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This is a contribution from *Perspectives on Language Structure and Language Change. Studies in honor of Henning Andersen.*

Edited by Lars Heltoft, Iván Igartua, Brian D. Joseph, Kirsten Jeppesen Kragh and Lene Schøsler.

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Aspects of grammaticalization and reanalysis in the voice domain in the transition from Latin to early Italo-Romance

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This article discusses some aspects of the grammaticalization and reanalysis of lexical verbs as passive auxiliaries and light verbs in the passage from Latin to (Italo-)Romance, focussing on (i) the diachronic relationship between auxiliari-ization and light verbs, (ii) the direction of the changes and (iii) the pertinacity to change of light verbs. The light verb uses of the verbs under investigation (COME, BECOME), both in Late Latin and in some early Italo-Romance vernaculars, exhibit a different type of decategorialization and desemanticization compared with auxiliaries, attested later than their auxiliary function.

Keywords: grammaticalization, reanalysis, voice, light verbs, auxiliaries

1. Introduction

This article investigates some aspects of the diachrony of auxiliaries and light verb constructions, in relation to the grammaticalization and reanalysis of the Latin verbs *feri* ‘become, arise’, *venire* ‘come’, occurring as passive auxiliaries and light verbs¹ in the transition to (Italo-)Romance, and to the alleged pertinacity to change of light verbs (Butt 2010; Butt & Lahiri 2013), trying to detect general and areal features in the patterns of change investigated (Bisang 2008; Heine & Kuteva 2011, among others).

1. Although in the literature on Italo-Romance the term serial verb is used (Rosen 1997; La Fauci 2000; Cennamo 2007), the data investigated are to be viewed as instantiating light verbs, since the complex predicate they belong to does not consist of a sequence of distinct events functioning as a single unit (Seiss 2009; Butt & Lahiri 2013, among others for the distinction between serial and light verbs).

The discussion is organized as follows. Section 2 illustrates the notions of auxiliary and light verb in the light of the current debate on the *status of light verbs*. Section 3 analyses the semantic and syntactic changes associated with the auxiliary and light verb functions of the Latin verbs *feri* ‘become, arise’ and *venire* ‘come’ in the passage to (Italo-)Romance. Section 4 shows that the light verb uses of the lexical verbs under investigation, both in Late Latin and in some early Italo-Romance vernaculars, exhibit a different type of decategorialization and desemanticization and that the relationship auxiliary-light verb may be non-linear: one and the same verbal lexeme, in fact, can have simultaneously auxiliary and light verb function(s), the latter developing after their auxiliary uses. Section 5 explores the contribution of the Latin and early (Italo-)Romance data to the current debate on the status of auxiliaries and light verbs in relation to change. Finally, Section 6 draws the conclusions.

2. Auxiliarization, light verb constructions and voice

Light verbs are one of the three major types of *complex predicates*, comprising serial verb constructions, raising verbs and restructuring predicates (Bowerman 2008: 162–165), as well as auxiliaries, causatives and other types of “multi-headed predicates” (Alsina, Bresnan & Sells 1997: 1), consisting of “sequences of two or more verbs functioning syntactically as a single predicate”, either contributing and bringing together different events, as in the case of *serial verbs*, or modulating a single event, adding differences in control, aspect, benefaction (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 112), as with *light verbs* (Butt 2003: 4; 2010; Butt & Lahiri 2013), or conveying Tense-Aspect-Modality and voice distinctions, as with *auxiliaries* (see also Cennamo 2007).

2.1 Auxiliaries vs light verbs

Following current assumptions in the literature, auxiliaries instantiate different points along a grammaticalization chain, spanning from full verbs to grammatical markers of T(ense), A(spect) and M(odality), the so-called TAM chain (Heine 1993: 28, 53–58, 131; see also Harris & Campbell 1995: 173) (1), resulting from the interplay of four parameters, belonging to different domains (Andersen 2008: 15, n. 2), applying in varying ways and to a different extent: *desemanticization* (loss of lexical content, often referred to as “semantic bleaching”), *decategorialization* (loss of the grammatical behaviour associated with their lexical status, namely, reduced verbal behaviour), *cliticization* (loss of morphosyntactic independence/status as a separate word), *erosion* (loss of phonological substance) (Heine 2003: 578; Hopper & Traugott 2003: 111–114, among others).

Auxiliary verbs tend to be finite (carrying tense, aspect, or modality meanings/markers) and show “specialized syntactic behaviour” (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 111), occurring most typically only in specific syntactic contexts, characterized by O/S orientation² in the case of passive constructions (see Cennamo 2006 for an investigation of passive auxiliaries in Late Latin and early Italo-Romance).

The *verb to affix cline* is usually conceived of as involving the steps illustrated in (1), the (vector/)light verb³ uses being often viewed as optional intermediate points (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 108; Rosen 1997; Giacalone Ramat 2000; Giacalone Ramat & Sansò 2014, among others):

- (1) Full verb > (vector/light verb) > auxiliary > clitic > affix

More recently, however, light verbs have been regarded as instantiating a different syntactic category, a subtype of lexical verbs, which does not involve grammaticalization. They are viewed as “diachronically pertinacious, although not completely inert to change” and as arising from the reanalysis of the main verb, according to the syntactic context in which it occurs (Butt 2003, 2010; Hopper & Traugott 2003: 114; Butt & Lahiri 2013: 20 and Section 2.1.2). As shown in Hopper & Traugott (2003: 114), and confirmed in the present study with examples from late Latin and early Italo-Romance, light verbs instead do appear to result from grammaticalization, although realizing a different type of decategorialization and desemanticization of the main verb from which they derive as compared with auxiliaries (see also Cennamo 2007 and Section 5).

I consider the interplay of these parameters in shaping the (passive) auxiliary and light verb uses of the verbs BECOME, COME in Late Latin and some early Italian vernaculars (namely old Tuscan), functioning as TAM markers in patterns with O orientation when occurring as voice markers, and conveying semantic nuances not directly/only marginally related to the core meaning of the lexical verb they originate from in light verb constructions.

2.1.1 *Auxiliarization and changes in the argument structure of predicates*

In the auxiliarization process the lexical verb becomes a tense-aspect-modality marker, and the original complement (e.g., a non-finite verbal complement) becomes the main verb (i.e., the lexical verb). The two predicates, initially conveying

2. S, A, O are syntactico-semantic categories, referring to the sentence nuclear participants, following a well-established terminology for the core arguments of the clause (e.g., Haspelmath 2011 and references therein).

3. The term “vector” verb was introduced by Hook (1974, 1991) for Hindi and other Indo-Aryan languages, and viewed as a quasi-auxiliary, conveying aspectual and benefaction meanings (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 109; Butt 2010: 65–66 and references therein).

- b. *nadya-ne xat hk^h li-ya*
 Nadya.F.ERG letter.M.NOM make take-PRF.M.SG
 ‘Nadya wrote a letter (completely)’ (Butt 2003:2)

Light verbs are most typically finite and can occur in isolation: they may retain their original meaning and function. In Hindi and other modern Indo-Aryan languages, verbs such as ‘go’, ‘give’, ‘take’, ‘throw’, ‘strike’ ‘sit’, and others may function as light verbs, combining with a verb in a non-finite form, the *conjunctive participle* (corresponding to the Sanskrit ‘gerund’ or ‘absolutive’ in *tvā* (*ya*) or *-ya/yā*) (Butt 2010), carrying the main verbal meaning of the clause (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 109, 2003: 112), and conveying a semantic nuance of volitionality, inception/completion, suddenness, depending on the construction, and may affect the argument structure of the joint predicate, determining for instance the NOM vs ERG case-marking of the subject in Urdu (4) (Butt 1997, 2003, 2010).

- (4) a. *vo ro par-aa*
 he-NOM weep-INF fall-PRF.M.SG
 ‘He fell to weeping (burst into tears)’ (Butt 1997: 123)
- b. *us-ne ro daal-aa*
 he.ERG weep put-PRF.M.SG
 ‘He wept copiously on purpose’ (ibid.)

In Italian, verbs like *rimanere/restare* ‘remain’, *diventare* ‘become’, and *venire* ‘come’ occur both in auxiliary and light verb function (in its non-passive and non-motion activity use for *venire*), as revealed by their different syntactic behaviour. In point of fact, only light verb uses of lexical verbs (5a), (5c), (6a) can occur in participial absolute/conjunct participle constructions, which are impossible with auxiliaries, as shown in (5b), (5d), (6b) (Rosen 1997; La Fauci 2000; Cennamo 2007):

- (5) a. *restato/rimasto colpito al collo*
 stay.PTCP.M.SG hurt.PTCP.M.SG at-the neck
 ‘Having been hurt in his neck’ (lit. Remained struck)
- b. **stato colpito al collo*
 be.PTCP.M.SG hurt.PTCP.M.SG at-the neck
 ‘Having been hurt in his neck’ (lit. Been struck)
- c. *il ragazzo rimasto colpito...*
 the boy remain.PTCP.M.SG hurt.PTCP.M.SG
 ‘The boy who has been hurt in his neck’.
- d. **il ragazzo stato colpito...*
 the boy be.PTCP.M.SG hurt.PTCP.M.SG

- (6) a. una torta *venuta* *cotta* all'esterno
 a cake come.PTCP.F.SG cook.PTCP.F.SG at-the-outside
 ma cruda all'interno (venire: light verb)
 but raw at-the-inside
 'lit. A cake come cooked outside but raw inside'.
 'A cake that came out cooked inside but raw inside'.
- b. *una torta *venuta* *cotta* da Marco
 a cake come.PTCP.F.SG cook.PTCP.F.SG by Mark
 'lit. A cake (that has) come cooked by Mark'. (venire: passive auxiliary)
- c. una torta *venne* *cotta* da Marco, un'altra da Giovanna
 a cake come.PST.3SG cook.PTCP.F.SG by Mark another by Jane
 'One cake was cooked by Mark, another one by Jane'.
- d. la torta (mi) è *venuta/venne*
 the cake I.DAT be.PRS.IND.3SG come.PTCP.F.SG/COME.PRF.3SG
ben cotta
 well cook.PTCP.F.SG
 'The cake came out well cooked to me' (venire: light verb)

In its light verb function(s) *venire* occurs in both simple and compound tenses (6a), (6d); in its (passive) auxiliary function *venire* only occurs in simple tenses (6c) (cf. **la torta è venuta cotta* the cake be.PRS.3SG come.PTCP.F.SG cook.PTCP.F.SG 'The cake has been (lit. is come) cooked' (auxiliary 'come') vs. *la torta è venuta (ben) cotta* be.PRS.3SG come.PTCP.F.SG cook.PTCP.F.SG – lit. 'The cake is come (well) cooked' (light verb *come*) (Rosen 1997; La Fauci 2000; Cennamo 2007). In addition, the A argument is in the dative when expressed, as in (6d), a pattern already attested in old Tuscan (cf. Section 3.2).

The different syntactic behaviour of light verbs in Hindi/Urdu and Italian stems from their different syntactic status: whereas light verbs contribute to the argument structure of the complex predicate, auxiliaries are just TAM markers (Butt 1997, 2003, 2010; Seiss 2009; Butt & Lahiri 2013, among others). Thus, light verbs instantiate a different syntactic category, a subtype of lexical verbs according to Butt (2010), Butt & Lahiri (2013): they structure or "modulate" the event, rather than changing the argument structure of the joint predicate, like auxiliaries. Under this view, only one lexical entry is postulated, with the light verb and full verb/auxiliary meanings triggered by the syntactic context in which they occur, as shown in (7) (adapted from Butt & Lahiri 2013: 24):

- (7) Underlying entry < main verb > auxiliary (via reanalysis) > clitic > affix
 light verb

The explanation for the cross-linguistic spread of verbs such as ‘come’, ‘go’, ‘take’, ‘hit’, ‘rise’, ‘fall’, ‘throw’, ‘give’, ‘rise’, ‘do/make’ in light verb function/constructions is that these verbs are *passépartout* elements, characterized by a very general meaning and therefore susceptible of occurring in several syntactic contexts or “constellations” (Butt & Lahiri 2013: 24). Syntactic context, indeed, lies at the heart of the use of some of these verbs (e.g., *come*, *go*, *do/make*), also in auxiliary function, owing to the lack of “specificity” in their lexical meaning (Heine 1993: 28), with grammaticalization involved in both light verbs and auxiliaries.

A more insightful account for the light verb and auxiliary status of the lexical verbs recurring in this function is put forward by Bisang (2008: 56), who shows – in discussing the different uses of the verb *ba:n* ‘come to have’ in Khmer and generally in East and mainland Southeast Asian languages –, that the synchronic relationship among the different functions of a grammatical marker can be better described by means of the notion of a “source concept” spreading in different directions, rather than through the notions of cline or path of grammaticalization (cf. also Bisang 2011: 112). This notion proves more useful than the scheme proposed by Butt (2003, 2010), Butt & Lahiri (2013) for the description of the auxiliary and light verb uses of verbs denoting change of state, change of location and activity in the transition from Latin to early Romance and in some early Italian vernaculars, albeit the auxiliary and light verb functions of a lexical verb, when they are identical in form, arise from the syntactic context in which they occur, as also illustrated in (5)–(6) from contemporary Italian and in Sections 3.1–3.2.⁴

As we shall see in the course of discussion, the data investigated show that the relationship light verbs – auxiliaries may be more complex than usually assumed in the literature and that light verbs, although involving grammaticalization, following Hopper & Traugott (2003: 114), depending on the language, do not appear to instantiate an intermediate stage in this process (Butt 2003, 2010; La Fauci 2000; Cennamo 2007).

3. Light verbs and (passive) auxiliaries in Late Latin and early (Italo-)Romance

The Latin verbs *feri* ‘become’, *venire* ‘come’ and their early Italo-Romance continuators **fire* ‘be/become’, *venire* ‘come/become’, display both auxiliary and light verb functions, occurring, respectively, as TAM markers in passive constructions and

4. A similar approach is put forward in Heltoft (2017) for the development of auxiliaries in Danish and Kragh & Schøsler (2015) for the diachrony of some progressive periphrases in French.

as “*vectors*” of semantic facets of resultativity, unexpectedness, involitionality/lack of control in their light verb uses, depending on the pattern.

3.1 *Fieri* and its early Italo-Romance continuants

In Late Latin, attested from the 4th century A.D., the accomplishment verb *fieri* ‘become, arise’ – also occurring in early and Classical Latin as the lexical passive of the verb *facere* ‘do, make’, *fieri* meaning ‘be done/made’ –, is employed as a voice marker, in imperfective passive function only, with [–Animate] subjects (8a) in the early attestations of this usage, subsequently also with [+Animate] ones (8c). This construction alternates, sometimes in the same text, with the canonical synthetic passive (i.e., the –R form) (8b) and with the canonical passive pattern for perfective tenses, *esse* ‘be’ + past participle (9) (albeit rarely and apparently initially only in some tenses, the present indicative and the present subjunctive) (Svennung 1935: 457–458; Winters 1985). The latter structure gradually spreads to imperfective tenses in late texts (e.g., 6th–9th century A.D.) – although never replacing the canonical analytic passive *esse* ‘be’ + past participle –, as part and parcel of wider changes affecting the grammatical encoding of voice and the argument structure of the clause in the passage to Romance (Muller 1924; Svennung 1935: 459; Cennamo 2005, among others):

- (8) a. *interpositae orationes fiunt*
 intersperse.PTCP.F.PL.NOM prayer.PL.NOM become-PRS.IND.3PL
 ‘Prayers are being/get interspersed’ (lit. become interspersed)
 (Per. Aeth. 35, 6)
- b. *interponuntur orationes*
 intersperse-MPASS.PRS.IND.3PL prayer.PL.NOM
 ‘Prayers are being/get interspersed’ (Per. Aeth. 37, 6)
- c. *et fiat battutus et*
 and become.PRS.SBJV.3SG beat.PTCP.M.SG.NOM and
missus in carcere
 put.PTCP.M.SG.NOM in jail
 ‘And that he be beaten and imprisoned’ (Lex Cur. Addit. VIII, 42)
- (9) *ut forsitan... gemitus populi omnis auditus*
 that perhaps the-moan crowd-GEN all-GEN heard.PTCP.M.SG
sit
 be.PRS.SBJV.3SG
 ‘That perhaps the moan of the whole crowd is heard’ (Per. Aeth. 36, 3)

In a 6th century A.D. cookery book (*De re coquinaria*, Anthimus) the verb *fieri* ‘become, be made/done’ is also attested in examples where it appears to function

as a resultative marker, i.e., in a light verb function, as in the conjunct participial form *cocta facta* ‘lit. cooked become/made’ in (10), where the participle *facta* (lit. ‘become/made’) singles out the verbal nature of the participle of the lexical verb, *cocta* ‘cooked’, that has instead an adjectival function in the simple form (*cocta* ‘cooked’ vs. *cruda* ‘raw’). This interpretation is supported by the presence of the adverb *bis* ‘twice’, that underlines the verbal (i.e., eventive) function of the past participle of the verb *coquere* ‘cook’, otherwise ambiguous, between a verbal (lit. ‘cooked become/made’) and an adjectival function (‘cooked’ vs ‘raw’):

- (10) *lenticla et brassica vis (=bis) cocta*
 lentil.SG.NOM and cabbage.SG.NOM twice cook.PTCP.F.SG.NOM
facta (Orib. *Syn.* 4, 30)
 become/make.PTCP.F.SG.NOM
 ‘Lentils and cabbage cooked twice’ (lit. twice cooked become/made)

For other accomplishment verbs, e.g., *assare* ‘roast’, *elixare* ‘boil’, instead, the past participle only has a verbal function (*assatus* lit. ‘(been) roasted’, *elixatus*, lit. ‘(been) stewed’), the adjectival value being conveyed by a corresponding adjective (e.g., *elixus* ‘boiled’, *arsus* ‘roasted, burnt’), as shown in (11), where the past participle of *feri*, *factus*, occurs in conjunction with the adjective, and is coordinated with the verbal participle, *assati*, rather than with the adjective, *assi* (in line with the fact that coordinated elements may not be of the same form class, but must be alike in function), thereby confirming the view that the sequence adjective + *factus* functions as a verbal participle. In this construction *factus*, the past participle of the verb *feri*, acts as a light verb form, a verbalizer, conveying the semantic nuance of resultativity (see Svennung 1935: 459 and discussion in Cennamo 2005, 2006, 2007):

- (11) (=10) *elixi facti et assati* (**assi*)

Interestingly, a similar pattern occurs in a 15th century old Lombard (Comasco) text, where the presence of *facta* ‘become’, the past participle of the continuator of Latin *feri*, **fire*, ‘be, become’, disambiguates the verbal from the adjectival interpretation of *strangosada* ‘in anguish’ (lit. ‘anguished’), the past participle of the verb *strangosar* ‘anguish’, as shown in (12a) *strangosada facta* vs (12b), *strangosada*, where the past participle has a plain adjectival meaning instead (see also Cennamo 2007: 80):⁵

5. The sentence can also have a different bracketing, [*facta quaxe morta*], the past participle *facta* ‘become’ forming a complex predicate with *morta* ‘dead’, the past participle of the verb *morir* ‘die’, having also an adjectival function, depending on the syntactic context. The function of the form *facta*, however, would not change.

- (12) a. el morto desmonta zo e va und
 the dead go.PRS.IND.3SG up and go.PRS.IND.3SG where
 e la madre *strangosada facta*
 be.PRS.IND.3SG the mother anguished become.PTCP.F.SG
quaxe morta
 almost dead
 ‘The dead gets up and goes to his mother, who is in anguish (lit. (who has)
 become anguished), almost dead’ (Passione, 16. 23)
- b. e como la madre ste in tanta afflictio[n]
 and how the mother stay.PRS.IND.3SG in much despair
 e *sta strangosada* oiando tal imbasata
 and stay.PRS.IND.3SG anguished.PTCP.F.SG hear.GER such report
 ‘And how his mother is in such despair and almost anguished in hearing
 the /report’. (Passione, 8.19–20)

In old Lombard (e.g. old Milanese), sometimes in the same texts where it occurs in light verb function, such as the *Passione* (Old Comasco), **fire* + past participle (and its variants) also occur as imperfective passive markers, being the most common passive auxiliary, attested in all tenses except the past perfect and the gerundive, unlike in other northern early Italian vernaculars, where it is confined to some tenses only, e.g., crystallised forms of the subjunctive in present/future function in old Florentine (Bertuccelli Papi 1980: 72; 74), the present/imperfect indicative in old Venetian (Kontzi 1958; Cennamo 2003, among others):

- (13) Tu *fi'* *metua* sot pei e
 you become.PRS.IND.2SG put.PTCP.F.SG under feet and
fi' *fagia* *morir* (O. Milanese)
 become.PRS.IND.2SG make.PTCP.F.SG die.INF
 ‘You are trampled upon and are made to die’ (Bonvesin, *Disputatio*, 32. 98)

3.2 *Venire* in Late Latin and early Italo-Romance

Venire ‘come’ is hardly attested as a passive auxiliary in Late Latin, with only one clear and yet controversial⁶ example of the use of this verb as a TAM marker in an O-oriented pattern, i.e., as a passive voice marker (although the issue needs further investigation), in a veterinary treatise from the second half of the 4th century A.D., *Mulomedicina Chironis* (14a), with later (8th–9th century A.D.) attestations of related verbs such as *pervenire* ‘come to, arrive at, fall to’ (14b), *evenire* ‘come out, come forth, happen, befall’ (14c), in patterns that are ambiguous, however, between

6. See discussion in Adams (2013: 721–723) and references therein.

a fientive⁷ (i.e., transitional) (Haspelmath 1987: 9; 1990: 34) and a passive reading, at times also with overt expression of the agent, as in (14b) (Muller 1924: 80):

- (14) a. quem (sc. cibum) conceptum venire oportet
that.ACC.M (food.ACC.M) take.PTCP.M.SG come.INF ought
'Food that ought to be taken'. (Mul.Ch. 266)
- b. si ab eis aliquis interfectus evenerit
if by they.ABL someone kill.PTCP.M.SG come.PRF.FUT.3SG
'If someone happens to be killed by them' (lit. will-come/end up killed)
(Cap. Sax., 797; Muller 1924: 80)
- c. dum bene instructus perveniat
until well teach.PTCP.M.SG come.PRS.SBJV.3SG
'Until he is well taught' (lit. comes/ends up well taught)
(Cap., an. 802; Muller 1924: 80)

Light verb constructions with the verb *venire* 'come' are not found in early and Classical Latin (unless we regard *venire* as a light verb conveying resultativity, rather than the motion verb 'come' in (23) *irritata venit* 'lit. irritated comes (results/ends up)', an issue to be further explored). In contrast, in some early Italian vernaculars (e.g., old Tuscan), various subtypes of this structure occur, some of which attested already in 13th century texts, generally with subjectivization of the O argument, as exemplified in (15) and (16). In both patterns the finite form of the verb *venire* is followed by the past participle of a transitive verb (15c)–(15d) (less commonly intransitive ones), also with an unexpressed (15f) or a sentential O (15g), (17). The A argument (usually the third person (15a), more rarely the first and second persons),⁸ is in the dative. It is most typically preverbal, occurring either before the light verb, as in (15a) or before the complex predicate (light verb + past participle), if realized by a pronoun, as in (15c). The A argument may also be postverbal if

7. The term refers to predicative constructions consisting of a transition verb (e.g., *become*) and an adjective, denoting the transition from a state to a new state, as in *caro spissa fit* 'Meat becomes dry', from the adjective *spissus* 'dry' (see also Michaelis 1998).

8. For instance, there are only two examples in *Decameron* (14th century) (Bertuccelli Papi 1980: 62):

- (i) *se ti venisse veduto Lapuccio ...* (*Decameron* VIII, 2.15)
if you.DAT come.IMPRESBJV.3SG see.PTCP.M.SG Lapuccio
'If you happened to see Lapuccio' (lit. if to you came seen Lapuccio)
- (ii) *spesse volte mi vien presa l'una*
several times I.DAT come.PRS.IND.3SG take.PTCP.F.SG the-one.F.SG
per (id. VI, 10. 49) *l'altra* (id. VI, 10. 49)
for the-other.F.SG
'Several times I mistake one for the other' (lit. 'to me comes taken the one for the other')

instantiated by a nominal, occurring either after the light verb, as in (15c) or after the complex predicate (15d). The construction shows different word order possibilities also for the O argument, encoded as a subject, as in (15b), ... *venne ... questa donna veduta*, and (15d), *venne ... alzato il viso* (Kontzi 1958: 43–49; Bertucelli Papi 1980: 60–70; Vincent 1987: 248–249):

- (15) a. *se veduto le venisse un*
 if see.PTCP.M.SG she.DAT come.SBJV.IMPRESG a
giovannotto (transitive verb; [+agr])
 young-man
 ‘If she had happened to see a young man’ (lit. if seen to her came a young man)
 (*Decameron*, V. 10. 24)
- b. *gli venne per ventura... questa donna veduta*
 he.DAT come.PRESG by chance this woman see.PTCP.FSG
 ‘He happened to see this woman’ (lit. to him by chance came this woman seen)
 (*Decameron*, II.7.91)
- c. *le venne sentita una novella*
 she.DAT come.PRESG hear.PTCP.FSG a story.FSG
 ‘She happened to hear a story’ (lit. to her came heard a story)
 (*Decameron*, III. 9. 7)
- d. *...venne alla giovane alzato il viso*
 come.PRESG to.the girl raise.PTCP.M.SG the face.M.SG
 ‘The girl happened to raise her face’ (lit. came to the girl raised the face)
 (*Decameron*, IX. 2. 14)
- e. *e avvegnadiochè mortalmente gli venne*
 and although mortally he.DAT come.SBJV.IMPRESG
peccato (intransitive verb)
 sin.PTCP.M.SG
 ‘And although he happened to commit mortal sin’ (lit. mortally to him came sinned)
 (*Teologia Mistica*, Siense, 1356/67; 84, col. 1.18;
 Giacalone Ramat & Sansò 2014: 25)
- f. *a Sagramorre venne mirato*
 to Sagramorre come.PST.3SG look.PTCP.M.SG
in quella parte (intr. verb)
 in that part
 ‘Sagramorre happened to look in that direction’
 (*Tavola Ritonda*, 166.13, Florentine, 1st half of the 14th century)
- g. *venneli pensato d’andare in Grecia*
 come.PST.3SG.he.DAT think.PTCP.M.SG of-go.INF in Greece
 ‘He happened to think of going to Greece (lit. came-to him thought to go in Greece)
 (*Leggenda di messer Gianni di...*, 43 r22)

More rarely, the pattern is found with the verb in the non-agreeing, impersonal form, the past participle reverting to the unmarked masculine singular form (16) (Bertucelli Papi 1980: 61–72; Ambrosini 2000: 359):

- (16) gli *ne venne schizzato* ['lanciato'] *una* [sc. *fava*]
 he.DAT of.it come.PST.3SG throw.PTCP.M.SG one.F (broad bean)
nell'orecchia
 into-the ear
 'A broad bean hit his ear (lit. to him of them (= broad beans) came dashed into his ear' (Trecentonovelle, CLXVIII. 5)

In the light verb constructions illustrated above, *venire* is semantically empty, giving the complex predicate a nuance of unexpectedness and lack of control, involitionality of the A argument, encoded as an oblique, i.e., in the dative. The verb retains only the more general, transitional (i.e., entry into a new state) facet of its lexical meaning (Maiden 1995: 157) and combines with all aspectual classes (e.g., states, activities, accomplishments, achievements) (Bertucelli Papi 1980: 61–68 for a wide range of examples; Giacalone Ramat & Sansò 2014), the sequence *venire* + past participle meaning 'happen' or 'end up, result'. The construction also occurs in compound tenses (Bertucelli Papi 1980: 64; Cennamo 2007; Giacalone Ramat & Sansò 2014), as shown in (17):

- (17) E *venuta* *nella età da marito*, non *m'è*
 and come.PTCP.F.SG in.the age from husband not I.DAT.be.PRS.IND.3SG
venuto *fatto* *di poterla* *dare* *a*
 come.PTCP.M.SG make.PTCP.M.SG of be-able.INF.she.ACC give.INF to
persona che mi piaccia
 person that I.DAT like.PRS.SBJV.3SG
 'And, having reached the age of getting marriage, I did not happen to be able to give her to someone who I like' (Decameron V. 5, 365)

The light verb function of *venire* in compound tenses illustrated in (17), very frequent in old Florentine and generally in old Tuscan, is found in other northern vernaculars as well, e.g., old Mantoan (16th century) (Vincent 1987: 249). The construction may be ambiguous between a light verb and a passive interpretation, that is only resolved by the context, as in (18a), alongside clearly passive structures, with the A argument overtly expressed, introduced by the preposition *da* 'by' (18b):

- (18) a. disse *esserle* *venuta* *involata* *una sua*
 say.PST.3SG be.INF.she.DAT come.PTCP.F.SG steal.PTCP.F.SG a her
collana d'oro
 necklace of-gold
 'She said she happened to be stolen a golden necklace/she was stolen a
 golden necklace of hers' (Ascanio de' Mori, *Novelle*, 954)
- b. ciò che *dal padre gli* *era* *venuto*
 that which by-the father he.DAT be.IMPRES.IND.3SG come.PTCP.M.SG
lasciato
 leave.PTCP.M.SG
 'What he had been given by his father' (lit. what by his father was come
 left him) (Ascanio de' Mori, *Novelle*, 945)

In old Tuscan the light verb function of *venire* also occurs in a different subtype, where the verb appears to convey an aspectual function, resultativity, illustrated in (19), analogous to the construction discussed in (6), *una torta venuta cotta all'esterno* 'lit. 'A cake come cooked outside', the only light verb pattern used in contemporary Italian.⁹ This usage is not found, however, in old Lombard and old Venetian, where only *venire*-passive occurs (Cennamo 2003), alongside the 'fientive' use of this verb (20a), attested in old Tuscan already in 13th century texts and found also in other early Italian varieties, e.g., old Lombard and old Sicilian, where also *venire*-passive occurs¹⁰ (Kontzi 1958: 40; Bertuccelli Papi 1980: 69; Squartini 2003; Cennamo 2007; Giacalone Ramat & Sansò 2014). This construction, too, may be viewed as instantiating a subtype of the light verb *venire*, attested also in participial absolute/conjunct participle structures (20b) (from the 16th century),

9. The involitionality marker use of *venire* in Italian is nowadays confined to fixed patterns, occurring most typically in simple tenses, only with the past participle of the verb *fare* 'to do, make' (e.g. *mi vien fatto* I.dat come.PRS.3SG do.pp.M.SG 'I happen to' ('to me comes done') and followed by a subordinate clause introduced by the preposition *di* 'to' (lit. 'of'), governing the infinitive of the verbs *dire* 'to say' and *pensare* 'to think':

- (i) *mi vien fatto di dire /pensare*
 I.DAT come.PRS.3SG make.PTCP.M.SG of say.INF /think.INF
 'I happen to say/think' ('To me comes done to say/think')

10. (i) *li quali venu partuti* (Senisio, Angelo. *NA*, a228.1) (passive auxiliary)
 the which come.PRS.IND.3PL divide.PTCP.M.PL
 'Who are divided' (lit. come divided)
- (ii) *li iornu di lu venniri santu* (Sposizione del Vangelo Secondo Matteo,
 the day of it come.INF saint B110, 26.1) (fientive copula)
 'The day when he became saint'

identifying the light verb behaviour of lexical verbs also in contemporary Italian (Rosen 1997: 200; La Fauci 2000 and Section 2.1.2):

- (19) *la tela era ben venuta fatta ad Aragnes*
 the cloth be.IMPRES.IND.3SG well come.PTCP.F.SG make.PTCP.F.SG to Aragnes
 'The cloth had come out well to Aragnes' (*Metamorfosi d' Ovidio*, B028, 14)
- (20) a. *e allora li cavalieri tutti vennero smarriti*
 and then the knights all come.PST.3PL dismay.PTCP.M.PL
 (= si smarrirono)
 (REFL dismay.PST.3PL)
 'And then all the knights got dismayed' (*Tavola Ritonda*, XCIII. 352)
- b. *venuta adunque Madonna Modesta contro'l suo volere*
 come.PTCP.F.SG then Dame Modesta against-the her will
vecchia canuta
 old.F.SG white-haired.F.SG
 'So, Dame Modesta having become against her will a white-haired old woman'
 (Straparola, *Le piacevoli notti*, 248)

Thus, the data investigated do not appear to support the claim often quoted in the literature (Kontzi 1958: 36–37; Rohlf's 1969: 128–129; discussion in Maiden 1995: 157, and recently Giacalone Ramat & Sansò 2014), whereby the rise of *venire*-passive in old Tuscan would be subsequent to the light verb use(s) of the verb (see also Salvi 2010: 146), since the two constructions are found in texts from the same period (cf. also Kontzi 1958: 42–43; Bertucelli Papi 1980: 68).

4. Origin of *BECOME* and *COME* as voice markers and light verbs

The patterns investigated result from a grammaticalization process following different paths or chains, leading to different syntactic categories, the auxiliary and light verb functions of the transition verbs *fieri* 'become, arise' and *venire* 'come, happen, end up'. The auxiliarization of *fieri* and *venire* involves an initial stage where these verbs are equivalent to the copula *esse* 'be', thereby occurring also with inherent properties, i.e., non-result states, as shown in (21b), from a 6th century A.D. text (Svennung 1935: 460; Cennamo 2005: 184). This stage is attested earlier for *venire*, in examples with nominal and adjectival complements from Classical Latin (especially in poetry, e.g., Virgil, Ovid, Juvenal, Propertius) (21a) – albeit apparently more frequently with a nominal complement – and, at a later stage, for the verb *fieri*, a usage found in 4th–6th century A.D. non-literary texts such as *Mulomedicina Chironis*, Orbasias, Anthimus, illustrated in (21b) (Svennung 1935: 460; Löfstedt 1938/39: 181–184; Cennamo 2005: 189; 2007):

- (21) a. *seu tristis veniam seu... laetus*
 either sad.NOM come.SBJV.PRS.1SG or... happy.NOM
 ‘Whether I am downcast or joyful’ (when I meet my friends)
 (Prop. 1, 12, 25)
- b. *utilis fiat ita, ut in lactes*
 useful.NOM become.PRS.SBJV.3SG thus that in milk.PL.ACC
caprunos coquat
 goat.PL.ACC cook.PRS.SBJV.3SG
 ‘Thus it is useful so as to cook goat kids in milk’ (Anthim. 82.2–3)

Subsequent steps involve the gradual “regrammation” (Andersen 2006, 2008), “extension” (Andersen 2001: 230) or “expansion” (Heine & Reh 1982: 38–39) of *feri* and *venire* copulas into the syntax, as passive auxiliaries (8a), (8c), (10), (14a), and as light verbs (12)–(13), (15)–(17). In the former usage *feri* and *venire* gradually integrate into the verbal paradigm, in so-called copula auxiliarization (Dik 1987: 57), becoming tense-aspect-modality markers and occurring in patterns with O-orientation, thus reanalysing as voice markers. This is the case when the past participle in the joint predication they occur in is no longer formed from accomplishments/achievements, e.g., *coquere* ‘cook’, *constringere* ‘contract’, *mutare* ‘change’, *irritare* ‘irritate’ (22a), (23a). With these verbs the sequence *feri/venire* + past participle may be ambiguous between a spontaneous, anticausative or agentive anticausative-middle function when the subject is animate (Haspelmath 1987: 27–29), and an externally caused eventuality, as in its passive interpretation. With activity verbs, e.g., *gubernare* ‘to govern’ (22b), *concupere* ‘to take’ (23b), only the reading of an externally caused eventuality is available, since the change component is lacking in the event structure of these verbs, the causer optionally surfacing as an oblique already in Late Latin with the verb *feri*:¹¹

- (22) a. *et maxillae constrictae fient*
 and the.jaws.PL.F.NOM contract.PTCP.PL.F.NOM become.FUT.IND.3PL
 (= constringentur)
 contract.MPASS.FUT.3PL
 ‘Its jaws become contracted (= get contracted)’ (Mul. Ch. 307. 15)
- b. *per sacerdotes fiant gubernatas*
 by priest.PL.NOM become.PRS.SBJV.3PL govern.PTCP.F.PL.ACC
 ‘That they be governed by the priests’ (Cap. Gen. 783; Muller 1924: 79)

11. Cf. further discussion in Cennamo (2005: 186; 2006: 324–325); Adams (2013: 719–721); Pinkster (2015: 258) and references therein.

- (23) a. *irritata venit* (= irritatur)
 annoy.PTCP.F.SG come.PRS.IND.3SG (= annoy.MPASS.PRS.IND.3SG)
 quando contemnitur illa
 when slight.MPASS.PRS.IND.3SG she.NOM
 ‘She gets annoyed (lit. (be)comes annoyed) when she is looked down upon/
 slighted’ (Prop. I, 10, 25)
- b. (= 14a) *quem (sc. cibum) conceptum venire*
 that.NEUT food.NEUT take.PTCP.NEUT.SG come
 oportet in duas partes
 ought to in two parts
 ‘Food that ought to be taken in two parts’ (Mul. Ch. 26)
- c. (= 14b) *si ab eis aliquis interfectus evenerit*
 if by they.ABL someone kill.PTCP.M.SG come.PRF.FUT.3SG
 ‘If someone happens to be killed by them’ (lit. will-come/end up killed)
 (Cap. Sax., 797; Muller 1924: 80)

In contrast, in their expansion into the syntax as light verbs, *feri* and *venire* are reanalysed as markers of resultativity and involitionality, respectively, developing from the weakening of the (indefinite) change component of their lexical meanings, and realized through different paths.

Thus, the past participle of the verb *feri*, both in Late Latin and in old Lombard, occurs in conjunct participial constructions (characteristic of the light verb behaviour of a verb), carrying an aspectual meaning, resultativity, revealing the verbal function of the past participle of the lexical verb it occurs with (e.g., *caro vaporata facta* ‘lit. meat steamed become/made vs *caro vaporata* lit. ‘meat steamed’ (see also (10), Section 3.1)). Truly light verb uses of *venire*, instead, are not found in Latin but in its old Tuscan continuants (Section 3.2), albeit with Latin antecedents in desemanticized uses of the verb in conjunction with adjectives, in copular-like constructions where the verb retains only the transitional-resultative facet of its original meaning, as in *rara venerint* (24a). In Latin, however, *venire* never comes to denote the transition from a state to a new state, with the meaning ‘become’, like *feri* (e.g., *tumor durus fit* swelling.M.NOM hard.M.SG become.PRS.IND.3SG ‘the swelling becomes hard’). By contrast, its related form *devenire* (< *de-venire* ‘come down off, away from’) – where the prefix *de-* conveys a downward orientation, meaning ‘from’, ‘away from’ (Acedo-Matellán 2015: 53, note 21 and references therein) –, is found both in fientive patterns (24a) and in a seemingly light verb usage (24e) (Cennamo 2005: 190–191):

- (24) a. *carnes deveniunt siccae* (Anthim. 12, 3)
 meat.NOM.PL (be)come.PRS.IND.3PL dry.NOM.PL
 ‘Meat becomes dry’ (lit. come out)

- (24) b. ardet caro deforis et deintus
 burn.PRS.IND.3SG meat.NOM.SG outside and inside
devenit (= est) *cruda*
 (be)come.PRS.3SG raw
 ‘Meat burns outside and is (lit. comes out, ends up, results) raw inside’
 (Anthim. 4, 1)

As a matter of fact, *venire* never occurs with a fientive meaning, even in late texts, as illustrated in (24c) (from the 8th century A.D. *Compositiones ad tingenda musiva*), where the verb may be interpreted as equivalent to *esse* ‘be’, i.e., as having a truly copular function, as well as denoting the transition to a state/condition, meaning ‘to end up, result’, developing an earlier usage, attested, for instance in Classical Latin (24g):

- (24) c. et si rara *venerint*, decoque eam (= ea)
 and if runny.NEUT.PL come.FUT.PRE.3PL cook.IMPR.2SG it.ACC
 usque dum spissa *fiant*
 continuously until thick.NEUT.PL become.PRS.SBJV.3PL
 ‘And if they are/result (lit. ‘will come’) runny, cook them until they become thick’
 (*Comp. Ting. Mus.* M 18; Löfstedt 1938/1939: 183)
- d. *illic veniunt felicius uvae*
 there come.PRS.IND.3PL more-successfully grapes
 ‘There grapes grow (lit. come) more easily’ (an issue that deserves further study)
 (Virgil, *Georg.* 1.54, 45)

Interestingly, in the fientive interpretation of the sequence verb + adjective, there occurs the verb *fieri*, rather than *venire*, as in (24c), *rara venerint* vs. *spissa fiunt*. The latter use of *venire*, in turn, appears to be related to its indefinite change meaning, as illustrated in (24c) and (25), in O-oriented constructions such as *in contemptionem venire* ‘to come to be despised’, *in consuetudinem venire* ‘to become habituated’, *in discrimen venire* ‘to fall in danger’, *in odium venire* ‘to come into hatred’, in *sermonem venire* ‘to happen to/to come to talk about someone’. In these patterns the [\pm An] subject undergoes the verbal process, and the use of the verb underlines its transition to a state/condition, and the A argument in the dative, depending on the pattern (25b) (see also Cennamo 2005: 187–189):

- (25) a. ne in invidiam veniam
 not in hatred come.PRS.SUBJ.3SG
 ‘That I do not come to be hated’ (lit. not I in hatred came/fell)
 (Cic. *Fin.* 2.24, 79)

- b. ut non solum *hostibus* in *contemptionem* Sabinus
 so-that not only enemies.DAT in contempt.ACC Sabinus
veniret, sed ...
 come.IMP.F.SUBJ.3SG but
 ‘That Sabinus had fallen into contempt not only to their enemies, but ...’
 (lit. came into contempt) (Caes. *B.G.* 3, 110)

The complement of the verb (the prepositional phrase *in* + accusative) expresses an abstract, event-like entity and the construction conveys the semantic nuances of unexpectedness, lack of control, involitionality, facets of meaning characteristic of some continuants of this pattern in old Tuscan, as shown in Section 3.2.

Thus, within the semantic space of transition, spanning from path of motion/change of state to the endpoint/result of a change of state, different verbs can be identified, instantiating different points within this domain: *venire* (motion/change of state) and *fieri* (change of state), focussing on the path/transitional and result state/endpoint facets, respectively.

In both changes, as illustrated in the above discussion, the syntactic context, (i) the A argument in the dative vs the nominative case, and (ii) the type of complement – adjective/noun, prepositional phrase, *in* + accusative (denoting the entry into a condition/state), past participle – play a crucial role, determining the auxiliary vs light verb interpretation.

However, as the analysis of Late Latin and old Italian (namely Tuscan) data reveals, the syntactic distinction between auxiliary and light verb functions of a lexical verb, manifesting itself in the non-occurrence vs occurrence of the verb in compound forms, respectively, is not always clearcut. This is so, for instance, for the verb *venire* ‘come’ in old Mantoan, that is found in a compound form also in its passive auxiliary function, even with the overt expression of the agent, as in (18b) (*ciò che dal padre gli era venuto lasciato* ‘What he had been given by his father’), thus violating a constraint differentiating its passive auxiliary and light verb use in old Tuscan (and in contemporary Italian) (Sections 2.1.2 and 3.2).

4.1 Light verb behaviour of the passive auxiliary *essere* ‘be’

In Old Tuscan also the canonical passive auxiliary *essere* ‘be’, in the compound *stato*-patterns (supplied by the verb *stare* ‘stand’) (Cennamo 2016:970 and references therein), may occur in compound participial forms (the *stato*-forms, in constructions usually regarded as differentiating the auxiliary from the light verb uses of a lexical verb. In this case an auxiliary, that is, a TAM marker, occurs in the syntactic contexts characteristic of light verbs in old Tuscan, conveying an aspectual meaning, resultativity (a pattern found also in old Neapolitan, where the

double participial form is also an unaccusative marker (Ledgeway 2009: 596–600 and references therein):

- (26) a. *parmi stato morto e soppellito e*
 seem.PRS.IND.I.DAT be.PPM.SG kill.PTCP.M.SG and bury.PTCP.M.SG and
resuscitato (sc. Bassus)
 revive.PTCP.M.SG Bassus
 ‘He (sc. Bassus) seems to have been killed and buried and revived again’
 (*Pistole di Seneca*, 30, 67)
- b. *quivi smontati e molto stati*
 here dismounted.PTCP.PL.M and much be.PTCP.PL.M
onorati da’ nobili uomini di Trapani
 honour.PTCP.M.PL ‘by noble men of Trapani’ (*Decameron*, V. 7, 376)

As shown in (26a), in 14th century Florentine texts (e.g. Boccaccio, Villani, Jacopo Passavanti) the past participle of *essere* ‘be’, *stato* ‘been’, occurs in double participial constructions, in patterns where it functions as a verbalizer (26a)–(26b), underlining the verbal nature of the past participle of the lexical verb, similarly to the past participle of *feri* ‘become’ in late Latin and its continuant *fi* in old Lombard (Section 3.1).

Thus, not only lexical verbs like *come*, but also auxiliaries like *be* may behave syntactically like a light verb in some early Italo-Romance varieties (see also Cennamo 2007).

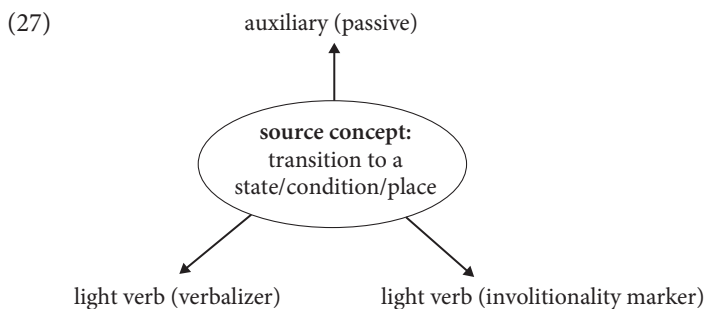
5. Auxiliaries, light verbs and change in the passage to Italo-Romance

The analysis of late Latin and early Italo-Romance data concerning the auxiliary and light verb uses of the verbs *become* and *come*, reveals that light verbs may result from grammaticalization and reanalysis, like auxiliaries, although differing in their syntactic distribution and behaviour, as well as in their semantic contribution to the complex predicate they are part of.

The following points emerge, partially confirming the insights from perceptive work by Butt (2003, 2010), Butt & Lahiri (2003, 2013): (i) there appears to be no evidence for light verbs as being an intermediate optional stage on a grammaticalization path leading to the auxiliary and ultimately affixal status of a lexical verb; (ii) the auxiliary and light verb function of one and the same lexical verb are usually detectable from the syntactic construction they occur in, although ambiguity may arise between the (passive) auxiliary and light verb interpretation of a verb under identity of the syntactic constellations where they occur (as in old Mantoan).

However, the data investigated show that auxiliaries and light verbs, although different syntactic categories, as argued by Butt (2010), Butt & Lahiri (2013), do appear to derive from the same lexical verbs, realizing two distinct paths, involving different types of grammaticalization, and leading, respectively, to TAM markers and verbalizers (e.g., resultative markers) in Late Latin and old Lombard, while developing into involitionality markers in old Tuscan and old Mantoan.

Therefore, rather than hypothesizing one underspecified lexical entry for both the full/main verb and its light verb use, with the auxiliary function derived through grammaticalization from the former, as proposed in (Butt 2010: 68), Butt & Lahiri (2013), as pointed out in Section 2.1.2, a more insightful model for describing the different syntactic status of auxiliaries and light verbs and their diachrony in the languages and early varieties analysed, is Bisang's (2008) notion of a "source concept" from which different uses and constructions diffuse (also Bisang 2011: 112), as illustrated in (27). This scheme accounts for different types and degrees of grammaticalization and integration of the various uses of a lexical verb into the verbal paradigm, high for the auxiliary and light verb uses of one and the same lexical verb. The light verb function, however, retains one of the lexical entailments of the lexical verb they derive from, the transitional component – following Butt & Lahiri's (2003) proposal for the lexical semantic representation of light verbs and their fully lexical uses –, leading to a grammatical element, the light verb, contributing to the argument structure of the complex predicate, as a verbalizer (conveying the aspectual nuance of resultativity) and/or an involitionality marker (see also Butt & Lahiri 2013 for a slightly different scheme).



As for the internal structure of the eventuality described by the joint predication consisting of the light verb uses of COME/BECOME + the past participle of the lexical verb, following Butt & Lahiri (2003: 44–45), two subevents can be identified, an accomplishment event structure, instantiated by the transition, i.e., a process, and its result state. This analysis provides an interesting insight into the difference between the auxiliary and light verb usage of a lexical verb when the latter

conveys an aspectual nuance (e.g., resultativity), differentiating it from the purely tense-aspectual function of its auxiliary use (Butt & Lahiri 2003: 44).

Light verbs, therefore, may not be “immune” to change, as illustrated for Late Latin and early Italo-Romance. Of the two types of contributions they make to the complex predicate they occur in, as (i) verbalizers and (ii) involitionality markers, the former appears to instantiate a core property of light verbs, attested both in Late Latin and in early Italo-Romance, unlike the involitionality function, only attested in some vernaculars and subsequently lost, occurring in highly idiomatic and lexicalized forms in contemporary Italian.

6. Conclusions

The analysis of the syntactic behaviour and semantics of the verbs COME and BECOME in conjunction with the past participle of a lexical verb, in (passive) auxiliary and light verb functions, in the transition from Latin to early (Italo)Romance, appears to bring interesting data to the current debate on the rise and grammaticalization paths of passive auxiliaries and on the status and diachrony of light verbs as compared with auxiliaries.

More specifically, the Latin constructions *fieri* ‘become’ + past participle and *venire* ‘come’ + past participle, although following different paths of grammaticalization, seem to involve a stage at which the lexical verbs *fieri* and *venire* become equivalent to the copula *esse*. Thus, the auxiliarization of *fieri/venire* + past participle might be regarded as a case of regrammation or copula expansion, whereby a new grammatical function is added to an already grammatical element (the copula), and involving also a change in the nature of the complement of the verb (nominal/ adjective > verbal adjective > verbal participle).

The trigger of the passive reinterpretation of the sequences *fieri/venire* + past participle appears to be a change in the aspectual classes of the past participle of the verbs occurring in these periphrases, from achievements/accomplishments – with which the pattern can be ambiguous between an anticausative and a passive interpretation, depending on the syntactic context –, to activity verbs, with which only the passive reading is available.

Although occurring in passive function (marking imperfective passives) in late Latin, the verb *fieri* is also found in conjunct participles, in light verb function, acting as a verbalizer, a usage attested later than its auxiliary use and also found in old Lombard for its continuator *fi*.

The verb *venire*, on the other hand, well attested in imperfective passive function in several early Italo-Romance varieties, also occurs in the involitional subtype of light verb function in old Tuscan and old Mantoan, coexisting with the passive

auxiliary function, sharing the same syntactic behaviour (the compound participial pattern) in the latter variety.

Thus, there is no evidence, either in late Latin or in early Italo-Romance, for light verbs as diachronically intermediate between their fully lexical and auxiliary status.

The data also reveal the existence of more than one light verb construction with *venire*, sharing the same syntactic properties (e.g., occurrence in compound tenses), but varying in meaning, ranging from the lexical (indefinite change) to the more grammatical (eventive–impersonal) reading.

Acknowledgements

For Henning Andersen, in the wake of his seminal and thought-provoking work on grammaticalization, reanalysis and the actualization of change.

I thank Francesco Ciconte, Romano Lazzeroni and Lene Schøsler for their insightful comments on an earlier version of the article. The usual disclaimers apply.

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative (case)
ACC	accusative (case)
ACT	active
AGR	agreement
AN	animate
COMPL	complement
DAT	dative (case)
ERG	ergative
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
GER	gerund
IMPRF	imperfect (tense)
IMPER	imperative
IND	indicative
INF	infinitive
INTR	intransitive
M	masculine
MPASS	medio-passive marker –R (in middle, passive or impersonal function)
NEUT	neuter
NOM	nominative (case)
PASS	passive

PERF	perfect (tense)
PL	plural
PRS	present (tense)
PST	past (tense)
PTCP	past participle
PLUPRF	pluperfect
RFL	reflexive
SG	singular
SBJV	subjunctive
TRANS	transitive
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person

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