

# THE HISTORY OF A SINGLE-CELL ALLOMORPH: THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR OF THE ROMANCE PRETERITE

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the early history of the Romance languages, regular sound change produced an allomorph that happened to be limited to the first person singular preterite. We might suspect that such a ‘single-cell’ allomorph, vastly ‘outnumbered’ by the forms of the remainder of the paradigm, would be analogically ousted in favour of other allomorphs. In fact the opposite is true: it was repeatedly extended to occupy other cells of the paradigm. What follows is intended as a small addition to the description of this detail of Romance historical inflexional morphology<sup>1</sup>. The generalization that the original single-cell allomorph repeatedly ‘takes over’ other paradigm cells has never been made before.

### 2 The history of the allomorph

#### 2.1 Phonological causes

The historical determinant of the allomorph in the 1SG preterite is the (unstressed) desinence \*-[i], continuing the Latin 1SG present indicative perfective ending -ī. The 1SG preterite is the only cell of the Romance verb paradigm originally to have had this ending<sup>2</sup> and it triggered several regular phonological modifications which produced allomorphy in the root. Namely:

- i. metaphony of the stressed vowel
  - ii. raising of an immediately preceding thematic vowel [a]
  - iii. palatalization of immediately preceding root-final consonants
- I examine the morphological effects of each in turn.

#### 2.2 Metaphony in the first person singular preterite

Metaphony (cf. Maiden 1991; 2011, p. 184f.) is assimilatory raising of stressed (usually mid) vowels when followed by unstressed high vowels in the following syllable. It is uncontroversial that the vocalic allomorphs at issue here

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<sup>1</sup> Dorin Urișescu, to whose memory this study is dedicated, well understood the value for Romance linguistics of the simple documentation of facts and patterns in diachronic linguistics. Beyond his theoretical contributions, he made a vast contribution to factual description, in particular, of Romanian dialects, not least through his work for the regional linguistic atlases.

<sup>2</sup> For mainly phonological reasons (see Maiden 1996), -i later emerges in Italo- and Daco-Romance as an inflexional marker of 2SG.

are of metaphonic origin<sup>3</sup>. In the relevant Romance varieties, stressed mid vowels ([o] or [e]) in the lexical root become high vowels (respectively [u] and [i]) under metaphony. In fact, only a relatively small subset of preterite verb-forms happened to meet the structural description for metaphony, by virtue of presenting a stressed mid vowel in the syllable immediately preceding the ending. These are verbs, virtually restricted to the second or third conjugations, which display a special, morphologically idiosyncratic, root-allomorph inherited from Latin perfective root-allomorphs. That allomorph was stressed in the 1SG and 3SG preterite (and sometimes elsewhere in the paradigm). If that stressed allomorph contained a high mid vowel, that vowel underwent metaphony in the 1SG, where the inflexional ending was [-i]. Some examples from Spanish and Portuguese are FĒCĪ > \*'feki > \*'fiki > Sp. *hice* 'did', Pt. *fiz*; POSŪI > \*'posi > \*'pusi > Sp. *puse* 'put', Pt. *pus*; QUAES(IU)I > \*'kesi > \*'kisi > Sp. *quise* 'wanted', Pt. *quis*. A further example is the verb 'do' (< Latin FACERE), whose imperfective root was FAC-, but whose perfective root was FĒC-, yielding proto-Romance \*[fek]. I give in Table 1, respectively, the Latin, postulated proto-Romance, and old Occitan forms (Anglade 1921, p. 303f.):

Table 1

Latin	FĒCĪ	FĒCISTĪ	FĒCIT	FĒCIMUS	FĒCISTIS	FĒCERUNT
proto-Romance	*'fiki	*fe'kisti	*'feket	*'fekemos	*fe'kestes	*'fekeron
old Occitan	<i>fis</i>	<i>fezist</i>	<i>fes, fe</i>	<i>fezém</i>	<i>fezétz</i>	<i>féron</i>

Anglade (1921, p. 305, 328, 342, 348, 351) further illustrates this pattern for 1SG.PRT *pris* 'took' (<PRAEHENDĪ), 2SG.PRT *prezist*, etc., 1SG.PRT *cric* 'believed' (<CRĒDIDĪ), 2SG.PRT *creguist*, etc.; 1SG.PRT *quis* 'sought' (<QUAESIUĪ), 2SG.PRT *quezist*, etc., 1SG.PRT *vinc* 'came' (<UĒNĪ), 2SG.PRT *venguist*, etc. Old Portuguese (Huber 1986, p. 243–247) also shows the metaphonic alternant largely or exclusively limited to the 1SG preterite, for example 1SG *tive* 'had' (<TENUĪ) 2SG *teveste* 3SG *teve* 1PL *tevemos* 2PLG *tevestes* 3PL *teveron*. Remnants of the originally association of the high vowel [i] with the 1SG preterite are still detectable in old Spanish. Menéndez Pidal (1962, p. 318) states that alongside 1SG preterite *fize* we still find at the end of the fifteenth century 3SG *fezo* and 1PL *fezimos*, etc., as well as innovatory *fizo*, *ficimos*, etc. There are also modern dialectal remnants of the old distribution, for example in the Leonese of Cabrera Alta (Casado Lobato 2001, p. 81): 1SG 'fiθe 'did' 2SG fe'θistes 3SG 'fiθo or 'feθo 1PL fe'θimos 2PL fe'θistes 3PL fe'θjeron. Literary and dialectal Catalan have 1SG *fíu*, 2SG *feres* 3SG *féu* 1PL *férem* 2PL *féreu* 3PL *feren*.

This metaphonic 1SG preterite allomorph is frequently extended to all, or most, other forms of the preterite and related<sup>4</sup> tense-forms (such as imperfect sub-

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Meyer-Lübke 1895, p. 376, Fouché 1929, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> The Romance preterite continues the Latin present indicative perfective form. Other Romance verb-forms also continue Latin perfective forms, and share a distinctive root-allomorph with the preterite. Typically at issue are continuants of the Latin pluperfect indicative and pluperfect

junctive). In Ibero-Romance and Gallo-Romance, the analogical extension commenced in the pre-literary period, and affected all the relevant cells. Consider, for modern Spanish and Portuguese, the paradigm of the preterite, and the 1SG imperfect subjunctive (as representative of the other PYTA forms), of *hacer/fazer* ‘do’; *querer* ‘want’; *tener/ter* ‘have’; *venir/vir* ‘come’; *poner/por* ‘put’, each showing generalization of the metaphonic high vowel (Table 2). In Portuguese, Galician, and some western Spanish varieties, the 3SG preterite is often an exception (cf. Coelho da Mota, Rodrigues, and Soalheiro 2003; O’Neill 2013).

Table 2

	1SG.PRT	2SG.PRT	3SG.PRT	1PL.PRT	2PL.PRT	3PL.PRT	1SG.IPF.SBJV
Castilian	<i>hice</i>	<i>hiciste</i>	<i>hizo</i>	<i>hicimos</i>	<i>hicisteis</i>	<i>hicieron</i>	<i>hiciese</i> etc.
Portuguese	<i>fiz</i>	<i>fizeste</i>	( <i>fez</i> )	<i>fizemos</i>	<i>fizestes</i>	<i>fizeram</i>	<i>fizesse</i> etc.
Castilian	<i>quise</i>	<i>quisiste</i>	<i>quiso</i>	<i>quisimos</i>	<i>quisisteis</i>	<i>quisieron</i>	<i>quisiese</i> etc.
Portuguese	<i>quis</i>	<i>quiseste</i>	<i>quis</i>	<i>quisemos</i>	<i>quisestes</i>	<i>quiseram</i>	<i>quisesse</i> etc.
Castilian	<i>vine</i>	<i>viniste</i>	<i>vino</i>	<i>vinimos</i>	<i>vinisteis</i>	<i>vinieron</i>	<i>viniese</i> etc.
Portuguese	<i>vim</i>	<i>vieste</i>	( <i>veio</i> )	<i>viemos</i>	<i>viestes</i>	<i>vieram</i>	<i>viesses</i> etc.
Castilian	<i>puse</i>	<i>pusiste</i>	<i>puso</i>	<i>pusimos</i>	<i>pusisteis</i>	<i>pusieron</i>	<i>pusiese</i> etc.
Portuguese	<i>puse</i>	<i>puseste</i>	( <i>pôs</i> )	<i>pusemos</i>	<i>pusestes</i>	<i>puseram</i>	<i>pusesse</i> etc.

In the earliest French texts, the extension affects only other stressed forms of the root. Thus, the metaphonic, preterites 1SG *fis* ‘did’, *vin* ‘came’, *dui* ‘owed’ < \*’feki, \*’veni, \*’dewwi generalize their vowel (see Fouché 1967, p. 276) to the root-stressed 3SG and 3PL (e.g., *fist vint dut volt; fisdrent vindrent durent*), and also (see Fouché 1967, p. 336f.) to the former pluperfects *fis(t)dra, vindre, firet, dure, voldra*. Subsequent analogical change, chiefly observable from the fifteenth century, extends the vowel to unstressed syllables, so that it enters the non-root-stressed forms of the preterite and the imperfect subjunctive. Thus modern French (Table 3):

Table 3

	old French	modern French	
	preterite	imperfect subjunctive	
1SG	<i>vin</i> ‘came’	<i>venisse</i>	<i>vins vinsse</i>
2SG	<i>venist</i>	<i>venissés</i>	<i>vins vinsses</i>
3SG	<i>vint</i>	<i>venist</i>	<i>vint vînt</i>
1PL	<i>venimes</i>	<i>venissiens</i>	<i>vîntes vinssions</i>
2PL	<i>venistes</i>	<i>venissiez</i>	<i>vîntes vinssiez</i>
3PL	<i>vindrent</i>	<i>venissent</i>	<i>vinrent vinssent</i>
1SG	<i>fis</i> ‘did’	<i>fe(s)isse</i>	<i>fis fisse</i>
2SG	<i>fe(s)is</i>	<i>fe(s)isses</i>	<i>fis fisses</i>
3SG	<i>fist</i>	<i>fe(s)ist</i>	<i>fit fit</i>

subjunctive (the latter is the source of the imperfect subjunctive in many Romance varieties, and of the pluperfect indicative in Romanian), and the Latin future perfect indicative and present perfect subjunctive. See further Maiden (2011, p. 180–201; 2016, p. 709–711).

1PL	<i>fe(s)imes</i>	<i>fe(s)issiens</i>	<i>fimes</i>	<i>fissions</i>
2PL	<i>fe(s)istes</i>	<i>fe(s)issiez</i>	<i>fites</i>	<i>fissiez</i>
3PL	<i>fistrent</i>	<i>fe(s)issent</i>	<i>firent</i>	<i>fissent</i>

Some Ibero-Romance varieties initially followed the same route. Egido Fernández (1996, p. 411–441) describes how in medieval Leonese the high vowels seem first to have spread from the 1SG to other rhizotonic forms. The same tendency is detectable in medieval northern Italo-Romance: see, e.g. Monaci (1955, p. 422, 510) for 3SG and 3PL examples with metaphonic vowels in old Bergamasque and old Piemontese.

### 2.3 Extension of the first person singular preterite thematic vowel

A different kind of 1SG preterite alternant involves the ‘thematic vowel’ of first conjugation verbs. The historically predicted pattern, in which the relevant alternant occurs just in the 1SG, survives, for example in standard Portuguese and standard Spanish. Most Spanish verb-forms comprise a lexical root followed by the thematic vowel, marking conjugation class, followed in turn by a marker of person and number. Table 4 illustrates the first conjugation verbs, characterized by the thematic vowel [a]:

Table 4

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
imperfect ind.	<i>cantaba</i>	<i>cantabas</i>	<i>cantaba</i>	<i>cantábamos</i>	<i>cantabais</i>	<i>cantaban</i>
preterite	<i>canté</i>	<i>cantaste</i>	<i>cantó</i>	<i>cantamos</i>	<i>cantasteis</i>	<i>cantaron</i>
imperfect subj.	<i>cantase</i>	<i>cantases</i>	<i>cantase</i>	<i>cantásemos</i>	<i>cantaseis</i>	<i>cantasen</i>

In first conjugation verbs, the vowel [e] of the 1SG preterite is a striking ‘odd-one-out’. The [e] in lieu of thematic [a] in this cell of the paradigm has a straightforward phonological explanation (cf. Lausberg 1965, p. 279f.), which can be summarized as: [aj̄] > [eĭ] > [e]. However, the ending [-aj̄] occurred at just one point in the verb system, namely the 1SG preterite of first conjugation verbs. The original diphthong remains in modern Italian, Portuguese shows raising but still preserves a diphthong, while French and Spanish show the monophthong [e] (Table 5):

Table 5

	1SG	2SG	3SG
Latin	CANTA(U)I	CANTA(UI)STI	CANTAU(I)T
Italian	<i>cantai</i>	<i>cantasti</i>	<i>cantò</i>
French	<i>ŷāte</i>	<i>ŷāta</i>	<i>ŷāta</i>
Spanish	<i>canté</i>	<i>cantaste</i>	<i>cantó</i>
Portuguese	<i>cantei</i>	<i>cantaste</i>	<i>cantou</i>

	1PL	2PL	3PL
Latin	CANTA(UI)MUS	CANTA(UI)STIS	CANTA(UE)RUNT
Italian	<i>cantammo</i>	<i>cantaste</i>	<i>cantarono</i>
French	<i>ŷātam</i>	<i>ŷātat</i>	<i>ŷātεκ</i>
Spanish	<i>cantamos</i>	<i>cantasteis</i>	<i>cantaron</i>
Portuguese	<i>cantámos</i>	<i>cantastes</i>	<i>cantaram</i>

The [e] of the first conjugation 1SG preterite has, in some varieties, been extended into other forms of the preterite. This phenomenon is widely observed in much of the province of León<sup>5</sup>, southern, central, and northern Sanabria, extending into central Asturian and the far north of Portugal (Tras os Montes, Miranda). A quite common pattern is extension of [e] to all first and second person forms of the preterite. Thus in the dialect of Miranda do Douro (Piel 1944, p. 387) we find the set of first conjugation endings 1SG -'ei 2SG -'este 3SG -'ou 1PL -'emos 2PL -'estes 3PL -'orũ. Fouché (1929, p. 46f.) indicates a similar tendency in old Castilian, although it has not persisted in the modern standard language. In Palacios del Sil (González-Quevedo 2001, p. 137) we find the same pattern, e.g., 1SG *cheguei* 2SG *cheguesti* 3SG *chegóu* 1PL *cheguemos* 2PL *cheguestis* 3PL *cheganon*. See also Hanssen (1913, p. 111); Munthe (1987, p. 48); Buesa Oliver and Castañer Martín (1994, p. 71–80); Casado Lobato (2002, p. 78f.), Rodríguez Castellano (1952, p. 155) for further examples<sup>6</sup>. Krüger (1954, p. 48, 51f., 54, 71, 74) illustrates various patterns for Sanabria (province of Zamora) in which the 3SG, and often the 3PL, are exceptions to the extension. For Aragonese, Kuhn (1935, p. 133) shows that [e] is extended throughout the preterite in the dialect of Hecho, and that it does so with the exception of the third person forms in other localities (see also Navarro Tomás 1909, p. 115–117; Blas Gabadra and Romanos Fernando 2005, p. 26)<sup>7</sup>. The phenomenon is also attested in eastern Pyrenean Catalan: thus Formiguères (Alcover & Moll point 4, §57 *anar*): 1SG a'neri 'went' 2SG a'nerəs 3SG a'nek 1PL a'nerən 2PL a'neru 3PL a'nerən.

While the Romance synthetic preterite forms have disappeared in modern northern Italo-Romance dialects, there is evidence that extension of the vowel of the first conjugation 1SG present indicative once occurred in these varieties as well

<sup>5</sup> Egidio Fernández (1996, p. 384–386), for medieval Leonese, reviews arguments for an alternative view that the presence of [e] or the diphthong [ei] in first conjugation preterites outside the 1SG is a matter of phonological change. Nonetheless, the analogical account is that ultimately adopted by Menéndez Pidal (1962, p. 311f.).

<sup>6</sup> As Rodríguez Castellano (1952, p. 162f.) shows, this [e] may also extend into the imperfect subjunctive. The coherent, 'morphomic', morphological behaviour of the set of verb-forms that are sometimes called in the Spanish grammatical tradition 'perfecto y tiempos afines', comprising in Ibero-Romance the imperfect subjunctives and (where present) the future subjunctive is of great theoretical significance (see e.g., O'Neill 2014, p. 60–62; Maiden 2018a). The 'morphomic' status of the distribution of the alternant is not an issue I can pursue here, however.

<sup>7</sup> In Panticosa (Nagore Laín 1986, p. 169) [e] is extended just to the 1PL preterite. In Belsetán (Lozano Sierra and Salud Bernad 2007, p. 108), it extends into 1PL and 2PL preterite as well.

(cf. Rohlfs 2021, p. 316 for Bergamasque and old Milanese). In old Piedmontese, in the writings of Alione (sixteenth century; cf also Clivio 1969), we find, for first conjugation verbs: 1SG *-eri* 2sg *-er* 3sg *-er/-e* 1pl *-eron* 2pl *-eri* 3pl *-eron*. Schädel (1903, p. 88) found extension of [e] through the first conjugation preterite in the Ligurian of Tenda. Similar evidence is detectable in some modern Bolognese dialects, as shown by *AIS* maps 1697 and 1698 for Bologna (point 456). The endings given are: 1SG *-e* 2SG *-'eʃ* 3SG *-'o* 1PL *-'en* 2PL *-'eʃi* 3PL *-'en*. Maranesi (1869, p. xxi) illustrates the spread of [e] through the preterite in Modena, except the 3SG. In Salve (province of Lecce, *AIS* point 749) where the 1SG ending is *-[e]*, we also find: 2SG *lle'veʃti* 'washed' 3SG *lle'vɔ* 1PL *llev'emme* 2PL *lle'veʃtive* 3PL *lle'va:ra*, with extension of [e] into the first and second person preterite forms.

#### 2.4 The first person singular preterite alternant in Daco-Romance

In Daco-Romance, the historical final *-[i]* of the 1SG preterite also produced a stem alternant limited just to that cell of the paradigm. This allomorph arose from the regular palatalizing effects of [i] on an immediately preceding consonant (cf. Maiden et al. 2021, p. 13 for illustrations of the morphological effects in Romanian)<sup>8</sup>. In practically every case<sup>9</sup>, what was involved was a stressed preterite allomorph which ended in *-[s]*: when this *-[s]* was historically followed by the 1SG ending *-[i]* it regularly became *-[ʃ]*-. Thus, for the old Romanian verb *a scrie* 'to write', we find in most of the paradigm the allomorphs *scri-* (e.g., present *scriu* 'I write', *scrie* 's/he writes', imperfect *scria* 'I/he wrote'), *scris-* (in the preterite, pluperfect, and old conditional; e.g., *scrise* 'he wrote', *scrisese* 'I/ s/he had written', *scrisere* 'I/he would write'), but also *scriş-* [skriʃ] just in the 1SG preterite (e.g., *scriş(u)* < \*skrisi < SCRIPSI). The inflexional subparadigm of the preterite of the relevant verbs in old Romanian, and to this day in Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian<sup>10</sup>, is thus as in Table 6<sup>11</sup>:

Table 6

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Old Romanian	<i>scriş(u)</i> 'write'	<i>scriséşi</i>	<i>scrise</i>	<i>scrisem(u)</i>	<i>scriset(u)</i>	<i>scriseră</i>
	<i>zîş(u)</i> 'say'	<i>ziséşi</i>	<i>zise</i>	<i>zîsem(u)</i>	<i>zîset(u)</i>	<i>zîseră</i>
Aromanian	'arʃu 'burn'	'arsiʃ	'arsi	'arsimu	'arsitu	'arsiri
	'skofu 'remove'	'skqasiʃ	'skqasi	'skqasimu	'skqasitu	'skqasiri
Megleno-Romanian	tunʃ 'shear'	tun'seʃ	'tunsi	'tunsim	'tunsits	'tunsira
	ziʃ 'say'	zi'seʃ	'zisi	'zisim	'zisis	'zisira

<sup>8</sup> There was also palatalization of the root-final consonant in the 1SG preterite in medieval northern Italian dialects (Morosi 1882–1885, p. 411, 416, 420; Meyer-Lübke 1895, p. 332; *AIS* plates 1698–1700, especially for the Gallo-Italian points 817 and 865, in Sicily).

<sup>9</sup> *A sta* 'to stand' and *a da* 'to give' had preterite roots ending in dentals. These will be mentioned later.

<sup>10</sup> See Saramandu (1984, p. 456), Nevaci (2006, p. 100f.), and Atanasov (2002, p. 242f.).

<sup>11</sup> The ending *-u* is a later innovation.

The main generalization is that this 1SG preterite root allomorph is almost never eliminated<sup>12</sup>. We do not find in old Romanian, Aromanian, or Megleno-Romanian any analogical elimination of [ʃ] in favour of [s]. Moreover, in some south-western Daco-Romanian dialects the alternant is not only retained but, usually<sup>13</sup>, extended to other cells of the preterite, particularly the 2SG, but often to all first and second person forms (the third person is much more rarely affected). Some examples from Banat dialects are given in Table 7<sup>14</sup>.

Table 7

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Berzasca (pt 5)	plĩ'ʃəi 'wept'	plĩ'ʃəf	'plĩsə	plĩ'sərəm	plĩ'sərəts	'plĩsərə
Bănia (pt 15)	plĩ'ʃəi	?	?	?	?	?
Borlovenii Vechi (pt 20)	plĩ'ʃəi	plĩ'ʃəf	'plĩsə	plĩ'sərəm	plĩ'sərəts	'plĩsə
Luncavița (pt 25)	plĩ'ʃəi	plĩ'ʃəf	'plĩsə			
Cornereva (pt 26)	plĩ'ʃəi	plĩ'ʃəf	?	plĩ'ʃərəm	?	plĩ'ʃərə?
Berzasca (pt 5)	skri'ʃiəi <sup>15</sup> 'wrote'	skri'siəf	'skrisə	?	?	?
Bănia (pt 15)	skri'ʃiəi	skri'siəf	'skrisə	skrisə'rəm	skrisə'rəts	'skrisərə
Borlovenii Vechi (pt 20)	skri'ʃiəi	skri'ʃiəf	'skrisə	skrisə'rəm	skrisə'rəts	'skrisərə
Luncavița (pt 25)	skri'ʃiəi	skri'ʃiəf	'skrisə	?	?	?
Cornereva (pt 26)	skri'ʃiəi	skri'ʃiəf	'skrisə	?	?	?
Berzasca (pt 5)	spu'ʃəi 'spoke'	spu'ʃəf	'spusə	spu'ʃərəm	spu'ʃərəts	'spusərə
Bănia (pt 15)	spu'ʃəi	spu'ʃəf	?	'spusərəm	'spusərəts	'spusərə
Borlovenii Vechi (pt 20)	spu'ʃəi	spu'ʃəf	'spusə	'spusərəm	'spusərəts	'spusərə
Luncavița (pt 25)	spu'ʃəi	spu'ʃəf	'spusə	spu'ʃərəm	spu'ʃərəts	'spusərə
Cornereva (pt 26)	spu'ʃəi	spu'ʃəf	'spusə	?	?	?

<sup>12</sup> Romanian might be seen as displaying a direct elimination of the 1SG alternant (cf. Şiadbei 1930, p. 333n1; Lombard 1954, p. 456f.) in *a da* 'to give', whose old Romanian 1SG preterite is *dedi(u)*. The expected form, given Latin *DEDI*, would be *\*\*de(d)zi(u)*. The non-affricated form also occurs in Aromanian (Saramandu 1984, p. 456), a dialect which otherwise systematically *preserves* the 1SG preterite allomorph. Whatever the explanation, we seem to be dealing with something fairly ancient and specific to this verb, rather than an indicator of a general tendency to eliminate the single-cell alternants of the 1SG preterite.

<sup>13</sup> In some dialects the alternant remains restricted to the 1SG.

<sup>14</sup> See *NALRBanat* maps 612, 621, 760; also *ALRVII* maps 1983–1985, 1987–1990.

<sup>15</sup> This locality also has a 1SG preterite form without the normal palatalization but Moise (1978) indicates that it is typically used in speaking with strangers or more prestigious interlocutors. This may reflect the influence of standard Romanian, discussed below.

Some of the Banat dialects also preserve remnants of preterite roots with final dentals (from Latin STETI and DEDI (or analogical \*'deti, modelled on STETI). In these verbs, the phonologically regular effect of *-[i]* on the preceding dental was affrication ([tʃ], [dʒ]). While the affricate must originally have been limited to the 1SG preterite, it has generally spread to the whole preterite. Table 8 illustrates this for the verb *da* ‘give’<sup>16</sup>.

Table 8

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Bănia (pt 15)	jɛts	je'jeʃ	'jetsə	'jetsərəm	'jetsərəts	'jetsərə
Borlovenii Vechi (pt 20)	jɛts	je'jeʃ	'jetsə	'jetsərəm	'jetsərəts	'jetsərə
Luncavița (pt 25)	də'tsəj	də'tsəʃ	'dətsə	də'tsərəm	də'tsərəts	'detsərə
Cornereva (pt 26)	də'tsəj	də'tsəʃ	'dətsə	də'tsərəm	'darəts	'datsərə

Now, my claim that the 1SG preterite alternant is not eliminated in Daco-Romanian seems to be patently contradicted precisely by modern standard Romanian and by various other modern southern Romanian dialects, where original root-final [ʃ] is completely replaced by [s] (also Frâncu 1984, p. 428; Maiden et al. 2021, p. 295). Thus Table 9

Table 9

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Romanian	<i>scriséi</i>	<i>scriséși</i>	<i>scrise</i>	<i>scriserăm</i>	<i>scriserăți</i>	<i>scriseră</i>
Gârbovu <sup>17</sup>	skri'səj	skri'səʃ	'skrisə	skri'sərəm	skri'sərəts	'skrisərə

This absence of the expected palatalized alternant in the 1SG preterite in Romanian is not, however, the major exception that it appears, because it is not a straightforward analogical ‘levelling out’ of one allomorph under pressure from others. Rather, it is a secondary effect of a different kind of change, such that the entire stem of the 1SG is replaced by that of the 2SG, a stem which of course does not have the palatalized alternant and also contains a stressed thematic vowel, a property in turn shared with the rest of the preterite (and pluperfect) paradigm. It is generally held (e.g., Şiadbei 1930, p. 354; Frâncu 1984, p. 433) that the emergence of the type *scriséi* for *scrîș(u)* is due to the analogical influence of arrhizotonic 2SG *scriséși* and to the inflexional model of ‘weak’ preterites of other conjugation classes in which the 1SG is arrhizotonic and stressed on the thematic vowel. Loss of [ʃ] *only* occurs, indeed, where the stressed thematic vowel has also been introduced as described. My general claim that that palatalized alternant of the 1SG preterite is not analogically eliminated under pressure from the numerically superior set of forms without palatalized allomorphs remains robust.

<sup>16</sup> *NALRBanat* maps 732/733. See also Weigand (1896, p. 243); Şandru (1937, p. 142); Beltechi (1994–1995, p. 112).

<sup>17</sup> *NALROltenia* point 952, map 973.

### 3 CONCLUSION

The foregoing makes a descriptive generalization about the history of the ‘single-cell allomorph’ of the 1SG preterite across the Romance languages. It is not one that has ever been made before, and I believe that it is surprising. Despite being ‘outnumbered’ paradigmatically, the allomorph rarely disappears; on the contrary, it tends to *expand* its paradigmatic domain into other parts of the preterite and sometimes beyond. Whatever explains this behaviour, it is most unlikely to be a putative greater frequency of the 1SG over the other forms of the preterite. For most verbs the third person forms (and perhaps even the third person singular alone) surely possess greater text frequency than the 1SG<sup>18</sup>. Indeed, it is precisely the 3SG which (as many of our examples show, e.g., Table 2 for Portuguese and Table 7) is most resistant to the extension of the allomorph.

Single-cell allomorphs are little studied<sup>19</sup> and it is difficult to make valid theoretical pronouncements in the absence of wider-ranging surveys of their diachronic behaviour. It is certainly not the case that *any* single-cell allomorph tends to expand into other parts of its paradigm. For example, metaphony, a major cause of single-cell allomorphy in the 1SG preterite, is also the source of extensive single-cell allomorphy in the 2SG present indicative of many Italo-Romance dialects in which it is triggered solely by the 2SG ending *-[i]* (cf. Maiden 1991, p. 155–160), yet that alternant is not extended<sup>20</sup>. Typical is Ischia (Freund 1933): 1SG *ka' nauʃk* ‘know’ 2SG *ka' nuʃə* 3SG *ka' nauʃə* 3PL *ka' nauʃənə*; 1SG *'kandə* ‘sing’ 2SG *'kəndə* 3SG *'kandə* 3PL *'kəndənə*; 1SG *'təŋgə* ‘have’ 2SG *'tjenə* 3SG *'tənə* 3PL *'tənənə*. Here *ka' nuʃ-*, *'kənd-*, and *'tjen* only appear in the 2SG present. Unlike the preterite alternants, intra-paradigmatic analogical extension of the unique 2SG present indicative alternant is extremely rare in Italo-Romance. Similarly, old Romanian verb *putea* ‘be able’, had a root ending everywhere in *[t]* except for the 1SG present namely *poci(u)* (*[ˈpoʃ(u)]*), yet this in the modern standard language has been completely ousted by *pot* and has never been extended to other parts of the paradigm. Likewise, *vor* the form of the 3PL present indicative of Romanian *a vrea* ‘want’, Spanish *sé* 1SG present of *saber* ‘know’, or the 2SG allomorph *vuo-* of Italian *volere* ‘want’, each seems firmly limited to its respective cell. Overall, Romance single-cell allomorphs show no *general* propensity to expanding their paradigmatic domain, but it seems that they tend to do so *if they are located within the preterite*.

While the focus of this study has been 1SG preterite allomorphs, the propensity for single-cell allomorphs in the preterite to spread is not limited to the 1SG. Albeit

<sup>18</sup> On the greater frequency of third person preterite forms, see also Maiden (2018b, p. 251–253).

<sup>19</sup> But see Corbett (2015, p. 181; 2016, p. 72).

<sup>20</sup> Since the form of the input stem is always different from that of the preterite, the result is always something different from that of any single-cell allomorph also triggered by metaphony in the preterite.

much more rarely, a single-cell allomorph of the *third* person singular preterite – which in many Ibero-Romance and Italo-Romance varieties end in  $[-'o]$  or  $[-'ɔ]$  – behaves similarly. In some varieties, this ending is also subject to analogical generalization within the preterite, even coming to occupy *all* the cells of the preterite<sup>21</sup>. Thus Table 10, from the Aragonese of Jasa and Aragüés (Kuhn 1935, p. 134):

Table 10

1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
kom'pro 'bought'	kom'pros	kom'pro	kom'promos	kom'proiθ	kom'pron

Similar developments occur in Italo-Romance<sup>22</sup>: e.g., Sassa ( *AIS* point 625) 1SG tro'ɔ 2SG tru'isti 3SG tro'ɔ 1PL tro'emmo 2PL tro'este 3PL tro'oru, Prignano ( *AIS* point 454) it extends throughout the preterite 1SG kan'tɔ 2SG -'ɔs 3SG -'ɔ 1PL kan'tɔn 2PL -'osi 3PL kan'tɔn.

Yet another example of an allomorph historically limited to the preterite is the 3PL person-number desinence  $[-r]$ -, derived from Latin  $-RUNT$  (e.g., 3PL AMAUERUNT, FECERUNT). Many languages still restrict this form to the 3PL preterite (Table 11):

Table 11

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
French	<i>chantai</i>	<i>chantas</i>	<i>chanta</i>	<i>chantâmes</i>	<i>chantâtes</i>	<i>chantèrent</i> <i>dirent</i>
Spanish	<i>canté</i>	<i>cantaste</i>	<i>cantó</i>	<i>cantamos</i>	<i>cantasteis</i>	<i>cantaron</i> <i>dijeron</i>
old Romanian	<i>cântaiu</i>	<i>cântași</i>	<i>cântă</i>	<i>cântămu</i>	<i>cântatu</i>	<i>cântară</i> <i>ziseră</i>
	<i>zișu</i>	<i>ziseși</i>	<i>zise</i>	<i>zisemu</i>	<i>zisetu</i>	

What is striking is that in several different Romance varieties, apparently independently, the  $[r]$  allomorph is analogically extended to some or all other forms of the preterite. In modern Romanian and in many Romanian dialects 3PL preterite  $-ră$  has penetrated all plural preterite forms (see Tables 7, 8, 9; also Maiden 2009, p. 289–295 and Maiden et al. 2021, p. 286–289 for extensions of this ending beyond the preterite). The same phenomenon occurred in old Piedmontese (where it seems limited to the first conjugation: see Giacomino 1873, p. 443; Meyer-Lübke 1895, p. 324); an example is given in §2.3 (e.g., 1SG  $-eri$  2sg  $-er$  3sg  $-er/-e$  1pl  $-eron$  2pl  $-eri$  3pl  $-eron$ ). Extension of  $[r]$  through the preterite (usually excepting the 3SG) is also widely observed in Occitan and Francoprovençal dialects; see Meyer-Lübke (1895, p. 352, 354), Bybee and Brewer (1980, p. 211f.), O'Neill (2014, p. 58f). The Catalan synthetic preterite shows extension of  $[r]$  to all

<sup>21</sup> See also Navarro Tomás (1909, p. 118f.). For further discussion of this phenomenon in Ibero-Romance, see Bybee and Brewer (1980, p. 213f.).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, the first conjugation preterites in  *AIS* plate 1697. Also Signorini (2011, p. 64), Rohlf (2021, p. 315f.).

forms of the preterite except 3SG and 1SG (e.g., 1SG *cantí* ‘sang’ 2SG *cantares* 3SG *cantà* 1PL *cantàrem* 2PL *cantàreu* 3PL *cantaren*), and the same pattern of extension is to be found in Friulian (e.g. Meyer-Lübke 1895, p. 336)<sup>23</sup>.

Why do these single-cell alternants survive and spread in the way we have observed? To speculate very tentatively, it may be relevant that these allomorphs are each uniquely distinctive of the preterite. The root-forms which are subject to metaphony in Ibero-Romance, Gallo-Romance, and beyond, and to palatalization (and affrication) in Daco-Romance are not limited to the preterite: the former also occur at least in the imperfect subjunctive (and, in some varieties, in other tense-forms as well) and the latter also occur in the pluperfect indicative (and, in some varieties, the synthetic conditional). As for the allomorphy in the thematic vowel, first conjugation thematic [a] is also found elsewhere in the paradigm, including throughout the imperfect indicative and imperfect subjunctive; but the allomorphs [e] (and [o]) occur *only* in the preterite<sup>24</sup>. Similarly, -[r]- occurs as a person-number marker only in the preterite. That these are the only allomorphs which are uniquely distinctive of the preterite may favour their reanalysis as markers of ‘preterite’ *par excellence* – a reanalysis manifest in a tendency<sup>25</sup> to extend them to all (and often only) the preterite forms. But as stated at the outset, my aim here has been descriptive. There is a clear need for a wider, cross-linguistic, study of single-cell allomorphs in diachrony.

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<sup>23</sup> On the spread of other preterite 3SG endings, see Meyer-Lübke (1895, p. 352f.).

<sup>24</sup> At least ‘among past tense forms’, since [e] also occurs in first conjugation present subjunctives.

<sup>25</sup> The ‘morphomic’ pattern of identity between the roots of the preterite and imperfect subjunctive (and sometimes other tense-forms as well) characteristic of the Romance languages and discussed in detail by Maiden (2018a, p. 44–83) has meant that the extension of the ‘preterite’ alternant has very often then overflowed into other tense-forms, but that does not prevent the original motivation of the spread being a tendency to create a consistent marker for ‘preterite’. In varieties such as Portuguese (cf. Table 2) where the original 1SG preterite alternant has spread everywhere in the preterite and the imperfect subjunctive *except*, sometimes, the 3SG preterite, we come full circle, in that what was once the general allomorph ends up being itself unique to the preterite. My speculation predicts that this alternant might itself begin to spread to other parts of the preterite, effectively reversing the original historical process, but I do not see any evidence of this.

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THE HISTORY OF A SINGLE-CELL ALLOMORPH:  
THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR OF THE ROMANCE PRETERITE*(Abstract)*

This study makes a novel descriptive generalization about the historical morphology of the Romance verbs. Regular sound change gave rise, in different Romance languages and in different forms, to a type of allomorphy restricted to the first person singular preterite. While the facts are well described in the literature, these allomorphs show a common diachronic trend which has never been noticed. Despite their paradigmatic 'isolation', they tend not only to survive but to be extended to other parts of the preterite and even beyond. This study offers some brief speculation on the reasons for this behaviour, and calls for more extensive comparative study on the diachrony of 'single-cell allomorphs' in the world's languages.

**Key words:** *allomorphy, metaphony, palatalization, Romance, preterite.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *alomorfism, metafonie, palatalizare, limbi romanice, perfect/preterit.*

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