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edited by

GIOVANNA MAROTTA - FRANCESCO ROVAI

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Introduction

GIOVANNA MAROTTA - FRANCESCO ROVAI

1. *Moving towards historical sociolinguistics*

The journal *Studi e Saggi Linguistici* has a long tradition within the field of classical languages as well as historical linguistics, in symbiosis with open-mindedness to contemporary theoretical linguistics. This special issue is perfectly in line with the scope of the journal, combining as it does the study of ancient Indo-European languages with the critical application of some cardinal notions and methods of sociolinguistic analysis. The focus is on the complex interplay of variation and norm as mirrored in the texts available for corpus-closed systems. Especially in the case of classical languages, the large amount of materials, of different age and register, allows the observation, description and even a reasonable interpretation of the data according to a sociolinguistic key.

The starting point shared by the Authors of this volume is the acknowledgment of linguistic variation as belonging to all levels of the grammar of the ancient languages. For instance, if Latin is viewed not only as a written and literary language, but also as a spoken language, it necessarily has to encompass linguistic variation according to the pragmatic contexts as well as to education and social status of the speakers/writers. Since variation is a keyword introducing sociolinguistic analysis, the application of notions and methods of modern sociolinguistics becomes a necessity more than an option in the case of closed-corpus languages too.

The studies collected in this volume can be inserted within the quite wide line of research of the so-called historical sociolinguistics, starting from the Seventies of the last century (e.g. Labov, 1972; 1994; Romaine, 1982) till the most recent contributions of this millennium (Müller, 2000; Adams, 2003; 2007; 2013; Conde Silvestre, 2007; Clackson, 2011; Hernández Campoy and Conde Silvestre, 2012; Hernández Campoy and Schilling, 2012, among the others).

Scholars are perfectly aware that combining sociolinguistics and written ancient texts is not an easy task. In the case of 'dead' languages, not only

are the speakers to ask or record unavailable, but also sociolinguistic cues occurring in the sources are often scarce and ambiguous. The distance between ancient and present-day situations can be measured by considering how difficult it is to reconstruct the attitudinal judgments about accents in the ancient world. Although some cues of social stereotypes or even prejudices associated with a certain language variety are available in Greek and Latin texts, the matched-guise technique extensively used in contemporary studies of language attitudes (see Calamai's article) is obviously impossible.

In the ancient world the notion of linguistic norm had a much more cogent meaning than in contemporary times. Therefore, variation was viewed essentially as a deviation, a sort of mistake to be punished. Notwithstanding variable degrees of literacy of the speakers/writers, in Greek society and even more so in the Roman one public power, as well as the schools, worked for a strict supervision of all the written documents. And the grammarians were true guardians of the language. The standardization of Greek and Latin inscriptions represents clear evidence of such a socio-cultural trend.

Nevertheless, to conceive ancient languages as diasystemic entities is still possible. And general linguistics together with sociolinguistic analysis may allow us to enlarge our slants and to draw a multifaceted picture more similar to that of an alive and contemporary language, *multis variatis variandis*, of course. In our opinion, this new point of view can legitimately be taken up, although notions and methods developed for contemporary societies should always be applied to ancient languages with awareness and caution. In particular, the reconstruction of the linguistic repertoires may be considered a realistic target, at least for languages with a sufficiently rich corpus of data.

The studies in this issue of *Studi e Saggi Linguistici* show how variation and norm did coexist and contrast even in the classical world. The different sections find their pivot on the notion of variation, viewed in its relations with language contact and linguistic identity. Besides Ancient Greek and Latin (Sections I and II), Italic languages as well as other ancient Indo-European languages (Sections III and V) settle the empirical domain. The material investigated ranges from literary texts to tablets, inscriptions and other non-literary texts. The relevant patterns of linguistic variation emerge from an in-depth analysis of graphemic, morpho-phonological, syntactic and lexical markers. The grammatical tradition, especially rich in the case of Greek and Latin, makes up a supplementary as well as strong evidence for the study of linguistic variation (Section IV).

We believe that models developed from the description and interpretation of contemporary realities may support the reconstruction of the socio-historical contexts where ancient languages were used. The study of data derived from written sources may considerably benefit from the integration of the more traditional philological analysis with contemporary sociolinguistics and theoretical linguistics. Such an integrated methodology might even overcome some inconsistency of the textual data available.

In our wishes, the collection of studies in this issue of *Studi e Saggi Linguistici* should represent an adequate example of how modern and ancient notions, both theoretical and methodological, may proceed hand in hand.

2. *Contents of the volume*

As anticipated above, the nineteen papers collected in the volume cover a wide range of contexts and situations in the Classical world, in which the sociolinguistic categories of identity, variation, and norm play a role either in the interaction among the varieties of a single language, or in the contact between different languages. The contents are divided into five Sections, as summarised here.

Section I (*Linguistic norm and variation in Latin*) focuses on phenomena of sociolinguistic variation in the Latin language, and on their correlations with language change. M. Donati ('Variazione e tipologia testuale nel corpus epigrafico *CLASSES I*') carries out quantitative analyses on the distribution of non-classical variants in a representative corpus of archaic Latin inscriptions. Available data show that the occurrence of non-classical features cannot be directly correlated with any specific typology of inscriptions. Rather, epigraphic evidence suggests that, in the 3rd century BC, the process of standardisation of the epigraphic language and orthography was still far from being consistently accomplished. The paper by G. Marotta ('Talking stones. Phonology in Latin inscriptions?') focuses on the graphemic alternations between <I> and <E> and between <U> and <O> within a corpus of archaic and early Latin inscriptions. Such variation in spelling, which is interpreted in the light of a diasystemic view of the Latin language, is acknowledged as evidence for a socio-phonetic process that was sensitive to both lexical and prosodic constraints. This case study is also the starting point for a methodological discussion on the reliability of epigraphic texts

for socio-phonetic investigation in historical linguistics. In a more socio-pragmatic perspective, P. Molinelli ('Plural pronouns and social deixis in Latin: a pragmatic development') illustrates the diachronic evolution of the system of address in Latin, with particular reference to the emergence of the so called *pluralis maiestatis* and *reverentiae*. The phenomenon is described as a progressive change from Early Latin, in which social deixis was encoded in the language by means of lexical strategies, to Late Latin, in which morphological and syntactic strategies became more and more prominent.

In Section II (*Language variation and contact in Italy and Greece*), a number of both literary and epigraphic texts are presented, in which Latin and its varieties came into contact with other Italic languages and Greek. C. Fedriani ('L'uso del greco in Plauto: un tassello sociolinguistico nella rappresentazione dell'identità') highlights the role of contextual, pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors in the use of lexical Graecisms in Plautus' plays. A corpus-based research reveals not only that Greek is used by Plautus to modulate his characters' identities, but also that such identities may be constantly reshaped and renegotiated in view of the different communicative situations, which is in line with a more general representation of identity as a dynamic and context-sensitive construct. Building on onomastic material drawn from epigraphic texts, E. Middei ('L'onomastica peligna tra variazione, identità e contatto') discusses the expression of local identity in the land inhabited by the Paeligni during the process of Romanisation. This area is particularly open to influences from both Northern and Southern Sabelian languages and dialectal Latin, but a detailed examination of the structure of the onomastic *formulae* and their variants, indicates the existence of specific features that are typical of Paelignan onomastics. In his paper, P. Poccetti ('Strategie di alternanza di codice nel latino letterario repubblicano tra polifonia e discorso riferito') studies the distribution of code-switching and code-mixing in fragmentary texts of early Latin literature, with peculiar focus on the occurrences of Oscan, Greek, and Latin varieties in Lucilius' fragments. These strategies are exploited by Lucilius as a linguistic resource to represent polyphony, and, in reported speech, they contribute to characterising either individual or collective linguistic behaviour. In a methodological perspective, it is worth noting that this approach can cast new light on a number of passages whose interpretation is traditionally controversial. F. Rovai ('Notes on the inscriptions of Delos: the Greek transliteration of Latin names') investigates some aspects of the accommodation of the Latin

language in the multilingual environment of Delos during the 2nd and 1st century BC, paying particular attention to the transliteration of the Latin names into the Greek-written inscriptions. Albeit heterogeneous and often inconsistent, the criteria of transcriptions do allow some inferences about several features that may be regarded as characterising spoken Latin, spoken Greek, and Greek-Latin bilingual speech.

The papers included in Section III (*Language variation at the boundaries of the Graeco-Roman world*) analyse Latin and Greek documents that come from peripheral areas of the Classical world. The texts are considered with reference to both inner-language variation and their relationship with other languages. The writing tablets from the Roman fort at Vindolanda in Britannia are examined by F. Cotugno (*'I longa* in iato nel *Corpus Vindolandense*'), who explores the distribution of the so-called *I longa*, i.e. a graphic device that was used to mark not only the vowel *i*, but also the palatal glide in hiatus. A detailed examination of the occurrences of the *I longae* permits regarding the gliding of *i* in hiatus as a feature of the spoken language, whose distribution is sensitive to both diaphasic and diastratic factors. Moving from an analysis of both private and official inscriptions from Lycia, in which Lycian and Greek coexist, P. Dardano (*'Le iscrizioni bilingui licio-greche nel loro contesto socio-storico: tipi e funzioni a confronto*') addresses a number of issues that are raised by multilingual texts. Alongside phenomena of interference that are strictly linguistic and surface in the order of the clause constituents and in the topicalization structures, the relationship between the two languages is illustrated in the light of a holistic approach to the bilingual document, which takes into account the different dislocation of the two languages on the monuments. F. Logozzo (*'Register variation and personal interaction in the Zenon Archive*') displays the role of pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors as underlying linguistic and stylistic variation in the Zenon archive, an epistolary corpus that depicts the everyday life of public administration in the 3rd-century Ptolemaic Egypt. Opening greetings, expressions of requests and closing formulas are examined and put in relation with socio-pragmatic factors such as the sender's purpose and the social relationship or gap, between the sender and the recipient. M.C. Benvenuto, F. Pompeo and M. Pozza (*'The multilingual urban environment of Achaemenid Sardis*') aim at reconstructing the linguistic repertoire that was current in Achaemenid Sardis, a multilingual environment where Lydians, Greeks, Persians and, possibly, Carians and Aramaic-speaking peoples co-

habited during the 5th and 4th centuries BC. Such an aim has to deal with data that are scarce and fragmentary, but a reliable socio-linguistic scenario can nevertheless be built by means of a multi-modal approach that takes into consideration the historical, archaeological, social, and cultural context.

Section IV (*Metalinguistic awareness of identity and variation*) contains five papers that testify how a linguistic norm can be overtly acknowledged and stated by speakers (in most cases, obviously, grammarians), and how they perceive some relevant features of non-standard varieties and other languages. M. Benedetti (*De verborum greci et Latini differentiis vel societatibus. La diatesi media e il punto di vista latino*) reviews the problem of the two different interpretations that were traditionally given by the Greek grammarians of the category of ‘mediality’, and brings a new voice into such a debated issue. A different perspective can in fact be opened, if one takes into account Macrobius’ peculiar point of view on this question, as stated in a passage of his treatise *De differentiis*, where a systematic comparison is carried out between Greek and Latin grammatical categories. S. Calamai (‘Between linguistics and social psychology of language: the perception of non-native accents’) introduces a methodological reflection on language attitudes and language as a marker of group identity. The starting point is a pilot study on differences in how Standard Italian and three varieties of foreign accented speech (Albanian, Romanian and General American) are perceived by a sample of high school students from a medium-sized city in contemporary Central Italy. J. Clackson (*Latinitas, Ἑλληνισμός and Standard Languages*) discusses the possibility of comparing the Classical metalinguistic categories of *Latinitas* and *Hellenismós* with the modern concept of ‘standard language’. Actually, the Greek *Hellenismós* is recognized as having covered a wider range of linguistic varieties than encompassed under modern standard languages, and the study of variant orthographic practices in Latin legal inscriptions, suggests that also *Latinitas* was a similarly elastic concept. R. Ferri (‘Linguistic variation in patristic commentaries of biblical texts’) presents a detailed survey of passages from the Church Fathers, where they explicitly state that the language of both the Latin and the Greek version of the Bible, was very distant from the Classical literary language. The study is devoted, in particular, to underlining their consciousness of the existence of a ‘popular’ register of Latin, and to describing the metalanguage they used to account for social, regional, and pragmatic variation in Biblical Latin. In his contribution, M. Mancini (‘Ricerche sulla prosodia del latino d’Africa’) tackles

the debated issue of the *Quantitätskollaps* in the so called Vulgar Latin. The research is based on an exhaustive and punctual investigation of two kinds of sources: on the one hand, the metalinguistic *testimonia* of the late Roman grammarians, together with several texts from the metricists; on the other hand, the metrical funerary inscriptions from Northern Africa and the two poems by Comedian. In the light of these texts, Vulgar Latin can be characterised by the collapse and neutralisation of vowel quantity, which surfaced as a generalised lengthening of stressed vowels, and, conversely, as a generalised shortening of unstressed ones – regardless of the syllabic structure.

Finally, Section V (*Language variation and Indo-European perspectives*) shows how the investigation of language variation and language contact can bring a significant contribution to the knowledge of the prehistoric and Indo-European inheritance. C. Fabrizio ('Il caso curioso dell'infinito soggetto in latino') illustrates the syntactico-semantic constraints that account for the use of infinitives in subject function in Latin. Their syntactic behaviour and other features as well (lack of case marking, neuter gender, availability as direct objects) speak in favour of their status of non-canonical subjects that reflect a semantically-oriented argument structure. Such a pattern is inconsistent with the canonical alignment of the Latin clause, but consistently surfaces in a number of syntactic constructions that are attested elsewhere in Latin and in other ancient Indo-European languages. R. Lazzeroni ('Divagazioni sulla legge degli appellativi in greco e in vedico') points out that, in Greek and in Sanskrit, the change in the position of stress in a word which changes its Part-of-Speech, is not limited to the so called 'law of appellatives' (noun *vs* adjective), but it encodes a number of other both lexical and morphological oppositions (agent noun *vs* action noun, common noun *vs* proper name, nominative case *vs* vocative case, etc.). The hypothesis is put forward that such phenomena of transcategorisation can be more properly described and better understood in terms of markedness and scalar representation of the linguistic categories. D. Romagno ('The Greek-Anatolian area in the 2nd millennium BC: between language contact, Indo-European inheritance and typologically natural tendencies') discusses some alleged areal features in the Greek-Anatolian domain in the 2nd millennium BC. Genuine and false isoglosses are therefore disentangled, distinguishing language contact phenomena from socioculturally-dependent traits, from inherited aspects, and from properties that appear to have a strong cross-linguistic validity.

The original idea of coming up with a monographic issue of *Studi e Saggi Linguistici* sprouted in occasion of the conference *The Classical Languages between Variation, Identity and Norm*, held in Pisa last February (<http://www.fileli.unipi.it/prin2015/>). The meeting was organized within the research project PRIN 2010-2011, *Linguistic representations of identity. Sociolinguistic models and historical linguistics* (PRIN 2010, prot. 2010HXPFF2_001). We wish to thank the Department of Philology, Literature and Linguistics for hosting the conference. Special thanks are due to Francesca Cotugno, Irene De Felice, and Margherita Donati for their help in the organisation of the event.

The valid collaboration of the participants has allowed for the publication of the essays in less than one year. The Editors and the Direction of the journal would like to thank the Authors and the Publisher ETS for their constant dedication, without which this issue would not have come out this current year.

Although the combining of the study of ancient Indo-European languages with some of the sociolinguistic tenets could be considered to be a challenge, we claim that the results of the studies published in this volume show how such a challenge is not only valid but also leads, while totally respecting the textual tradition, to conclusive findings.

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SL

Section I

Linguistic norm and variation in Latin



Plural pronouns and social deixis in Latin: a pragmatic development

PIERA MOLINELLI

ABSTRACT

Address systems are central to communication and typically comprise nominal and pronominal forms (and related verbal agreement) that distinguish between familiar / affective and reverential/courtesy values. Forms of address are pragmatic in nature and constitute a linguistic domain that is located at the periphery of grammar, and whose forms and functions are subjected to rapid and dramatic developments since they are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural situation and can change considerably according to political, social and cultural transformations.

This study investigates the socio-pragmatic development of the system of address from Early Latin, when the system was unmarked as to the reverential dimension, to Late Latin, when such functions emerged and were clearly expressed, by unravelling the main diachronic steps and the factors at play. In a corpus language like Latin, socio-linguistic groups and variables are not straightforwardly identifiable. It is registers and styles that allow us to analyse patterns of variation in interactional contexts and in social deixis. Accordingly, this paper offers a case study on Cicero's *Verrine* that allows us to make both qualitative and quantitative observations.

KEYWORDS: address system, identity, inclusive plural, reverential plural, honorific titles.

1. *Introduction*

The system of address is central to communication as it defines, shapes and indexes both the speaker's and the interlocutor's identity and their mutual relationship. The system of address is independent of the content which is being conveyed in a given interaction and is made up of both verbal and non-verbal elements, constituting a system in Saussure terms: what constitutes the social deixis system which is anchored to a given socio-cultural context are not single elements, but their coherent integration.

Address systems in modern Indo-European languages comprise nominal and pronominal forms (and related verbal agreement, if this exists) that typically distinguish between familiar and affective values, on the one hand, and reverential and polite values, on the other. These values are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural situation and can change rapidly according to political,

social and cultural transformations, whenever previously established criteria are substituted or enriched by newer ones, which give rise to a new system.

This study investigates the socio-pragmatic development of the system of address from Early Latin, when the system was unmarked as to the reverential dimension, to Late Latin, when such functions emerged and were clearly expressed along the *tu/vos* opposition that is still found in some Romance languages.

An important aim of the research is to highlight the main diachronic steps and the factors at play in the linguistic representation of identity by means of nouns, pronouns and verbal agreement. While nouns and pronouns rely on the speaker's choice, verbal agreement is due to the grammatical constraints of a given language; this difference highlights the pragmatic power of nominal and pronominal strategies.

In this type of linguistic change the existence in Latin of a pool of synchronic variables featuring a set of alternative, but similar, strategies played a key role. Indeed forms and functions can dynamically reduce or increase their relative importance, thus making the general scenario not always straightforwardly defined.

In order to describe this complex diachronic development, we will analyse subsequent steps of synchronic variation in different chronological periods and literary genres, rather than taking into account sociolinguistic parameters. Speakers typically select an address form on the basis of sociolinguistic considerations that fit with a given interactional context. In many studies on modern languages, speakers are classified according to sociolinguistic features such as age, social rank, education, and in most cases research has been carried out on highly standardized languages (see, e.g., Braun, 1988: 23-24). Corpus languages, however, have a specific status: sociolinguistic groups and variables are not straightforwardly identifiable, and it is rather registers and styles that allow us to analyse patterns of variation in interactional contexts and in social deixis.

This study stems from previous research on specific authors (e.g., Conway, 1899 and Pieri, 1967 on Cicero's letters; Lilja, 1971 on Pliny's letters; Haverling, 1995 on Symmacus) that provided interesting insights. These results are worth reconsidering both over a longer time span and in relation to remarks such as those of Brown and Gilman (1960: 254) who, partially relying on previous studies¹, explain the emergence of the reverential value

¹ CHATELAIN (1880); MOMMSEN (1882: 540-544); BYRNE (1936).

of *vos* as depending on the presence of two emperors (in Constantinople and Rome).

In this perspective, the aim of this paper is twofold: to reconstruct this long diachronic development from Early to Late Latin, trying to systematically integrate earlier specific observations on single authors within a longer diachronic perspective, and to challenge the widespread opinion that the domain of use of the second-person plural pronoun *vos*, originally used to refer to the emperors, would have progressively expanded to address people of higher ranks.

This paper is organized as follows. In order to describe the emergence of a system of social deixis in Latin, in Section 2 we will first describe the Early Latin address system, which was unmarked as to the reverential dimension. In Section 3, we will focus on the pragmatic mechanism that triggered the emergence of this pragmatic strategy, namely pluralization, which is closely connected to the use of abstract nouns to refer to the interlocutor (e.g., *maiestas*). In Section 4 we will offer a case study based on Cicero's *Verrine*, also to provide a quantitative corpus-based description of the spread of pluralization in a specific text genre. Section 5 broadens the scope of the discussion, extending it to further developments that produced new rules in the system of Late Latin social deixis and challenging previous interpretations of the motivations that led to the emergence of later uses. Section 6 concludes with a discussion of the analysis developed in this paper and summarizes the main results.

2. *The Latin system of address*

Forms of address are pragmatic in nature because they depend on the system of social rules that govern the behaviour of the interlocutors in a given historical context. They constitute a linguistic domain that is located at the periphery of grammar, and whose forms and functions are subject to rapid and dramatic changes in diachrony. Let us briefly consider, for instance, the two poles that are at the chronological extremes of the system, namely Contemporary Italian, on the one hand, and Classical Latin, on the other. It emerges clearly that the strategies for expressing social deixis are remarkably different.

In Contemporary Italian, the system of address comprises:

- a. Nominal forms, including a wide range of names (e.g., proper names), kinship terms (*mamma* “mum”, *nonna* “grandma”), titles (*signore* “Sir”, *Sua Eccellenza* “His/Her Worship”), military ranks (*Sergente* “sergeant”) and work-related terms (*Professore* “professor”, *Ingegnere* “engineer”). The nominal system has progressively been reduced over time (for example, in the 18th century titles like *Vostra Signoria* “Your Lordship” were much more common: Molinelli, 2010; 2015).
- b. Pronominal forms include *tu* (informal) as opposed to *Lei* (formal and reverential, Migliorini, 1957); there is a regression of *Voi*, whose use is now circumscribed to some Southern regional varieties. The tripartite system *tu/Lei/Voi* was used according to social rules from the 16th to the 20th century, though *Lei* had some ideological antagonists mainly in the 18th and 20th centuries, especially during fascism, because of its supposed foreign influence.

In Classical Latin, the system of address was built upon the following strategies:

- a. Nominal forms represent the main strategy, and proper names are the most frequent: the use of *praenomen*, *nomen* and *cognomen* could modulate and express different address types (Dickey, 2002: 56-67). Other frequent strategies include titles (*dominus*); kinship terms (*mater*, *frater*); terms to express affect and esteem (*carissima*, *dilecte*: Dickey, 2002: 136 ff.); figuratively used terms like *cor*, *lumen* (Dickey, 2002: 152).
 - b. Regarding pronouns, *tu* is the only option available; in address structures, the possessive adjective *mi* (*mea*, *meum*, *meus*, *mei*, *meae*, *noster*) followed by a proper name (ex. 1) or an abstract noun (ex. 2) or adjective (ex. 3) is widely attested to convey affective involvement, especially in private letters (see Dickey, 2002: 218 for more examples). *Noster* often has sociative value (ex. 4).
1. *Me*, mi Pomponi, *valde paenitet vivere*. (Cic. *Att.* III, 4)
“My dear Pomponius, I am heartily sorry to be alive.”
 2. *Obsecro te*, mea *vita*. (Cic. *Fam.* XIV 2, 3: to Terentia)
“I implore you, my darling.”
 3. *Vale*, mi *optime et optatissime frater*. (Cic. *Q.fr.* II, 7, 2)
“Good-bye, my best and most longed-for of brothers.”
 4. *Vehementer me sollicitat Atticae nostrae valetudo*. (Cic. *Att.* XII, 33, 2)
“I am much disturbed about dear Attica’s hill-health.”

Pieri (1967: 212) points to subtle pragmatic differences in the use of *meus* and *noster* in Cicero: *meus* entails an affective involvement, such as that

felt by a father, a brother, a friend; *noster*, by contrast, implies a basic sociative meaning and expresses a lesser degree of intimacy, or even deference, towards the interlocutor. As we will see, this semantic nuance played a crucial role in the development of further pragmatic values deployed by forms that are connected to the first-person plural.

The functional enrichment of the social deixis system lies in the continuum between these two opposing poles: in Classical Latin the system inherited from Early Latin is basically constituted by nominal and pronominal *tu* forms, but already in Classical Latin and in the subsequent decades a new pluralization strategy emerges. This emergent strategy, attested as early as in Cicero, is based on the use of first-person plural pronouns (and related verbal agreement) for the expression of sociative and inclusive values, which also foster the development of *pluralis auctoris* and *modestiae*, as will be discussed in Section 4.

The train of reasoning followed here, partially along the lines of Haverling (1995)², is that another value developed out of the *pl. modestiae* function, namely, that of *pluralis maiestatis*. The *pluralis maiestatis* can be interpreted as a means of honorific self-designation used by the speaker in order to pragmatically modulate and emphatically express his/her identity in specific contexts. The motivation behind the pluralization strategy of the *pluralis maiestatis* is iconic in nature, along the lines of the principle ‘what counts more is more’. In this perspective, pluralization plays a key conceptual role in such a pragmatic development: further evidence for this claim comes from the fact that in many languages pluralization is the basic mechanism for deference (Head, 1978: 191, fn. 6). Interestingly, Joseph too refers to this pragmatic use of the plural as an «icon of an attitude of deference». To quote Joseph’s own words:

In deferential address the speaker defers from using the morphological devices originally coded for reference to the human subject or object in the sentence, replacing them with pronouns and inflections that apply literally to another person category. The morphological deferring is the icon of an attitude of deference (genuine or institutionalized) toward the referent on the part of the speaker. The ‘error’ can end up as a requisite of usage, and in the most extreme case replace the original form

² HAVERLING (1995: 354) argues that «the reason for the initial development of the ‘illogical’ use of the plural of the 2nd person should be sought in a more frequent use of the ‘illogical’ plural of the 1st person in epistolography in general, rather than in the political or even in the social conditions of the day».

entirely, as in English, where deferential you has driven 2s thou to a marginal, archaizing para-existence. (Joseph, 1987: 259)

This strategy, which points to a honorific self-evaluation entailing a positive representation of the self, is likely to have analogically triggered a complementary strategy, that of *pluralis reverentiae*, that is, the symmetrical use of *vos* to address someone who refers to him/herself with *nos*, with the aim of recognizing the self-representation of identity maintained by the interlocutor.

This is, in sum, the development that we seek to untangle and analyse in this study. Let us now investigate more closely the stages of this functional development that, as far as we are aware, has never been explored across a wide chronological span and not even with a specific pragmatic approach.

3. *Pluralization strategies in Latin*

As we have seen above, the system of address in Early Latin does not feature reverential pronouns: the only available and unmarked form is the singular *tu*. Even a frequently cited passage such as that found in Ennius (VIII 377), *nos sumus Romani, qui fuimus ante Rudini*, represents a controversial case: the plural here could have been used by the poet to recall his *tria corda*, i.e., Oscan, Latin and Greek languages. Evidence for the exclusive use of *tu* comes from dialogues reported in Early comedies, from epistolary material, and also from the greeting formulae used by gladiators to address the emperor, which survived even after the Classical period:

5. *Have, Imperator, morituri te salutant.* (Svet. *Claud.* 21, 6)

“Hail, Emperor, those who are about to die salute you.”

From a diachronic perspective, the earlier non-referential pluralization in Latin emerges with the first-person pronoun, whereby *nos* is used instead of *ego* with a sociative and inclusive value. In this perspective, *nos* literally points to the inclusion of the addressee and evokes a sense of commonality and close relationship, also enhancing participation, interest and support (cf. Hofmann, 2003: 291; Brown and Levinson, 1987: 127). By including the interlocutor within an action that, in principle, does not require his interven-

tion, the speaker wishes to establish a more direct contact, and the outcome of this supportive move is to trigger a close association.

In Cicero's letters, the inclusive plural is widely attested as associating the interlocutor within a move of appraisal or contempt, in order to reinforce or mitigate a precise communicative move – and this can happen even if the letter is sent only to Atticus:

6. *Sed opinor quiescamus, ne nostram culpam coarguamus qui, dum urbem, id est patrias, amamus dumque rem conventuram putamus, ita nos gessimus ut plane interclusi captique simus.* (Cic. Att. IX, 6, 2)

“But I suppose I had better keep quiet, for fear of convicting myself of folly in managing to be cut off wholly and made captive through my love of my country and an idea that the matter could be patched up.”

In orations, the inclusive plural is frequently used by Cicero to associate his client with himself or to show his own participation and involvement in his cause (see Ronconi, 1946: 2), as in the following passage:

7. *Unum per fugium, iudices, una spes reliqua est Sex. Roscio [...] vestra pristina bonitas et misericordia. Quae si manet, salvi esse possumus.* (Cic. P.Sex.R.Am. 52, 150)

“The only refuge, the only hope that is left for Sextus Roscius is [...] the kindheartedness and compassion which you showed in earlier times. If these feelings abide, we can even now be saved [that is: “Sex. R. can be safe”].”

As I will try to show in the next section, forensic rhetoric constitutes an interesting text genre, since it provides a communicative pattern that fosters the development of this pragmatic function.

Another pragmatic development, which dates back to Classical Latin, is referred to as *pluralis auctoris* or *pluralis modestiae*, that is, the use of *nos* for *ego* in speaking of oneself and one's own actions. In doing so, the speaker downplays his individual personality, and identifies with his audience: this is why this type of pluralization acquires a modesty value, precisely because the author does not emphasize his own creative process and highlights instead the relationship that, by means of his own work, he has established with his readers (see Pieri, 1967: 217-218). By means of a plural reference, the personality of the author is defocalised and blurred in a plurality of subjects:

8. *Ut supra* demonstravimus. (Caes. Gall. 5, 19)
“As above set forth.”
9. Nos *hic* φιλοσοφοῦμεν (*quid enim aliud?*) et τὰ περὶ τοῦ καθήκοντος *magnifice* explicamus προσφωνοῦμενque *Ciceroni*. (Cic. Att. XV, 13, 6)
“I am philosophizing here (what else can I do?) and getting on splendidly with my *De Officiis*, which I am dedicating to my son.”

The *pluralis acutoris* or *modestiae* basically functions as a pragmatic means to modulate the affective distance between the speaker or writer and his interlocutors. At this chronological stage this is the only value that clearly emerges from the texts at our disposal. Some ambiguous uses found in Catullus and in Pliny’s letters to Trajan cannot be interpreted as earlier cases of *pluralis reverentiae* (see below), which, at this chronological stage, has not yet emerged. The same holds true for the singular-plural opposition in the first person, as argued by Lilja at the end of her detailed study on Pliny (1971: 103): «the singular use of *nos* is rare in Pliny’s letters, the first person plural ordinarily referring to more than one person». Lilja found just «a couple of instances» of pluralization that however should be interpreted as *pluralis modestiae*, as in the case of *scripta nostra* (IV, 26, 2 e VII, 2, 1). Pieri (1967: 218) and Fridh (1956: 170) provide an interpretation along the same lines.

The *pluralis maiestatis* constitutes a further development that emerges in the 3rd century CE and is likely to have stemmed from the systematic use of the *pluralis modestiae* in formal contexts. A crucial role was played at this juncture by a specific type of text, namely, imperial rescripts, that is, documents that were issued in response to a specific demand made by its addressee, most typically on juridical matters. These legal texts were in many cases prompted by the emperor, who tended to adopt means of honorific self-designation, including plural verbal forms such as *iudicamus*, *permittimus*, *decernimus*, and abstract nominals, as evinced in the following passage from the *Codex Theodosianus*, whose *subscriptio* dates back to July 27th, 398.

10. *Repugnantes priscorum sententias* nostra serenitas *temperavit*.
(*Codex Theodosianus* 11, 30, 56: 398 AD)
“Our Serene Highness moderated those who made resistance to the decisions of the ancestors.”

According to Hofmann (2003: 292), the *pluralis maiestatis* spreads from the 5th century onwards. Hofmann and Szantyr (1965 II: 20), however, argue that its use was already established by the time of Gordianus III

(238-244 CE). Once conventionalized as pragmatic strategy to express honorific self-evaluation, the *pluralis maiestatis* triggered the complementary use of ‘illogical’ second plural reference in place of a second singular reference, which was re-interpreted as a deferent form of address: the *pluralis reverentiae*. This type of pluralization progressively became the conventional, ritualized strategy to modulate and express social distance and as such was codified in the social deixis system of the time (Molinelli, 2015). Once part of the system, the *pluralis reverentiae* rapidly spread in all those social environments that were heavily influenced by official registers; Norberg (1999: 27) reports that this kind of plural was even used as a polite form to address colleagues in specific socio-cultural contexts. This use occurs in Symmachus (Haverling, 1995)³, later in Cassiodorus and Gregorius Magnus (Hoffman and Szantyr, 1965 II: 20-21). This use of the second plural reference pragmatically interpreted as a deferent address form subsequently passed into the spoken language and into early Romance varieties. To cite an example: the plural *voi* “you” is used by Dante to express respect and social distance with interlocutors such as Farinata, Brunetto, and Cacciaguیدا (but not with his beloved Vergil), who, by contrast, addresses Dante with the *tu* form (Ronconi, 1946: 4).

Summing up, the decisive turning point in the context of this long pragmatic development is constituted by pluralization as a codified strategy to linguistically express social distance. It first emerged in Classical Latin with a sociative value and triggered subsequent developments. At this chronological stage, epistolary texts and forensic rhetoric constitute the most interesting genres. Crucially, the latter has been less investigated: however, it is worth looking into further in order to explore the emergence of sociative-inclusive functions and the development of the related *pluralis auctoris*.

The genre of forensic rhetoric, indeed, intrinsically realizes a sort of ‘scene’ where (i) the speaker addresses his interlocutors by seeking to estab-

³ According to HAVERLING (1995: 337-338), the earliest indisputable examples of *vos* (instead of *tu*) to express deference, respect and, more generally, social distance, first appear in Symmachus – and this in spite of diverging authoritative interpretations: «Some recent experts of Symmachus take the plural in this and other passages to be sociative [...] In my view, however, we are actually dealing with examples of an ‘illogical use’ of the plural». The passage referred to in the quote is given below: *Summa adficio gratia, quod animadverto litteras meas tibi insubidas non videri, et in gravi dono habeo hanc apud vos esse de nostris epistolis censionem [...] verum ut hoc mihi laetitiae fuit, ita illud ludificandi gratia opinor adiectum, si quid in tuis versibus sorduisset, id ut mei stili cura limaret [...] interea si nobis utendas aures datis, dicam, quid diebus superioribus egerimus [...]. Hinc vos munere salutationis imperio, doque nuntium, prope nos, Deo volente, esse redituros. Fors fuit huiusce promissi. Vestra tamen indulgentia affatum saepe tribuat, quasi diutius abfuturis. Vale. (Symm. *Epist.* 1, 3).*

lish an emphatic relationship, both in the case of judges to be persuaded and defendants to be defended; this may eventually trigger inclusive values; and (ii) the speaker effectively draws the attention of the audience, this eventually leading to the development of *auctoris/modestiae* plurals. These features make this text genre particularly suitable to fostering bridging contexts in which both the pragmatically enriched interpretation and the literary reading are possible, and this is the reason why we have decided to explore Cicero's *Verrine* orations in depth in the next section.

4. *A Case Study: Cicero's Verrine orations*

The case study offered in this section was carried out using a corpus-based methodology. The text under scrutiny was quantitatively analysed using the *LASLA Opera Latina*⁴.

The *Verrine* orations were selected after a comparison with other orations by Cicero because of their quantitative and qualitative adequacy: the phenomenon of pluralization is well represented both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. The body of data analysed comprises all first-person plural pronouns (Section 4.1) and all verbs inflected in the first-person plural (Section 4.2).

4.1. *Pluralization of pronouns and adjectives*

The token frequency of first-person plural pronouns in the *Verrine* orations is 106. Remarkably, 17% of the pronouns out of the total number carry pragmatic values: this quantitative evidence suggests that the pragmatic functions performed by pluralization strategies are stabilized in Cicero, not only in epistolary texts, also in this text genre. The quantitative distribution is summarized in Table 1.

Total amount of 1 st person plural pronominal forms	Inclusive / sociative plural	<i>Pluralis auctoris / modestiae</i>
106	9	9

Table 1. *Pronominal forms of 1st pers. pl. in the Verrine orations.*

⁴ This corpus, compiled at the University of Liège, contains Early and Classical works that can be searched according to lexical parameters and grammatical categories (<http://cip193.philo.ulg.ac.be/OperaLatina/>).

Let us briefly comment on some significant examples.

Firstly, the corpus contains interesting cases of sociative plural which alternates with uses of the corresponding singular pronoun within the very same excerpt: this testifies to the fact that the plural form constituted a pragmatically oriented alternative form carrying a specific communicative value. In (11), for example, *causa a me perorata* is opposed to *accusatio nostra*: the cause is perceived as the individual product of Cicero's original thought, while its content, that is, the act of accusation, mirrors Cicero's projection towards the external and public audience, an attitude that is capable of producing tangible consequences involving the whole community.

11. *Non sinam profecto causa a me perorata quadraginta diebus interpositis tum nobis denique responderi cum accusatio nostra in obliuionem diuturnitatis adducta sit.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio prima*, 54)

"Assuredly I will not suffer the reply to our case to be made only when forty days have passed after I have ended my speech for the prosecution, and the lapse of time has blurred the memory of the charges we bring."

Example (12) sheds more light on the use of the sociative plural as pointing to the clear inclusive import of the choices that Cicero wishes to share with the judges. What Cicero is claiming has a collective meaning that involves everyone and from which nobody can escape.

12. *Quid est, Verres? [...] Non credemus M. Octavio non L. Liguri? Quis nobis credit, cui nos?* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 127,4)

"What have you to say then, Verres? Shall we not believe Marcus Octavius Ligus? Or Lucius Ligus? Who will then believe us, or whom shall we believe?"

The passage given in (13) neatly illustrates another pragmatic nuance achieved by the inclusive meaning, namely that of the generalizing plural with intensifying value. Cicero amplifies his experience so that it can serve as a paradigmatic representation of the experience of virtually everybody, associating them with his own behaviour and in his reflections, which are seen and presented as universally valid.

13. *Haec eadem est nostrae rationis regio et uia horum nos hominum sectam atque instituta persequimur.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* V 181,8)

"For persons like myself, our lives must be planned to follow the same path and take the same direction; we belong to the school, and copy the methods, of the men I speak of."

As far as the *pluralis auctoris* is concerned, we can observe that this function is closely connected to Cicero's professional activity as a lawyer, with reference to procedures that only he, with his skills and personal choices, could have performed. However, Cicero occasionally uses plural pronouns to express self-reference in relation to salient juridical acts in order to virtually involve the whole audience and to share his legal actions, such as, for instance, that of requiring *tabulas* (ex. 14), the notification of the summons to appear (ex. 15), the submission of pieces of evidence for allegation (ex. 16), and the act of bringing charges (ex. 17).

14. *Hoc uero nouum et ridiculum est quod hic nobis respondit cum ab eo tabulas postularemus.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 60,15)

"But what we have here is a ridiculous novelty: I demanded his accounts, and he told me that [...]."

15. *Minari Siculis si decreuissent legationes quae contra istum dicerent [...] gravissimos privatarum rerum testis quibus nos praesentibus denuntiauimus eos ui custodiis que retinere.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* II 12,11)

"They began to threaten the Sicilians, if they decreed any deputations to make statements against him [...] to detain by force and under guard the most damaging witnesses of his private transactions, whom **we** had summoned by word of mouth to give evidence."

16. *Quid a nobis iudices expectatis argumenta huius criminis? Nihil dicimus.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* II 104,9)

"Why should this Court feel that *we* must prove this charge? We hold our tongues."

17. *Atque ut aliquando de rebus ab isto cognitis iudicatis que et de iudiciis datis dicere desistamus et quoniam facta istius in his generibus infinita sunt nos modum aliquem et finem orationi nostrae criminibus que faciamus pauca ex aliis generibus sumemus.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* II 118,16)

"Now I cannot prolong indefinitely my tale of the cases Verres tried, the sentences he pronounced, the proceedings he authorized. His misleadings of this kind are without number; but my list of charges must be cut short, or my speech will never done. I will therefore select a few instances of other kinds."

The *pluralis auctoris* is also used to corroborate discourse planning and discourse managing devices: for example, when Cicero introduces a new top-

ic, thus seeking to actively draw the audience's attention to what he is about to say (cf. ex. 8 and 9 above for a comparable function):

18. *Uerum ad illam iam ueniamus praeclaram praeturam crimina que ea quae notiora sunt his qui adsunt quam nobis qui meditati ad dicendum parati que uenimus.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 103,3)

“But now let us come to his illustrious career as praetor. Let us proceed to offences that are more familiar to this audience than to us who have thought out and prepared the case we have come here to conduct.”

19. *Quid? Hoc nos dicimus?* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* IV 92,8)

“And is it I who say so?”

Parallel to that, the attention the audience pay to his speech cannot gratify anyone else but him. However, Cicero cleverly involves all the listeners in his satisfaction, which becomes a collective, general achievement of a shared goal, that is, Verres' exile. This communicative and pragmatic entailment is realized once again by means of the *pluralis auctoris*:

20. *Superiore omni oratione perattentos uestros animos habuimus id fuit nobis gratum admodum.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* III 10,4)

“In all the earlier part of my speech I have enjoyed your close attention, to my very great satisfaction.”

4.2. *Pluralization of verbs*

The quantitative distribution is even clearer and more telling if we consider the process of pluralization with verbs. Out of the total number (269 tokens), we have pragmatically oriented meanings – either sociative or *auctoris/modestiae* – in almost 77% of cases, as shown in Table 2.

Total number of 1 st -person plural verbs	Inclusive / sociative plural	<i>Pluralis auctoris / modestiae</i>
269	122 (45.3%)	85 (31.5%)

Table 2. *1st-person plural verbs in the Verrine orations.*

Suffice it to mention here some representative passages. In (21) we have a bridging context in which Cicero associates Hortensius with himself by

using a plural with a clear sociative function. We suggest that this context constitutes a bridging case since both the literal plural meaning (Cicero and Hortensius) and the sociative one are in principle allowed:

21. *Dissimulamus Hortensi quod saepe experti in dicendo sumus.*
(Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 27,2)

“We are pretending ignorance, Hortensius, of what our experience at the Bar has repeatedly shown to us.”

Verbs of perception like *audio* and *video* or verbs of cognition like *scio* inflected in the first-person plural deserve separate mention in this context, as they seem to partially function as discourse markers used to point to shared knowledge with the aim of imposing a generalizing perspective on what is being said. In this case, we have an abstract sociative value that does not involve a specific person – as happened with Hortensius in ex. (21) above.

22. *Pergae fanum antiquissimum et sanctissimum Dianae scimus esse.*
(Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 54,2)

“At Perga there is, as we know, a very ancient and much revered sanctuary of Diana.”

23. *Audimus aliquem tabulas numquam confecisse quae est opinio hominum de Antonio falsa.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 60,9)

“We have heard of a man’s never keeping any accounts; that is what is widely believed about Antonius, though incorrectly.”

24. *Huic etiam Romae uidemus in basi statuarum maximis litteris incisum ‘A communi Siciliae datas’.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* II 154,17)

“Even in Rome we see him glorified by the inscription, cut in huge letters on the pedestal of his statues, *Presented by the united people of Sicily.*”

As in example (14) to (17) above, also with pluralized verbs we have cases of *pluralis auctoris* when Cicero describes specific procedures that characterize the juridical process. Cases in points are crucial verbs like *accusemus* (ex. 25), *dicimus* (ex. 26), in *uestrum iudicium adduximus* (ex. 27); see also *denuntiavimus* in example (15) above. Of course, these are technical moves that he performed alone. However, by means of the plural, Cicero broadens the scope of his actions with a view to including the audience, thus calling upon it to witness and implicitly appraise his behaviour.

25. *Fructum istum laudis qui ex perpetua oratione percipi potuit in alia tempora reseruemus nunc hominem tabulis testibus priuatis publicis que litteris auctoritatibus que accusemus.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio prima* 33,3)
 “The harvest of fame that might have been gathered by making a long continuous speech let us reserve for another occasion, and let us now prosecute our man by means of documents and witnesses, the written statements and official pronouncements of private persons and public bodies.”
26. *Haec primae actionis erit accusatio. Dicimus C. Verrem cum multa libidinose multa crudeliter in ciuis Romanos atque socios multa in deos homines que nefarie fecerit tum praeterea quadringentiens sestertium ex Sicilia contra leges abstulisse.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio prima* 56,2)
 “The scope of the prosecution in the first part of the trial will be this. We submit that Gaius Verres has been guilty of many acts of lust and cruelty towards Roman citizens and Roman allies, of many outrageous offences against God and man; and that he has, moreover, illegally robbed Sicily of four hundred thousand pounds.”
27. *Non enim furem sed ereptorem non adulterum sed expugnatorem pudicitiae non sacrilegum sed hostem sacrorum religionum que non sicarium sed crudelissimum carnificem ciuium sociorum que in uestrum iudicium adduximus.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* 19,5)
 “It is no common thief, but a violent robber; no common adulterer, but the ravager of all chastity; no common profaner, but the grand enemy of all that is sacred and holy ; no common murderer, but the cruel butcher of our citizens and our subjects, whom we have haled before your judgement-seat.”

Besides technical juridical procedures, other actions too are seldom expressed using a pluralized verb. In this case, this strategy strengthens the assertive force and bestows a greater validity on what is said. In (28), for instance, the act of having seen Verres’ statues is presented as a general account: the use of the plural calls upon the whole audience to actively witness Cicero’s deeds, to share responsibility for the actions performed by him, and to show empathetic solidarity with him. In (29), even a cognitive process such as acquiring knowledge of certain acts is depicted as shared ascertainment.

28. *Quae signa nunc Verres ubi sunt. Illa quaero quae apud te nuper ad omnis columnas omnibus [...] uidimus.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 51,4)
 “Where are those statues now, Verres? I mean those we saw in your house the other day, standing by all the pillars.”
29. *Cum haec maxime cognoscere[m]us.* (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* II 187,1)
 “While noting these particular facts.”

Parallel to the discourse-managing function performed with pronouns, also verbal pluralization can serve with the *pluralis auctoris* to introduce new topics (cf. ex. 18 and 19 above):

30. *Uerum ad illam iam ueniamus praeclaram praeturam.*
 (Cic. *In C. Verrem actio secunda* I 103,1)
 “But now let us come to his illustrious career as praetor.”

The data discussed so far show that in Cicero’s orations, pluralization is established as a pragmatic tool to skilfully gain the audience’s agreement and to lend authority to the voice of the speaker. As we shall see in the next section, these uses constitute the functional core from which new pragmatic values developed, thus enriching the system of social deixis in the subsequent centuries.

5. Further developments

In the previous sections the analysis of *nos* has shown that the use of the pronoun as a cooperative-inclusive plural pointing to the emphatic involvement of the interlocutor is the first pragmatic value to emerge. This function relies on modulations of the affective distance, which is typically realized in symmetric and reciprocal relations. Therefore, the inclusive plural is a linguistic means that differentiates and scales different degrees of intimacy between interlocutors that share the same power level and social status.

A crucial development is represented by the emergence of the honorific value, which the speaker could use in order to self-evaluate himself positively: the *pluralis maiestatis*, which constitutes a subjectively marked evolution of the sociative-inclusive plural. By means of this strategy, the speaker expresses himself as an abstract and collective plurality of subjects, thus self-representing himself as a subject that ‘counts more’. This is a key develop-

ment in the diachrony of Latin social deixis, since it links older values with further functions related to deference and respect. In other words, with the *pluralis maiestatis* first emerged an idea of social distance and asymmetric relation, which augmented the difference with the interlocutor. Significantly, while the inclusive plural flourished in the republican period (according to the *TLL*, its first attestation is found in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 90 BCE; see also our data on the *Verrine* orations), the *pl. maiestatis* was initially used in the imperial age, by Roman bishops (Pope Clement I, ca. 91-101) and subsequently by emperors, starting from Gordianus III (238-244) (Sasse, 1889: 7, 53, 55, quoted by Uspenskij, 2008: 133).

A further, complementary development is represented by the *pluralis reverentiae*, which was used as politeness acknowledgement of the positive image of himself/herself asserted by the speaker. This plural shares with the *pl. maiestatis* the fact that the interlocutors have asymmetric degrees of power within the interaction. Politeness and reverential forms rapidly became ritualized and codified within the system of social deixis: this led to the pragmatic encoding of distance by means of the complementary functional development of *vos* (cf. e.g. Wackernagel, 1926-1928 I: 101; Haverling, 1995; Uspenskij, 2008: 134). The complementary role played by the *pl. reverentiae* with respect to the *pl. modestiae* is clearly explained by Schmid (1923: 479) in terms of a specular interactional relation featuring a question inflected in the first-person plural that triggers an answer inflected in the second-person plural: «Die Antwort der ergebenen Untertanen auf die Prätension, die sich seitens der Fürsten in der ersten Person Pluralis ausspricht, ist die Anrede in der zweiten Person Pluralis». The widespread interpretation, first suggested by Mommsen (1882: 540-544) and later followed by Brown and Gilman (1960), according to which the *pl. maiestatis* (and therefore the *pl. reverentiae*) had a concrete rather than an abstract use is therefore significantly challenged. Older examples of this pragmatically driven function are also found for instance in Ancient Greek (see, e.g., Schmid, 1923: col. 479 for a discussion) and in typologically distant languages and cultures⁵. Uspenskij (2008: 134) emphasizes in this respect that we are dealing with linguistic processes that are anchored in specific socio-cultural and historical contexts, which, however, are motivated in terms of communicative and cognitive principles that are cross-linguistically valid.

⁵ Consider the 45A map of the *World Atlas of Language Structures* 'Politeness Distinctions in Pronouns', <http://wals.info/feature/45A#2/25.7/137.0>.

In parallel to the emergence of the reverential value, the nominal strategy turned out to be very productive in Late Latin. What late texts reveal is that there is an increasing tendency to address a person using abstract nouns accompanied by the possessive adjective, with honorific and reverential value. This reverential nominal strategy was already attested in Early Latin (see e.g. Hofmann and Szantyr, 1965: 101-102 and the detailed lists provided by Dickey, 2002: 132-133, 152-153), but it is at this chronological stage that it reaches a systematic codification within the system of social deixis, as pointed out in the following passage by Fridh (1956: 169):

L'emploi des noms abstraits comme titres d'honneur adressés aux destinataires est un trait caractéristique du style épistolaire grec et latin des derniers siècles de l'antiquité. L'origine de cet usage est à chercher dans la tendance fort répandue non seulement dans le style de la rhétorique et de la poésie, mais aussi dans le langage populaire, à employer les noms abstraits, surtout les noms de qualités dérivés d'adjectifs, avec un génitif ou un pronom possessif pour faire pour ainsi dire incarner dans une personne ou dans une chose concrète la cause efficiente de l'action accomplie. (Fridh, 1956: 169)

The semantic and pragmatic development of *maiestas* can serve as an interesting example in this context, since its functional enrichment mirrors the emergence of the reverential values we have just described.

Originally, *maiestas* had a religious value and was used to refer to the emperor, depicting him as a divinity (see, e.g., Svennung, 1958: 71). In Classical Latin we find the first cases in which *maiestas* was used to refer to the *princeps* (ex. 31-32). Later, in the first century CE, we have a passage attested in Vindolanda tablets where *maiestas* does not refer to the emperor but to someone of lower status, presumably the provincial governor (ex. 33):

31. *Sed neque parvum carmen maiestas recepit tua.* (Hor. *ep.* 2, 1, 258)

“But neither does your majesty admit of a lowly strain.”

32. (*Auguste* [...]) *maiestas adeo comis ubique tua est.* (Ovid. *trist.* 2, 512)

“So benign is your majesty everywhere.”

33. [...] *mine probo tuam maies*
[t]atem imploro *ne patiaris me*
[i]nnocentem uirgis cas[t]igatum
esse. (*Tab.Vind.* 344, 4.5)

“As befits an honest man (?) I implore your majesty not to allow me, an innocent man, to have been beaten with rods.”

It is important at this point to underline that the passages by Horace and Ovid constitute two bridging contexts featuring the attribution of the quality linked to *maiestas* to Augustus. Significantly, this use first appears in poetry texts and does not seem to mirror a stabilized pragmatic strategy designed to express social deixis. Further evidence for this claim comes from the fact that in the examples given above the use of the second-person singular (*tua*) always appears, which demonstrates that the reverential value of the second plural has not yet come to light. Along the same lines, Fridh (1956: 170) argues that they «ne sont pas encore à regarder comme de vrais titres consacrés par l'usage et que l'origine de ces titulatures n'est probablement pas antérieure au début du IV^e siècle».

In the passage from the Vindolanda tablet, an innocent man is imploring the 'majesty' of the local governor: similarly to examples (31-32), *maiestas* is not employed with an addressing value in a proper allocutive sense, but bears the constitutive trait of the person who is being implored. The attribution of this specific quality to a given person constitutes the bridging context that determines a further complete identification of the interlocutor with the abstract quality expressed by *maiestas*. This process explains why in Late Latin it will be possible to refer directly to the interlocutor using the name that expresses the abstract positive quality that best represents him. Such instances exemplify crucial steps along the road to the conventionalization of *maiestas*, whose intrinsic qualities were gradually pragmatically exploited as a means of social deixis. The increasing frequency of *maiestas* as a pragmatically stable honorific term of address is demonstrated by the wider use made by authors like Quintilian and Plinius; between the 3rd and the 4th centuries, these nominal forms of address were systematically used as titles for emperors by the *Scriptores historiae Augustae* and by Symmachus.

Other expressions pragmaticalized in a similar vein: *tua pietas*, for instance, is found as early as in Quintilian and Plinius (cf. *Ep.* 10, 1); other honorific nominals that were later adopted are *claritas*, *clementia*, *dignatio*, *dignitas*, *eminentia*, *excellencia*, *magnificentia*, *magnitudo*, *perennitas* and, to refer to bishops, also *sanctitas tua*. Complementary to the use of positive address nominals, new expressions of modesty emerge: examples would be *mediocritas nostra* (cf., e.g., Vell. 2, 111, 3) and *mea parvitas* (cf., e.g., Val Max. 1, praef.), which pragmaticalized in order to refer to oneself while interacting with the emperor from the age of Tiberius onwards, that is, when the *pluralis maiestatis* was becoming pragmaticalized (Svennung, 1958: 81-82, cited by Uspenskij, 2008: 124, fn. 36).

It is important in the present discussion to observe that the process of pragmatization leading to the conventional fixation of these address formulae, which mirror the emergence of new social rituals, can be better understood if linked to the contemporary socio-historical context. As early as the 3rd century CE the Roman Empire was torn by both internal and external crisis: on the one hand, Rome lost part of its political hegemony and cultural primacy, while on the other, neighbouring peoples were pushing from the East. As a result, at the end of this period of transition the balance of power between senate and emperor was drastically shifted towards the latter and his court: as Norberg (1968: 14) writes:

The emperors imposed on society a caste system according to which all were linked to a certain profession and a certain social class. At the same time a new system of honorific titles was instituted. The emperor could be called *gloriosissimus*, *serenissimus*, *christianissimus*, the functionaries were divided into four classes of which the attributes were *illustres*, *spectabiles*, *clarissimi*, and *perfectissimi*. The emperor was addressed by the words *vestra maiestas*, *vestra gloria*, *vestra pietas*, others were addressed, depending on their rank, *vestra excellentia*, *eminentia*, *magnificencia*, *spectabilitas*, etc. The titles *beatitudo* and *sanctitas* were preserved for ecclesiastical dignitaries. (Norberg, 1968: 14)

6. Concluding remarks

In this paper, we have investigated the diachronic development of the Latin address system and the stages of functional enrichment from Early Latin, where the nominal strategy was the one primarily used, to Classical Latin, where we have the emergence of sociative/inclusive values, to the Imperial period, characterized by the development of the *pluralis maiestatis* and *reverentiae*. A productive system of honorific titles was instituted after the 3rd century, when a caste system where all were linked to a certain profession and a certain social class was established.

Crucially, the diachronic process we have described could be better characterized in terms of a cyclical development whereby the nominal strategy continued across the history of Latin. This strategy was initially highly productive due to the lack of an alternative politeness device in the grammatical system – for instance, the lack of pronouns of address in Early and Classical Latin. When pluralization finally emerged, names of address were reinterpreted and honorific titles re-functionalized.

These morphological and structural changes ultimately depend on social motivations and develop in other Indo-European languages as well (Joseph, 1987). What the data confirm is that, arguably, there existed in Latin society a structured system of social stratification and that it was mirrored by linguistic strategies of social deixis that initially emerged as purely lexical ones. The innovation we have tried to illustrate rests on the fact that gradually this stratification reached the morphological and the syntactic structure. Latin constitutes a privileged laboratory in this respect because it allows us to explore the emergence of socially determined innovations in morphology and in syntax.

All such values are to be connected partly with the contemporary sociopolitical situation: the *pluralis maiestatis*, entailing a positive self-evaluation, emerges in the Imperial age, where the political system was basically structured around the prominent figure of the emperor, and triggers later developments, such as the complementary strategy of the *pluralis reverentiae*. The established use of the plural form also for the second person as a means to express deference constitutes the most important innovation in Late Latin – and as such it continued in Romance languages (see Niculescu, 1974: 12; Watts *et al.*, 1992: 92-93; Janner *et al.*, 2014). The use of the reverential second plural develops as a deviation from the unmarked form that progressively becomes part of the system. Significantly, the use of *maiestas* as an honorific title first appears in Augustan poets and is never attested in earlier periods, when the republic could not advance the development of such a person-oriented strategy. As we have seen, however, forensic oratory may have enhanced the early emergence of some of these functions. Cicero's *Verrine* constitute an interesting text type in this respect and our corpus-based analysis has hopefully shed light on both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the phenomenon.

From a theoretical perspective, these pragmatic uses of plural pronouns and plural verbal agreement can be better accounted for if linked to the notion of 'face', that is, «the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact» (Goffman, 1967: 23). Accordingly, sociative and inclusive values and the *pl. maiestatis* have to be connected to positive face needs, such as the need to foster agreement, to be valued, to maintain a positive self-image and to establish sympathetic relations. Reverential values, by contrast, seem to be pragmatically motivated by the need not to impose on others and to create social distance – i.e., they have to be linked to the notion of negative face.

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