Lucio Melazzo, Emanuele Lanzetta, Rossella Li Mandri, Annamaria Bartolotta

(University of Palermo)

Relative Clauses in the Evolution of Latin

In the Antisymmetry theory relative clauses are considered to have (1) as a structure (cf. Kayne (1994)):

(1)   [DP, CP]

Applying Rizzi's (1997) split CP hypothesis to the analysis of relative clauses, Bianchi (1999) proposes that *wh*-relative clauses should be accounted for by having recourse to a two steps scheme. In her view, the phrases of the CP-system involved in relativization are those of Force and Topic. As regards TopicP, this assumption is justified by the formulation of the Topic parameter here given as (2):

(2) ±(Topic° optionally supports the features [+ declarative] and [+ relative])

There are only *wh*-relative clauses in Latin; all of them are introduced by the relative pronoun *qui*, *quae*, *quod* or its derivatives. The two-steps relativization can be admitted of in Latin as well. As Bianchi (1999: 315, note 60) also states, however, in Latin the landing site of the wh-pronoun cannot be Spec, TopicP, inasmuch as some topicalized material can be found between the head noun and the relative pronoun. If the relative pronoun were in Spec, TopicP, Relativized Minimality would be violated: assuming that the NP "head" in Spec, ForceP must antecedent-govern its trace in Spec, TopicP, and antecedent-government would be blocked by an intermediate Spec of the same type filled by a topicalized phrase. This is precisely the situation in both Archaic and Classical Latin, pace Salvi (2005: 448), who maintains that relative *wh-*

phrases occupy a position which precedes that of topic/frame constituent (Topic"). This assertion conflicts definitely with (3).

(3) ut quae bello ceperint quibus vendant habeant (Caes., *B.G.* 4, 2, 1)

It is true that at a certain stage in the history of Latin a topicalized constituent is not to be found between NP "head" and correlative determiner — which implies that the relative pronoun may have occupied a Spec position incompatible with the presence of a topic constituent.

Our paper aims to verify how Latin C-system recognizes the order of constituents and the features realized in the heads of the phrases making it up. Our argument will be taking into account a corpus of texts from low Latin on. Incursions into Ancient Italian may not be excluded.

References

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