ЯL

The long history of a syncretism
in Italo-Romance and Ladin verb morphology

MARTIN MAIDEN
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ABSTRACT

This study traces the history of a syncretism in the verb morphology of two Romance varieties. It explores the origin, in medieval Tuscan and elsewhere, of a morphomic pattern of identity between the second person singular present indicative and some cells of the present subjunctive. It shows that this syncretism was originally an accidental effect of sound change, but that subsequent morphological changes replicated that pattern with a result today familiar in the grammar of modern Italian. It then explores a peculiar morphological change which happened almost 'overnight' in the recent history of the Val Badia dialect of Ladin, and argues that the only plausible explanation is a 'calque', involving the redistribution of native inflexional material in imitation of the aforementioned morphomic pattern in standard Italian. The theoretical implications of this conclusion are briefly considered. The findings of this study suggest that speakers prefer predictability of patterning over transparent signalling of grammatical meaning and that, most surprisingly, morphomic patterns can actually be borrowed from one language into another.

KEYWORDS: syncretism, morphomes, borrowing, Italian, Ladin

1. *A neglected syncretism and its implications*

There is an aspect of the inflexional morphology of Italian which 'hides in plain sight'[1]. The facts are perfectly familiar, yet the pattern involved is never acknowledged. At issue is the syncretic paradigmat-

---

ic distribution such that identical morphological material is uniquely shared by a set of cells comprising: 2sɢ present indicative, 1sɢ, 2sɢ, and 3sɢ present subjunctive, and 3ᴘʟ present subjunctive (Table 1):

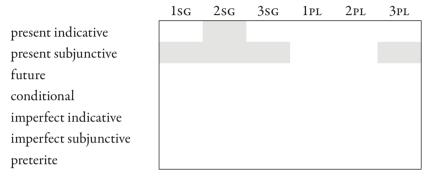|	1sɢ	2sɢ	3sɢ	1ᴘʟ	2ᴘʟ	3ᴘʟ
present indicative		▓				
present subjunctive	▓	▓	▓			▓
future						
conditional						
imperfect indicative						
imperfect subjunctive						
preterite						

Table 1. A syncretism in Italian first conjugation verbs.

This syncretism is the fortuitous result of sound change and the set of paradigm cells implicated is irreducible to any significant, distinctive, shared functional denominator. The arbitrariness of its distribution is magnified by the fact that it is restricted to the *first conjugation*. It is ignored in synchronic descriptions of Italian morphology presumably because synchronically, too, it is assumed to be a matter of chance resemblance, of 'accidental' not 'systematic' distribution (cf. Baerman 2009: 220-221; Haspelmath & Sims 2010: 174-176; Stump 2019: 293). However, a different story is told by its very early history and by its very recent history. Both historical phases show that speakers can and do detect arbitrary, historically accidental, patterns of syncretism, and that their knowledge of those patterns can guide the course of morphological change to the extent of overriding and obscuring established, transparent, mappings between form and meaning. The more recent phase also bears a novel implication for morphological theory: abstract syncretic patterns can be 'borrowed' from one language into another.

Syncretisms involving functionally arbitrary patterns of paradigmatic distribution are staple examples of what Aronoff (1994) called 'morphomes'. Morphomes by definition lack synchronic phonological or functional motivation, and they are, typically, recurrent patterns of

formal identity defined across sets of paradigm cells which lack any distinctive common characteristic. They are also the kind of phenomenon on which Maiden (e.g., 2018) bases most of his analyses of the role of morphomic patterns in the history of the Romance languages. Among the morphomic phenomena which Maiden discusses are, for example, cases in which if the cells of the present subjunctive have a stem allomorph (whatever its phonological nature) then that same allomorph will be shared by the first person singular present indicative, and vice versa, or in which the occurrence of an allomorph, whatever its form, in the stem of any one cell of the preterite, imperfect subjunctive (and certain other parts of the paradigm) implies the presence of that same allomorph in all the others. Despite the fact that the paradigm cells affected form a heterogeneous set, there is ample evidence from subsequent diachronic morphological changes (see Maiden 2016b, 2018: 19) that speakers are aware of these abstract, morphomic, distributional patterns, and actually prefer them over apparently more 'natural' form-meaning relationships. The Italo-Romance facts discussed here throw further light on such phenomena in diachrony. However, Maiden (2018) also strongly asserts the idiosyncratically 'language-specific' nature of indiividual morphomic structures, predicting that they will only be found in the languages (or their descendants) in which the historical accidents which gave rise to them occurred. The evidence presented below that morphomic structures are borrowed – or more accurately 'calqued' – will force us re-examine that claim.

2.   'Iotic' syncretism in modern Italo-Romance and its origin

2.1. The syncretism and its dialectal distribution

In the modern Italian present tense of the first conjugation an identical form occurs – exclusively – in 2SG (indicative and subjunctive) and 1SG, 3SG, and 3PL subjunctives. The singular forms are perfectly identical, while the modern 3PL is differentiated from the singular by also having the ending -no. It is quite likely, however, that 'kanti was also originally the form of the 3PL, as well as that of the singular, the ending

-no having been introduced at a later date: for some relevant arguments see, e.g., Maiden (1995: 130-132)[2]. Table 2 contrasts an example of the Italian first conjugation present (*cantare* 'sing') with a non-first-conjugation verb (*vendere* 'sell') where no such syncretism exists[3]:

1st CONJ	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*canto* 'kanto	*canti* 'kanti	*canta* 'kanta	*cantiamo* kan'tjamo	*cantate* kan'tate	*cantano* 'kantano
PRS.SBJV	*canti* 'kanti	*canti* 'kanti	*canti* 'kanti	*cantiamo* kan'tjamo	*cantiate* kan'tjate	*cantino* 'kantino

NON-1st CONJ	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*vendo* 'vendo	*vendi* 'vendi	*vende* 'vende	*vendiamo* ven'djamo	*vendete* ven'dete	*vendono* 'vendono
PRS.SBJV	*venda* 'venda	*venda* 'venda	*venda* 'venda	*vendiamo* ven'djamo	*vendiate* ven'djate	*vendano* 'vendano

Table 2. Present indicative and subjunctive of first conjugation a
nd non-first conjugation verbs in modern Italian.

The pattern characterized by inflexional -*i*, illustrated in Table 2, is not restricted to Italian or to Tuscany. This syncretism (henceforth, 'iotic' syncretism) recurs in Lazio, Umbria, and Corsica (see *AIS* map 1685; Rohlfs 2021b: 248; 296; *ALEIC*[4]; Chiodi-Tischer 1981). It further appears in fourteenth-century Abruzzese (Haumer 1934: 74) and fifteenth century Assisan (Sestito 2004: 197). It is also possible to discern the original presence of the desinence -*i* through the phenomenon of metapho-

---

[2] VANELLI (2014: 144) suggests a phonological explanation for the [i] of the third person plural. But what she invokes is a sound change peculiar to Tuscan, while the iotic third person plural subjunctive is found outside Tuscany, as mentioned below.

[3] These are the only cells whose ending is a syllabic [i]. The status of the 1PL and 2PL forms (where orthographic *i* is [j]) is different, because they are common to all conjugations. Only in the first conjugation is the 2SG present indicative distinctively homophonous with forms of the present subjunctive.

[4] Compare *ALEIC* maps 31, 34, 115, 215, 223, 338, 360, 361, 362, 371, 380, 487, 520, 598, 900, 924, 1124, 1264, 1334, 1337, 1495, 1507, 1570, 1618, 1734, 1764, 1776, 1779, 1821, 1830.

ny: just as in numerous Italo-Romance dialects the -i of the 2SG triggers metaphonic assimilatory raising of the preceding stressed vowel, the -i of our syncretistic present subjunctive forms appears to have had the same effect. Thus old Aquilano has metaphonized 3SG.PRS.SBJV *perduni* vs non-metaphonized 3SG.PRS.IND *perdona* (Haumer 1934). In some dialects of Romagna, final *-i has long been deleted (and locally replaced by -a)[5], but leaves a trace of its former presence in a metaphonic vowel – not only in 2SG, as expected, but also in 1SG, 3SG, and 3PL present subjunctive[6]. Schürr (1974: 54-55) gives the following from Forlì (Table 3)[7]:

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	kãt 'sing'	kẽt	'kãta	kan'tẽ	kan'teɨ̯	'kãta
PRS.SBJV	'kẽta	'kẽta	'kẽta	kan'teɲa	kan'tiva	'kẽta

Table 3. Distribution of metaphony in the Forlivese present tense.

For Lugo, Pelliciardi (1977: 115-21) gives the forms in Table 4[8]:

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	lev[9] 'wash'	lev	'lɛva	la'vẽn	la'vi	'lɛva
PRS.SBJV	'leva	'leva	'leva	la'vɛɲa	la'viva	'leva

Table 4. Distribution of metaphony in the present tense in Lugo.

[5]   In the examples given here, the present subjunctive ends in -a. Apparently, the original first conjugation subjunctive marker -i was replaced, after triggering metaphony, by the non-first conjugation present subjunctive marker -a. This sequence of events was first mooted by MUSSAFIA (1871: 67-68). He was worried, however, that a scenario in which -i was first extended (causing metaphony) then ousted by -a (leaving the effects of metaphony behind), was too contrived ('zu künstlich'). I think that this explanation is simply the only one available. First, -i was generalized as a subjunctive marker in all conjugations, with metaphonizing effects, but later some surviving, more archaic, remnants of the original non-first conjugation desinence -a returned to prevail over -i. HAUMER (1934: 74) also reveals an apparent tussle between subjunctive *-i* and *-a* in old Aquilano. See WENDRINER (1889: 71) for rivalry between first and non-first conjugation subjunctive markers in sixteenth-century Paduan.

[6]   In these dialects this pattern is found in all conjugations. Extension of the -i of the present subjunctive from the first conjugation to other conjugations is widely attested in central Italo-Romance (see, e.g., ROHLFS 2021b: 298-299).

[7]   See also SCHÜRR (1919: 133, 140, 146, 151).

[8]   I offer an IPA approximation of Pelliciardi's transcription: the more closed vowels are metaphonic outcomes.

Schürr (1918: 57-58, 60-61, 63, 65-66) provides older Romagnolo examples from texts such as the sixteenth century *Pulon Matt*, for the singular and third person forms of the present subjunctive. For example, metaphonic *e* for historically underlying *[a] in 1SG.PRS.SBJV *fezza* 'do', 3SG.PRS.SBJV *tretta* 'treat', 3PL.PRS.SBJV *bella* 'dance'. Compare *fezza* with modern dialectal Tuscan *facci*, and the last two forms with Italian *tratti*, *balli*(*no*). In sum, the iotic syncretism familiar from Italian exists, or once existed, both south and north of the Apennines. *How* did that syncretism originate?

2.2. *Origins of iotic syncretism*

The Latin antecedents of the (modern Italian) forms given in Table 2 are in Table 5:

FIRST CONJUGATION						
	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	CANTO	CANTAS	CANTAT	CANTAMUS	CANTATIS	CANTANT
PRS.SBJV	CANTEM	CANTES	CANTET	CANTEMUS	CANTETIS	CANTENT

NON-FIRST CONJUGATION						
	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	UENDO	UENDIS	UENDIT	UENDIMUS	UENDITIS	UENDUNT
PRS.SBJV	UENDAM	UENDAS	UENDAT	UENDAMUS	UENDATIS	UENDANT

Table 5. Present indicative and subjunctive
of Latin first and non-first conjugation verbs.

One cannot arrive at the first conjugation forms in Table 2 from the Latin first conjugation forms in Table 5 entirely by regular sound change; in particular, the ending -i cannot be explained phonologically. The expected changes would be[9]:

(i)   word-final nasals and dentals fall

(ii) word final -s after a vowel becomes *-i̯

(iii) the diphthongs arising from (ii) become raised monophthongs, so that:

---

[9] For more detailed arguments in support of (ii) and (iii) see MAIDEN (1996).

$$
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\text{-as} & > & \text{*-a}\underset{\smile}{\i} & > & \text{*-e} \\
\text{-es} & > & \text{*-e}\underset{\smile}{\i} & > & \text{*-i} \\
\text{-is} & > & \text{*-i}\underset{\smile}{\i} & > & \text{*-i}
\end{array}
$$

The predicted results of these sound changes appear in Table 6:

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	'kanto	'kante	'kanta	kan'tamu	kan'tati	'kanta(n)
PRS.SBJV	'kante	'kanti	'kante	kan'temu	kan'teti	'kante(n)

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	'vendo	'vendi	'vende	ven'demu	ven'deti	'vendo(n)
PRS.SBJV	'venda	'vende	'venda	ven'damu	ven'dati	'venda(n)

Table 6. Phonologically predicted outcomes of Latin verb forms
in early Italo-Romance.

The predicted forms in Table 6 already involve a syncretism almost identical in its distribution (not yet in form) to that of modern Italian: as an accidental result of sound change, the 2SG present indicative of the first conjugation has become identical to the 1SG, 3SG, and 3PL present subjunctive. The 2SG present subjunctive is slightly different, in that it already ends in -i by (iii) above. The pattern of syncretism characterized by final -e illustrated in Table 6 and 7 still survived in old Tuscan (Rohlfs 2021b: 248; 296), although the modern pattern of syncretism in -i was already well established alongside it.

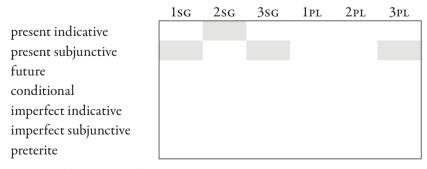|	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
present indicative						
present subjunctive						
future						
conditional						
imperfect indicative						
imperfect subjunctive						
preterite						

Table 7. Early Italo-Romance syncretism in the present tense
of the first conjugation.

Somehow, the syncretic set of forms in -e has been replaced by a set of forms in -i (making them identical to the established 2SG present subjunctive form in -i). How did this come about? There is simply no phonological mechanism relevant here[10] by which final unstressed [e] raises to [i]. Nor can the change we observe be a reanalysis such that speakers simply replace the verb ending -e with -i 'across-the-board'. In medieval Tuscan final -e was also found in the 3SG present indicative of non-first conjugation verbs and of rhizotonic preterite forms, the 1SG and 3SG forms of all imperfect subjunctives, all 2PL forms, and the infinitive. Yet, within the present-tense, the replacement of forms in -e by those in -i occurs *only* in the 1SG, 3SG, and 3SG.

There have been divers attempts to explain this replacement. Meyer-Lübke (1895: § 145) invokes analogical generalization of the already existing 2SG present subjunctive ending -i to other present subjunctive forms, but this explanation is completely unmotivated, and spread of the 2SG form is otherwise unparalleled in the system. Tekavčić (1980: 288) curiously claims that it is a change principally motivated by a need to distinguish the first conjugation subjunctive forms from the 2SG imperative in -a, but this explanation ignores the fact that these forms were already perfectly distinguished, and that no differentiation was ever necessary. It is Rohlfs (2021b: 296) who discerns what seems to me the only plausible explanation, namely that what happens in the present subjunctive is connected with the replacement of -e by -i in the 2SG present indicative[11]: 'È chiaro che quest'*i* è di origine analogica, e si dovrà riportare agli stessi motivi che hanno causato la desinenza -*i* nella seconda persona dell'indicativo'.

Rohlfs does not explain further, but what he seems to be invoking as the motivation of our change is the so-called 'Humboldt's Universal', formulated by Vennemann (1978: 259), which states that '[s]upple-

[10] NIELSEN WHITEHEAD (2012: 294-302) shows that Latin *long* final -e could yield -i, but the -e at issue was short. See also VANELLI (2013: 465-466) for arguments against a phonological explanation.

[11] LAUSBERG (1966: 277) invokes analogical spread of the first conjugation 2SG subjunctive ending, but fails to motivate such a change.

tion is undesirable, uniformity of linguistic symbolization is desirable: both roots and grammatical markers should be unique and constant'. The ending -i was already[12] the inflexional marker of 2SG in the present indicative of non-first conjugation verbs (e.g., *vedi* 'see', *vendi* 'sell', *dormi* 'sleep'), in the present subjunctive of first conjugation verbs (e.g., *canti*), in fourth conjugation[13] imperatives (e.g., *dormi*), in imperfect subjunctives of all conjugations (e.g., *vedessi*), and in the preterite and conditional of all conjugations (e.g., *vedesti*; *vedresti*). In Italian, in fact, all 2SG verbs forms have come to end in -i, except for the first conjugation 2SG imperative. It is therefore unsurprising that a minority 2SG ending -e was replaced by the far more widespread 2SG ending -i. It should be added, by the way, that replacement of -e by -i was not limited to the 2SG present indicative of the first conjugation: -e was also the regular ending of 2SG non-first conjugation present subjunctives and of all imperfect indicatives[14], and here too it was eventually replaced by -i[15].

In many Italo-Romance dialects, replacement of -e by -i indeed stops in the 2SG. Table 8 shows a typical pattern for a dialect of Liguria (Azaretti 1982: 200)[16], while Table 9 illustrates the same pattern for the first conjugation in Ascrea in Lazio (Fanti 1939):

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	'kantu 'sing'	'kanti	'kanta	kan'tamu	kan'te	'kanta
PRS.SBJV	'kante	'kanti	'kante	'kantimu	'kanti	'kante

Table 8. Replacement of -e by -i just in the 2SG in Ventimiglia (Liguria).

[12] ROHLFS (2021b: 248) appeals implausibly (cf. HAASE 1999: 171) to the analogical influence of the fourth conjugation 2SG present indicative ending -i. Haase's own appeal to what he calls an 'Alteritätsanalogie' involving a reversal in the first conjugation of the alternation pattern characteristic of the fourth conjugation (indicative *i* vs subjunctive *a*), seems equally problematic.

[13] Possibly also in second conjugation imperatives such as *vedi*; for a different, phonological, explanation, see NIELSEN WHITEHEAD (2012: 294-302).

[14] For further phonological evidence of original 2SG -e in southern Italy, see MAIDEN (2016: 220).

[15] Modern Italian 2SG present subjunctive (*tu*) *venda* is a recent innovation: see, e.g., ROHLFS (2021b: 296-297, 299-301); MAIDEN (1995: 129, 2007: 161, forthc.).

[16] The 1PL and 2PL forms in this dialect are later formations, irrelevant here.

	1sg	2sg	3sg	1pl	2pl	3pl
PRS.IND	'manno 'send'	'manni	'manna	man'nemo	man'nete	'mannanu
PRS.SBJV	'manne	'manni	'manne	man'nemo	man'nete	'mannenu

Table 9. Replacement of -e by -i limited to the 2sg in Ascrea (Lazio).

Dialects such as those illustrated in Tables 8 and 9 have something close to a 'superstable' marker of 2sg: almost all 2sg forms end in -i, and -i expresses almost exclusively 2sg. For instance, in Ascrea (Fanti 1939) – with a few exceptions in some very high frequency verbs with vowel-final roots in the present indicative, and with the systematic exception of the 2sg imperative in the first conjugation – all 2sg forms end in -i, but almost no[17] non-2sg form does so.

In Italian an 'ideal', i.e. maximally transparent, near-biunique matching between the 2sg and its desinential marker could also have been installed. What actually happens looks rather like a 'misreading of the instructions': the replacement of -e with -i in the 2sg seems to have been reanalysed as a rule replacing -e with -i wherever in the paradigm there are forms identical to the second person singular. In short, the innovation is sensitive not to a person-number specification, but to a pattern of syncretism which had accidentally arisen in the early Italo-Romance first conjugation present indicative. It replicates that pattern and, in so doing, gives rise to the slightly different pattern familiar from modern Italian and re-presented in Table 10, one which includes the 2sg present subjunctive, already in -i:

	1sg	2sg	3sg	3pl
PRS.IND	canto	canti	canta	cantano
PRS.SBJV	canti	canti	canti	cantino

Table 10. Modern Italian first conjugation syncretism.

---

[17] The exception is the preterite, which has 1sg -i, a form inherited from Latin.

I come back to the theoretical significance of the emergence of this pattern later. I first turn to a much later development of the Italian iotic syncretism. This development is remarkable in that it does not actually occur in Italian at all, or even within Italo-Romance as usually defined, but in the recent history of the Ladin dialects of the Val Badia. Yet I shall argue that what we observe there is a direct consequence of the Italian syncretism.

3. The Badiot Ladin 'sigmatic' syncretism

3.1. The nature of the Badiot syncretism

The modern Ladin of the Val Badia shows a pattern of syncretism which is that of modern Italian, albeit quite different in phonological content. It is unlike its Italian counterpart[18] in that it is 'sigmatic', the inflexional ending involved being -(e)s[19], not -i.

In the Val Badia[20], the sigmatic pattern occurs at San Martin de Tor, La Valle, S. Leonardo, S. Cassiano, Corvara, Colfosco (*ALD* points 83, 84, 85, 91, 90, 89). Table 12 presents examples from S. Martin de Tor and Corvara (gaps reflect lack of information for specific forms). For further extensive illustration of this pattern, see the 'schemi verbali' provided in Moling (2016).

[18] It is also unlike Italian in not necessarily involving whole-word syncretism. In Italian, first conjugation verbs do not normally show root allomorphy, but in Ladin (for reasons explained later) the phenomenon is not restricted to the first conjugation and affects many verbs with already existing root allomorphy.

[19] As examples in Table 12 show, Ladin -es sometimes manifests as -əs, or as -js (-i̯s) postvocalically. This is a matter of phonetic variation.

[20] There is one, isolated, case outside the Val Badia. This is si:bəs, the present subjunctive forms of the verb 'be' in the Gardenese dialect of S. Cristina (*ALD* point 87; *ALD-II* maps 114, 117). Its historical status is unclear: I find nothing like it in nineteeenth century descriptions of Gardenese, although data from *TALL* confirm it for modern Gardenese. It is unclear whether the Gardenese form is influenced by Badiot, or whether the presence of the sigmatic subjunctive in Gardenese indicates that somehow the phenomenon *originated* in the verb 'be', in both varieties. This seems unlikely, because it is precisely 'be' which in the Val Badia sometimes lacks the sigmatic form (cf. note 28).

San Martin de Tor[21]

	1sɢ	2sɢ	3sɢ	3ᴘʟ
PRS.IND	ˈma:ndʑi 'eat'	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑa	ˈma:ndʑa
PRS.SBJV	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑes
PRS.IND	krɐj 'believe'	ˈkrɐjes	krɐj	krɐj
PRS.SBJV	ˈkrɐjes	ˈkrɐjes	ˈkrɐjes	ˈkrɐjes
PRS.IND	o:j 'want'	ˈo:s(te)	o:(l)	o:(i̯)
PRS.SBJV	o:js	o:js		
PRS.IND	pɔ 'can'	pɔ:s	pɔ	pɔ
PRS.SBJV	ˈpɔ:js		ˈpɔ:js	ˈpɔ:js
PRS.IND	do:rmi 'sleep'	ˈdo:rmes	do:rm	do:rm
PRS.SBJV	ˈdo:rmes	ˈdo:rmes	ˈdo:rmes	ˈdo:rmes
PRS.IND	suŋ 'am'	ɛs	ɛ	ɛ
PRS.SBJV	ˈsi:dəs	ˈsi:dəs	ˈsi:dəs	ˈsi:dəs
PRS.IND	a 'have'		a	a
PRS.SBJV	a:js	a:js	a:js	a:js

Corvara

	1sɢ	2sɢ	3sɢ	3ᴘʟ
PRS.IND	ˈma:ndʑe 'eat'	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑa	ˈma:ndʑa
PRS.SBJV	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑes	ˈma:ndʑes
PRS.IND	ˈkraje 'believe'	krajs	kraj	kraj
PRS.SBJV	ˈkrajəs	ˈkrajəs	ˈkrajəs	
PRS.IND	o:i̯ 'want'	ˈo:s(te)	o:(l)	o:(i̯)
PRS.SBJV	ˈo:jes	ˈo:jes		
PRS.IND	pɔ 'can'	pɔ:s	pɔ	pɔ
PRS.SBJV	ˈpɔ:jes		ˈpɔ:jes	ˈpɔ:jes
PRS.IND	do:rm 'sleep'	do:rmes	do:rm	do:rm
PRS.SBJV	ˈdo:rmes		ˈdo:rmes	ˈdo:rmes
PRS.IND	suŋ 'am'	es	ei̯	ei̯
PRS.SBJV	ˈsi:dəs	ˈsi:dəs	ˈsi:dəs	ˈsi:dəs
PRS.IND	a 'have'		a	a
PRS.SBJV	ˈa:jes	ˈa:jes	ˈa:jes	ˈa:jes

Table 12. Sigmatic syncretism in dialects of the Val Badia.

[21] Data from: *ALD-I* maps 52, 201, 257, 258, 259, 627, 628; *ALD-II* maps 114, 117, 372, 378, 380, 482, 483, 488, 491, 492, 493, 497, 596, 597, 598, 604, 606, 722, 723, 727, 728, 925, 929, 930, 998, 999, 1000.

3.2. *Origins of the Badiot syncretism*

The sigmatic syncretism is very recent. Final -s in the 2sg is inherited from Latin, but its presence elsewhere is novel. There is absolutely no sign of it in the detailed morphological descriptions produced in the late nineteenth century (e.g., Alton 1879; Gartner 1883; also Mair 1978: 138-139)[22], and no examples in nineteenth century Ladin prose texts[23]. Yet by the 1960s it is firmly established[24]. Indeed its presence is perhaps the most remarkable difference in Vittur's reworking and expansion (Alton-Vittur 1968) of Alton (1879). Alton was mainly describing his native dialect of Colfosco (cf. Kramer 1989: 757), yet gave no indication of our syncretism. In Colfosco today, however, the sigmatic subjunctive is firmly established, and Alton-Vittur (1968: 36, 41, 43-44, 49, 51-55) lists only sigmatic subjunctive forms for upper Val Badia[25]. How and when did this happen?

Kramer (1976: 78) assumes that the sigmatic endings of the first and third persons of the present subjunctive originate in 2sg forms in -s (see also Salvi 2020: 81). In fact there is no other plausible origin for this ending. It is also significant that present subjunctive -(e)s and 2sg present indicative -(e)s are mutually exclusive: we have only 2sg. prs.sbjv ˈmaːnʤes, never **ˈmaːnʤeses. All other tenses and moods (except singular imperatives), in almost all other Badiot varieties, show sigmatic 2sg forms[26]. The fact that the sigmatic subjunctive ending cannot itself be combined with a 2sg desinence clearly suggests that the sigmatic subjunctive was itself originally a 2sg form. Kramer (1976: 78) derives subjunctive -es specifically from historically underlying *-as, the ending of the 2sg present subjunctive of non-first conjugation verbs. In most Ladin varieties the distinction between con-

---

[22] The *AIS* data, gathered in 1921, provide scant information on the present subjunctive, but Colfosco (point 314, map 1639) has ˈmani ('I send'), with no -s.

[23] See for example the nineteenth century material in 'grafia antica' for the Val Badia in the *TALL* database. It should be noted that material provided there in 'grafia moderna' introduces into the writings of Alton sigmatic subjunctives which are certainly not there in the original texts.

[24] See further Mair (1973); Kramer (1976); Moling (2016).

[25] Although the 1968 reworking 'stützt sich [...] auf das Badiot und zwar des Oberlandes, St. Kassian-Stern-Abtei [...]', rather than Colfosco (Alton-Vittur 1968: 8).

[26] Cf. *ALD-II* maps 118, 375, 484, 485, 491.

jugation classes has been neutralized in the present subjunctive, and the prevailing forms always originate in the *first* conjugation (see, e.g., Mair 1978: 138), so it seems doubtful that the sigmatic subjunctive would originate in non-first conjugation verbs. Actually, there is another source for -es, namely the 2SG present *indicative* of first conjugation verbs, also historically in *-as (cf. *'mand(u)kas > 'maːndʒes), and this is a point to whose significance I return later.

There are no good explanations of *why* this has happened. Kramer (1976: 78) merely indicates that what we observe is *plausible* because similar things happen elsewhere: he claims that there are parallels in French for 2SG desinences being extended into the 1SG. Yet this happens in the French *indicative* not in the subjunctive (e.g., UENDO UENDIS UENDIT > *vend vends vend* > *vends vends vend* but UENDAM UENDAS UENDAT > *vende vendes vende*). The French facts also have a specific motivation, namely that in certain verbs, by sound change, both 1SG and 2SG came to end in -s (cf. Pope 1952: § 899). As for the extension of 2SG -es into the third person as well as into the 1SG present subjunctive, Kramer invokes a parallel with an assumed generalization of -i from the 2SG of the first conjugation present subjunctive in Italian, as proposed for Italian by Lausberg (1966: 277)[27]. Mair (1978: 142) does not really explore the cause of the sigmatic subjunctive, but focuses interestingly on its paradigmatic distribution, noting that the distribution of -s in Val Badia is exactly the same as that of a present subjunctive ending -i in the dialect of Marebbe. I suggest later that this parallel with Marebbano, and the parallel with the Italian iotic present subjunctive mentioned by Kramer, have real significance for understanding the phenomenon.

What kind of inflexional pattern existed in Badiot present indicatives and subjunctives before the emergence of the sigmatic present subjunctive? Broadly, the endings of the present subjunctive had in some localities the (originally first conjugation) marker -e, and else-

---

[27]   Kramer additionally invokes the influence of the imperfect subjunctive, in whose singular and third person 'ein -s im Auslaut steht'. But the -s of the imperfect subjunctive does not stand 'im Auslaut' in the 2SG, while the -s of the imperfect subjunctive is present in 1PL and 2PL as well (KRAMER 1976: 84-85). These are clearly two different kinds of -s.

where -i. Alton (1879: 102; 105; 107; 113) illustrates the following (Table 13) pattern from first conjugation verb 'love'. There is complete neutralization of inflexion class distinctions in the Ladin present subjunctive, in favour of originally first conjugation forms, so that present subjunctive endings are generally[28] identical for all conjugations.

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	*ame*	*ames*	*ama*	*amon*	*amès*	*ama*
PRS.SBJV	*ame*	*ames*	*ame*	*amonse*	*amèse*	*ame*

Table 13. Present tense first conjugation morphology
in late nineteenth century upper Val Badia.

What Alton transcribes as final *-e* (apparently a weakly articulated schwa: see also see also Alton-Vittur 1968: 39) is a reflex of the first conjugation subjunctive marker *-e. The modern dialect of Rina (*ALD* pt 82), illustrated in Table 14 has a clear -e (*ALD-II* maps 482, 483, 488, 491, 492, 493, 497):

	1SG	2SG	3SG	3PL
PRS.IND	ˈmandʒi 'eat'	ˈmandʒes	ˈmandʒa	ˈmandʒa
PRS.SBJV	ˈmandʒe	ˈmandʒes	ˈmandʒe	ˈmandʒe

Table 14. Present tense morphology in modern Rina.

Elsewhere, we find -i. Gartner (1883: 131) records in the first conjugation in San Leonardo an ending -i that appears in the 1SG, 3SG and 3PL present subjunctive (Table 15):

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	ˈpoːrte 'carry'	poːrts	ˈpoːrta	purˈtuŋ	purˈtai̯s	ˈpoːrta
PRS.SBJV	ˈpoːrti	poːrts	ˈpoːrti	purˈtuŋʒe	purˈtai̯ʒe	ˈpoːrti

Table 15. Present tense morphology in late nineteenth century
San Leonardo.

[28] Exceptions are the present subjunctive of the verbs 'be' (1SG si: 2SG si:s 3SG si: 3PL si:), and 'give' (specified as having an optional set of forms 1SG di: 2SG di:s 3SG di: 3PL di:).

That the marker -i was characteristic of present subjunctive is also indicated in Gartner's data from Marebbe and S. Vigilio (see also Mair 1973: 90), presented in Table 16:

Marebbe

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.SBJV	ˈpwarti 'carry'	pwartis	ˈpwarti	purˈtiŋ	purˈtai̯s	ˈpwarti

S. Vigilio

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
PRS.IND	ˈpoːrte 'carry'	ˈpoːrtəs	ˈpoːrta	porˈtuŋ	porˈtɛi̯s	ˈpoːrta
PRS.SBJV	ˈpoːrti	ˈpoːrti	ˈpoːrti	porˈtuŋze	porˈtɛi̯ze	ˈpoːrti

Table 16. Present tense morphology in late nineteenth century Marebbe and San Vigilio.

The present subjunctive pattern with -i reported by Gartner for S. Vigilio is repeated in modern data (*ALD-II* maps 488, 491, 492, 493, 497) for Pieve di Marebbe (point 81), presented in Table 17:

	1SG	2SG	3SG	3PL
PRS.IND	ˈmanɟi 'eat'	ˈmanɟes	ˈmanɟa	ˈmanɟa
PRS.SBJV	ˈmanɟi	ˈmanɟi	ˈmanɟi	ˈmanɟi

Table 17. Present tense morphology in modern Pieve di Marebbe.

Overall, then, it seems that much of the Val Badia once had a present subjunctive characterized, in the singular and 3PL, by inflexional -i (or -ə or -e). Now, the fact is that the singular and 3PL forms of the present subjunctive of first conjugation verbs should not have any kind of final vowel at all. The regular and predictable fate of final unstressed -e in Ladin (as extensively found in northern Italo-Romance varieties as well: cf. Rohlfs 2021a: 180-181) is for it to be deleted, the only unstressed final vowel that regularly survives in these varieties being -a. Nonetheless, Romance languages for which one would predict on historical phonological grounds a zero ending in the present subjunctive rarely actually show this predicted result; rather, a final inflexional vow-

el of some kind is usually present, usually -e or -i in the Ladin area (see, e.g., *AIS* maps 1685, 1686; *ALD-II* maps 491-493, 497; Rohlfs 2021b: 299-300). Mair (1978: 138-139) is probably right in suggesting that -i is a local reflex of unstressed final -e[29]. It is more difficult to say where this latter vowel comes from. One possibility is that it was analogically extended from a subset of first conjugation verbs in which final -e was widely preserved after clusters /Cr/ or /Cl/ (cf. Rohlfs 2021a: 181-182; Lausberg 1965: 299)[30]. A further problematic detail is that the 2SG ending of the present subjunctive is reported by Gartner as -i, rather than -is, for S. Vigilio, a pattern which seems to have spread in the modern dialects of Marebbe and the lower Val Badia. The cause of this resemblance with Italian is unclear. It is true that in these dialects -s is often lost for phonological reasons after a stem-final sibilant, and notably in the imperfect subjunctive/conditional (Mair 1973: 90-91, 143), but that particular phonological environment is not systematically encountered in the present subjunctive. Gartner (1883: 151) shows that in the 1880s -s was still retained in the 2SG present subjunctive forms of the verbs 'be' and 'have', even though -i appeared in other verbs. The disappearance of -s, then, is a detail which seems to have a non-phonological motivation, and one wonders whether this might already be the imitation of the modern Italian (first conjugation) present subjunctive. However we seek to explain these facts, the crucial point is this: that -i is, or was, the prevalent present subjunctive marker in Badiot by the nineteenth century, and that this present subjunctive ending, of native origin, will have been homophonous with the standard Italian present subjunctive ending (especially so in those Badiot varieties where even the 2SG present subjunctive ended in -i, as in Italian). How, though,

[29]   Mair is discussing Marebbano, but raising of final unstressed -e to -i is more widespread (cf. reflexes of *'sɛmpre 'always' in *AIS* map 1534; *ALD-I* map 722; *ALD-II* map 208). It is, however, difficult to identify other clear examples of this development specifically for the Val Badia. KRAMER (1976: 78) attributes -i to the influence of the fourth conjugation thematic vowel [i], but this is implausible both on historical phonological grounds (final unstressed *-i is regularly deleted) and on morphological grounds (-i is not a marker of present subjunctive in the fourth conjugation).

[30]   This phenomenon similarly affects the 1SG present indicative, originally in -o. See further LAUSBERG (1966: 273; 277); ROHLFS (2021b: 246-247); ELWERT (1972: 283); SALVI (2020: 80). Also KRAMER (1976: 71, 79).

did Badiot get from this situation to the modern sigmatic present sub-junctive?

The sigmatic present subjunctive ending in the Val Badia has a par-adigmatic distribution (2SG present indicative + 1SG present subjunc-tive + 3SG present subjunctive + 3PL present subjunctive) of a kind for which there is – so far as I can detect – no parallel anywhere else in the the Val Badia dialects or in any other Ladin variety. It there-fore cannot be analogically modelled on any indigenous distributional pattern. However, it displays exactly the pattern of syncretism found in Italian first conjugation verbs, where the relevant desinence is 'iot-ic' (2SG.PRS.IND *canti* ~ 1SG.PRS.SBJV *canti* ~ 2SG.PRS.SBJV *canti* ~ 3SG.PRS.SBJV *canti* ~ 3SG.PRS.SBJV *canti*(*no*)). We have seen that by the late nineteenth century the singular and 3PL present subjunctive forms of all verbs had -i in the Val Badia, thereby also presenting an accidental resemblance with the desinences found in the Italian first conjugation. My claim is that the Italian iotic syncretism is the model for the Badiot sigmatic syncretism[31].

The situation in the Val Badia in the nineteenth century was that Italian was taught in elementary schools, and had been so since the seventeenth century the language favoured in preaching, confession, and liturgy (for the ideological motives for this preference see, e.g., Palla 2020: 255; 258; Fiorentini 2020: 456). That the inhabitants of the Val Badia knew at least some Italian is confirmed by Alton and by Gartner (see Alton 1879: 3; Gartner 1882: 9; 11; also Belardi 1994: 68). Alton states that Ladin speakers esteemed Italian and actively sought to learn it (as well as German)[32]. Until the early 1870s, prior-ity tended to be given to Italian in schools, but thereafter the Austri-an authorities sought to exclude it in favour of German (Palla 2020: 254-255), and teaching in Italian in schools was suppressed during the First World War (Salvioni 1917: 28; Coletti, Cordin, and Zamboni 1992: 208; Goebl 2020: 49). After incorporation of the South Tyrol

---

[31] From what I can observe, the contexts in which the (present) subjunctive in Badiot is *used* are not fundamentally different from those of Italian.

[32] To the best of my knowledge, there is no parallel phenomenon in German (or Bava-rian dialects).

into the Italian state, Italian was reintroduced, and introduced into public administration (Coletti, Cordin & Zamboni 1992: 208-209). During the Fascist period Italian became the sole language used in schools. Belardi (2003: 35) identifies the twentieth century as the period when Ladin monoglottism disappeared and all Ladin-speakers came to master at least one other language (German or Italian), with interference effects both by and on Ladin.

It is perilous to try to motivate a change in a detail of verb morphology by appeal to Ladin-speakers' attitudes towards Italian, but we should not ignore the import of Palla's observation (2020: 259) that «[i] ladini, nonostante la vicinanza linguistica all'italiano, percepirono l'annessione al nuovo Stato come qualcosa che andava contro la loro storia, cultura, tradizione, come qualcosa di così diverso da sé da cui la comunità doveva tutelarsi per poter sopravvivere, e di conseguenza la coscienza ladina crebbe, si diffuse, si radicò tra la gente molto di più che nel secolo precedente». Might this have been a context in which 'Ladinization' of a fundamentally 'Italian' morphological phenomenon was favoured? Where Italian was becoming increasingly influential but a sense of distinctive 'Ladinity' was also growing, might the 'compromise solution' have been that speakers of Badiot sought to 'Ladinize' an Italian inflexional pattern by replacing -i (predominantly the marker of 2sG) with the native 2sG marker -(e)s?[33] What they did, I suggest, was to implement an Italian *pattern* of paradigmatic distribution, but one that uses native Ladin morphological *matter*[34]. This is a *calque* of the Italian pattern of syncretism.

---

[33] There is at least one other respect in which Badiot morphology shows a 'nativizing' reaction to Italian morphological influence. ALTON (1879: 106-107), for Colfosco, gives imperfect indicative forms in -v- (aˈmava, baˈtova, alˈdiva; cf. Italian *amava*, *batteva*, *udiva*) but also alternatives without -v-. Yet corresponding forms in the late twentieth century lack -v- (e.g., 3sG.IPF.IND manˈdʒaː, doʁˈmiː; cf. ALTON-VITTUR 1968: 40; *ALD-II* maps 484-86, 601, 725, for point 89, Colfosco). For Pieve di Marebbe (Pfarre), GARTNER (1883: 132; 139; 144) gives imperfect indicative forms in -v-, yet the *ALD* data from the 1990s only show forms without -v-. In these cases morphological material shared with Italian seems to have been rejected in favour of more locally distinctive forms. For some other Italian influences on Ladin morphosyntax, see VIDESOTT (2006: 1749).

[34] Cf. SAKEL (2007).

4. *Some theoretical implications. Syncretism, 'naturalness', and 'morphomic calquing'*

4.1. *'Naturalness'*

My claim is that a pattern of syncretism which arose in early Italo-Romance as an accidental consequence of sound change, has been replicated at least[35] twice, in different ways and independently, in the Romance languages of Italy. In central Italy, including Tuscan, an analogical change originally affecting just one member of the relevant syncretic set of cells (the 2SG) comes to affect the whole of that set, thereby preserving (but also slightly modifying) an existing syncretic pattern in the first conjugation. Perhaps a millennium later, dialects of the Val Badia replicate the Italian syncretism, using native morphological material.

It is striking that more than once, and centuries apart, the 'price' of replicating the syncretism has been the blurring of a previously sharply defined correlation between form and meaning. In Tuscan and elsewhere in central Italy, a change whose very motivation appears to have been the generalization of -i as sole marker of 2SG 'overshoots', so to speak, so that the newly created form also appears in specific non-second-person cells of the present subjunctive. In Badiot, the calquing of the Italian pattern has meant that -s, formerly a desinence uniquely associated with 2SG, now also systematically occurs in some non-second-person cells of the present subjunctive. The 'natural' relationship such that -i, or -s, is sole exponent of 2SG is not in fact compromised:

---

[35] Badiot is not, in fact, the only case of a sigmatic present subjunctive. A similar phenomenon appears in certain north-eastern Lombard dialects, where there is -s in the 1SG, 3SG and 3PL present subjunctive, in all conjugations. More rarely, -s also appears in the 2SG present subjunctive. The phenomenon is described with great clarity by RÜHRLINGER (2015), principally on the basis of material from *ALD*. Space will not allow me to offer a properly detailed analysis of the facts here (for which see MAIDEN 2022). I do not believe that this sigmatic subjunctive is *directly* connected with what we see in the Val Badia, but I believe that it does reflect contact with the same pattern of syncretism, in a different Italo-Romance dialect. As argued in MAIDEN (2022), while in Badiot the change is motivated by contact with Italian, in the north-eastern Lombard dialects it is probably due to contact with northern Italo-Romance dialects which had inherited the same pattern of syncretism as that found in early Tuscan.

almost[36] all 2SG forms came to end in -i, in Tuscan, and continued
to end in -s, in Badiot. What changes is that the innovatory syncre-
tisms undermine the *biuniqueness* of the form-meaning relationship:
the meaning 'second person singular' is still solely expressed by -i or -s,
but -i or -s no longer solely expresses the meaning 'second person singu-
lar'. This chimes with the observation of Maiden (2018: 312-313), who
suggests, broadly, that the diachronic replication of morphomic pat-
terns resolves what might be described as the 'paradigm distribution
problem', the problem of knowing where in the paradigm to distribute
alternative variant forms when they arise in a language. Faced with
variation in morphological exponents, speakers favour stable and pre-
dictable patterns for distributing them within inflexional paradigms[37].
In early Tuscan a situation arose (and endured over some time) in
which, for example, *cante* coexisted with *canti* in the 2SG, as a con-
sequence of the analogical generalization of -i as 2SG marker. In this
situation, not only did two forms correspond to one meaning, but an
existing syncretic pattern was disrupted (that between 2SG.PRS.IND
cante, 1SG.PRS.SBJV *cante*, 3PRS.SBJV *cante*(*no*)). The ultimate out-
come allowed the language producer to have the 'best of both worlds':
-i was generalized as a 2SG marker, but the existing syncretic pattern
was also 'saved' by generalization of -i to all relevant cells. The same
appears to be true for Badiot: here speakers have kept -s as their sta-
ble and recurrent 2SG marker, but have also stably and predictably re-
distributed that marker according to a syncretic model acquired from
Italian (and possibly favoured by some internal factors, as we have
seen). From the point of view of the hearer, the result is 'unnatural' to
the extent that the relevant forms become ambiguous with regard to
person, number, and mood. In practical terms, the effects are probably
negligible. In both Tuscan and Badiot, mood – and specifically selec-
tion of the subjunctive – is often independently predictable from the
broader syntactic and semantic context, as more generally in Romance
(see, e.g., Quer 2016: 957-965). As for the person and number of the

---

[36] Some Tuscan, and nearly all Badiot, imperatives are exceptions.
[37] An anonymous reviewer suggests that one might speak of a (paradigmatic) 'tem-
plate'.

subject, the linguistic context frequently serves to remove ambiguity[38], and in any case the 'problem' in Tuscan is (originally) limited to the first conjugation. In Badiot the person and number of the subject tend to be distinguished by clitic subject forms (see, e.g., Salvi 2016: 159; 165) so that, in effect, the inflexional ending is functionally redundant and the communicative disruption caused by the syncretism therefore minimal. In short, the morphomic changes addressed in the present study reflect a maximalization by speakers of predictability of distribution in which violation of 'naturalness' is actually minimal and which apparently comports a minimal increase in cognitive effort for hearers.

4.2. *Morphomic calquing and the language-specificity of morphomic patterns*

While it is widely acknowledged that morphomic patterns in inflexional paradigms are able to be replicated in diachrony from generation to generation (see, e.g., Esher 2014; O'Neill 2014; Maiden 2018), it seems *a priori* unlikely that morphomic patterns could ever be 'borrowed' from one language into another one. After all, morphomic patterns are the diametrical opposite of the most common (or most detectable?) type of linguistic borrowing, that involving loanwords. With these, a form denoting a clearly defined, and often culturally novel, referent is taken from one language into another: one thinks, for example, of the borrowing into English from Spanish, and there from Nahuatl, of *tomato* or *chocolate*. Quite unlike loanwords, morphomic patterns exist independently of the phonological forms which manifest them, and may be assigned no referential or functional meaning. They therefore seem the most improbable candidates for any kind of 'borrowing', and the general assumption in the literature seems to be that they are not borrowed (cf. Kossman 2015; Gardani 2018)[39]. Good evidence for the borrowing of morphomic patterns under contact conditions has certainly hitherto been lacking. It is true that Elson (2017)

---

[38] Indeed, in Tuscan the the 2sg subjunctive is generally accompanied by a disambiguatory explicit 2sg subject pronoun. See also Vanelli (2014: 143n16).

[39] Gardani (2018: 4-5, 10-12) does identify 'abstract' morphological patterning in borrowing, but what is principally involved is the ordering of constituents in compounds.

gives an example of an alleged morphological borrowing from middle Bulgarian into Romanian verb morphology, and his labelling of the relevant phenomena as 'realizational' seems to correspond very closely to the notion 'morphomic'. If Elson's analysis of the facts were correct, we would indeed have a case of morphomic borrowing. However, Maiden (2021b) demonstrates that the relevant facts are unlikely to have anything to do with language contact, because – among other reasons – exactly the same paradigmatic pattern is found in numerous other Romance varieties which were never in contact with any Slavonic language. The developments we have seen in Badiot perhaps, at last, really do provide evidence that borrowing of a morphomic pattern is possible.

If this is true, it tends to contradict a criterion developed to test, cross-linguistically, whether some assumed morphomic phenomenon really is 'morphomic' – i.e., whether it a matter of 'morphology by itself', and is not synchronically determined by any functional or phonological factor. Maiden (2018: 2, 22) proposes language-specific 'uniqueness' as a negative test of 'morphomicity': if some putative morphomic pattern exists in some language, it is unlikely to be genuinely morphomic if that same pattern can be shown also to exist in some other language (and shared inheritance can be excluded). The types of morphomic structure in Romance languages surveyed by Maiden (2018) are by and large the fortuitous, idiosyncratic, result of accumulated changes in the history of the relevant languages which are inherently unlikely to have occurred in the same manner and order in other languages. The same morphome, it is argued, is therefore highly unlikely to recur in other languages. If some putatively morphomic pattern turns out not to be 'unique' in this way, that should prompt the suspicion that the phenomeon is not morphomic at all, but motivated by some universally available extramorphological factor which the investigator has simply failed to detect. Maiden's 'uniqueness' criterion has been criticized by Herce (2019: 130) who believes that it is an unnecessary and unwelcome deterrent to typological and comparative research on morphomic structures. While Herce's objection is overstated (see Maiden 2021a: 94-95 for discussion), and the uniqueness

criterion can be defended as a handy general negative diagnostic of morphomehood, the evidence from Badiot that morphomic patterns actually can be 'calqued' from one language into another (albeit into a closely cognate language with a very similar overall morphological structure) weakens that criterion and adds to arguments that morphomic patterns can indeed appear in languages which are unrelated to each other in any relevant sense, due to borrowing. Maiden (2021a: 95n7) also considers some other possible cases of 'non-unique' morphomes.

5. *Conclusion*

This study of the 'long' history of a syncretism has made some surprising connexions and reached some surprising conclusions. An aspect of the morphological structure of modern Italian which had seemed so trivial as to have passed basically unnoticed by linguists, turns out to have a complex history shared with many other Italo-Romance varieties, and one which suggests a significant disregard on the part of speakers for transparent signalling of grammatical categories in favour of robust predictability of paradigmatic patterning. And a puzzling, recent and abrupt, change in the morphology of some Ladin dialects appears to have been triggered by exposure to that very same phenomenon in the morphology of a different language, Italian. It thereby flies in the face of what may seem to be common-sense assumptions about what can be 'borrowed' between languages, and invites a more nuanced appreciation of the value of 'uniqueness' in typological studies of morphomic structures.

Martin Maiden
Research Centre for Romance Linguistics
University of Oxford
martin.maiden@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk

References

AIS = Jaberg, K. & Jud, J. (1928-40), *Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz*, Zofingen, Ringier.

ALD-I = Goebl, H., Bauer, R. & Haimerl, E. (1998), *Atlant linguistich dll ladin dolomitich y di dialec vejins, 1a pert / Atlante linguistico del ladino dolomitico e dei dialetti limifrofi, 1a parte / Sprachatlas des Dolomitenladinischen und angrenzender Dialekte*, 1. Teil, 7 vols., Wiesbaden, Reichert.

ALD-II = Goebl, H. (2012), *Atlant linguistich dll ladin dolomitich y di dialec vejins, 2ª pert / Atlante linguistico del ladino dolomitico e dei dialetti limitrofi, 2ª parte / Sprachatlas des Dolomitenladinischen und angrenzender Dialekt*e, 2. Teil, 7 vols., Strasbourg, Éditions de Linguistique et de Philologie.

ALEIC = Bottiglioni, G. (1933-42), *Atlante linguistico-etnografico italiano della Corsica*, Pisa, Simoncini.

Alton, J. (1879), *Die ladinische Idiome in Ladinien, Gröden, Fassa, Buchenstein, Ampezzo*, Innsbruck, Verlag de Wagner'schen Universitaets-Buchhandlung.

——— & Vittur, F. (1968), *L ladin dla Val Badia. Beitrag zu einer Grammatik des Dolomitenladinischen neu bearbeitet und ergänzt von Franz Vittur unter Mitarbeit von Guntram Plangg mit Anmerkungen für das Marebanische von Alex Balsissera*, Brixen, Weger.

Aronoff, M. (1994), *Morphology by Itself*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press.

Azaretti, E. (1982), *L'evoluzione dei dialetti liguri esaminata attraverso la grammatica storica del ventimigliese*, Sanremo, Casablanca.

Baerman, M. (2009), *Case Syncretism*, in Malchukov, A. & Spencer, A. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Case*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 219-230.

Bauer, R. & Casalicchio, J. (2017), *Morphologie und Syntax im Projekt ALD-DM*, in «Ladinia» 41, pp. 81-108.

Belardi, W. (1994), *Profilo storico della lingua e della letteratura ladina*, Rome, Il Calamo.

——— (2003), *Breve storia della lingua e della letteratura ladina*, San Martin de Tor, Istitut Ladin 'Micurà de Rü'.

Bermúdez-Otero, R. & Luís, A. (2016), *A view of the morphome debate*, in Luís, A. & Bermúdez-Otero, R. (eds.), *The Morphome Debate*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 309-340.

Chiodi Tischer, U. (1981), *Die Mundart von Sisco (Korsika)*, Frankfurt, Lang.

Coletti, V., Cordin, P. & Zamboni, A. (1992), *Il Trentino e l'Alto Adige*, in Bruni, F. (ed.), *L'italiano nelle regioni. Lingua nazionale e identità regionali*, Turin, UTET, pp. 178-219.

Dalbera-Stefanaggi, M.-J. (1983), *La flexion verbale et sa dynamique: un des traits de différentiation verbale en corse*, in «Etudes corses» 20/21, pp. 353-83.

Elson, M. (2017), *On the history of radical-final palatalization in Romanian conjugation: the interaction of phonetic phenomena with non-phonetic*, in «Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie» 133, pp. 844-92.

Elwert, W. (1972), *Die Mundart des Fassa-Tals*, Wiesbaden, Steiner.

Esher, L. (2014), *Autonomous morphology and extramorphological coherence*, in «Morphology» 24, pp. 325-350.

Fanti, R. (1939), *Note fonetiche e morfologiche sul dialetto di Ascrea*, in «L'Italia Dialettale» 15, pp. 101-133.

Fiorentini, I. (2020), *Il plurilinguismo dei ladini e le languages in contact nell'area ladina*, in Videsott, P., Videsott, R. & Casalicchio, J. (a cura di), *Manuale di linguistica ladina*, Berlin - Boston, de Gruyter, pp. 452-469.

Gardani, F. (2018), *On morphological borrowing*, in «Language and Linguistics Compass» 12, https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12302.

Gartner, T. (1882), *Viaggi ladini*, Linz, Wimmer.

——— (1883), *Raetoromanische Grammatik*, Heilbronn, Henninger.

Goebl, H. (2020), *Il ladino e i ladini: glotto- e etnogenesi*, in Videsott, P., Videsott, R. & Casalicchio, J. (a cura di), *Manuale di linguistica ladina*, Berlin - Boston, de Gruyter, pp. 35-66.

Haase, M. (1999), *Dialektdynamik in Mittelitalien. Sprachveränderungsprozesse im umbrischen Appenineraum*, Tübingen, Stauffenburg.

Haspelmath, M. & Sims, A. (2010), *Understanding Morphology*, London, Hodder.

Haumer, H. (1934), *Syntax und Flexion des Verbums in den aquilanischen Chroniken*, Jena, Gronau.

Henri, F. (2021), *Morphomic structure in Mauritian Kreol: On change, complexity and creolization*, in «Morphology» 31, pp. 447-489.

Herce, B. (2019), *Morphome interactions*, in «Morphology» 29, pp. 109-132.

Kossmann, M. (2015), *Contact-induced change*, in Baerman, M. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Inflection*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 251-271.

Kramer, J., (1976), *Historische Grammatik des Dolomitenladinischen: Formenlehre*, Gebrunn bei Würzburg, Lehmann.

——— (1989), *Ladinisch: Grammatikographie und Lexikographie*, in Holtus, G., Metzeltin, M. & Schmitt, C. (eds.), *Lexikon der romanistischen Linguistik*, vol. III: *Die einzelnen romanischen Sprachen und Sprachgebiete von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart. Rumänisch, Dalmatisch/Istroromanisch, Friaulisch, Ladinisch, Bündnerromanisch*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, pp. 757-763.

Lausberg, H. (1965), *Lingüística románica*, vol. I: *Fonética*, Madrid, Gredos.

——— (1966), *Lingüística románica*, vol. II: *Morfología*, Madrid, Gredos.

Maiden, M. (1995), *A Linguistic History of Italian*, London, Longman.

——— (1996), *On the Romance inflectional endings -i and -e*, in «Romance Philology» 50, pp. 147-182.

——— (2007), *On the morphology of Italo-Romance imperatives*, in Bentley, D. & Ledgeway, A. (a cura di), *Sui dialetti italoromanzi: saggi in onore di Nigel B. Vincent*, Norfolk, Biddles, pp. 148-164.

——— (2016a), *Italo-Romance metaphony and the Tuscan diphthongs*, in «Transactions of the Philological Society» 114, pp. 198-232.

——— (2016b), *Some lessons from history. Morphomes in diachrony*, in Luís, A. & Bermúdez-Otero, R. (eds.), *The Morphome Debate*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 33-63.

——— (2018), *The Romance Verb. Morphomic Structure in Diachrony*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

——— (2021a), *The morphome*, in «Annual Review of Linguistics» 7, pp. 89-108.

——— (2021b), *Establishing contact. Slavonic influence on Romanian morphology?*, in «Journal of Language Contact» 14, pp. 24-52.

——— (2022), *The sigmatic subjunctive in north-eastern Lombard dialects: An explanation?*, https://www.academia.edu/91654452.

——— (forthc.), *Historical morphology*, in Ledgeway, A. & Maiden, M. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Italian Language*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Mair, W. (1973), *Ennebergische Morphologie. Analyse eines dolomitenladinischen Flexion-systems*, Innsbruck, Institut für romanische Philologie.

——— (1978), *Eine typologische Untersuchung zur dolomitenladinischen Verbaflexion*, in «Mondo ladino» 2, pp. 101-157.

Meyer-Lübke, W. (1895), *Grammaire des langues romanes*, vol. II: *Morphologie*, Paris, Welter.

Moling, S. (2016), *Dizionario italiano-ladino Val Badia. Dizionar ladin Val badia – talian*, S. Martin de Tor, Istitut ladin Micurà de Rü, https://itavalbadia.ladinternet.it/.

Mussafia, A. (1871), *Darstellung der romagnolischen Mundart*, Vienna, Gerold's Sohn.

Nielsen Whitehead, B. (2012), *On Italian, Ibero-Romance and Romanian imperatives in -i and the fate of Latin final -e*, in «Revue romane» 47, pp. 283-304.

O'Neill, P. (2014), *The morphome in constructive and abstractive models of morphology*, in «Morphology» 24, pp. 25-70.

Palla, L. (2020), *Coscienza linguistica e identità ladina*, in Videsott, P., Videsott, R. & Casalicchio, J. (a cura di), *Manuale di linguistica ladina*, Berlin - Boston, de Gruyter, pp. 243-279.

Pelliciardi, F. (1977), *Grammatica della lingua romagnola: la lèngva dla mi tèra*, Imola, Galeati.

Pope, M. (1952), *From Latin to Modern French*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Quer, J. (2016), *Mood*, in Ledgeway, A. & Maiden, M. (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 954-966.

Rohlfs, G. (2021a), *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti: fonetica*, Bologna, il Mulino.

——— (2021b), *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti: morfologia*, Bologna, il Mulino.

Round, E. (2015), *Rhizomorphomes, meromorphomes, and metamorphomes*, in Baerman, M., Brown, D. & Corbett, G. (eds.), *Understanding and Measuring Morphological Complexity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 29-52.

Rührlinger, B. (2015), *Morfologia verbale dei dialetti lombardi nord-orientali nel loro contesto geolinguistico*, Strasbourg, EliPhi.

Sakel, J. (2007), *Types of loan: matter and pattern*, in Matras, Y. & Sakel, J. (eds.), *Grammatical Borrowing in Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, Berlin - New-York, Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 15-29.

Salvi, G. (2016), *Ladin* in Ledgeway, A. and Maiden, M. (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 154-168.

——— (2020), *Il ladino e le sue caratteristiche*, in Videsott, P., Videsott, R. & Casalicchio, J. (a cura di), *Manuale di linguistica ladina*, Berlin - Boston, de Gruyter, pp. 67-108.

Salvioni, C. (1917), *Ladinia e Italia*, Pavia, Fusi.

Schürr, F. (1918), *Romagnolische dialektstudien. Lautlehre alter Texte*, Vienna, Hölder.

——— (1919), *Romagnolische dialektstudien. Lautlehre lebender Mundarten*, Vienna, Hölder.

——— (1974), *La voce della Romagna*, Ravenna, Girasole.

Sestito, F. (2004), *Aspetti linguistici di un documento inedito dell'assisano quattrocentesco: lo statuto di Radicofani (1441)*, in «Studi di Linguistica Italiana» 30, pp. 161-203.

Smith, J. C. (2020), *Old, Middle, and Modern: temporality and typology*, in Allan, K. (ed.), *Dynamic Language Changes: Looking in and across Languages*, Singapore, Springer Nature, pp. 183-200.

STUMP, G. (2019), *Paradigm function morphology*, in AUDRING, J. & MASINI, F. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Morphological Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 219-230.

TALL = Tratament automatich dl lingaz ladin. corpuslad, corpuslad.ladintal.it

TEKAVČIĆ, P. (1980), *Grammatica storica dell'italiano*, vol. II: *Morfosintassi*, Bologna, il Mulino.

VALENTINI, E. (2001, ed.), *Gramatica dl ladin standard*, Vich/SanMartin de Tor/ Bolzano, Union Generela di Ladins dles Dolomites/Istitut Cultural Ladin 'Majon di fascegn'/ Istitut Cultural Ladin 'Micurà de Rü'/Istitut Pedagogich Ladin.

VANELLI, L., (2013), *Variazione desinenziale nella flessione verbale dell'italiano antico*, in CASANOVA HERRERO, E. & CALVO RIGUAL, C. (eds.), *Actas del XXVIé Congreso Internacional de Lingüística y de Filología Románicas*, II, Berlin - Boston, de Gruyter, pp. 459-471.

——— (2014), *Person endings in the old Italian verb system*, in BENINCÀ, P., LEDGEWAY, A. & VINCENT, N. (eds.), *Diachrony and Dialects. Grammatical Change in the Dialects of Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 131-151.

VENNEMANN, T. (1978), *Phonetic and conceptual analogy*, in BALDI, P. & WERTH, R. (eds.), *Readings in Historical Phonology*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 258-274.

VIDESOTT, P. (2006), *Innerromanische Sprachkontakte: Italienisch und Dolomitenladinisch. Contacts linguistiques intraromans: italien et ladin Romanische*, in ERNST, G., GLESSGEN, M.-D., SCHMITT, C. & SCHWEICKARD, W. (eds.), *Romanische Sprachgeschichte. Histoire linguistique de la Romania. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Geschichte der romanischen Sprachen. Manuel international d'histoire linguistique de la Romania*, vol. II, Berlin - New York, de Gruyter, pp. 1743-1751.

WENDRINER, R. (1889), *Die paduanische Mundart bei Ruzante*, Breslau, Koebner.