

A BASIC COURSE IN LATIN, by Richard J. O'Brien and Neil J. Twombly. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962. Pp. xxi, 569.

THIS NEW Latin textbook has as its central purpose the providing of a "modern structural description" of the Latin language, primarily for students interested in learning Latin. There has certainly been no dearth of new Latin textbooks in recent years, although few, if any, have tried so consistently to break with traditional Latin teaching as Sweet in his *Latin: A Structural Approach* (University of Michigan Press, 1957), and to provide an analysis of Latin structure based on the teachings of descriptive linguistics. The authors of the present volume have rightly acknowledged their debt to Professor Sweet's initial effort, and at the same time have insisted on the differences of their own analysis from his. The plan of the book and the pedagogical devices employed also owe much to Sweet. But clearly these are auxiliary problems, since the fundamental criterion for the success of this text lies in the adequacy of the linguistic description which is the basis of it. The authors have presented a comprehensive and often stimulating account of Latin structure, although it must be said to fail in certain crucial aspects. This conclusion is due not so much to any shortcomings of the authors for such a task, but to the inadequacy of the assumptions about grammatical analysis which they appear to have adopted in carrying it out. In view of the great effort and importance which is attached to a new consideration of Latin structure, it seems only proper that the critical effort of this review be directed to this question.

I do not find in the text a clear statement about the kind of grammatical analysis which O'Brien and Twombly have chosen to adopt, although the influence of generative grammar is sometimes apparent—in the use of transformational rules in the description of the Latin passive, the nominalized question, and so on. What emerges, however, is a grammar of Latin not consistent either with transformation, or with any rigorous morpheme-class or immediate-constituent framework. It does not necessarily follow that a grammar of Latin for students need be theoretically restricted in this sense, but such decisions of presentation surely must be based on the best available grammar. The impression that one receives from this text is rather that a number of contradictory grammatical models have been superimposed one upon another for the sake of explaining isolated syntactical questions. The most consistently serious objection, however, is the more or less morpheme-to-utterance approach to Latin syntax, which produces some bewildering explanations.

O'Brien and Twombly do not attempt as complete a survey of morphophonemic processes as they do of the syntactical component of Latin. The morphophonemic relations discussed in the book (and listed in the Appendix on page 538) are in principle close to Harris's use of the morphophonemic concept, rather than to generative phonology. Thus the alternating phonemic sequences of isolated paradigmatic allomorphs are rewritten with morphophonemic symbols in order to preserve paradigmatic unity. The result of this is often a morphophonemic spelling unrelated to the general phonological processes underlying different paradigmatic examples of allomorphic variation. If, for example, a e o u, as characteristic paradigmatic vowels, were to alternate with i in different stateable environments, a morphophonemic spelling A (subsuming the alternation a/i), E, and so on, would obscure the basic fact of, say, general vowel weakening to i in certain positions. The addition of a morphophonemic spelling as a third phonological transcription dealing with generally separate allomorphic variation obscures general phonological operations underlying such allomorphic variation. Thus O'Brien and Twombly describe the morphophonemic relations in the paradigms oratiō (nom. sg.), oratiōnem (acc. sg.) . . . , and fortitudō, fortitudinem . . . , as

- (1) N is \emptyset before {nom. sg.}, /n/ elsewhere—
{oratioN-}, but
- (2) IN is /ō/ before {nom. sg.}, /in/ elsewhere—
{fortitudIN-} (page 538).

For the paradigms vulnus, vulnere (abl. sg.) . . . ,
carmen, carmine . . . ,

- (3) E is said to be /u/ before {nom.-acc.}, . . .
/e/ elsewhere—{wulnES-}, { neut. sg. }
but
- (4) I is /e/ before {nom.-acc.}, . . . /i/ else-
{ neut. sg. }
where—{karmIN-} (page 538).

If we consider the same set of examples apart from the trivial goal of achieving individual paradigmatic unity, then underlying (1) and (2) are

- (5) the loss of final s after s r l n.
- (6) the lengthening of final grave (back) vowels.
- (7) the weakening of medial short vowels to i.
- (8) the loss of final n after back vowels.

Underlying (3) and (4) are, additionally,

- (9) the change of medial s to r.
 (10) the change of i to e before medial r.

Given the underlying forms *oratiōn-, *fortitudōn-, *karmen-, *wulnus-, rules (5)–(10), if the order (5) (8) (6) (9) (7) (10) be insisted on, will derive, properly, oratiō (by 5, 8), fortitudō (by 5, 8, 6), fortitudinem (by 7), karminis (by 7), vulneris (by 9, 7, 10), and countless other forms while preserving the general nature of the derived alternations.¹ Thus (10) is not set up to correct the derived *vulniris, but underlies cinis, kineris, caperis (2nd sg. passive from *capi+ris), and so on. The partial ordering (9) (7) (10) merely allows vulnus, vulneris to be derived without setting up an additional rule or paradigmatic morphophonemic symbol. Even more interesting is the fact that the authors' use of morphophonemic spelling would fail to distinguish obvious regular morphophonemic processes from more highly limited alternations. Thus only a few 3rd declension nouns of the type vulpēs, vulpem, abiēs, abietem require the morphophonemic rule $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} -ies \\ -Ces \end{array} \right\} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} -iēs \\ -Cēs \end{array} \right\}$. It would be easy to rewrite this vowel alternation with a new morphophonemic symbol, but this only adds to the number of statements without bringing out any clear insight into the real morphophonemic processes.

I have stated that the authors' frequent morpheme-to-utterance approach has led to some unacceptable syntactical descriptions. This morpheme-to-utterance approach subsumes more specifically in this book 1) the description of purely syntactical, and mostly phrase structure, patterns in terms of individual inflectional categories, and 2) an attempt to set up a rigorous part-of-speech categorization in terms of these inflectional categories. In both cases the preoccupation must be with the underlying co-occurrent relations and subsequent phrase structure analysis (kernels), and—since the authors insist on talking about transformations—the transformational potentials of these underlying sentences. Since, in highly inflected languages, particular inflectional markers have to be derived from P-markers (i.e., the labelled nodes and associated phrase structure or immediate constituent diagram), it is important to avoid attempting to define purely syntactical questions—transitive vs. intransitive, active vs. passive, and so on—by individual inflectional markers. As the authors show, it becomes

¹Starred forms are not to be taken as historically significant here, but are rather the underlying phonological representation of morphemes from which the proper overt forms are derived by a set of rules.

necessary to use such inflectional markers to help the student to recognize syntactical patterns, but the student cannot hope to learn the syntax when unacceptable syntactical descriptions result from classifications based on only inflectional endings. A clear indication of this is seen in the first discussion concerning adverbs: "There is no adverb derived from the stem of multus. Since the forms multum and multō do not show the derivational suffix of an adverb (i.e., -ē and -ter), they are not adverbs. Since multum and multō fulfill the function of an adverb, they have a special name, adverbial" (page 50). Now in this particular case the consequences of this distinction need not be harmful and it is an important point for the student to learn, but the methodological approach which lies behind it leads in other cases to questionable results. In this case, the fact that multus does not have associated with it an adverb in -ē is on the same level of facts as the English past, in which walk happens to form the perfect with a suffixal element, while take with an internal vowel change. The syntactical description of sentences with these particular categories of perfect forms must not in the least change, and the different formations are in fact irrelevant to questions of syntax. A morpheme structure rule $\text{Mult} + \text{Adv}_{\text{man}} \rightarrow \text{multum}$ will handle this skewness without affecting syntactical descriptions. If, finally, multum is in part responsible for setting up a phrase structure category—adverbial accusative—with which all accusatives are analyzed that do not fit into some a priori scheme, then the results are more serious (cf. page 148).

An examination of O'Brien and Twombly's discussion of transitive and intransitive verbs (Chapter 23), the adverbial accusative (Chapter 24) and the active-passive distinction will bring out more of the difficulties which have been suggested. Verbs which show the contrast of the personal endings t/tur are described as transitive (habet/habētur), and are accordingly said to be inflected for voice. Those verbs which do not show this contrast are intransitive, and therefore not inflected for voice. These verbs are described as having two sub-types: active intransitive—which show only active personal inflection, and passive intransitive, i.e., deponents, which show only passive personal inflection. The distinction between these three types of verb classes is fundamental and the authors are right to insist on the differences, but this classification is built on inflectional definitions rather than on co-occurrent relations and the resulting phrase structure analysis leads to several difficulties. Since only active transitive verbs (i.e., those showing both t and tur in contrast) are described as patterning with direct-object accusatives, the co-occurrent equality between habet and sequitur with their object nominals cannot be

$$(5) V_n \rightarrow \left\{ \left\{ \text{NP} \right\} \right\}_{V_{n\text{in}}} + \left. \begin{array}{l} V_{n\text{acc}} \\ V_{n\text{abl}} \\ V_{n\text{dat}} \\ V_{n\text{gen}} \end{array} \right\}$$

The second difficulty which the classification described leads to is the question of the so-called "impersonal passives," verbs which, as described by O'Brien and Twombly, show the active/passive contrast (i.e., *tur* vs. *t*) only in the third person singular—e.g., *it/itur*. The result of this is that "the verb *eō* is, therefore, transitive only in the third person singular" (page 145). If this is so, then we should expect to find *it*, but not any other form of *eō*, patterning with an object nominal in the accusative, which is, of course, never the case. To label the verbs of the type *eō* to fit in with an a priori definitional scheme which is syntactically unacceptable is not to explain the fact that verbs which do not pattern with any complement (but not V_d verbs which do not) show such a contrast in the third singular only. While space does not permit the discussion of all the details, the passive transformation takes the form $\#NP_{\text{nom}} + \dots \langle NP_{\text{acc}} \rangle \dots + V_n\# \Rightarrow \langle NP_{\text{abl}} \rangle + \dots \langle NP_{\text{nom}} \rangle \dots V_n\text{tur}\#$. The consequence of this only sketchily formulated rule is that $\langle NP_{\text{acc}} \rangle \Rightarrow \langle NP_{\text{nom}} \rangle$ is possible only where, in fact, the particular verb happens to pattern with an object nominal in the accusative; or in other words, a verb patterning with a direct object accusative is not a limiting condition for the passive transformation to apply. All V_n verbs listed in the phrase structure rules 1-5 above may be thus transformed. If there is no $\langle NP_{\text{acc}} \rangle$ the verb will necessarily in every case be rewritten *itur*, since the third person singular is the unmarked form (lastly stated rule of agreement, which is really absence of agreement), and therefore unspecified, and the object nominals in cases other than the accusative will simply be retained, and properly labelled, in the passive sentence.²

In dealing with the problem of embedding simply the altered form of kernel sentences into specific phrase structure slots, the

²Cf. "The order of elements in a transformational grammar of German," *Language* 38.263-270, 1962, for similar interesting cases in German of the unacceptability of commonly held notions about transitive-intransitive and active-passive as any kind of universals.

authors have done a great service in their analysis.³ The concept of nominalization which they introduce (on page 45), and which refers there to the deletion of a noun, and the assigning of the noun marker to the remaining modifying adjective, is put to good use. On pages 93-94 they expand their use of nominalization to relative clause embedding, and insist on this method of (infinitely) expanding originally limited phrase structure categories. This treatment of the nominalized question as the embedded complement of certain verbs, transformed from underlying interrogative sentences with certain subsequent modal changes of the verb, further extends their application of nominalizations. The embedded nominalization, however, which underlies the traditional indirect statement with verbs like dicit as complement (and as subject also, with verbs like licet, iuvat, and predicative sentences with Es + Adj, which the authors do not discuss together, unfortunately) is discussed with the adverbial accusative, and again the authors are not successful. Thus in the sentence Caesar dixit Corneliam patrem amisisse (from an underlying Cornelia patrem amisit, in this case) the infinitive is labelled the direct object accusative. Here, however, we must introduce the necessity of embedding a permuted kernel (in terms of inflectional changes) as the C (complement) of verbs of the dicit class (V_S). That is, sketchily, given a terminal string of the type $NP_{nom} + C + V_S$, embed the permuted sentence $NP_{acc} + NP_{acc} + V_{re}$ from $NP_{nom} + NP_{acc} + V_b$ in C. The new sentence will have the properly labelled C from the original kernel sentence. In this case, reliance by O'Brien and Twombly on inflectional endings which are in effect only the result of an embedding transformation produced the wrong analysis of the indirect statement.

A valuable insight which the authors have touched upon is a possible relation between the sentences

- (1) Cornelia (a Caesare) dicta est patrem amisisse, and
- (2) Corneliam patrem amisisse (a Caesare) dictum est

and some constructional differences which underlie the sentence

- (3) Caesar dixit Corneliam patrem amisisse.

Their explanation is that (3) is ambiguous, in that either Cornelia or amisisse may be the direct object accusative of dixit, and that further only a transformation to the passive can resolve the ambiguity. The solution to this question is rather to be described by

³The authors, of course, do not use the terminology and framework of generative grammar, but for the sake of the consistency of the syntactical discussions, I characterize their descriptions in such form.

different underlying V_S verbs with embedded complements. Thus $NP_{nom} + C + V_S$ in the passive gives $\langle NP_{abl} \rangle + C + V_{stur}$, i.e., Corneliam patrem amisisse (a Caesare) dictum est, with the third singular neuter dictum est, as mentioned above. Sentence (1) above is to be described as the passive transformation of an underlying $NP_{nom} + NP_{acc} + C + V_S$, in which the original subject of the presentence is embedded into NP_{acc} , and the remaining part into C , so that NP_{acc} will become NP_{nom} , with (1) above as the result. This transformation then has associated with it a derived constituent analysis in which dicta est patrem amisisse is the expanded VP. It is a significant fact that the verb videt is translated as 'seem' in constructions like (1), but 'is seen' with constructions like (2), which lends support to the above distinction in types of embedding associated with different V_S verbs.⁴

There are other insights which O'Brien and Twombly provide in their text, so that it is all the more unfortunate that some of the fundamental problems of Latin syntax which I have discussed are obscured by too weak and inadequate a grammatical framework. There will be some who may not learn any Latin from this text, but many will not escape thinking about Latin in reading it.

Allan R. Keiler
The University of Michigan

⁴See C. Fillmore, "The position of embedding transformations in a grammar," *Word* 19.208-31, 1963, for a discussion of certain verb classes in English with comparable embedding transformations.