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“Latin to Romance: typology and its relationship to variation and change”

Lass (2000) presents an account of the Germanic languages in which he radically re-assesses labels such as 'Old', 'Middle', and 'Modern'. Each of the notions in question 'is a well-formed typological category; but it is not temporal. It rather indicates an ontogenetic position on a cline of morphological and prosodic change'. He demonstrates this hypothesis by analysing the way in which a number of linguistic features have or have not changed between Proto-Germanic and modern Germanic, and showing that, from a typological perspective, contemporary Germanic languages may appropriately be labelled 'Old', 'Middle', 'Early Modern', and 'Modern'. In this paper, which represents work in progress, I tentatively apply Lass's methods to the Romance languages, using the framework of Coseriu (1971; 1988), in which Romance is distinguished from Latin by an iconic typology, whereby relational concepts or meanings receive relational, 'syntagmatic' (i.e., analytic) exponence and non-relational concepts or meanings receive non-relational, 'paradigmatic' (i.e., synthetic) exponence. I shall suggest that the findings so far lend support to Lass's broad hypothesis and provide an accurate typology of Romance which takes account of diachronic data but is conceptually independent of notions such as temporality and periodization.

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- Lass, Roger. 2000. 'Language periodization and the concept "middle".' *Placing Middle English in Context*, ed. Irma Taavitsainen, Terttu Nevalainen, Päivi Pahta & Matti Rissanen, 7-42. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.