologically based sections: (1) early Empire, i.e., the 1-3rd centuries A.D.; (2) later Empire, i.e., the era starting with the 4th century and lasting up to the 5th or 6th or 7th, and sometimes even 8th century A.D., depending on the history and epigraphic culture of each province.

For our investigation we have selected five Roman provinces from the Latin part of the Empire: Moesia Inferior, Moesia Superior, Dalmatia, Venetia-Histria and Gallia Narbonensis. Now let us examine the selected Roman provinces starting from the East, going westwards, looking first at the early, then the later Empire in each of them, to see whether these temporal and spatial units show conclusive differences in the distribution of the linguistic phenomena under consideration.

1.1. *Early Moesia Inferior*

The first province to be analysed is Moesia Inferior[5]. The data recorded from early Moesia Inferior are sufficient (149 items = 100%) for drawing linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows[6]:

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[4] See the charts of Herman 2000a: 129-133 (cf. also Adamik 2012: 136-137); in Herman's investigation there are 869 occurrences (= 88%) of phonological phenomena (AE~E included), and 123 occurrences (= 12%) of morphosyntactic phenomena.

[5] The data pertaining to this province have been recorded mainly by Ágnes Jekl (and also by Sára Zalán) from the corpora of IScM, ILBulg, Conrad, IIFDR and IBulgarien (for resolving abbreviations of inscriptional corpora used in this survey see EDCS, http://www.manfredclauss.de/abkuerz.html).

[6] In order to obtain a more substantial data set, besides the data forms having one

Chart 4: *Early Moesia Inferior c. 1-3rd A.D.*

From the distributional pattern of this chart[7], we can conclude that in early Moesia Inferior the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases was the most frequent phenomenon (36% = 52 items)[8], followed by the confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension (15% = 23 items)[9], and by the confusion of the genitive and the dative (11% = 16 items)[10]. The confusion of the dative and the

morphosyntactic main code, we had to take into consideration the data forms which have twofold encoding in our Database, i.e. a nominal morphosyntactical code and e.g. a phonological one parallelly, in whichever order. This procedure was inevitable because such forms as *comiti* for *comitis*, *comite* for *comitem* and *vita* for *vitam* etc. can be interpreted not only as examples of confusion of the cases but also as examples of phonological change, and these confusions are inseparable from each other. At the same time, we also considered data forms where the alternative code is another nominal morphosyntactic code, but here only the main code was taken into account.

[7] In the notes related to the data displayed at charts 4-13 we use the following system: after the total number of the confusion concerned we give the figures of each subtype of the related confusion as they are coded in the Database (e.g. 2 Acc. ~ Abl = 1 acc. pro abl. + 1 abl. pro acc. etc.) according the status on 31.12.2012, with an illustrative example of the subtype at the first occurrence in this study.

[8] 52 Acc. ~ Abl = 32 acc. pro abl. (alternatively coded as -0 > -m, e.g. LLDB-934: PRO SALVTEM = *pro salute*, IScM 1, 344, 4, AD 202) + 7 nom./acc. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-19570: PR[O]‖ NEPOTES = *pro nepotibus*, ILBulg 426, 2, AD 17-200) + 7 dat./abl. pro acc. (e.g. LLDB-8547: PER| VALERIO = *per Valerium*, IScM 5, 66, 5-7, AD 178) + 6 abl. pro acc. (alternatively coded as -m > -0, e.g. LLDB-11200: OP PI|ETATE = *ob pietatem*, IScM 5, 189, 8-9, AD 101-150).

[9] 23 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc = 23 nom./abl. pro acc. (alternatively coded as -m > -0, e.g. LLDB-2010: ARA| POSVIT = *aram posuit*, IScM 1, 373, 13, AD 157).

[10] 16 Gen. ~ Dat. = 10 dat./abl. pro gen. (e.g. LLDB-10607: PRO [S]AL[VT]E IMP ()| ANTONINO = *pro salute imperatoris () Antonini*, IScM 5, 13, 4, AD 138-161) + 6 dat. pro gen. (alternatively coded as -s > -0, e.g. LLDB-1151: DIS MANIBVS | C IVLI () CEL[E]|RI VETER = *Dis Manibus Gai Iulii () Celeris veterani*, ILBulg 56, 1-4, AD 101-150).

ablative of the third declension (10% = 15 items) also has to be mentioned here as a further characteristic feature of the area[11]. The other confusions with fewer than 10 instances are left out of account as more or less isolated and irrelevant phenomena[12].

1.2. *Later Moesia Inferior*

In later Moesia Inferior, the recorded data amounts only to the third of those recorded for the early Moesia Inferior (149 items), but it still yields a sufficient body of data (49 items = 100%) for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions, if with some caution. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:

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[11] 15 Dat. ~ Abl. = 4 abl. -e > I (alternatively coded as e > I, e.g. LLDB-6867: PRO SALVTI = *pro salute*, IScM 5, 23, 3, AD 161-169) + 10 dat. -ī > E (alternatively coded as i: > E, e.g. LLDB-4009: BENE| MERENTE () POSVIT = *bene merenti () posuit*, IScM 2, 346, 7-8, AD 201-300) + 1 abl. -ī > E (alternatively coded as i: > E, e.g. LLDB-4569: PRAESIDE ()| [CO]NSVLARE = *praeside () consulari*, IScM 3, 97, 4-5, AD 169-175).

[12] 7 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 7 nom./abl. pro gen. (e.g. LLDB-7272: VET|RANVS ALA = *veteranus alae*, IScM 5, 23, 8, AD 161-169; 6 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 dat. pro nom. (LLDB-4882: CAESAR () [RE]STITVTORI = *Caesar () restitutor*, IScM 3, 96, 12, AD 274) + 4 nom. pro dat. (LLDB-11113: ASCLEPIO ET YGIA| = Asclepio et Hygiae, IScM 5, 239, 1, AD 151-200); 6 Nom. ~ Abl. = 5 nom. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-670: CVRA AGEN|TIBVS MAG CLA GAI|VS = *curam agentibus magistris Claudio Gaio*, IScM 1, 326, 8-9, AD 149) + 1 abl. pro nom. (alternatively coded as -s > -0, c.f. LLDB-19765: MARCEALE () POSVIT = *Martialis () posuit*, ILBulg 199, 1, AD 201-300); 5 Abl. ~ Loc. = 5 loc. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-11197: DOMO OESCI = *domo Oesco*, IScM 5, 188, 4, AD 106-162); 4 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen. (c.f. LLDB-11143: VERI AVRELII CAESARE = *Veri Aurelii Caesaris*, IScM 5, 13, 5, AD 138-161) + 3 gen. pro abl. (e.g. LLDB-11286: CAIO [AL]|EXANDRI = *Caio Alexandro*, IScM 5, 233, 9-10, AD 178); 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat. (e.g. LLDB-1217: DO|MINA () PVER () D D = *dominae () puer () donum dedit*, ILBulg 362, 1-2, AD 131-AD 300); 2 Nom. ~ Gen. = 2 nom. pro. gen. (e.g. LLDB-1277: PRO SALVTE IMP M ANT GORDIANVS = *pro salute imperatoris M. Antonii Gordiani*, IScM 1, 347, 6-8, AD 238); 4 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum (e.g. LLDB-19424: MEMORIAM| [C]AVSAM POSVIT = *memoriae causa posuit*, Conrad 525, 5 AD 251-300); 2 Casus > praep. cum casu = 2 casus sine praep. > praep. (e.g. LLDB-19697: EXS| VISV = *visu*, ILBulg 270, 4-5, AD 101-250); The nominative plural ending -*as* turns up five times, thus it can be regarded more than a completely isolated phenomenon: 5 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae (e.g. LLDB-19763: FIL[I]VS ATQV [FI]|LIAS MEAS| () POSVERVNT = *filius atque filiae meae () posuerunt*, ILBulg 170, 7-8, AD 131-170).
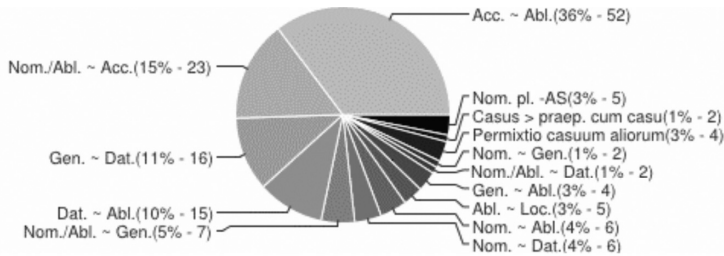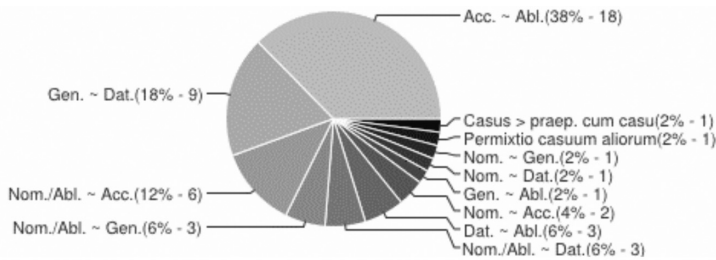
Chart 5: *Later Moesia Inferior c. 4-6th A.D.*

From the distributional pattern of this chart we can conclude that in later Moesia Inferior the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases was most prevalent (38% = 18 items)[13]. The second most frequent 'error' was the confusion of the genitive and the dative (18% = 9 items), followed by the confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension (12% = 6 items)[14]. For other types of confusion or change there are less than 5 examples recorded, therefore these should be regarded as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, which are thus left out of consideration[15].

In short, Moesia Inferior shows a little difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profile. However, as there is an apparent shift between the distributional schemes of the early and later Moesia Inferior, the conclusion can be drawn that the early predominance of the confusion of the accusative and the ablative became more marked (E 36% > L 38%) later on, and the confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension relatively frequent in early times perceptibly receded (E 15% > 12%) in the later period, conceding its second rank to the confusion of the genitive and the dative (E 11% > L 18%).

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[13] 18 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 abl. pro acc. + 2 nom./acc. pro abl. + 3 dat./abl. pro acc. + 10 acc. pro abl.

[14] 9 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1 gen. pro dat. + 5 dat./abl. pro gen. + 3 dat. pro gen.; 6 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 6 nom./abl. pro acc.

[15] 3 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 3 nom./abl. pro gen.; 3 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 3 nom./abl. pro dat.; 3 Dat. ~ Abl. = 2 dat. -ī > E + 1 abl. -e > I; 2 Nom. ~ Acc. = 2 acc. pro nom. (e.g. LLDB-20702: PVSVVIT VN (|) CVNIVGEN SVA = *posuit hunc () coniunx sua*, IBulgarien 130, 5-6, AD 301- 400); 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen.; 1 Nom. ~ Dat. = 1 dat. pro nom.; 1 Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro. gen.; 1 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 Casus > praep. cum casu = 1 casus sine praep. > praep.

2.1. *Early Moesia Superior*

The second province to be investigated is Moesia Superior[16], the Western neighbour of Moesia Inferior. The amount of relevant data recorded from early Moesia Superior is not as large as from early Moesia Inferior (149 items), but it still yields sufficient data (51 items = 100%) for drawing cautious but relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:
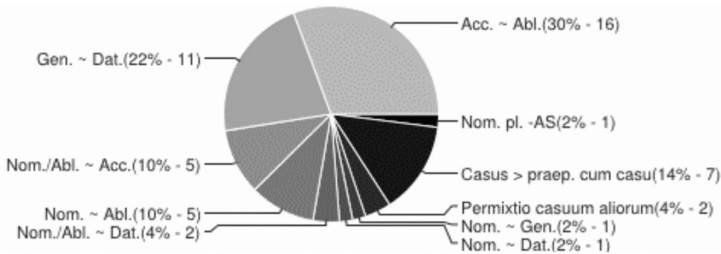
Chart 6: *Early Moesia Superior c. 1-3rd A.D.*

From the distributional pattern of this chart we can conclude that the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases prevailed here too (30% = 16 items). It was followed in frequency by the confusion of the genitive and the dative (22% = 11 items)[17]. For other types of confusion or change, including the single, isolated occurrence of of the nominative plural ending *-as,* there are less than 10 examples recorded, hence these should be regarded as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, and are to be left out of consideration, accordingly[18].

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[16] The data pertaining to this province have been recorded mainly by Réka Visontai (and also by Sára Zalán) from the corpus of IMS, complemented by AE and ILJug.

[17] 16 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 abl. pro acc. + 3 nom./acc. pro abl. + 10 acc. pro abl.; 11 Gen. ~ Dat. = 5 gen. pro dat. + 1 dat./abl. pro gen. + 5 dat. pro gen.

[18] 5 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 5 nom./abl. pro acc.; 5 Nom. ~ Abl. = 5 nom. pro abl.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat.; 1 Nom. ~ Dat. = 1 dat. pro nom.; 1. Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro. gen.; 2 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 7 Casus > praep. cum casu = 6 casus sine praep. > praep. + 1 praep. > casus sine praep. (cf. LLDB-14324: EXIERV|NT ANCONES FACIEN|DOS = *exierunt ad ancones faciendos*, AE 1973, 473, 2-4, AD 99-100); 1 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

2.2. *Later Moesia Superior*

In later Moesia Superior, the number of recorded data forms is very low, yielding a data set (25 = 100%) scarcely sufficient for drawing very cautious, however, possibly relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:
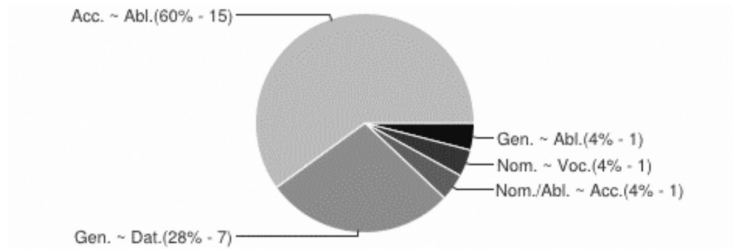
Chart 7: *Later Moesia Superior c. 4-6th A.D.*

The distributional pattern of this chart is quite similar to that of later Moesia Inferior, but it is simpler and more settled[19]. Similarly, in later Moesia Superior the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases prevailed (60% = 15 items), while the confusion of the genitive and the dative (28% = 7 items) is also worth mentioning[20]. For other types of confusion or change there are less than 5 examples recorded, therefore these should be regarded as too isolated and irrelevant phenomena to be taken into consideration[21].

In short, Moesia Superior also shows a difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profiles, which are, anyway, very similar to those of Moesia Inferior. From the shift between the early and later distributional schemes of Moesia Superior the conclusion can be drawn that the early prevalence of the confusion of the accusative and the

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[19] *Settled* means here that the distribution of the case confusion types displayed in this chart is polarised in an expected manner according to the changes of Vulgar Latin declension system, i.e. the recorded data are concentrated at the crucial case confusions, like at the confusion of the accusative and ablative and of dative and genitive etc.

[20] 15 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 acc. pro abl. + 7 dat./abl. pro acc. + 4 abl. pro acc. + 1 nom./acc. pro abl.; 7 Gen. ~ Dat. = 2 dat./abl. pro gen. + 2 dat. pro gen. + 3 gen. pro dat.

[21] 1 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 1 nom./abl. pro acc.; 1 Nom. ~ Voc. = 1 nom. pro voc. (e.g. LLDB-4766: FILI MEVS = *fili mi*, IMS 4, 50, 1 AD 301-600); 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen.

ablative extended significantly over the centuries (E 30% > L 60%), and the confusion of the genitive and the dative, significant in early times, also extended observably in the later period (E 22% > L 28%).

3.1. *Early Dalmatia*

The third province to be presented is Dalmatia[22]. The number of data forms recorded from early Dalmatia is again very low, yielding a data set (27 items = 100%) just on the line for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions, of course, cautious ones again. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows[23]:
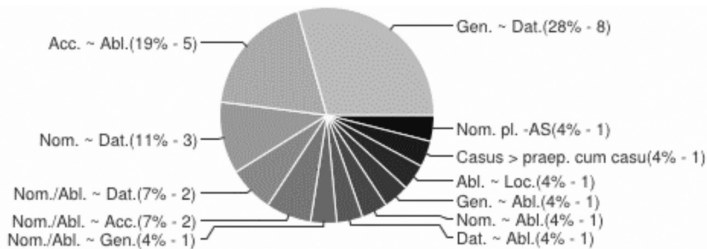
Chart 8: *Early Dalmatia c. 1-3ʳᵈ A.D.*

From this chart we may conclude that the confusion of the genitive and dative cases could have been the most frequent phenomenon (28% = 8 items), followed by the confusion of the accusative and the ablative (19% = 5 items)[24]. For other types of confusion, including the single occurrence of the nominative plural ending -*as*, less than 5 examples are recorded –, therefore these are, again, considered isolated and irrelevant phenomena[25].

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[22] The data pertaining to this province have been recorded by myself from the corpus of ILJug and the recently published corpus of Christian inscriptions in Salona (abbreviated as Salona in our Database and as Salona-04 in EDCS, see http://www.manfredclauss.de/abkuerz.html)

[23] This entire chart with its distributional pattern of early Dalmatian changes is yet indefinite and hypotethical: a more precise presentation will be possible after recording the remaining data of CIL.

[24] 8 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1 gen. pro dat. + 7 dat. pro gen.; 5 Acc. ~ Abl. = 2 acc. pro abl. + 3 abl. pro acc.

[25] 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 3 nom. pro dat.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 2 nom./abl. pro acc.; 1 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 1 nom./abl. pro gen.; 1 Dat.

3.2. *Later Dalmatia*

In contrast to early Dalmatia, we have sufficient data (85 items = 100 %) for later Dalmatia, which allows for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:
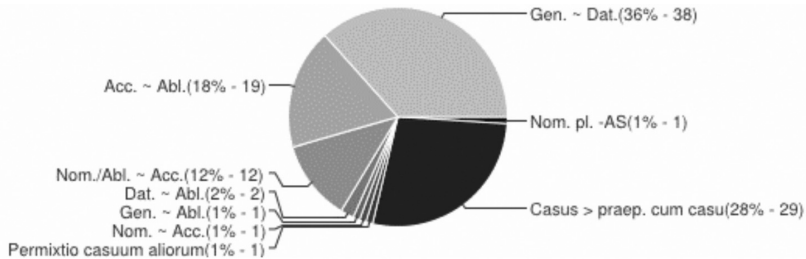
Chart 9: *Later Dalmatia, c. 4-7th A.D.*

If we leave the quite high proportion of non-classical prepositional usage out of consideration (28% = 29 items)[26], we can conclude the following from the rest. The confusion of the genitive and dative cases clearly prevailed (36% = 38 items), while the confusion of the accusative and the ablative (18% = 19 items) is the second most common 'error', and the confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension (12% = 12 items) is the third[27]. Other types of confusion, including a single instance of the nominative plural ending -*as*, are obviously so scarce that they can be left out of the profile as isolated phenomena[28].

~ Abl. = 1 abl. -e > I; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 gen. pro abl.; 1 Abl. ~ Loc. = abl. pro loc.; 1 Casus > praep. cum casu = 1 casus sine praep. > praep. 1 Nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

[26] 29 Casus > praep. cum casu = 29 casus sine praep. > praep. In most cases they are of the type: *sub die* instead of *die* (e.g. LLDB-14233: SVB DIE = *die*, ILJug 3, 2548, 1, AD 501-600). The prepositional phrases recorded in our database are always used for reinforcing the semantic function of the case itself and almost never instead of another case like *ad* and the accusative instead of dative or *de* and ablative instead of genitive.

[27] 38 Gen. ~ Dat. = 22 dat./abl. pro gen. + 16 dat. pro gen.; 19 Acc. ~ Abl. = 2 dat./abl. pro acc. + 1 nom./acc. pro abl. + 8 abl. pro acc. + 8 acc. pro abl.; 12 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 12 nom./abl. pro acc.

[28] 2 Dat. ~ Abl. = 2 abl. -e > I; 1 Gen. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro gen.; 1 Nom. ~ Acc. = 1 nom. pro acc.; 1 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 Nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

In short, Dalmatia shows a difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) profile of data. From the shift between the early and later distributional schemes of the province the conclusion can be made that the early predominance of the confusion of the genitive and the dative became more marked later on (E 28% > L 36%), while the confusion of the accusative and the ablative kept its second rank (E 19% > 18%) and the extending (E 7% > 12%) confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension reached the third place in the later period.

4.1. *Early Venetia and Histria*

The fourth analysed province is Venetia-Histria[29]. The number of data forms recorded from early Venetia-Histria is very low: again, our data set (24 items = 100%) is only hardly enough for drawing very cautious, still, possibly relevant conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows[30]:

Chart 10: *Early Venetia and Histria c. 1-3rd A.D.*

From this chart we might however conclude that the confusion of the genitive and dative cases seems to be the most frequent phenomenon (16% = 4 items), and the confusion of the accusative and the ablative, together with the confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension, and the nominative and the

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dative (all three of 13% = 3 items) were tied for the second place[31]. For other types of anomaly, including the single instance of the nominative plural ending -*as*, there are less than 4 examples recorded, which are, again, not numerous enough to be considered as relevant[32].

4.2. *Later Venetia and Histria*

In contrast to the early times of Venetia-Histria, we have a sufficient amount of data (102 items = 100%) for the later period of this province that allows for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:
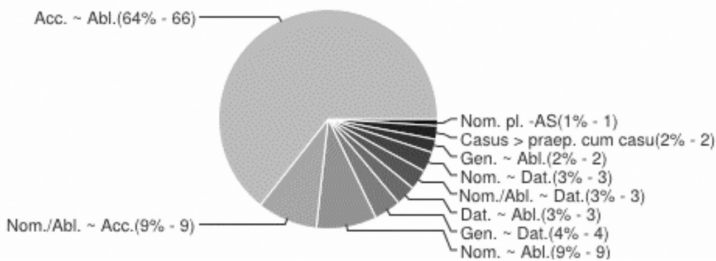

Chart 11: *Later Venetia and Histria c. 4-8ᵗʰ A.D.*

From the distributional pattern of this chart, which is simpler and more settled than that of early Venetia-Histria, we can see that the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases definitely prevailed (64% = 66 items), followed by the confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension and by the confusion of the nominative and ablative, with their proportion lagging far behind (9% = 9 items)[33]. For other types of confusion or change there are less

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[31] 4 Gen. ~ Dat. = 2 dat. pro gen. + 1 dat./abl. pro gen. + 1 gen. pro dat.; 3 Acc. ~ Abl. = 3 nom./acc. pro abl.; 3 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 3 nom./abl. pro acc.; 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 nom. pro dat. + 1 dat. pro nom.

[32] 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 2 nom./abl. pro gen.; 1 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 1 nom./abl. pro dat.; 1 Nom. ~ Acc. = 1 acc. pro nom.; 1 Dat. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. -ī > E; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Abl. ~ Loc. = 1 abl. pro loc.; 3 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

[33] 66 Acc. ~ Abl. = 34 abl. pro acc. + 13 nom./acc. pro abl. + 1 dat./abl. pro acc. + 18 acc. pro abl.; 9 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 9 nom./abl. pro acc.; 9 Nom. ~ Abl. = 7 abl. pro nom. + 1 dat./abl. pro nom. (e.g. LLDB-21166: OB[II]T IVLIANO = *obiit Iulianus*, InscrIt 10, 2, 157, 1, AD 590-900) + 1 nom. pro abl.

than 9 examples recorded, which, due to their small number, are out of consideration[34].

In short, Venetia-Histria shows a significant difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profile. From the shift between the early and later distributional patterns of the province we can conclude that the early predominance of the confusion of the accusative and the ablative extended extremely in later times (E 13% > L 64%), and the confusion of the genitive and the dative, predominating in early Venetia-Histria, largely receded later (E 16% > L 4 %).

5.1. *Early Gallia Narbonensis*

The fifth and last province considered in this context is Gallia Narbonensis[35]. The amount of data recorded from early Narbonensis is quite low, yielding a data set (26 items = 100%) again just over the line for making very cautious but hopefully relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows[36]:
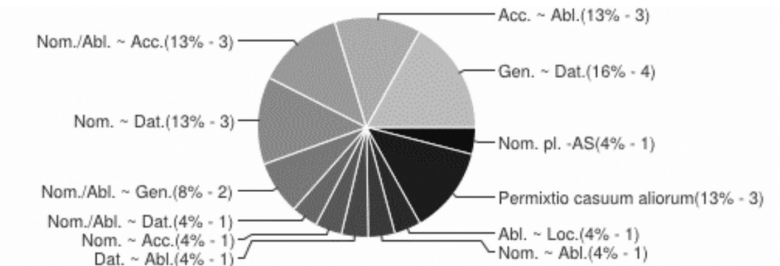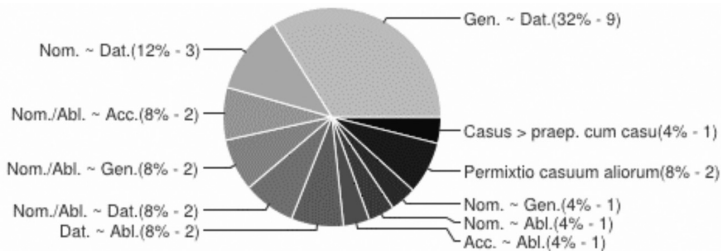

Chart 12: *Early Gallia Narbonensis c. 1-3rd A.D.*

From this chart we may however conclude that the confusion of the genitive and dative cases could have been the most frequent (32% = 9

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[34] 4 Gen. ~ Dat. = 3 dat./abl. pro gen. + 1 dat. pro gen.; 3 Dat. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. -e > I + 2 dat. -ī > E; 3 Nom./Abl. ~ dat. = 3 nom./abl. pro dat.; 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 nom. pro dat. + 1 dat. pro nom.; 2 Gen. ~ Abl. = 2 gen. pro abl.; 2 Casus > praep. cum casu = 2 casus sine praep. > praep.; 1 nom. pl. -AS pro -ae.

[35] As for this province the data have been recorded by Zsuzsanna Ötvös from the next corpora: ILN, RICG, ICalvet, INimes, ILHSavoie and RISch.

[36] This entire chart with its distributional pattern resembles that of early Dalmatia and of Early Venetia and Histria considerably and every conclusion drawn from it is yet merely hypothetical.

items)[37]. All other types of confusion occur so scarcely that they can be regarded as irrelevant[38].

5.2. *Later Gallia Narbonensis*

In contrast to early Narbonensis, we have a more sufficient amount of data (81 items = 100%) for later Narbonensis, which allows for drawing relevant linguistic conclusions. The distribution of the data can be charted as follows:


Acc. ~ Abl.(53% - 41)
Gen. ~ Dat.(11% - 9)
Nom./Abl. ~ Acc.(11% - 9)
Casus > praep. cum casu(12% - 10)
Permixtio casuum aliorum(2% - 2)
Nom. ~ Gen.(1% - 1)
Nom. ~ Abl.(1% - 1)
Nom. ~ Dat.(2% - 2)
Nom./Abl. ~ Gen.(2% - 2)
Dat. ~ Abl.(5% - 4)
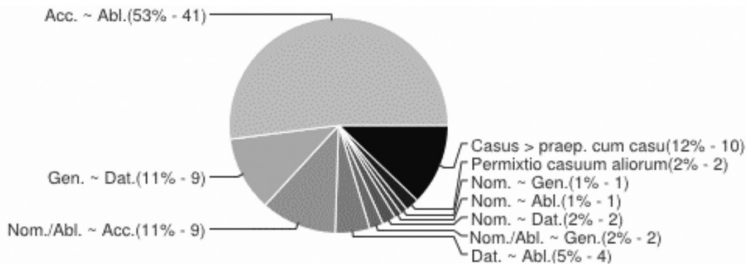
Chart 13: *Later Gallia Narbonensis c. 4-8th A.D.*

From the distributional scheme of this chart, which is simpler and more settled than that of early Narbonensis, we can conclude that the confusion of the accusative and ablative cases was the most prevalent feature (53% = 41 items)[39]. Apart from this and the quite high proportion of non-classical prepositional usage (12% = 10 items)[40], only the confusion of the genitive and the dative and the confusion of the nominative-ablative and the accusative of the first declension is worth mentioning, both with their proportion lagging

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[37] 9 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1 dat./abl. pro gen. + 2 gen. pro dat. + 6 dat. pro gen.

[38] 3 Nom. ~ Dat. = 3 nom. pro dat.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 2 nom./abl. pro acc.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 2 nom./abl. pro gen.; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Dat. = 2 nom./abl. pro dat.; 2 Dat. ~ Abl. = 1 dat. -ī > E + 1 abl. -ī > E; 1 Acc. ~ Abl. = 1 abl. pro acc.; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro. gen.; 2 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; 1 Casus > praep. cum casu = 1 casus sine praep. > praep.; For the nominative plural ending -*as* we do not have any examples at all.

[39] 41 Acc. ~ Abl. = 10 abl. pro acc. + 5 dat./abl. pro acc. + 1 nom./acc. pro abl. + 25 acc. pro abl.

[40] 10 Casus > praep. cum casu = 10 casus sine praep. > praep (in most cases of the type "*sub die* instead of *die*").

behind (11% = 9 items).[41] For other types of confusion or change there are less than 9 examples, which, as isolated and irrelevant phenomena, are left out of consideration[42].

In short, Gallia Narbonensis also shows a significant difference between its early (= E) and later (= L) data profile. From the radical shift between the early and the later distributional schemes of the province, we can conclude that the proportion of the confusion of the accusative and the ablative extended extremely (E 1% > L 50%), stealing the first place from the confusion of the genitive and the dative, which receded significantly (E 32% > L 11 %), and was forced back to the second place.

6. *Final Conclusions*

The first and most obvious conclusion of the present survey is that all provinces involved display differences in their early and later data profile. This demonstrates that the processes of linguistic change are traceable in the inscriptional material of each region throughout the course of time.

However, there is a more important question: to see whether our investigation could yield any new information on the territorial differences in the transformation process of the Latin declension system. The answer is a solid 'yes'. If we call to mind the main features of the transformation process of the nominal inflectional system and compare these features with our findings, we get the following picture.

According to the evidence of early and modern Romance languages, there must have been three different regions of the Vulgar Latin declension system:

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[41] 9 Gen. ~ Dat. = 1dat. pro gen. + 8 dat./abl. pro gen.; 9. Nom./Abl. ~ Acc. = 9 nom./abl. pro acc.

[42] 4 Dat. ~ Abl. = 2 abl. -e > I + 2 abl. -ī > E; 2 Nom./Abl. ~ Gen. = 2 nom./abl. pro gen.; 2 Nom. ~ Dat. = 2 nom. pro dat.; 1 Nom. ~ Abl. = 1 nom. pro abl.; 1 Nom. ~ Gen. = 1 nom. pro. gen.: 2 commutatio vel permixtio casuum aliorum; The nominative plural ending -*as* does not turn up at all.

Vulgar Latin Case-system	nominative	accusative-ablative	dative-genitive
1. Gaul (Old French, Old Occitan)			
2. Balkans (Rumanian)			
3. Africa (Hispania, Italia), modern Romance			

Table 1: *Different regions of the Vulgar Latin declension system*

1. According to the evidence of Old French and Old Occitan, a system with only two cases evolved in late Gaul, where a nominative was opposed to an oblique case descending from the accusative[43]. 2. According to the evidence of Rumanian, another system with only two cases emerged in the Balkans, where an established dative-genitive inflection was opposed to a nominative-accusative inflection, which emerged from the fusion of the nominative and the accusative-ablative[44]. 3. There must have been a third area in later times, i.e. Africa and probably parts of Italy and Hispania, where the nominative and the accusative merged earlier than in Gaul, and a system with only one inflection emerged, which means that in those regions the system of inflections effectively disappeared – as there is no such system in modern Romance languages except for Rumanian[45].

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[43] Herman 2000b: 58: "This stage, containing only a nominative and an oblique inflection in the singular and the plural, still survives in the two-case declensions of Old French and Old Occitan texts (and probably in the contemporary but unwritten Western Rhaeto-Romance as well)."

[44] Herman 2000b: 59: "It looks as if the developments were slightly different in the East. Late inscriptions from the Balkans contain far more possessive datives than elsewhere, which probably attests to the survival in these regions of a dative-genitive inflection opposed to all the other cases. This development could be what explains the presence in Modern Rumanian of a two-case system in feminine nouns, in which *țare* (< *terrae*, dative and genitive) is opposed to *țară* (< both *terra*, nominative, and *terram*, accusative)." and 51: "Rumanian is a different kind of exception to the general development, since there feminine nouns preserved a distinction between a nominative-accusative and a genitive-dative inflection."

[45] Herman 2000b: 58: "On the other hand, as mentioned above, in some areas, in Africa and probably parts of Italy and Hispania, the nominative and the accusative came together earlier than in Gaul, so it is probable that the Romance spoken in these areas, at

Now, the results of our investigation largely agree with the general picture sketched above.

Vulgar Latin Case-system	nominative	accusative-ablative	dative-genitive	Romance
Gallia Narbonensis **Acc. ~ Abl. 53%** **Nom. ~ Acc. 0%** **Gen. ~ Dat 11%** **Venetia and Histria** **Acc. ~ Abl. 64%** **Nom. ~ Acc. 0%** **Gen. ~ Dat 4%**				1. Gaul (Old French, Old Occitan)
Dalmatia **Gen. ~ Dat. 36%** **Acc. ~ Abl. 18%** **Nom. ~ Acc. 1%**				2. Balkans (Rumanian)
Moesia Inferior > ? **Acc ~ Abl. 38%** **Gen. ~ Dat. 18%** **Nom. ~ Acc. 4%**		**Moesia Superior > ?** **Acc ~ Abl. 60%** **Gen. ~ Dat. 28%** **Nom. ~ Acc. 0%**		

Table 2: *Incorporating the examined provinces in the regions of the Vulgar Latin declension system*

If we consider only the later periods of the provinces examined here, it becomes obvious that, Gallia Narbonensis, with the predominance of the merged accusative-ablative (Acc. ~ Abl. 53%) case clearly distinct from the nominative (Nom. ~ Acc. 0%) and accompanied by a receding dative-genitive (Gen. ~ Dat. 11%), can be classified into the first area with the system of only two cases, typified by Old French and Old Occitan[46]. Similarly, Venetia and Histria, with the

least in some declensions, ended up quite soon with just one inflection for each noun in the singular and another in the plural, which effectively means that in those regions there was no longer a system of inflections at all."

[46] Parallel to this development, the confusion of genitive and dative receded significantly in later Narbonensis (E 32% > L 11%), thus a chance for establishing a merged dative-genitive case disappeared.

predominance of a merged accusative-ablative (Acc. ~ Abl. 64%) case clearly distinct from the nominative (Nom. ~ Acc. 0%) and accompanied by an evanescent dative-genitive (Gen. ~ Dat. 4%), can be classified into the first area, too[47]. Contrary to later Narbonensis and Venetia and Histria, later Dalmatia, with the prevalence of dative-genitive inflection (Gen. ~ Dat. 36%) opposite to the well established accusative-ablative case (Acc. ~ Abl. 18%) and clearly distinct from the separate nominative (Nom. ~ Acc. 1%) simply displays the previous three-case system to the later two-case system of the Balkan-type with an opposition of a dative-genitive and a nominative-accusative inflection. Regarding Moesia Inferior and Superior, it can be asserted that a three-case system emerged in both areas. However, in contrast to later Dalmatia, a merged nominative-accusative case prevailed (MInf Acc ~ Abl. 38%, MSup 60%), while the existence of a merged dative-genitive case was also perceptible (MInf Gen. ~ Dat. 18%, MSup 28%). Since here, unlike in Dalmatia and Narbonensis, there is no remaining relevant inscriptional material from the 7th century, we cannot say in which direction the three case-system of this area would have developed: towards the Gallic or the Balkan-type[48].

Although these preliminary results may later be modified throughout the further processing of the Database, the achievements presented so far prove that the methodology established by József Herman is quite efficient, not only in the field of phonological, but also in the field of morphosyntactic investigations[49].

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[47] Still, a notable difference is that the confusion of the genitive and the dative is more isolated in Venetia and Histria (4%) than in Narbonensis (11%).

[48] As far as I know, these results are new and barely have any antecedents in the literature; cf. the otherwise indispensable studies of P. A. Gaeng on the changes of nominal inflection as reflected in later (i.e. Christian) epigraphic sources of the Western provinces (Gaeng 1977) and of the Balkans (Gaeng 1984), and the fundamental Grammar of G. Galdi (2004) on the nominal inflection in the Latin inscriptions of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire (the Balkans and the Eastern Provinces, i.e. the territory concerned in CIL 3).

[49] Moreover, they also refute the statement made by Adams (2007: 7): "of the evidence that might be called on in investigating the regional diversity of Latin, inscriptions, with their uniformity right across the Empire, are the weakest."

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