Spanish is a *Romance* language, meaning that it is a vernacular descendant of Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire. In addition to Spanish, the Romance group includes such national languages as Portuguese, French, Italian, and Rumanian, as well as regional languages and dialects like Catalán, Galician, Occitan, Rhetoroman and Sardinian. Latin is normally thought of as an extinct language, and in one sense this is true, as there are no longer any native speakers of the Classical Latin that is taught in schools. On the other hand, each of the languages that were just mentioned could be regarded as regional varieties of modern Latin. The fact that modern Spanish or French speakers, for example, cannot understand Classical Latin (unless they have deliberately learned it) reveals the far reaching changes that have taken place as the Romance languages have evolved. Nevertheless, an unbroken chain of speakers exists that links the population of the Roman Empire with the present population of the Romance-speaking world.

Like the other Romance languages, Spanish is derived from *Vulgar Latin*, the complex of dialects that represented the language spoken by legionaries, traders, farmers and so forth. Concrete evidence of what Vulgar Latin was like is hard to come by, however, as it was never systematically written down. As the philologist Menéndez Pidal put it (1968:3), *el cantero más rudo, al grabar un letrero, se proponía escribir la lengua clásica* ‘the least polished stone mason, when he carved a sign, tried to write the classical language’. Only in a handful of inscriptions, prescriptive treatises such as the famous *Appendix Probi*, and the occasional non-standard text are we given a glimpse of how Latin was actually spoken by the population at large.

Nevertheless, the gap between Vulgar and Classical Latin should not be overestimated. It is true that grammatical relations which in Classical Latin were expressed by inflecting individual words were more commonly represented in the Vulgar variety syntactically or periphrastically, as in *de cervos* for *cervorum* ‘of the deer’ or *cantare habeo* for *cantabo* ‘I will sing’. But there is no reason to suppose that the bulk of the populace would have been incapable of recognizing most of the words of a Classical text when it was read aloud or even of decoding the literary syntax and morphology.

Vulgar Latin was presumably always subject to considerable geographical variation, although not to the extent that Latin speakers from different parts of the Empire would not have been able to understand one another. Regional varieties gradually drifted apart, a process that can only have accelerated after the Western Empire collapsed in the 5th century and the old Roman provinces were overrun by Germanic tribes (Franks, Burgundians, Swabians, Visigoths and so forth). There are, then, no precise moments when the modern Romance languages were born. In the case of Spanish (i.e., originally, the language of Castile), texts from the Castile area begin to exhibit Romance features from the 10th century onwards, but the 12th century texts are the first that have a clear Spanish look to them (for examples of medieval Spanish writing, see Gifford & Hodcroft 1966). As ever, though, writing would have lagged behind speech, especially as for centuries an established orthography existed for Latin but not for the emerging Romance vernaculars.

Spanish has its roots in the rustic Latin of southern Cantabria and its growth from obscure provincial dialect to world language mirrors the rise of the kingdom of Castile. Initially a small enclave on the eastern edge of the kingdom of León, Castile played a leading role in the Reconquest, expanded (together with its language) progressively southwards and by the 14th
century controlled all of the Peninsula except Portugal, Navarre, Aragon and the surviving Islamic kingdom of Granada. With the unification of Castile and Aragon in 1479, the modern Spanish nation-state was born and shortly afterwards Columbus’s discovery of America initiated a new colonial phase. In this way, the language of Castile came to dominate not just in the Peninsula (with the notable exceptions of Portugal, Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia) but, from the 16th century onwards, in the American colonies too.

History of Spanish Vowels

1.1. Pronunciation of Latin Vowels

Written Classical Latin had ten pure vowels, five long (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū) and five short (ā, ē, ī, ĕ, ŭ), plus three diphthongs (ae, oe, au). The Classical length distinction was replaced in Vulgar or spoken Latin by a distinction based on tongue height. In addition, there were fewer vowel sounds, particularly in unstressed syllables (note that the stress in a Latin word fell almost always in the same syllable as in the modern descendant or reflex although many words have been shortened). As far as pure vowels go, the Vulgar Latin system was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressed syllables</th>
<th>Unstressed syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[a] = written ā &amp; ā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[e] = written ē</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[i] = written ī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[o] = written ō, ŭ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u] = written ŭ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three additional points need to be noted. First, the Classical diphthongs ae and oe correspond, in the variety of Latin from which Spanish developed, to [e] and [e] respectively in stressed syllables and to [e] in unstressed syllables. The diphthong au was also reduced, to [o], but this seems to have been a later development.

Secondly, in final syllables (which in Latin were always unstressed) there was a merger of [o] and [u] and, later, of [e] and [i]. Consequently, only [a], [o] and [e] survive in that position into Old Spanish (i.e. Spanish as spoken from the time when the language began to be written down up until about the 16th century). It is true that [i] appears in the final syllable of the person 1 form of the modern -er/-ir preterite (e.g. dormi ‘1 slept’), but in this case what is now the final syllable was formerly the penultimate syllable (dormi < dormiv) and was moreover stress-bearing, hence not subject to the mergers that affected unstressed final syllables.

Thirdly, the practice of assigning adjacent vowels to distinct syllables was lost at an early date. When such vowels were identical in pronunciation, there was an inevitable reduction to a single vowel (e.g. duos [doos] > [dos] dos ‘two’), while unstressed prevocalic front vowels (/e/ or /i/) were reduced to the palatal semivowel [j] (as in puteum [poteo] > [potjo], later > Sp. pozo ‘well’) and unstressed prevocalic back vowels (/o/ or /u/) were reduced to the labial-velar semivowel [w] (as in coāg(u)lum [koag(o)lo] > [kwaglo], later > Sp. cuajo ‘rennet’).
1.2. Diphthongization of /ɛ/ and /ɔ/

Two sounds that appear to have functioned in Vulgar Latin as phonemes have no reflex in the modern Spanish phonemic inventory. These are /ɛ/ and /ɔ/, corresponding respectively to Classical ē (also to ae in stressed syllables) and to ō. For obscure reasons these sounds were modified to [je] and [we] respectively in many varieties of Latin, including that from which Spanish descends:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{mētum} & \ [\text{mɛto}] > [\text{mjeðo}] \ miedo \ ‘\text{fear}’ \\
\text{fōcum} & \ [\text{fɔko}] > [\text{fweɣo}] \ \text{fuego} \ ‘\text{fire}’
\end{align*}
\]

A following syllable-final nasal had the effect of slightly raising the tongue height of /ɔ/ and so one or two words containing ō + nasal escaped diphthongization. For example, the modern reflex of mōntem is monte ‘mountain’, rather than *muente.

In a number of cases, words containing [oj] (resulting usually from a previous transposition of [j] and a preceding [ɾ]) went the same way as words containing /ɔ/; e.g. corium [kojɾo] > [*kwero] cuero ‘leather’.

Sometimes the diphthong [je] (< ē) was reduced in Old Spanish to [i], particularly before [ʎ] and, to a lesser extent, before syllable-final [s]. Similarly, the diphthong [we] (< ō) underwent occasional reduction to [e], the favoured context being after [l] or [ɾ]:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{castēllum} & \ [\text{kastjeɾo}] > [\text{kastiɾo}] \ \text{castillo} \ ‘\text{castle}’ \ (\text{previously written castiello}) \\
\text{flōccum} & \ [\text{flweɾo}] > [\text{fleɾo}] \ \text{fleco} \ ‘\text{fringe}’ \ (\text{previously written flueco})
\end{align*}
\]

1.3. Vowel Raising

Under the influence of a nearby [j] – which has a very high tongue position – the vowels [a, ɛ, ɔ, e, o] were in many cases raised in stressed syllables in Vulgar Latin to [e, e, o, i, u] respectively. This series of sound changes can be regarded as an instance of metaphony, a process that leads to the approximation of one vowel’s quality to that of another. The effect of [j] across the vowel system was uneven, in that more vowels were affected in some phonetic contexts than in others. Presumably this is due to the fact that [j] itself survived longer in some contexts than in others and so had varying lengths of time to exercise an effect on a nearby vowel. Historians of the Spanish language usually identify different ‘types’ of [j], depending on the associated context, what subsequently happened to the semivowel and the number of vowels affected by it. The results of metaphony for each type of [j] are illustrated in the table below:
### Metaphony in Vulgar Latin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Type of [j]</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vowels affected</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilabial + [j] or cons. + [rj]; [j] generally survives unmodified</td>
<td>[ɛ] &gt; [e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>praemium</td>
<td>ōstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>premio</td>
<td>ostra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final/preconsonantal [j] (excluding [jl], [jln]); [j] generally lost</td>
<td>[a] &gt; [e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>básium</td>
<td>léctum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[bajo]</td>
<td>[listo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beso</td>
<td>lecho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced obstruent + [j]; whole sequence generally &gt; [j] or &gt; ∅ when next to a front vowel</td>
<td>[ɛ] &gt; [e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulēgium</td>
<td>pōdium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[polejo]</td>
<td>[podojo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poleo</td>
<td>poyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[j] next to lateral; whole sequence generally &gt; [x]</td>
<td>[ɛ] &gt; [e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rēg(u)lam</td>
<td>fōlia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[reja]</td>
<td>[fela]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reja</td>
<td>hoja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[j] next to nasal; whole sequence generally &gt; [n]</td>
<td>[o] &gt; [u]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pugnum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pojno]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puño</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The [ɛ] > [e] and [ɔ] > [o] changes, which are not immediately obvious from a comparison of Spanish with Latin, can be inferred from the failure to diphthongize. For example, the [ɔ] of fōlia must have been raised to [o] because, otherwise, the expected modern form would be *[wexa] and not [oxa] hoja ‘leaf’.

A parallel phenomenon affected [e] and [o] in *unstressed* initial syllables, with raising to [i] and [u] respectively, e.g. caementum [kemjento] > cimiento (whence cimientos ‘foundations’), cognātum [køjnato] > cuñado ‘brother-in-law’, cochleāre [kokljare] > cuchara ‘spoon’.

Note in addition that stressed vowels were occasionally raised under the influence of final [i]; e.g. vēnī > vine ‘I came’.

### 1.4. Syncope of Intertonic Vowels

*Intertonic* or unstressed internal vowels occupied a position of relative weakness in words and so were prime candidates for syncope; thus ciudad < cív(i)tātem, pueblo < pop(u)lum, ojo <
History of Spanish - Ian Mackenzie

1. The Latin Consonants

Basing themselves primarily on the Latin orthography, Romance philologists assume that, once

\( h \) had ceased to be pronounced (a development that appears to have occurred before the first
century BC), the Latin consonantal system was something like that shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin Consonants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/p/  /t/  /k/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/b/  /d/  /g/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/θ/  /s/  -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/  /n/  -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-  /l/  -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-  /ɾ/  -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from /θ/ and the voiced stops, the sounds shown above routinely appeared in geminate form, i.e. doubled (e.g. [bokka] buccam, > boca ‘mouth’; [gotta] guttam, > gota ‘drop’). We also need to take into account the labial-velar and palatal semivowels [w] and [j] (= written v and i),
even though these could in principle be treated as allophones of the vowels /u/ and /i/. The
reason for this is that, at the beginning of a word and also in intervocalic position, they
developed into sounds that are usually assigned to the modern consonantal inventory, in
Spanish at least.
2. Consonantization of Latin \( v \) and \( i \)

The initial and intervocalic \( v \) and \( i \) appear to have represented labial-velar and palatal semivowels, transcribable as \([w]\) and \([j]\) respectively. In the case of intervocalic \( i \), the phonetic correlate appears in fact to have been a geminate; e.g. \( māium \) [majjo] (> \( mayo \) ‘May’). Both items yield sounds in modern Spanish that are usually classified as consonants.

In the first place, the labial-velar semivowel must have developed, in the variety of Latin from which Spanish descends, into a voiced bilabial consonant. In intervocalic position (or between a vowel and a liquid), this consonant seems to have merged with the sound that, in spoken Latin, corresponded to written \( b \) (as is suggested by numerous contemporary spelling interchanges involving \( b \) and \( v \)). The likely articulation was a bilabial fricative or approximant, shown here as \([\beta]\):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{cervum} &\ [\text{kɛɾw}o] > [\text{kɛɾβ}o] > [\theta\text{jɛɾβ}o] \text{ ciervo} \ ‘\text{deer}' \\
\text{caballum} &\ [\text{kaβallo}] > [\text{kaβaλo}] > [\text{kaβaλo}] \text{ caballo} \ ‘\text{horse}'
\end{align*}
\]

In initial position, on the other hand, a contrast appears to have been maintained for centuries between \([b]\) (< Latin \( b \)) and \([\beta]\) (< Latin \( v \)). This contrast is reflected in the fairly regular use in Old Spanish texts of ‘\( b \)’ to represent the first sound and ‘\( v \)’ or ‘\( u \)’ to represent the second: \( \text{boca} \) ‘mouth’ (< \( \text{buccam} \), \( \text{bever} \) ‘to drink’ (< \( \text{bibere} \), \( \text{vaca} \) ‘cow’ (< \( \text{vaccam} \), \( \text{valle} \) ‘valley’ (< \( \text{vallem} \), \( \text{vassura} \) ‘rubbish’ (< \( \text{versūram} \).

In addition, as a consequence of the voicing of intervocalic Latin \( p \) a contrast developed in the Middle Ages between \([b]\) and \([\beta]\) in \textit{intervocalic} position:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ovum} &\ [\text{ɔw}o] > [\text{weβo}], \text{pl. [weβos]} \text{ huevos} \ ‘\text{eggs}' \\
\text{opus} &\ [\text{ɔpos}] > [\text{weβos}] \text{ Old Sp. } \text{huebos} \ ‘\text{necessity}'
\end{align*}
\]

However, both this contrast and that which obtained in initial position had disappeared by the 15th century at the latest, with \([b]\) and \([\beta]\) having the (complementary) distributions that they currently exhibit.

Turning now to the palatal semivowel, this sound has a number of outcomes in initial and intervocalic positions. In initial position it has frequently been lost (e.g. in \( \text{echar} \) ‘to throw’, < \( \text{iactāre}; \text{enero} \ ‘\text{January}' < \( \text{iānuārium} \)), although it has fricative \([x]\) as its reflex before back vowels (e.g. \( \text{juego} \) ‘game’, < \( \text{iocum} \)) and fricative \([j]\) as its reflex in a handful of isolated cases such as \( \text{yace} \ ‘\text{he/she/it lies}' (< \( \text{iacet} \) and \( \text{yema} \) ‘\text{yoke}' (< \( \text{gemmam} \). The geminate \([\mathsf{jj}]\), corresponding to \( i \) in intervocalic position, usually has fricative \([j]\) as its reflex in modern Spanish (e.g. \([\mathsf{ma}jjo]\) \( \text{mayo} \ ‘\text{May}' < \( \text{māium} [\text{majjo}]\)), a result that implies consonantization at an unspecified period and also simplification, possibly during the generalized process of \textit{lenition} or ‘weakening’ that took place in the second half of the first millennium AD (see section below).

3. Consonant + \([j]\)

In postconsonantal position the semivowel \([j]\) (corresponding there to written \( i \) or \( e \)) appears to have had a hand in a large number of Latin sound changes, often, though not always, drawing the place of articulation of a preceding consonant towards its own place of articulation through \textit{assimilation} (the process whereby two adjacent sounds become more alike).

In the first place, Vulgar Latin \([tj]\) and \([k\mathsf{i}]\) (corresponding to written \( t(h) \) or \( c(h) \) plus a prevocalic front vowel) both surface in Old Spanish as dental affricates: voiceless \([ts]\) in initial and
postconsonantal positions and voiced [dz] in intervocalic position, (the latter sound resulting from the voicing of [ts] during the lenition phase; see below). The development of Latin [tʃ] and [kʃ] into Old Spanish [ts]/[dz] presumably reflects an assimilatory process whereby palatal [j] drew the place of articulation of the preceding dental or velar towards the hard palate, possibly producing palato-alveolar [tʃ] at an intermediate stage. This latter sound is itself easily modified to [ts]; for example, the phenomenon is said to occur as a variable synchronic process in some modern dialects of Chilean Spanish.

Whatever the explanation for Latin [tʃ], [kʃ] > Old Spanish [ts]/[dz], the two dental affricates came to be deaffricated in the late medieval or early modern period and later, during the 15th or 16th centuries, the fricative reflexes were merged in a single voiceless sound, whence modern [θ]. In Andalusia and Latin America, matters followed a slightly different course, as the deaffricated reflexes of [ts] and [dz] merged with [s] and [z] (the latter stemming from Latin intervocalic s) in the 16th century. The products of that merger were themselves merged in the 17th century, and the single reflex is [s] throughout Latin America, the Canary Islands and most of Andalusia but [θ] in coastal areas of Cadiz and Malaga provinces. These processes are illustrated in the example below:

- **martium** [martjo] > [martso] > [marθo] | [marso] marzo ‘March’
- **calcea** [kalkʃa] > [kaltsa] > [kalθa] | [kalxa] calza ‘stocking’
- **puteum** [potjo] > [potso] > [podzo] > [poθo] | [poso] pozo ‘well’

Any obstruent that preceded [tʃ] or [kʃ] in Latin was eventually lost but survived long enough to prevent voicing of [ts]:

- **bracchium** [brakkʃo] > [bratso] > [braθo] | [braso] brazo ‘arm’
- **captiäre** [kaptʃare] > [katsar] > [kaθar] | [kasar] cazar ‘to hunt’
- **fasciam** [faskʃa] > [hatsa] > [aθa] | [asa] haza ‘strip of land’

The voiced counterparts to [tʃ] and [kʃ], viz [dj] and [gj] (= d/g + prevocalic e or i), initially yielded the geminate palatal fricative [jʃ], which was later simplified during the lenition phase, and subsequently lost through assimilation when next to a front vowel. This entire process was blocked in the case of [dj] by any preceding consonant, and the reflex is then identical to that of [tʃ].

- **podium** [podjo] > [poʃjo] > [pojo] poyo ‘stone bench/ledge’
- **corrigiam** [korregja] > [korreʃja] > [koreʃja] > [korea] correa ‘leather strap’
- **hordeolum** [ordjpo] > [ortʃswelo] > [orθwelo] | [orʃwelo] orzuelo ‘sty’

Turning now to the sonorants, the sequences [nj] and [lj] (= n/l + prevocalic e or i) are sources of the modern palatal nasal /ɲ/ and the voiceless velar fricative /ɻ/, the latter via earlier /ɻ/ and then Old Spanish /ʒ/:

- **arāneam** [aranja] > [araŋa] araña ‘spider’
- **ālium** [aljo] > [ało] > [ažo] > [axo] ajo ‘garlic’
4. Latin Velars

These underwent far-reaching changes both when followed by a front vowel and in preconsonantal position (within a word). In the first place, the sound that was the realization of /k/ (= written c) before front vowels (possibly a palatal or palatalized stop, [c] or [k’]), has the same reflex in Old Spanish as the sequence [k’]. As with [k’], a preceding obstruent does not survive into Old Spanish but voicing is again prevented in intervocalic position. These developments are illustrated below, with [k’] tentatively representing the realization of /k/ before front vowels:

\[
\text{čirca} \quad [\text{k’erka}] > [\text{tserka}] > [\text{θerka}]/[\text{serka}] \quad \text{cerca} \quad \text{‘near'}
\]
\[
\text{vicīnum} \quad [\text{βék’ino}] > [\text{βetsino}] > [\text{βedzino}] > [\text{beθino}]/[\text{besino}] \quad \text{vecino} \quad \text{‘neighbour'}
\]
\[
\text{flaccidum} \quad [\text{flakk’ido}] > [\text{Χatsjo}] > [\text{laθjo}]/[\text{lasjo}] \quad \text{laco} \quad \text{‘lank'}
\]
\[
\text{piscēs} \quad [\text{pesk’es}] > [\text{petf’ses}] > [\text{peθes}]/[\text{peses}] \quad \text{peces} \quad \text{‘fish'}
\]

Voiced velar /g/ (= written g) also had a palatal or palatalized allophone before front vowels (shown here as [g’]). In initial position, this sound behaves like the phonetic correlate of Latin i; i.e. it is usually lost (e.g. germānum > hermano ‘brother’) but has [j] as its reflex in a handful of cases (e.g. gypsum > yeso ‘plaster’). Loss in intervocalic position was general, however, either through assimilation to the following vowel or as part of the early medieval lenition process (e.g. magistrum > maestro ‘teacher/master’). On the other hand, a preceding consonant (usually /n/ or /r/) conditions a quite different series of developments, the reflex being [dz] in Old Spanish and then [θ] in the modern language (or [s] in Latin America etc.):

\[
\text{argillam} \quad [\text{argi’illa}] > [\text{ardzi’αa}] > [\text{arθi’αa}] \quad \text{arcilla} \quad \text{‘clay'}
\]
\[
\text{gingivam} \quad [\text{g’en’iβa}] > [\text{endzia}] > [\text{enθi’a}] \quad \text{encia} \quad \text{‘gum'}
\]

Turning now to velars in (word-internal) preconsonantal position, the main theme in spoken Latin is semivocalization before any front consonant other than [r] (for velar + [r] see 6 below). Thus the velar consonant that is assumed to have occurred at the beginning of the groups represented in the orthography by -ct-, -x-, -c(V)-, -g(V)- and -gn- is thought to have been weakened to [j]. In each case the resultant semivowel [j] must have exercised an assimilatory effect on the consonant it preceded, whose place of articulation was retracted to the palatal or palato-alveolar position. The [j] itself was absorbed in the process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of Preconsonantal Latin Velars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ct-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-x-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-cl/gl-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-gn-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the Old Spanish reflexes shown above [tʃ] and [ŋ] continue unchanged into modern Spanish, while the other two underwent further modification in the late Middle Ages or early modern period. First of all, [ž] was devoiced and so merged with [ʃ]. Then the place of articulation of [ʃ] was retracted to the velar area, producing modern /ʃ/:
Old Sp. [aβeža] aβeja > [aβeša] > [aβeša] aβeja  
Old Sp. [diše] dixe > [dixe] dije

The [l] of the group represented by -ult- was also semivocalized to [j] and so the lt part of the sequence has an identical reflex to [-kt-]:

\[cultellum \rightarrow [kojtɛllo] \rightarrow [kutʃjeɫo] \rightarrow [kutʃiɭo] \rightarrow [kutʃiɭo] cuchillo 'knife'

Note also that [j] (< k, g, or l) failed to palatalize a following consonant when that consonant was itself preconsonantal, normally because of an earlier intertonic syncope, or when it was word-final:

\[vult(rem) [βojtrem] \rightarrow [βujtrem] \rightarrow [bwitrem] buitre 'vulture'
\[pect(inem) [pejtne] \rightarrow [pejtne] \rightarrow [pejne] peine 'comb'
\[sex [sɛjs] \rightarrow [sɛjs] seis 'six'

A final point to note in connection with the Latin velars concerns the sequence [kw] (corresponding to written qu). This has a high frequency in the lexical stock of Latin but it was generally reduced to [k] before the Old Spanish period whenever it was followed by a vowel other than [a]:

\[quaer(ó) [kwɛro] \rightarrow [kɛro] \rightarrow [kɛro] quiero 'I want'

In one or two cases, loss of [w] before a front vowel results in palatalization of the preceding velar, which then surfaces as a dental affricate in Old Spanish and a dental fricative in (standard) modern Spanish:

\[laqueum \rightarrow [lakɛo] \rightarrow [latso] \rightarrow [ladzo] \rightarrow [laθo]/[laθo] lazo 'bow/ribbon'

Before [a] the labial-velar semivowel survives when the [kw] sequence is word-internal (e.g. \[aquam \rightarrow agua 'water') and when the sequence is initial in a word that is stressed on its first syllable (e.g. \[quattuor \rightarrow cuatro 'four').

5. Initial Consonants & Groups

The main changes here have affected /f/- (= written f-) and combinations of voiceless obstruent + lateral. Taking /f/- first, this seems, at least in the form of Latin from which Spanish descends, to have tended towards a glottal articulation [h] (in much the same way that the (f-) variable frequently has [h] as a variant in rural dialects of modern Spanish, as in [hwerte] for standard [fwerte] fuerte 'strong'). In the late Middle Ages, however, [f] was apparently reintroduced, as an allophone of /h/, before [r] and [w] (this development may be linked to an influx of French speakers that occurred in the 12th and 13th centuries). Loanwords in which [f] appeared in other phonetic contexts were subsequently borrowed into Old Spanish from Latin, Old French and Occitan, and this loosening of the labiodental's phonotactic parameters led to the emergence of a phonemic split, whereby /f/ came to contrast with /h/, as in, for example, borrowed [forma] 'form' versus popular [horma] 'shoemaker's last'. Until the 15th century both [f] and [h] were written as f but, with the emergence of a phonemic distinction between the two sounds, Spanish orthography began to reserve f for the first and h for the second. By the 16th century, however, [h] had been eliminated (from standard Spanish at least):

\[fortem [fɔɾte] \rightarrow [hwerte] \rightarrow [fwerte] fuerte 'strong'
\[fab(u)lāri/e [faβlare] \rightarrow [haβlar] > [aβlar] hablar (previously fablar) 'to speak'
Concerning the voiceless obstruent + lateral sequence, [pl-], [fl-] and [kl-] usually surface as [ʎ] in Old Spanish and Modern Spanish: \( \text{plānum} \rightarrow \text{llano} \) ‘flat’, \( \text{flammam} \rightarrow \text{llama} \) ‘flame’, \( \text{clāvem} \rightarrow \text{llave} \) ‘key’. (Note, however, popular exceptions such as \( \text{plateam} \rightarrow \text{plaza} \) ‘square’, \( \text{flōrem} \rightarrow \text{flor} \) ‘flower’, \( \text{clavi(u)lam} \rightarrow \text{clavija} \) ‘peg’.) In contrast, the reflex of these groups in postconsonantal position is the affricate \( \text{tš} \), generally with loss of the preceding consonant if this is not a nasal: \( \text{amplum} \rightarrow \text{ancho} \) ‘wide’, \( \text{inflāre} \rightarrow \text{hinchar} \) ‘to swell’, \( \text{masc(u)lum} \rightarrow \text{macho} \) ‘male’.

6. Lenition

During the early medieval period the intervocalic consonants (and also those located between a vowel and a liquid) in most of the embryonic Romance languages/dialects in western Europe underwent a series of related processes of weakening and/or voicing, which collectively are referred to as lenition. As far as Spanish is concerned the pattern of changes was as follows.

In the first place, the Latin geminate obstruents were simplified:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{puppem} & \rightarrow \text{popa} \quad \text{‘stern (of ship)’} \\
\text{sagittam} & \rightarrow \text{saeta} \quad \text{‘arrow’} \\
\text{buccam} & \rightarrow \text{boca} \quad \text{‘mouth’} \\
\text{massam} & \rightarrow \text{masa} \quad \text{‘dough’}
\end{align*}
\]

Note that the groups \([ps]\) and \([pt]\) came, through assimilation, to be articulated as geminates, which were then simplified in accordance with the pattern just illustrated:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ipse} & \rightarrow \text{ese} \quad \text{‘that’} \\
\text{captāre} & \rightarrow \text{catar} \quad \text{‘to taste/look at’}
\end{align*}
\]

Geminate sonorants were also simplified but, apart from \([mm]\) (= written \(\text{mm}\) or \(\text{mb}\)), they were modified in the process. Thus \([ll]\) and \([nn]\) (the latter sometimes resulting from assimilation of \([m]\) to \([n]\) following the syncope of an intervening vowel) were palatalized to \([ʎ]\) and \([ɲ]\), while geminate \([ɾɾ]\) was modified to a simple trill \([r]\):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lumbum} & \rightarrow \text{lomo} \quad \text{‘back’} \\
\text{pullum} & \rightarrow \text{pollo} \quad \text{‘chicken’} \\
\text{annum} & \rightarrow \text{año} \quad \text{‘year’} \\
\text{dom(ī)num} & \rightarrow \text{deweño} \quad \text{‘owner’} \\
\text{terram} & \rightarrow \text{tierra} \quad \text{‘land’}
\end{align*}
\]

Among the non-geminate voiceless consonants the effect of lenition was voicing (except in the cases of \([ś]\) and \([tś]\)) and/or approximantization or even loss. Note that all the sibilants were subsequently devoiced, a process that was complete by the 17th century. Intervocalic examples include:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{lupum} & \rightarrow \text{lobo} \rightarrow \text{lobo} \quad \text{‘wolf’} \\
\text{caballum} & \rightarrow \text{caballo} \quad \text{‘horse’} \\
\text{prōfectum} & \rightarrow \text{provecho} \quad \text{‘benefit’} \quad \text{[but post-prefix intervocalic \([f]\) was treated like initial \([f]\); e.g. \text{dḗfēnsam} > \text{dehesa} \quad \text{‘meadow’]} \\
\text{prātum} & \rightarrow \text{prado} \quad \text{‘meadow’} \\
\text{trīstītiam} & \rightarrow \text{tristeza} \quad \text{‘sadness’} \\
\text{sēnsum} & \rightarrow \text{seso} \rightarrow \text{seso} \quad \text{‘brain’}
\end{align*}
\]
In intervocalic position, lenition process is one of the striking features of Old Spanish, one that is firmly reflected in the modern orthography. In the suffix -\textit{at}(-)\textit{cum}, this \textit{t} must have been voiced and weakened when intervocalic and then, following syncope of the following \textit{i}, it became preconsonantal.

The system of voiced and voiceless sibilants that came about mainly as a consequence of the lenition process is one of the striking features of Old Spanish, one that is firmly reflected in the modern orthography. In intervocalic position, \textit{g}/\textit{ç} \cite{1}, \textit{ss} and \textit{x} represented dental \textit{ts}, alveolar \textit{s} and palato-alveolar \textit{ʃ} respectively, while \textit{z}, \textit{s} and \textit{j}/\textit{g} \cite{1} represented their voiced counterparts \textit{dz}, \textit{z} and \textit{ţ}. Compare, for example, \textit{decir} [\textit{detsir}] ‘to descend’, \textit{espresso} [\textit{espezo}] ‘thick’, \textit{fişo} [\textit{fižo}] ‘fixed’ with \textit{dezir} [\textit{dedzir}] ‘to say’, \textit{espresso} [\textit{espezo}] ‘spent’, \textit{fijo} [\textit{fižo}] ‘son’. In final and preconsonantal positions only one letter was available for each of the places of articulation, viz. \textit{z} (dental), \textit{s} (alveolar) and \textit{x} (palato-alveolar). This spelling convention presumably indicates neutralization of the voiced ~ voiceless contrast in these positions.

The processes involved in lenition had far-reaching effects, but they each appear to have a straightforward cause. In the first place, the voicing of intervocalic and preliquid voiceless consonants can be seen as an instance of assimilation, whereby the consonant in question acquires the voiced quality of the flanking segments (compare, for example, the way in which \textit{intervocalic (t) in modern American English is routinely voiced, and weakened, to [r], as in [\textit{siri} \textit{city}]. Approximantization too can be treated as a natural process of assimilation, as voiced approximants are in many respects similar to vowels. The simplification of the geminates might then be attributed to the fact that, following the voicing of the voiceless obstruents in intervocalic position, minimal contrasts that hitherto had been based on a distinction between geminates and non-geminates (e.g. \textit{sekare} \textit{siccâre} ‘to dry’ versus \textit{sekare} \textit{secâre} ‘to cut’) could now be expressed in terms of a distinction between voiceless and voiced (e.g. \textit{sekare} versus \textit{segare}, whence modern \textit{secar} versus \textit{segar}). In other words the geminates, which were expensive in terms of the muscular effort required to produce them, became functionally obsolete and so could be abandoned without detriment to the system as a whole.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{acūtum} [\textit{akuto}] > [\textit{agudo}] > [\textit{ayudo}] \textit{agudo} ‘sharp’
\item \textit{rēgālem} [\textit{regale}] > [\textit{reyal}] > [\textit{real}] \textit{real} ‘royal’
\end{itemize}

Pre-liquid examples include:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{aprīcum} [\textit{apriko}] > [\textit{abrijo}] > [\textit{aβriyo}] \textit{abrijo} ‘shelter’
\item \textit{duḻum} [\textit{doḻo}] > [\textit{doβlo}] > [\textit{doβle}] \textit{doble} ‘double’
\item \textit{patrem} [\textit{patre}] > [\textit{padre}] > [\textit{paδre}] \textit{padre} ‘father’
\item \textit{socrum} [\textit{sɔkro}] > [\textit{swegro}] > [\textit{swεyro}] \textit{suegro} ‘father-in-law’
\item \textit{quadrum} [\textit{kwadro}] > [\textit{kwadro}] \textit{cuadro} ‘picture/square’
\item \textit{quadrāginta} “[\textit{kwa̱drag\'{e}nta}] > [\textit{kwa̱dra\{e}nta}] > [\textit{kwa\{r\}enta}] \textit{cuarenta} ‘forty’
\item \textit{nigrum} [\textit{negro}] > [\textit{neyro}] \textit{negro} ‘black’
\item \textit{pigriti\textit{am}} [\textit{p\'{e}gret\'{j}a}] > [\textit{peyret\'{s}a}] > [\textit{p\'{e}r\'{e}θa}] \textit{pereza} ‘laziness’
\end{itemize}

Note that velar stop + [l] is excluded from the process illustrated above, as in this case the velar was semivocalized to [j] and the lateral was subsequently palatalized. Note also that voicing in many cases predates intertonic vowel syncope. A case in point is the voiced dental sound that in the modern orthography is represented by preconsonantal \textit{z}, as in \textit{portazgo} ‘toll’ (now best known as the name of a metro station in Madrid) and \textit{juzgar} ‘to judge’. In the case of \textit{juzgar}, the sound represented by \textit{z} stems from a voiced sound in Latin, viz. \textit{d} in \textit{iud(\'{i})c\'{a}re}, but in \textit{portazgo} it stems from an originally voiceless consonant, viz. \textit{t} in the suffix -\textit{at}(-)\textit{cum}. This \textit{t} must have been voiced and weakened when intervocalic and then, following syncope of the following \textit{i}, it became preconsonantal.
7. Adjustments Due to Vowel Syncope

The loss of intononic Latin vowels often led to the creation of hitherto impermissible sequences of phonemes and a variety of developments took place to bring these cases into line.

Often the loss of an intononic vowel necessitated merely a change in the place of articulation of a nasal (e.g. *sēm(i)tam* > *senda* ‘path’), in accordance with the principle that pre-consonantal nasals assimilate to the following consonant. Equally predictable are the simplification of geminate sonorants when they became pre-consonantal (e.g. *pall(i)dum* > *[pald]* > *[paɾdo]* ‘dark’) and the trilling of *[ɾ]* after a nasal, as in *hon(ō)rāre* > *[onra]* *honrar* ‘to honour’.

Other common developments were as follows. First, there was frequent *dissimilation* (the converse of assimilation) between nasals, usually resulting in a nasal becoming a lateral or *[ɾ]*:

- *an(i)mam* > *[anma]* > *[alma]* *alma* ‘soul’
- *sang(ui)nem* > *[saŋne]* > *[saŋgre]* *sangre* ‘blood’

Secondly, a so-called *epenthetic* consonant was often inserted between a nasal and a following *[ɾ]* (representing an alternative solution to the trilling illustrated by the *hon(ō)rāre* case):

- *hom(i)nem* > *[omne]* > *[omre]* > *[ombre]* *hombre* ‘man’

Thirdly, two consonants were sometimes transposed in a word (a phenomenon known as *metathesis*):

- *cat(ē)nātum* > *[kaðnaðo]* > *[kandaðo]* *candado* ‘padlock’

Fourthly, syllable-final bilabials and laterals were generally semivocalized, although a [w] produced in this way was subsequently lost through assimilation if it followed a back vowel:

- *dēb(i)ta* > *[deβda]* > *[dewda]* *deuda* ‘debt’
- *cal(i)cem* > *[kaltse]* > *[kawθe]* *cauce* ‘river channel’
- *cub(i)tum* > *[koβdo]* > *[koðo]* *codo* ‘elbow’

Finally, groups of three consonants were reduced to two in a variety of ways; e.g. *comp(u)tāre* > *contar* ‘to count’, *hosp(i)talem* > *hostal*.

8. Prosthetic [e]

A striking feature of Spanish phonotactics is a rule that forbids /#sC/. Similar rules operate or have in the past operated in other Romance languages and the tendency seems to predate the Middle Ages. In terms of etymology, the Spanish rule against /#sC/ has meant that a prosthetic or supporting [e] has been added to the beginning of words that in Latin began with /sC/; e.g. *stāre* > *estar* ‘to be’, *spērāre* > *esperar* ‘to wait’.

9. Final Consonants

Of the consonants that in Latin appeared in final position only /l/, /s/ and /n/ survive into Spanish. Latin [-r] was often transposed with the preceding vowel, as in *inter* > *entre* ‘between’, *quattuōr* > *cuatro* ‘four’ etc. Final /t/ was eliminated in Vulgar Latin, except as the marker of the 3rd person singular in verbs, in which role it survived until about the 12th century. The remaining Latin final consonants had been lost by the time Spanish began to written down. Apocope of
final [e] in the Middle Ages has ensured that some Spanish words end in consonants other than the /l, s, n/ that were directly inherited from Latin.

**History of the Spanish Noun**

1. **Disintegration of the Case System**

The case of a noun is the form it takes that marks its semantic or grammatical role in a sentence. Excluding the vocative (used for direct address), which was marked only in a some nouns (and then only in the singular), Classical Latin had five cases: nominative (usually used for a verb’s subject), accusative (usually used for a verb’s direct object), genitive (indicating ownership or association), dative (usually used for a verb’s indirect object), and ablative (indicating agency, instrumentality, manner or location, often in conjunction with a preposition). Noun lexemes were grouped into five classes or declensions, according to the pattern of their case endings.

In Vulgar Latin, on the other hand, the semantic/grammatical relations that in Classical Latin were indicated by case marking were expressed primarily through the use of prepositions; e.g. *de cervōs* (> *de [los] ciervos* ‘of [the] deer’) instead of *cervōrum* (genitive plural of *cervus* ‘deer’). As a consequence there were (or there came to be) just two cases: on the one hand a nominative, and on the other an oblique case, which in form appears to have been descended from the accusative (or, in the singular, a merging of the accusative and the ablative), but which in function subsumed accusative, genitive, dative and ablative.

In addition, mainly as a consequence of the fact that fewer vowel distinctions were drawn in Vulgar Latin than in Classical Latin, there were (or there came to be) three rather than five declensions. Thus in the variety of Latin from which Spanish descends, noun lexemes could be grouped into those with singular oblique forms ending in [o], those with singular oblique forms ending in [a] and those with singular oblique forms ending in [e]. Note that the third class included many nouns that in Classical Latin were imparisyllabic, in that they had one fewer syllable in the nominative singular than in other forms; e.g. nominative *fōns* ‘fountain’, accusative *fontem*, genitive *fontis*. Expanded nominative singular forms were created for such nouns in Vulgar Latin, and these seem often to have been phonetically identical to the genitive. For example, where Classical Latin had *fōns*, Vulgar Latin probably came to have [*fɔntes*] or [*fwentes*]. Note also that, from quite an early period, [-as] appears to have displaced Classical -ae as the nom. plural ending of [-a] class nouns (see Aebischer, Paul. 1971. ‘Le pl. -ās de la 1re decl. latine et ses résultats dans les langues romanes.’ Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 87:74-98). Accordingly, the case endings for the three different noun classes – as far as they can be reconstructed for the late spoken Latin of Spain – are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two-case system in spoken Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>[-o] class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sing.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ob.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plu.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ob.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now final [s] came to be eliminated from all singular forms, possibly because it was reanalysed as a plural marker owing to its presence in all but one of the plural forms (the [-o] class nominative). This development meant that the contrast between nominative and oblique was eliminated in the singular, where a formal distinction had subsisted in the [-o] and [-e] classes; in the plural a nominative ~ oblique contrast existed only in the [-o] class, e.g. [lopi] versus [lopos]. However, the nom. plural form in [-i], by now an anomaly, eventually disappeared from the Latin of Spain (although plurals in [-i] survived in other areas, such as central Italy) and thus was born the modern case-free noun system. Owing to the train of events just described, the forms that emerged from the ruins of the case system are almost always closest in phonetic shape to the Latin accusative.

2. Gender

Most nouns in the Vulgar Latin [-o] class were masculine, and most in the [-a] class were feminine. This gender-marking principle was progressively extended and by the Old Spanish period virtually no nouns survived from it. Accordingly, the reflexes of words like *sucrum* and *ulmum*, which ended in [o] but were feminine, either underwent a change in their final vowel (*sucrum* > *swegra* ‘mother-in-law’) or switched genders (*ulmum* fem. > *olmo* ‘elm’ masc.).

The main popularly derived exceptions to the [-o], [-a] ~ masculine, feminine correlation are *día* ‘day’ and *mano* ‘hand’. Most of the Greek-derived masculine nouns in [-a] such as *poeta* ‘poet’, *síntoma* ‘symptom’, *problema* ‘problem’ etc. are later *cultismos* (learned borrowings from Latin/Greek); words like *moto* ‘motorbike’ and *foto* ‘photo’ (both feminine) are modern abbreviations of words that do fit the normal pattern; and words like *cura* ‘cure’ and *guardia* ‘guard’ are feminine in their original abstract sense, only becoming masculine through metonymic extension of their meaning (*el cura* ‘the priest’, *el guardia* ‘the guard’).

Other nouns have joined the [-o] and [-a] classes owing to the fact that, from the Latin period onwards, there was a tendency to *hypercharacterize* the gender of nouns by replacing a final [e] with [o] or [a] or by adding one of these vowels to a final consonant:

- *puppem* [poppe] > [popa] *popa* ‘stern (of ship)’
- *cochleāre* [kokjare] > [kutšar] > [kutšara] *cuchara* ‘spoon’

3. Abandonment of the Latin Neuter

Unlike their modern Spanish counterparts, some nouns in Classical Latin were of the neuter gender, which was characterized by an identity of form between the nominative and the accusative and by the fact that the nominative/accusative plural always ended in *a*.

Neuters in -*um*, -*us* or -*ū* (e.g. *castellum* [>] *castillo* ‘castle’), *pectus* [>] *pecho* ‘chest’), *cornū* [>] *cuerno* ‘horn’) acquired masculine endings and so were assimilated into the Vulgar Latin [-o] class, as were the idiosyncratic words *caput* (>] *cabo* ‘end’) *vas* (>] *vaso* ‘glass’) and *os* (*hueso* ‘bone’). A few other neuter nouns evolved through their plural in -*a*. These plural forms were treated as singulars and so were assimilated into the Vulgar Latin [-a] class of nouns: *folia* (pl. of *folium*) > *hoja* ‘leaf’, *ligna* (pl. of *lignum*) > *leña* ‘firewood’, *pign(o)ra* (pl. of *pignus*) > *prenda* ‘garment’, *vōta* (pl. of *vōtum*) > *boda* ‘wedding’ etc. And the remaining neuters (apart from Greek-derived words, which seem to have been excluded from the popular lexicon and so do not concern us) passed to the third Vulgar Latin noun class, thereby acquiring either masculine or feminine gender, but not according to any general pattern.
A significant subset of this latter group consisted in imparisyllabic nouns with Classical nominative/accusative singular forms in -n or -r. These all have reflexes in [-re] or [-le] in modern Spanish, following expansion of the singular form in Vulgar Latin, intertonic vowel loss and subsequent phonetic adjustment:

[nomene] (for nōmen) > [nomne] > [nombre] nombre ‘name’
[īngwene] (for inguen) > [īngne] > [ingle] ingle ‘groin’

**History of the Spanish Adjective**

Classical Latin adjectives were inflected for case, gender and number. In Vulgar Latin and early Old Spanish, however, matters developed along similar lines to the nouns, with (i) the eventual elimination of the case system in favour of forms that, phonetically at least, most resemble Latin accusatives and (ii) the abandonment of the neuter gender. Accordingly, two classes of adjectives emerged, one with masculine singular in [-o] and feminine singular in [-a] (e.g. negro ‘black’ ~ negra < nigrum ~ nigram) and the other with no gender exponence at all (e.g. alegre ‘happy’ < alacrem, pobre ‘poor’ < paup(е)rem, igual ‘same’ < aequālem).

As with nouns, hypercharacterization produced a certain amount of restructuring. Adjectives in -or (< -ōrem) or -on (< -ōnem), together with some in -ēs (< -ēnsem), all hitherto unmarked for gender, acquired feminine forms in the late Middle Ages and early modern period, e.g. traidera from traidor ‘traitor’ (< traditōrem), españona from Old Sp. españón ‘Spanish’ (later español, -a under Gallic influence), and burgesa from Old Sp. burgés ‘city-dweller’ (later burgués, -a). But compare montés ‘wild’, cortés ‘polite’, which have no feminine form in standard Spanish. In contrast, some adjectives originally in -anol-ana (< -ānuml-ānam) lost the final vowel in the masculine, e.g. holgazán ‘lazy’ (originally with masc. folgazano).

Except in a handful of cases, the Classical Latin inflected comparative and superlative forms, such as grandior ‘bigger’ and grandissimus ‘biggest/very big’, gave way in Vulgar Latin to constructions involving the adverbs magis ‘more’, máxime “‘most’ and mult(um) ‘very’; thus magis grandis ‘bigger’, máximē grandis ‘biggest’ mult(um) grandis ‘very big’. (An alternative existed for the comparative, involving the adverb plūs, but this does not seem to have taken root in the area where Spanish developed.) máximē was soon abandoned but reflexes persist of magis and mult(um): más listo ‘cleverer’, el más listo ‘the cleverest’, muy listo ‘very clever’ (in a different syntactic role, of course, multum also yields the adverb mucho ‘a lot’).

A few very common comparative forms survived, namely mejor ‘better’ (< meliōrem), peor ‘worse’ (< pōiōrem), mayor ‘older/greater’ (< māiōrem) and menor ‘lesser’ (< minōrem). These escaped hypercharacterization.

The suffix -ísimo, as in guapísimo ‘very beautiful’, rarísimo ‘very strange’, is a cultismo or learned borrowing from Latin rather than a genuine survival of the Latin superlative.

**History of the Spanish Verb**

Latin verbs, like their modern Spanish counterparts, were organized into classes or conjugations. Where Spanish has three such conjugations, however, Latin had four: -āre verbs (e.g. pārare ‘to prepare’), -ēre verbs (e.g. sūmēre ‘to take’), -ēre verbs (e.g. habēre ‘to have’) and -īre verbs (e.g. audīre ‘to hear’). Of these, the -ēre and -īre conjugations merged in the variety of Latin from which Spanish is descended.

All surviving -āre verbs belong to the modern Spanish -ar class; the greater part of the surviving -ēre and -īre verbs appear in the (unproductive) -er class, although quite a few passed to the -ir
class; and the bulk of the surviving *-ire* verbs belong to the *-ir* class, although a number changed to the *-er* conjugation.

Latin also had a number of *deponent* verbs, which exhibited only the endings associated with the passive voice but which had an active sense. For example, *morītur* ‘he/she dies’ has the appearance of a passive (compare *auditur* ‘he/she is (being) heard’), but is not passive in meaning; nor does it have a corresponding ‘active’ form, as *auditur* does, namely *audit* ‘he/she hears’. The Latin deponent verbs were either lost or remodelled with active endings, surfacing in Spanish mainly in the *-ir* class. Thus *morī*, for example, was replaced by *morīre > morir* and *sequī by sequīre > seguir*.

Verb forms have been particularly susceptible to analogical restructuring, and where this has occurred, the symbol ‘†’ will often be used to highlight this circumstance.

1. Position of the Stress

Spanish generally maintains the Latin positioning of the stress, except in persons 4 and 5 of what are now the imperfect and the past subjunctive, where the stress has been retracted one syllable to produce uniformity across the subparadigm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cantāre</th>
<th>cantar ‘to sing’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cantābāmus</td>
<td>cantábamos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantābātis</td>
<td>cantabais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantā(ve)rāmus</td>
<td>cantáramos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantā(vi)ssēmus</td>
<td>cantásemos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantā(ve)rātis</td>
<td>cantarais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantā(vi)ssētis</td>
<td>cantaseis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The merger of the *-ēre* and *-ēre* conjugations also implies some stress reassignment, with stress shift from the root to the ending in the following *-ēre* forms: persons 4 & 5 pres. ind. (e.g. *capimus > cabemos, capitis > cabēis*), the infinitive (*capère > caber*) and the plural imperative (*capite > cabed*). In addition, adjustment is sometimes apparent where the Latin stress fell on a prefix, as the stress in the modern reflex is usually applied to the root; e.g. *renovō > renuevo* ‘I renew’. Finally, the handful of verbs that had variable stress in the strong forms (e.g. *aperiō ‘I open’, aperiōs ‘you open’) have acquired uniform stress (thus *abro, abres*).

2. The Regular Paradigms

2.1. The Present Tense

The *present tense* endings derive from their Latin counterparts essentially through normal sound change (merger of [e] and [i] in final syllables, loss of final [t] etc.). The one exception is person 6 in the *-ir* conjugation, where the Classical *-ire* ending, viz. *-unt*, must have been replaced in Vulgar Latin by *-ent* from the *-ēre* paradigm. Thus in the indicative we have the following:
The system of conjugation vowel reversal through which subjunctive ~ indicative is expressed in the present tense stems directly from Latin.

The reduction of the person 5 endings from two syllables to one occurred at the end of the Middle Ages. Intervocalic [t] was voiced during the lenition phase, with the result that the Old Spanish reflexes of -ātis, -ētis/-ītis and -ītis were -ades, -edes and -ides. The d (= [ð]) in these endings was subsequently lost (15th century) and the resulting hiatus was resolved either through dissimilation ([e] > [j]) or assimilation ([e] > [a/e/i] > ∅):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-ar</th>
<th>-er</th>
<th>-ir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-o &lt; -ơ</td>
<td>-o &lt; -ơ</td>
<td>-o &lt; -ơ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-as &lt; -ās</td>
<td>-es &lt; -ē/is</td>
<td>-es &lt; -ēs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-a &lt; -at</td>
<td>-e &lt; -e/it</td>
<td>-e &lt; -it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-amos &lt; -āmus</td>
<td>-emos &lt; -ē/imus</td>
<td>-imos &lt; -īmus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-āis &lt; -ātis</td>
<td>-ēis &lt; -ē/itis</td>
<td>-ēis &lt; -ētis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-an &lt; -ant</td>
<td>-en &lt; -ent</td>
<td>-en &lt; -ent (for -unt)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Except in the -ir conjugation, where such endings were the only ones available, the assimilated endings were abandoned in the Peninsula by the mid 16th century, but they prevailed in the voseante areas of Latin America.

### 2.2. The Imperfect

The imperfect endings were characterized in Latin by the presence of -āba- in the -āre conjugation, -ēba-in the -ēre/-ēre conjugations, and -īeba- in the -īre conjugation, the latter being reduced to [-βa-] in spoken Latin; thus, for example, clāmābat ‘he/she shouted’, timēbat ‘he/she feared’, VL venībat ‘he/she was coming’. The -b- was preserved in -āba- but was lost in the other conjugations, with the resultant [-ea-] and [-ia-] merging in favour of the latter form: timēbam, -ās, -āmus, -ātis etc. > temia ‘I feared’, -ías, -iāmos, -iāis.

In the Middle Ages, [-ia-] competed with [-ie-] (sometimes realized as [-je-]) in persons 2 to 6, a circumstance that is reflected in such pre-15th century spellings as temies, temien etc. Where [j] appeared in the verb ending, there was a tendency to raise the stem vowel, through metaphony, although this development was reversed in all cases; thus durmies (later dormías ‘you were sleeping’), sirvien (later servian ‘they served’), murien (later morian ‘they were dying’).

### 2.3. The Preterite

The modern preterite descends from the Latin perfect. The first point to note is that the -er and -ir conjugations have merged in this tense, the endings in both cases being traceable to the Latin -īre conjugation. This circumstance, together with the fact that the modern -ar endings descend straightforwardly from those of the Latin -āre class, means that the endings that need to be
considered are just those of the -āre and -īre paradigms, which, in their Classical form, are illustrated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cantāre ‘to sing’</th>
<th>dormīre ‘to sleep’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cantāvī</td>
<td>dormīvī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantāvistī</td>
<td>dormīvistī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantāvit</td>
<td>dormīvit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantāvimus</td>
<td>dormīvimus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantāvistis</td>
<td>dormīvistis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantāvērunτ</td>
<td>dormīvērunτ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The endings shown above were contracted in spoken Latin. Usually the contraction consisted in eliding the ‘perfective’ infix -v- (= [β] or [w]), but in person 3 the elided segment appears to have been the following [i], as -āvit and -īvit are thought to have been contracted to [-awt] and [-iwt] respectively. In the -āre class, the conjugation vowel [a] that preceded the -v- infix appears to have absorbed the vowel [e] (= written i or ē) that became adjacent in persons 2, 4, 5 and 6 once the -v- infix was lost. In the -īre class, on the other hand, loss of the -v- infix appears to have produced competing assimilated ([iiβe] > [ii]) and dissimilated ([iiβe] > [je]) forms in persons 2, 4, 5 and 6. Thus the Vulgar Latin ancestral forms of the modern Spanish preterite are likely to have been the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cantāre ‘to sing’</th>
<th>dormīre ‘to sleep’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[kantaj]</td>
<td>[dormi]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[kantasti]</td>
<td>[dormistī][dormjestī]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[kantawt]</td>
<td>[dormiwt]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[kantamos]</td>
<td>[dormimos][dormjemos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[kantarstes]</td>
<td>[dormistes][dormjestes]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[kantaront]</td>
<td>[dormirot][dormjeront]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In person 6, the dissimilated form [-jeron(t)] (> modern -ieron) appears to have ousted [-iron(t)] before Spanish came to be written down, but competition between assimilated and dissimilated forms in persons 2, 4, 5 continued into the Old Spanish period (for example, in addition to dormimos and durmimos, Old Spanish has dormiemos and durmiemos), eventually being resolved in favour of the assimilated forms. The modern -ir/-er person 3 ending -ió (= [jo]) presumably reflects syllabicization of the [w] of the ancestral form with concomitant semivocalization of the preceding [i] (i.e. [iw] > [ju]), followed by a routine modification of final [u] to [o]. The diphthong -ei- (phonetically [ej]) of the modern person 5 endings -asteis and -isteis is a 17th century innovation, clearly inspired by identical or similar diphthongs in person 5 in most of the other tenses (coméis, cantábaís, durmieraís etc.). The remaining endings reflect routine sound change: for [kantaj] > [kante] cantó compare [bajso] > beso ‘kiss’; for [kantawt] > [kanto] cantó compare taurum > toro ‘bull’; and for final consonants go to History of Spanish Consonants.)
2.4. The Past Subjunctive

The -ra and -se forms of the past subjunctive descend respectively from the indicative and subjunctive of the Latin pluperfect. Both of these were morphologically related to the Latin perfect and therefore exhibit parallel root/stem developments, as well as loss of the infix -v-:

|cantá(ve)ram >| cantara| dormí(v)eram >| durmiera|
cantá(ve)rás >| cantaras| dormí(v)erás >| durmieras|
cantá(ve)rát >| cantara| dormí(v)erat >| durmiera|
cantá(ve)rámós >| cantarámos| dormí(v)erámós >| durmiéramos|
cantá(ve)rátís >| cantarais| dormí(v)erátis >| durmirais|
cantá(ve)ránt >| cantaran| dormí(v)erant >| durmieran|
cantá(vi)ssem >| cantase| dormí(v)isssem >| durmiiese|
cantá(vi)ssēs >| cantases| dormí(v)issēs >| durmieses|
cantá(vi)ssēt >| cantasei| dormí(v)issēt >| durmiesiess|
cantá(vi)ssent >| cantasen| dormí(v)issent >| durmiesen|

2.5. The Imperative

The imperative endings derive straightforwardly from the Latin present imperative (sing. -ā, -ē, -ē, -ī; plu. -āte, -ēte, -īte). Final [e] was often lost in Old Spanish after postvocalic front consonants. This development affected the plural imperative (e.g. cantáte > cantade > cantad 'sing') and the singular forms of salir 'to go out', poner 'to put', tener 'to have', hacer 'to do': sal, pon, ten, haz. On the other hand, di 'say' stems from irregular dic.

For the future and conditional endings see section 6 below.

3. Root Vocalism

In some -ar and -er verbs, the modern e ~ ie and o ~ ue alternations exhibited in the present tense directly reflect the diphthongization of Vulgar Latin [e] and [o]. These sounds, it will be recalled, appeared only in stressed syllables. Therefore they occurred as root vowels only in the strong forms of the paradigm; hence e.g. siego 'I reap', cuelgas 'you hang' < secō [sekō], coll(o)cās [koll(o)kas], but segamos 'we reap', colgáiš 'you [plu.] hang' < secāmus [sekamos],
coll(o)cāmus [koll(o)kamos]. In other -ar and -er verbs, though, the same root alternations are due to analogical pressure. For example, sēm(i)nō and cōlāt, with [e] and [o] as the stem vowel, would normally have evolved to monophthongal forms, rather than †siembro 'I sow' and †cuela 'he/she strains'. On the other hand, analogical pressure has in some cases worked the other way, causing monophthongization of previously diphthongized forms. Thus some verbs with unalterable root vowels in modern Spanish, such as entregar 'to hand over' and prestar 'to lend', were root-alternating in Old Spanish: entriežo, priešto etc.

The root vocalism of -ir verbs has a rather more complex history. One of the crucial factors was metaphor, induced by the root increment [j] that appeared at various points in the verb paradigms. In the first place, as the table below shows, verbs in the Latin -īre and -ēre conjugations (and one or two in the -ēre class) exhibited root-incremental [j] in person 1 of the present indicative and in all persons in the present subjunctive [Present indicative person 6 in
the -íre class also exhibited [j], but this appears to have been lost at a much earlier date and so had no impact on the issue of root vocalism:

### Latin Root-Incremental [j] in Present Tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person 1 ind.</th>
<th>dēbère ‘to have to’</th>
<th>salíre ‘to go out’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dēbeō [deβjo]</td>
<td>salō [saljo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
<td>dēbeam [deβja]</td>
<td>saliam [salja]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dēbeās [deβjas]</td>
<td>saliās [saljas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dēbeat [deβjat]</td>
<td>saliāt [saliat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dēbeāmus [deβjamos]</td>
<td>saliāmus [saljamos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dēbeātis [deβjates]</td>
<td>saliātis [saljates]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dēbeānt [deβjant]</td>
<td>saliānt [saliant]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now this [j] was eliminated in almost every case, but not before it exercised a metaphonic effect, causing the raising in certain cases of stressed or unstressed root vowels. With the loss of the ‘perfective’ -v- infix, [j] also came to appear as a root increment in persons 3 and 6 of the -er/-ir preterite and throughout the subparadigms of the past subjunctive. This [j] has survived and it too triggered metaphony. Finally, root-incremental [j] was also present, from an early date, in the -er/-ir gerund (see section 7 below), either as the reflex of Latin i or through diphthongization of Vulgar Latin [ɛ] (= written ē). This [j] had an identical effect to the [j] of the -er/-ir preterite.

Curiously, however, while there was rampant vowel raising in verbs that are now in the -ir class, spreading analogically to forms without root-incremental [j], virtually all verbs in the -er conjugation seem to have been immune to the process. The result is that -ir verbs exhibit a marked affinity for high root vowels ([i] or [u]) or root-vowel alternations involving a high vowel ([e] ~ [i], [o] ~ [u]) and -er verbs an equally strong aversion to high root vowels. Given that the -er and -ir paradigms are very similar, this difference in root vocalism comes to be one of the main ways in which the two verb classes are differentiated. The historical details of root vowel raising are as follows.

As a rule the front mid vowel [e] has come to be raised to high [i] in -ir verb roots except in weak forms containing stressed [i], which exercised a dissimilatory effect on the root. Table 4.7 below illustrates this outcome using the verb medir ‘to measure’. The Latin ancestor of this verb was deponent mētīrī, which must at some point have been drawn into the regular -íre paradigm, thereby losing its passive-like inflections. Thus the Latin forms that appear in the table below are not forms that one would encounter in a Latin grammar book; rather, they have been reconstructed using the root of mētīrī and the regular -íre endings (except in person 6 pres. ind., where -iunt is replaced by -ent from the -ere conjugation). The forms of the modern paradigm that are analogical are marked with ‘†’. It will be noticed, then, that all the modern weak forms reflect undisturbed sound change, with the high vowel [i] appearing in the root only when the increment [j] (< Latin i) is present. The analogue forms, which are all strong, are characterized by the presence of [j] in the root despite the absence of the increment [j]. In these forms, the high root vowel is due not to undisturbed sound change but to the imitation of other forms (e.g. mido, midas, mida etc.) in which its presence is due to normal sound change. The spread of this analogical root vowel [i] has been curtailed only in the weak forms containing stressed [i], presumably as a consequence of dissimilation.
### Root Vowel Raising [e] > [i]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medir ‘to measure’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>contains stressed [i]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>no stressed [i]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-amos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-āis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-iō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-ieron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-iera etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-iendo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>strong forms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid-a etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>†mid-es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>†mid-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>†mid-en</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>†mid-e (imperative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, no modern verb with a back root vowel exhibits a parallel alternation to *medir* (i.e. mid [o] ~ high [u]), although *podrir/pudrir* ‘to rot’ did so until quite recently. This is because, over the course of history, the raising of the root vowel [o] in -ir verbs has spread unchecked through the entire paradigm. Thus alongside historically regular *subo* ‘I go up’ (< sūbeō [sōβjō]), *suba* (< sūbeam [sōβja]) etc., we find not just †*subes*, †*sube*, †*suben* (compare *mides, mide* and *miden*) but also †*subimos*, †*subis*, †*subir*, †*subi*, †*subiste*, †*subid* and so on.

Now verbs that in Classical Latin have ā in the root would in Vulgar Latin have shown an alternation between [a] and [o], according as the stress fell on the root or not: *dōrmīā* [dōrmja] ‘I sleep’, *dōrmēs* [dōrmis] ‘you sleep’, but *dōrmīmus* [dormimos] ‘we sleep’, *dōrmīāmus* [dormjamos] ‘we sleep (subj.)’ etc. In such verbs, the normal expectation would be for root-incremental [j] to raise [a] to [o] and [o] to [u]. However, apart from *domir* ‘to sleep’ and *morir* ‘to die’, all such verbs have been attracted to the general -ir model of uniform root vocalism in [u]; e.g. *excōnspuere > †escupir* ‘to spit’ (*†escape, †escupimos* etc.), *abhōrrēre > †aburrir* ‘to bore’ (*†aburre, †aburrimos* etc.), *cōp(e)rēre > †cubirir* ‘to cover’ (*†cubre, †cubrimos* etc.).

Even the two verbs that bucked this trend do not show predictable vowel raising. Thus although [o] is raised to [u] in the expected places (e.g. *dōrmīāmus* [dormjamos] > *duramos*) none of the roots in [a] surface in Spanish as roots in [o]. *Duermes, duerme and duermen* are historically regular, but †*duermo* and the strong present subjunctive forms (*†duerna, †duernas* etc.) are analogical, as root-incremental [j] would normally have raised the root vowel to [o], thereby excluding the possibility of diphthongization.

Verbs like *mentir* ‘to lie’ (< VL *mēntīre* for CL *mēntīrī*) parallel exactly *dormir*, with raising of [e] to [i] where this is etymologically motivated (e.g. *mintamos, mintāis*) and analogical spread of...
diphthongization from persons 2, 3, 6 pres. ind. to person 1 pres. ind. and to all the strong forms of the present subjunctive: *túmiento, *túmienta, *túmientas etc.

A lot of verbs developed along identical lines to *mentir (e.g. *herir ‘to wound’ (< *férire), *sentir ‘to feel’ (< *sentière), *hervir ‘to boil’ (< *férvère)), but many that could have shown the same development have come to exhibit the *medir type of root vocalism, possibly through reduction of [je] to [i] (compare castéllum > castiello > castillo ‘castle’). Verbs in this category include *vestir ‘to dress/wear’ (< *vestière), *pedir ‘to ask for’ (< *pètere), *seguir ‘to follow’ (< deponent *sèqui), *servir ‘to serve’ (< *sèrvire). *Venir ‘to come’ (< *vènire) is a different case again, as in the present it appears to have been influenced by *tener ‘to have’ (< *tènère), with regular raising of [e] but not of [a], and it shows uniformity of root vocalism in its ‘strong’ preterite (see section 5 below).

Finally, a number of -ir verbs with roots originally in [i] were attracted to the *medir pattern also. Thus *frígere, *ridère > *fíreir ‘to fry’, *fíreir ‘to laugh’, which exhibit identical root changes to *medir, *servir etc. di*cere ‘to say’ was similarly adjusted, but preserves its etymological [i] throughout its ‘strong’ preterite.

4. Root Alternations Involving Velar Consonants

A small class of common -er and -ir verbs exhibit a consonantal adjustment in their root before [o] or [a] (i.e. before the endings for person 1 present indicative and persons 1–6 present subjunctive). In the case of *decir ‘to say’ (< *dicere) and *hacer ‘to do’ (< *facere), the alternation results from the different ways in which Latin velars developed before front and non-front vowels, with [kʰ/ŋ/ʒ] surviving unchanged but [kʲ/ŋ/ʒ] being modified to [θ]. Thus *digo and *diga etc. result from forms in which the velar preceded a non-front vowel, viz. *dicō, *dicam etc. In the etyma of *hago and *haga, *hagas etc., viz. *faciō [fakʰo], *faciam [fakʰa], *faciās [fakʰas], the velar precedes the palatal semivowel [j], but this can be assumed to have been lost early enough for the development [kʲ] > [θ] not to have been initiated.

The -θ- ~ -0k- type of alternation (as in *naces ‘you are born’ versus *nazco ‘I am born’) has a similar origin. Many of the affected verbs stem from a Latin verb containing the infix -sc- (= [sk]) between the root and the ending. Like the same phonetic sequence in the plural nominal form *piscēs (> *peces ‘fish’), this combination of sibilant + voiceless velar has [θ] as its modern reflex before a front vowel. Before a non-front vowel, however, the sequence usually survives unmodified. This is essentially what happened in the case of verbs such as *nacer (< deponent *nāsci), except that the [s] of the [sk] sequence was modified to [θ] in the late Middle Ages or early modern period:

*náscoIR > Old Spanish nasco > modern nazco
*násceIRs > Old Spanish naçes > modern naces

On the other hand, the [g] that appears before [o]/[a] in *poner ‘to put’, *tener ‘to have’, *salir ‘to go out’, *venir ‘to come’, *valer ‘to be worth’, *caer ‘to fall’, *traer ‘to bring’ and *oir ‘to hear’ is not etymological, as the corresponding Latin forms have no velar at all; compare *pongo and *ponō, *tengo and *teneō, *salgo and *saliō, *vengo and *veniō, *valgo and *valeō, *caigo and *cadō, *traigo and *trahō, *oigo and *audiō. In fact, each of these verbs was attracted to this pattern during the Middle Ages, when root alternations involving the insertion of [g] between a sonorant and [o]/[a] were very common (e.g. Old Spanish planēs ‘you lament’ ~ plango ‘I lament’).

The palatal fricative [j] that appears in the strong forms of *huir ‘to flee’ (< *fuge(re) is etymological in person 1 pres. ind. (*huyo < *fugio *) and throughout the present subjunctive (e.g.
huya < fugiam), but it is analogical elsewhere (compare, e.g., huyes/fugis with maestro/magistrum). The [j] that appears in oyes, oye, oyen (from oir ‘to hear’) is also analogical, as the corresponding Latin forms are audīs, audit/audī, VL audent.

Finally the -ep/- ~ -ab/- type of alternation exhibited by caber ‘to fit’ and saber ‘to know’ is the result (i) of metaphony following transposition of [j] and [p] (e.g. capiat > [kajpat] > [kepa] quepa) and (ii) the deleniting effect of the semivowel [j] on a following voiceless stop (e.g. capiat > [sajpat] > sepa, but e.g. sapit [sapet] > sabe).

5. The Fate of the ‘Strong’ Perfect

In contrast to the uniformly weak preterite forms associated with all verbs in the -āre class and most in the -ēre class, verbs in the Latin -ēre conjugation as well as most in -ēre (and a handful in -īre) had mainly strong forms in the perfect tense. Despite the fact that, even among these verbs, persons 2 and 4 always had weak forms (e.g. dixisti, dixístis > dijiste, dijisteis) and person 6 was often weak (e.g. habuerunt > hubieron), it is usual to refer to the whole subparadigm in which these strong forms figured as a ‘strong perfect’. In Romance, most strong perfects were displaced by the ordinary -ir/-er paradigm. Of those that were not, the strong pattern of stress survives only in persons 1 and 3 (e.g. hice, hizo, supe, supo, vine, vino) but even here the 3rd sing. ending in -o is modelled on regular habló, comió etc.

-ēre strong perfects commonly had endings in -uīl-ui- (e.g. timuí ‘I feared’, timuistí ‘you feared’ etc.), a number of which have survived. Where these had [a] as the root vowel in Latin, in Old Spanish they show [o], because the [w] of the ending was transferred to the preceding syllable and then [aw] was modified to [o]:

habuí [aβwi] > [awβi] > [’ɔβe] ove (later hube ‘I had’)

sapuí [sapwi] > [sawpi] > [sopot] sopite (later supe ‘I knew’)

In the same category, the Latin root vowel [i] surfaces as [u] in Spanish: potuit > pudo ‘he/she was able to’, posuit > puso ‘he/she put’. The two types, roots in [o] and roots in [u], came to merge when the higher vowel spread through the ove/sopite group, presumably first developing under the influence of [j] (thus ovieron > uvieron) and then spreading analogically.

A number of Old Spanish preterite forms show analogical attraction to the above pattern but the only ones to survive are cupe ‘I fitted’ (cépi), estuve ‘I was’ (stetit), tuve ‘I had’ (tenui) and anduve ‘I walked’ (ambitāvi).

Numerous strong perfects in [-si][-se] (written -si/-si- or, in combination with [k], -xii/-xii-) survived into Old Spanish, but the modern language offers only dije ‘I said’ (< dīxi), ad-, conduje ‘I adduced/drove’ (< ad- condūxi), traje ‘I brought’ (< traxi) and quise ‘I wanted’ (< quaesī(v)i)). Though it looks etymological, the root vowel of traje is actually modelled on the [a] of trae, traia, traer etc., the Old Spanish form of the preterite being troxe, troxo etc., in imitation of the ove/sopite type.

Concerning the other surviving strong preterites, the root vowel [i] in the paradigms for hacer ‘to do’ and venir ‘to come’ is analogical except in person 1, where final [i] induced metaphony (fēcī [fekī], vēnī [vēni] > hice, vine); ver ‘to see’ and dar ‘to give’ show normal elimination of [-d-] with reduction of any subsequent hiatus or diphthong (vī(d)i, vī(d)istī, vī(d)īmus > vi, viste, vimos, de(d)i, de(d)istī, de(d)īmus > di, diste, dimos); and in the paradigm of ser ‘to be’, only fuiste (< fuistī, with raising of [e] to [i] in the penultimate syllable under the influence of final [i]), fue (<
fuit) and fueron (< fuérunt) can be derived regularly from their Latin counterparts, the [i] of fui, fuimos and fuisteis being modelled on that of the ordinary -ir/-er preterite endings.

6. Future and Conditional

The future and conditional in Spanish, as throughout western Romance, evolved through agglutination of present or imperfect forms of habère – contracted to just a stressed vowel and a person/number marker – and a preceding infinitive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>future</th>
<th>conditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cantâre + ha(bé)s &gt; cantarás</td>
<td>cantâre + (hab)ē(b)ās &gt; cantarías</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantâre + (hab)ēmus &gt; cantaremos</td>
<td>cantâre + (hab)ē(b)āmus &gt; cantaríamos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cantâre + (hab)ētis &gt; cantaréis</td>
<td>cantâre + (hab)ē(b)ātis &gt; cantaríais</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The [a], [e] or [i] of the infinitive occupied an internal unstressed position and so, with the exception of [a], it was subject to elimination. However, of the resulting syncopated forms, e.g. vivran (now vivirán), movrien (now moverian) and luzra (now lucirá), only a handful have survived. Some have undergone no additional adjustment, e.g. habré, cabrá, querré, while others show epenthesis, e.g. pondré, tendrá, valdriá, saldré, or, in the case of dirá (based on Old Sp. inf. dizir), consonantal elimination.

The compound origin of the future and conditional was not entirely obliterated until quite recently. Thus, until the 17th century, pronouns could be intercalated between the infinitive and the auxiliary: dar le ien .vi. çientos marcos (i.e. le darían seiscientos marcos), ir vos hedes sin falla (i.e. os iréis sin falla), Poema de Mio Cid 161, 1808.

7. Gerund

The modern forms descend from the ablative of the Latin gerund: cantando < cantandō, temiendo < timéndō (after [e] > [je]), durmiendo < dormiendō. The ablative of the gerund could already in Latin be used as an adverbial modifier – e.g. legendō discitur ‘with reading one learns’ – a function that is retained by its Spanish descendant (compare Se aprende leyendo). In addition, however, the modern gerund can occur adnominally (i.e. modifying a noun), as in El rector inaugurando la facultad..., and in the periphrastic progressive construction está hablando etc.

8. Past Participle

The descendants of -āre and -ēre verbs have past participles in historically regular -ado (-ātum) and -ido (-ītum). Most -ēre and -ēre verbs had strong participles but a few had weak forms in -ūtum and one or two in -ētum. Both of these endings (or their reflexes) have come to be replaced by -ido, although -udo (< -ūtum) was frequent until the 13th century: conocşudo, vençudo, sabudo, defendudo etc.

Most strong participles were also replaced by weak forms in -ido, but a number have reflexes in modern Spanish: puesto ‘put’ (< pos(i)tum), abierto ‘open(ed)’ (< apertum), cubierto ‘covered’ (< copertum), escrito ‘written’ (< scriptum), dicho ‘said’ (< dictum), hecho ‘done’ (< factum) etc. Visto ‘seen’ is analogical (Lat. vīsum) while vuelto ‘returned’ and (re-, ab-, di-) suelto ‘set loose’ stem from originally weak forms (vol(ū)tum and sol(ū)tum) in which the stressed vowel became post-tonic and was subsequently lost.

When combined with an appropriate tense of haber, the past participle is used in the formation of the compound tenses: he hablado, había hablado, habré hablado, hubiera hablado. Note,
however, that in Old Spanish ser was frequently used as the auxiliary with intransitive verbs – e.g. Venidos son a Castiella ‘They have come to Castile’, en Valencia son rastados ‘They have remained in Valencia’, Poema de Mió Cid 2269, 2270 – a practice that may have stemmed from the use of esse (> ser) with the past participle to form the perfect, pluperfect and future perfect of deponent verbs, as in e.g. mentitus sum ‘I have lied’.

The past participle also combines, as in Latin, with the auxiliary ser/esse to form a syntactic passive. However, where Latin required the auxiliary to be in the present tense, Spanish generally requires the preterite or the perfect. For instance, though the auxiliary in the sentence captīvī factī sunt is in the present tense, the meaning corresponds not to Son hechos prisioneros ‘They are (being) taken prisoner’ but to Han sido hechos prisioneros ‘They have been …’ or Fueron hechos prisioneros ‘They were …’. Similarly, the Latin sentence captīvī factī erant, with esse in the imperfect, corresponds not to Eran hechos prisioneros but to Habían sido hechos prisioneros ‘They had been taken prisoner’; and identical remarks apply mutatis mutandis to captīvī factī erunt, with esse in the future (i.e. the tense of the sentence is future perfect – habrán sido ‘they will have been’ – rather than future).

A further difference between the Spanish ser-passive and the Latin esse-passive is that the latter was not available, in Classical Latin at least, for the present, imperfect and future, because inflected forms were used in these cases: audior ‘I am (being) heard’, audībar ‘I am (being) heard’, audiar ‘I will be heard’.

9. Suppletion and Merger

Much of the paradigm of ir ‘to go’ (< īre) exhibits suppletion, i.e. it includes one or more forms borrowed from another lexeme’s paradigm. Thus the entire present tense, except persons 4 and 5 in the indicative together with the singular imperative, are based on forms of vādēre ‘to make your way’. Voy, vas, va and van stem from contractions of vādō, vādis, vādit and vādunt; vaya, vayas, vayamos etc. are adaptations – influenced no doubt by Old Spanish seeya, oya etc. – of vādam, -ās, -āmus etc; vamos, vais have the same source as vayamos and vayaíais except that they have not undergone analogical adjustment; and ve stems from va(d)e. The preterite of īre also failed to survive into Spanish, where it is replaced by the preterite of ser.

Ser itself shows complete merger with Old Sp. see (< sedēre ‘to sit’). The majority of the forms in the modern ser conjugation stem ultimately from forms belonging to Latin esse ‘to be’, but the present subjunctive forms as well as those of the imperative and the gerund descend from forms that originally belonged to the sedēre conjugation: sea, seáis etc. < sedeam, sedeātis; sé, sed < sedē, sedēte; siendo < seyendo < sedendō.

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