Chapter 6

ESSERE/STARE AS A ROMANCE PHENOMENON

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The contrast between the reflexes of *ESSERE-SEDERE and STARE in Castilian has received a great deal of attention from scholars, chiefly because of the elusiveness of any general principle which will satisfactorily describe their distribution.[1] Latterly, interest in the Catalan development (Falk 1979) has revealed discrepancies between different varieties of the language which must betoken an interestingly unstable state of affairs, and has also called attention to the differences between Castilian and Catalan usage. Yet comparative study should not be limited to the Iberian Peninsula: the Romance-wide importance of the *ESSERE/STARE contrast to which Peral Ribeiro (1958) pointed is worthy of closer scrutiny, as much for what it can suggest about the nature of linguistic change as for illumination of the Ibero-Romance phenomena.

It is nevertheless in Castilian that the *ESSERE/STARE contrast has been developed most fully, and it is as well briefly to survey the data in this language before embarking on a wider study. In my view, if we are to achieve a satisfactory description of the usage of ser and estar in modern Castilian we must roundly reject the seductive possibility of seeing in the superficial lexical unity of these verbs a deeper semantic unity. Each verb has several different usages, which are not (except, as we shall see, in purely historical terms) easily reconcilable.

We are therefore on safer ground if we begin by
looking simply at the various syntactic contexts in
which ser and estar can occur. Setting aside for
the moment the usages of the two verbs with prepos-
itional phrases, many of which have purely idiomatic
status, the picture may be summarised as follows:

(a) Ser is the only possibility with noun
complements.[2]

(b) Estar is the only possibility (except for a
very small number of principled exceptions[3]) with
locative adverbial complements.

(c) With a past participle, ser forms what may
be termed the 'action passive' while estar forms
what may be termed the 'resultant state passive'.
Castilian is hence able to make overt a distinction
which in many languages, English included, is covert.
In Castilian we have both

(1) a. Las proposiciones fueron [Preterite of ser]
        clavadas a la puerta (por Lutero)

        'The propositions were nailed to the door
        (by Luther)'

     b. Las proposiciones estaban [Imperfect of
        estar] clavadas a la puerta (*por Lutero)

        'The propositions were nailed to the door
        (*by Luther)'

The English translation is ambiguous between the
'action passive' reading, which is cognitively
synonymous with the active sentence '(Luther) nailed
the propositions to the door', and the 'resultant
state passive' reading, which renders the stative
result of the propositions having been nailed to the
door, and for which, in English as in Castilian, no
agent can be expressed.

(d) With an adjective complement, we may claim
as a general principle that the adjective following
estar cannot be construed syntactically as a nominal
or semantically as a classificatory or inherent
property: a simple but clear example is the contrast
between Juan está [estar] enfermo ('John is ill')
and Juan es [ser] enfermo ('John is an invalid,
belongs to the class of ill people, is inherently
ill'). Many adjectives used with estar have a
semantic force akin to that of a resultant state

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passive, e.g. estoy [estar] seguro ('I am sure;
something has happened to make me sure'). Others
represent a state through which a subject is passing,
e.g. la pera está [estar] verde ('the pear is green,
unripe'). Estar + adjective may also convey an
impression made on the speaker: ¡qué joven estás!
('How young you are, seem!').

　　　Characteristic of Castilian, then, is that it
has (a) different copular verbs for noun complements
and locative adverbial complements and (b) two sys-
tematically contrasting copulas with past participles
and adjectival complements.
　　　Portuguese ser and estar come tantalisingly
close to their Castilian counterparts in distribution
(which may explain the dearth of studies of the
phenomenon in this language); but there are differ-
ences. Castilian uses estar invariably with locative
adverbial complements, while in Portuguese estar is
used with such complements only when the subject of
the verb is animate, 'necessary' position of inanim-
ate subjects (see Querido (1976: 355-6)) requiring
most usually ser; thus:

(2)　a. Juan está [estar] en Lisboa
　　　　O João está [estar] em Lisboa
　　　　'John is in Lisbon'

　　　b. Lisboa está [estar] en Portugal
　　　　Lisboa é [ser] em Portugal
　　　　'Lisbon is in Portugal'

With adjectives the contrast between Castilian and
Portuguese is rather more difficult to establish.
Peral Ribeiro (175-6) discusses a number of examples,
concluding that the difference between the two lan-
guages is one of 'tendência': Portuguese allows, for
example, both Os seus olhos estão [estar]/são [ser]
cheios de caridade e de doçura ('Her eyes are full
of love and sweetness'), whereas Castilian only
accepts Sus ojos están [estar] llenos de caridad y
de dulzura. It is interesting that Portuguese can
use ser in precisely those cases which have some-
times been considered to constitute 'illogical' uses
of estar in Castilian, i.e. where the adjective or
adjectival past participle, though representing a
'resultant state', also represents an inherent
property. In Castilian it is the 'resultant state'
idea which seems to take precedence; in Portuguese,
it is the idea of inherentness.

Catalan must also be discussed at this stage,
since here too it can be claimed that there is a
systematic contrast between ésser and estar. However,
the distinction appears to have a different basis
from that encountered in Castilian and Portuguese.
With locative adverbial complements estar occurs
with, or implies, a durative adverbial of fixed-time
duration, while ésser carries no such implication:

(3) a. Estarem [estar](dues hores) a Barcelona
        'We shall be, stay, (two hours) in Barcelona'

     b. Som [ésser] a Barcelona
        'We are in Barcelona'

For some commentators, notably Badia Margarit (1962:
145ff.) the same aspectual distinction holds with
adjective complements too, although this has recent-
ly been disputed by Falk (112ff.), who proposes that
a subcategory of stative adjectives normally require
estar when they occur with an animate subject (e.g.
content 'happy', tranquil 'quiet', alegre 'happy',
malalt 'ill'). However, the implication of 'fixed
time duration' and compatibility with 'fixed time'
durative adverbials remains a feature of these ad-
jectives when used with estar. With past participle
complements, modern Catalan appears genuinely to be
in a state of flux: Badia (156) perceives a tendency
to prefer estar, thus creating a resultant state
passive as in Castilian; the conservative Vallcorba
(1978: 110) admits only ésser in sentences like
el gerro és [ésser] trencat 'the jug is broken' -
obligatorily el jarro está [estar] roto in Castilian)
in line with older usage. But in one written text I
examined[4] the Castilian-like usage was clearly
dominant.
    Moving now to the historical perspective, we
may say that what has happened in the Ibero-Romance
languages is as follows: (a) STARE has weakened to
a point at which it is almost entirely copular in
function (though still strongly marked for aspect in
Catalan); (b) STARE has encroached on some of the
functions originally fulfilled by *ESSERE. The
process is in origin comparable to the history of
verbs like stand and rest in English, which also show
some movement towards copular status in fixed exp-
ressions like stand corrected and rest assured.
Hints not only of the beginning of this process but
of its becoming fairly entrenched in the linguistic
systems of Romania are widely distributed:

A. Examples of the semantic weakening of STARE:

(a) The notion 'stand', one of the meanings, if not the chief meaning, of CL STARE, is everywhere rendered by a strengthening paraphrase: Fr. être debout, se tenir, Cast. estar de pie, It. stare in piedi, Rum. a sta în picioare.

(b) The reflex of STARE can have a meaning inconsistent with 'stand' or can combine with past participles or adverbs which are inconsistent with the meaning 'stand': Cast. estar sentado, Cat. estar assegut, It. stare seduto, all with the meaning of 'be seated'; Rum. a sta in the sense of 'sit'.

B. Examples of the participation of STARE in verbal paraphrases and idioms:

(a) Continuous verb-forms: Cast. estar cantando, Ptg. estar a cantar, estar cantando, Cat. estar cantant, It. stare cantando, Rum. a sta şi....

(b) Immediate future ('to be on the point of...'): Cast. estar para cantar, Ptg. estar para cantar, Cat. estar per cantar, It. stare per cantare, Rum. a sta să + subjunctive.

(c) With IN, meaning 'to consist of': Cast. estar en, Ptg. estar em, Cat. estar en, It. stare in.

(d) With BENE, meaning 'to suit': Cast. estar bien, Ptg. estar bem, Cat. estar bé, It. stare bene, Rum. a sta bine. STARE is used generally with BENE, MALE and their comparatives.

C. With adjective complements. It is interesting to note the 'favouring' of STARE with certain adjectives in Italian and Rumanian, creating in embryo the kind of situation that today obtains with adjective complements in Catalan. In Italian, the adjectives tend to represent mental states, the most common being tranquillo 'quiet', comodo 'comfortable', zitto 'quiet', fresco 'in trouble' and attento 'alert'; associated with the locative function of stare are solo 'alone' and fermo 'motionless'. The Rumanian list is semantically similar: liniştit 'quiet', trist 'sad', posomorît 'gloomy', îngîndurat 'pensive', and the locative nemişcat 'motionless' and ţintuit 'motionless' (literally, 'nailed'). Copceag and Escudero (1966: 347-8) call attention

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to the use of a sta with negative past participles
formed with the prefix ne-, which are used adject-
ivally with much the same force as the Castilian
resultant state passive: necitit 'unread', nelocuit
'unlived in', nemaritat 'unmarried', etc.

However, the Castilian-Portuguese development
in which STARE is shorn of full lexical value in its
progress towards pure copular status is not the only
development of interest in the history of STARE.
In Classical Latin, the semantic range of STARE is
fairly circumscribed; three full meanings can be
established, which I shall refer to as 'stand'$_1$
(with animate subject, opposed to 'sit'), 'stand'$_2$
(with inanimate subject, in the general sense of
'be situated') and 'stay'. Examples are:

(4)   a. Hi stant ambo, non sedent (Plautus, Capt.,
          prol. 1 sq.)
          'They both stand, they do not sit'

      b. ... quorum statuae steterunt in rostris
          (Cicero, de Or., 2,86,353)
          '... whose images stood on the tribune'

      c. ... qui domi stare non poterant (Cicero,
          Fl., 6,13)
          '... who were unable to stay at home'
          (Examples from Lewis and Short (1879: 1762-3)

Although Peral Ribeiro (149-50) and Bourciez
(1967: 253) have been able to select suggestive
examples of the use of STARE from Latin texts, it
must be stressed that STARE is in comparison with
estar in the modern Ibero-Romance languages by no
means common in either Classical or Vulgar Latin
documents. Plautus' Aulularia, for instance, yields
only one (triple) example, with the clear meaning of
'stand'$_1$; at the other end of the Latin period,
Gregory of Tours' Historia Francorum has no examples
at all in a sample I took consisting of the first
two books. The Vulgate is more rewarding, where
STARE regularly renders Greek ἱστημι, but otherwise
appears not to have substantial motivation; and the
Peregrinatio Aetheriae has eleven examples in the
first book, all with the meaning of 'stand'$_1$ or
'stand'$_2$, and all with an overt locative adverbial
complement (see Ernout (1954: 214)). Generally in
Romance, we find a marked increase in the frequency
of STARE, even outside the Iberian Peninsula, and
an expansion of its range of full lexical meaning.

In Italian we may identify the new meanings 'wait',
'live', 'stop', 'take time' and, with di, 'abstain
from' -- meanings which interestingly are all para-
lleled in Catalan, where the process of copular-
isation, as we have seen, is not as advanced as in
Castilian and Portuguese:

(5)   'Wait': It. Dobbiamo andare o stare?
                   'Should we wait or go?'

             Cat. Quantes hores hi van haver d'estar?
                  'How long did you have to wait
                  there?'

      'Live': It. Dove sta di casa, Lei?
                   'Where do you live?'

             Cat. Ell ara s'està al carrer de Provença
                  'He lives in the Carrer de Provença
                  now'

      'Stop': It. Stette un po', poi scrisse la lettera
                   'He stopped a little, then wrote
                   the letter'

             Cat. Per nosaltres no estiguen: podeu
                  continuar
                  'Don't stop on our account: you
                  may continue'

      'Take time': It. Starà poco a tornare
                        'He'll be back soon'

             Cat. Per a fer això han estat
                  quatres hores!
                  'To do that they've taken
                  four hours!'

      'Abstain from': It. Non ha voluto starsene di
                           mangiare
                           'He didn't want to give up
                           eating'

             Cat. Jo m'estic d'anar-hi
                  'I won't go there'

      (Italian examples from Reynolds (1962); Catalan
       examples from Fabra (1977))

In summary, STARE undergoes one of three different types of fate in Romance. Castilian and Portuguese illustrate the first type, where it is retained as a copula, obligatory in certain contexts, and with a reduction in full lexical meaning. Italian and Rumanian, in different measures, represent the second type, where a range of full lexical meanings is retained and enlarged upon, although there is some development of copular and auxiliary functions too. Catalan and some dialects of Provençal appear to fall somewhere between the two. The third fate of STARE, illustrated conspicuously by French, is total disappearance. I will now examine the histories of these individual developments and suggest reasons for the divergences encountered across Romania.

Old French offers a pattern strongly reminiscent at first glance of the Italian type of solution. Here ester is the reflex of STARE, surviving today only in the archaic expression ester en justice 'to go to court'. Old French texts yield the following range of meanings and usages:

(6)   'Stand'$_1$:   Sur l'erbe verte estut devant sun
                 tref (Chanson de Roland, 671)
                 'He stood on the green grass in front
                 of his tent'

      'Stand'$_2$:   ⁺Desus un pui vit une vile ester
                 (Aymeri de Narbonne, 160)
                 'He saw a town standing below a hill'

      'Stay':   El camp estez, que ne seium vencuz
                 (Chanson de Roland, 1046)
                 'Stay in the field, let us not be
                 vanquished'

      'Stop':   ⁺Dameisele, estez! fet li nains
                 (Chrétien de Troyes, Erec et Enide,
                 163)
                 'Stop, mistress! said the dwarf'

      'Live':   ⁺Adam formas et puis Evain sa per;
                 En paradis les en menas ester.
                 (Le couronnement de Louis, 699)
                 'You created Adam and then Eve his
                 companion; you took them to live in
                 paradise'

Also, as a reflexive, 'stand still':

> Li emperere s'estut si l'escultat
> (Chanson de Roland, 2105)
> 'The emperor stood and listened'

(Examples marked [+] are taken from Tobler and Lommatzsch (1925-))

Also frequently attested is the widespread idiom laissier ester (cf. It. lasciare stare, Cat. deixar estar) 'let alone'; this expression survives in French for much longer than the simple verb.[5] But it is significant what ester has not achieved in Old French: there seem to be no examples of the widespread use of STARE with BENE, etc., and neither has a continuous verb-form with ester as an auxiliary developed (indeed, if Old French can be said to have a continuous form at all, it is constructed with estre - see Menard (1973: 131)). As one might expect, there are no examples of ester with past participle or adjectival complements. The failure of ester to achieve anything approaching auxiliary or copular status in Old French must surely be a major factor in its fall. Morphological factors may also contribute to its demise: ester clashed homophonically in the preterite with estovoir 'to be necessary' (estut, etc.) and in the first and second persons plural with the new analogical imperfect of estre (estiiens, estiiez). This latter clash prompted some scholars to see the new imperfect of estre as deriving from ester; but it is difficult to square the other person-number inflections of ester with this view (see discussion in Peral Ribeiro (156-7)).

The closeness of association between STARE and *ESSERE in the proto-Romance period is, however, revealed in morphological mergers elsewhere. In French, Catalan and Italian, STARE supplies the past participle of the *ESSERE paradigm, so that in Catalan and Italian the compound forms of estar/stare and ésser/essere are indistinguishable (e.g. Cat. ha estat, It. è stato). In Gascon, other replacements seem currently to be in progress: Ronjat (1937: 289) observes in Béarn, where esta already supplies the infinitive, the almost total eclipse of the houi (<FUI) preterite by estèi or estoui and the coexistence in the imperfect subjunctive of hóussi, estèssi and estóussi. The entry for està in Palay (1980: 465) further gives estau as a present form and estaràm as a future, together with seràt. Badia (1950) has interesting data from a neighbouring

Pyrenean dialect which shows an apparently more thoroughgoing mingling of the two verbs: here *ESSERE supplies the imperfect, imperfect subjunctive and conditional of STARE while STARE supplies the past participle and gerund of *ESSERE.[6]

The history of Provençal is instructive insofar as STARE appears to have suffered eclipse in several dialects in modern times[7] without there being the same possibilities for homonymic clash as were observed in Old French. Estar is attested in Old Provençal with a fair range of values, although 'stay' seems to be its principal meaning, and I have not come across a convincing example of 'stand'$_2$:

(7) 'Stand'$_1$: [+]Amors o fai si cum lo bons austors
Qe per talan no.is mou ni no.is debat,
Anceis esta entro c'om l'a gitat.
(Richart de Berbesill)
'Love behaves like the good hawk which is not disposed to move or flap but rather stays still until it is despatched'.

'Stay': ... et ab el estet tro que.l coms mori
(Vidas, 21)
'... and stayed with him until the count died'

'Stop': [=]Venen escridan: Estatz, baro (Roman de Gerard de Rossillon)
'They come shouting: 'Stop, sir'.

'Live': [=]Ieu am mais estar en Fransa (Rambaud de Vaqueiras)
'I prefer to live in France'

'Suit': [=]Conois que miels m'estai
Que si trop altament ames (G. Amiels)

'I know that it suits me better than if I loved too highly'

'Abstain from': [=]Seigner Conrat, eu sai dui rei qu'estan
D'ajudar vos; ara entendatz qui. (Bertrand de Born)
'Lord Conrad, I know two kings who do not assist you; now hear who they are'.

Also, as a reflexive, 'stand still':
+L'aygua s'estay, que non si mou (La vida
de Sant Honorat, 55,33)
'The water is still, it does not move'

(Examples marked + are taken from Levy (1894-
1924); those marked = from Raynouard (1838-44))

As in Old French, STARE seems to have failed to
form a continuous verb-form. Estar must have sur-
vived very much longer than French ester, however:
Mistral (1885) gives the meanings 'stay, 'live',
'suit', 'abstain from' and a number of set phrases,
including the adjectival complements siau 'quiet'
and segur 'sure', together with the ubiquitous
laissa esta 'let alone'. Alibert (1935) gives a full
paradigm for esta.
    Old Italian offers a significantly different
picture from Old French and Old Provençal, despite
similarities in the 'full' meanings of stare that
are encountered here as in the modern language.
But stare, in addition to forming the continuous
verb-form, is also regularly found with male and
bene and their comparatives, and with other adverbs
and adjectives which represent a mental, physical or
moral state:

(8)   a. Chi starebbe meglio di me se quegli denari
         fosser miei? (Decameron, 2,5)
         'Who would be better than me if that money
         were mine'?

      b. Deh, Rinaldo, perché state voi così pensoso?
         (ib., 2,2)
         'Come, Rinaldo, why are you so pensive?'

Some indication of the possible complements of stare
is shown in the Vocabolario degli Accademici della
Crusca (1738: 7.709ff.), which, illustrating from
Renaissance writers, gives a profile of many adject-
ives and past participles which combine with stare,
as well as adverbs and prepositions (avanti, dietro,
etc.; sopra, sotto, etc.) and even nouns (stare
boccone 'to be face down', stare carpone 'to be on
all fours', stare sicurtà 'to stand surety').
    Estar in Old Catalan has certainly not acquired
the virtuosity of Old Italian stare; at first sight
it is much more akin to its closer congener in Old
Provençal:

(9) 'Stand'$_1$: ... e.ls bons a la part dreta estar
                 farã... (from Russell-Gebbett (1965),
                 Text 41 1.33)
                 '... and he will make the righteous
                 stand on the right...'

     'Stand'$_2$: Mare, levat aqexa pedra que.us sta
                 devant, et auretz ayga. (ib., 48, 1.36)
                 'Mother, lift that stone that is in
                 front of you, and you will have water'.

     'Stay':   ... car yo.y stegui I mes per fetz
                 del Gran Cham. (ib., 53, 1.7)
                 '... for I stayed there a month on
                 business with the Great Khan'

     'Live':   Enaxi, un ladre estave en aquel
                 bosch... (ib., 54, 1.17)
                 'So, a robber dwelt in that wood...'

It must be pointed out that 'stay' is without doubt
the principal meaning of estar here, especially with
animate subjects; the meaning of 'stand'$_1$ is rare.
But already there are examples where a simple loc-
ative copula reading is not out of the question:

(10) ... lo corp stava alt en un arbre ab un form-
     atge en lo bech... (ib., 59, 1.38)
     '... the crow was high in a tree with a [piece
     of] cheese in its beak...'

Past participle complements are also found, usually
with estar in its 'full' meaning of 'stay':

(11) Tancats aqestes portes, estien tancades tro jo
     torn (ib., 48, 1.21)
     'Once these doors are shut, let them stay shut
     until I return'

although there does appear to be movement in later
texts towards the modern copular value (pace
Vallcorba (52-4)):

(12) L'adolorit Rei... estigué admirat del somni que
     fet havia (Tirant lo Blanch, ch.6)
     'The grieving king... was amazed by the dream
     he had had...'

     Simply on the evidence so far presented, it
seems to me that we may refute any suggestion that
the early Romance languages are fairly similar in

their adoption of the values of STARE. On the
contrary, there are already by the time of the first
texts slight but significant differences which will
be intensified as each language develops. In part-
icular, the later disappearance of French ester and
Provençal esta(r) is not simply a morphological
accident but is foreshadowed in the failure of STARE
to gain anything like the same ground in these
languages as it had gained in Italian and Catalan.
The history of STARE in Vulgar Latin cannot be a
uniform one, but must be a series of extensions of,
restrictions on and preferences for the different
meanings of the verb, together with the establish-
ing of certain privileges of occurrence which are
eventually to achieve syntactic significance.

It is in this frame of mind that we must turn
back now to the Peninsular developments of STARE.
We might suspect the nascent impact of STARE in
Castilian and Portuguese from a slight but signif-
icant morphological phenomenon: STARE is not drawn
into the suppletive *ESSERE paradigm at all here,
with the result that STARE and *ESSERE are to be
kept very distinct; instead SEDERE is the verb that
is drawn in to provide the infinitive ser and the
past participle sido of *ESSERE. It is interesting
to note the consequences for SEDERE, incidentally:
although seer continues itself as a copula for some
time, it is sentar (associated with the transitive
asentar<*ADSEDENTARE - see Corominas 1954: 188)
that by the end of the sixteenth century has in its
reflexive form taken over the meaning of 'sit (down)',
with estar sentado as 'sit, be seated'. In Catalan
and Italian, where there is no mingling of *ESSERE
and SEDERE, SEDERE remains intact as seure and
sedere respectively with its original meaning.
French seoir is superseded by s'asseoir, the motiv-
ating factor in disappearance here being possible
homonymic clash between the future of seoir and
estre in Old French (see Orr (1939: 262)).

Looking at early texts in Castilian and
Portuguese, it is clear that STARE has already
staked out for itself a preference for association
with locative adverbial complements to a much great-
er extent than in other Romance languages. Pace
Saussol (1978: 67), who claims that the use of ser
and estar with locative adverbial complements in the
Poema de mio Cid is arbitrary, I observed that in
this text estar almost never took an inanimate
subject - a clear favouring of the 'stand'$_1$ meaning;
it is true, however, that ser occurs with both ani-
mate and inanimate subjects, although with animate

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subjects it often has the overtone of 'arrive':

(13) Antes sere con vusco que el sol quiera rayar.
     (231)
     'I will be with you before the sun begins to
     shine'

My interpretation of the use of ser and estar at
this period of Old Castilian is that while both are
possible with animate and inanimate subjects in the
context of a locative adverbial complement, estar
tends to have a 'marked' meaning with inanimate
subjects and ser a 'marked' meaning with animate
subjects. Such a value for estar resembles modern
Portuguese, where a 'marked' meaning similar to
English 'stand' obtains:

(14) a. O banco é [ser] naquela rua
        'The bank is in that street'

     b. O banco está [estar] naquela rua
        'The bank stands in that street'

The same might be said of Old Portuguese, where
apparently inconsistent examples can be similarly
elucidated, e.g.:

(15) E, quando Alamafom, seu rey delles, que estava
     [estar] em Silves, sobe como aquellas companhas
     alli erão [ser], sahio a elles do lugar com a
     mais companha que pode, porque lhe dicerão que
     estava [estar] alli o mestre com todo seu poder,
     e ho mestre, como sobe que era [ser] fora,
     alçou-se loguo de sobre Paderna e veio-çe
     lançar sobre Silves. (Nunes (1970: 29))
     'And when Alamafom, their king, who was
     [unmarked] at Silves, knew that those troops
     were [had arrived] there, he went out to them
     from the place with all the forces he was able,
     because he had been told that the master was
     [unmarked] there with all his power, and the
     master, when he knew that he was [had moved]
     outside, rose then from above Paderna and came
     and threw himself on Silves'.

However, a weakened value of 'stand'$_1$ is not the
only meaning of estar in these early Castilian and
Portuguese texts; the sense of 'stay' still seems
to be present in some instances, e.g.:

(16) Firme estido Pero Vermuez, por esso nos
encamo... (Poema de mio Cid, 3629)
'Pedro Bermúdez stood [remained] firm, he was
not upset on that account...'

But I cannot agree with Peral Ribeiro's implication
(172) that the values of Old Portuguese estar are
similar to those of Italian stare; neither Castilian
nor Portuguese estar offer anything like the same
range of 'full' meanings evidenced for Italian stare
in early texts.
An interesting development in Portuguese part-
icularly, but visible to a certain extent in
Castilian and even Catalan, is the rise of alterna-
tive copulas which threaten to be rivals for estar.
The following table shows frequencies of Castilian
fincar, seer, yacer and quedar, Portuguese ficar,
seer and jazer and Catalan restar in 10,000 word
samples of selected texts.

Castilian:

Poema de Mio Cid (12th. Cent.)	SER 144	ESTAR 20	FINCAR 6 SEER 4 YAZER 4
El Conde Lucanor (early 14th Cent.)	SER 140	ESTAR 39	FINCAR 7 YAZER 1
La Celestina (late 15th. Cent.)	SER 129	ESTAR 37	QUEDAR(SE) 8

Portuguese:

Livro de Linhagens (mid 14th. Cent.?)	SER 257	ESTAR 19	FICAR 25 JAZER 9
Os Lusíadas (late 16th. Cent.)	SER 92	ESTAR 49	FICAR 12 JAZER 2

Catalan:

Libre de Contemplació (late 13th. Cent.)	ESSER 360	ESTAR 11	
Tirant lo Blanc (mid 15th. Cent.)	ESSER 245	ESTAR 39	RESTAR 7

(Instances of ser/ésser as a perfect auxiliary have not been
counted).

It can be seen that in the Portuguese Livro de
Linhagens text ficar in fact overtakes estar in
frequency; it appears with adjective complements at
a time when estar generally does not, e.g.:

(17) ... todo o campo ficou cheo de samgue e pedras
     que hi auia. (258)
     '... all the field was full of blood and stones
     that were there'

Ficar has of course survived fairly forcefully into
modern Portuguese, unlike its Castilian congener.
As a copula, it is an alternative for estar in con-
texts where estar genuinely contrasts with ser (with
past participle and adjective complements), but it
may in non-contrastive contexts also replace ser
itself. Thus as early as the Lusiads we find ficar
occurring with a noun complement:[8]

(18) ... fica herdeiro
     Um filho seu, de todos estimado... (3,90)
     '... a son of his, held in esteem by all,
     was heir...'

Ficar thus achieves a remarkable versatility as a
copula which Castilian quedar, the form which super-
seded fincar, by no means shares. Seer and jazer/
yacer make nothing like the same bid for copula
status: the former's demise, in its weak copular
function as in its 'full' meaning of 'sit', is ac-
counted for, as we have seen, by clash with ser;
the latter, now obsolescent and functioning only
with the 'full' meaning of 'lie', have lost their
weak copular value almost entirely. The importance
of ficar in the history of Portuguese once again,
therefore, denies us a generalisation about copulas
in the two most closely related Peninsular languages,
and underlines the capability of languages to devel-
op aleatory preferences.
     The early Romance development of *ESSERE and
STARE in the Iberian Peninsula can therefore be
visualised as a particular evolution of the values
of these verbs in Vulgar Latin, similar to, but not
identical with, developments in other Romance lang-
uages. The general Romance development involves
both extension and reduction of their values and
functions: the Castilian and Portuguese character-
istic is to weaken the 'full' values of STARE whilst
tending to grammaticalise its remaining functions,
whereas other Romance languages appear to have
extended its 'full' values and tended to avoid

grammaticalisation. The failure to grammaticalise at all, however, as in French, leads to disappearance.

It is important to pause at the early medieval stage of Romance, since subsequent developments in the Peninsular languages are going to complicate the general Romance picture and make these languages look much more different from their relatives than in fact they were at this time. The foundations of the modern developments are, however, laid. The crucial feature of medieval Castilian and Portuguese is that estar has achieved copular status and has become associated with locative adverbial complements and with animate subjects. Another tendency can also be faintly glimpsed in the earliest texts – the association of estar with metaphorical locative adverbial complements which represent moral position or state. Saussol (29-30) points to examples in the Poema de mio Cid, and in Portuguese instances can even be found in the early cantigas, which have nowhere near as high an incidence of estar as do the chronicles:

(19) e meteron-m'en seu poder
      en que estou [estar] ...   (J Soares Somesso)
      '... and placed me in her power in which I
      [now] am...'

In Castilian, such usage is very common by the time of El Conde Lucanor (early fourteenth century). Here, there is a tendency for ser to be associated with prepositional phrase complements consisting of de + Noun and estar with those consisting of en + Noun; but ser still seems to be an alternative to estar in the latter context; compare:

(20) a. ... et dixol que fuese çierto que era [ser]
          en muy grant peligro del cuerpo et de toda
          su fazienda...(58)
          '... and said to him that it was certain
          that he was in great danger of body and of
          all his estate...'

      b. ... consejól que tomase una manera commo
          podría escusar de aquel peligro en que
          estava [estar] ...   (59)
          '... advised him that he should find a way
          of getting out of the danger he was in'

We may note that while Italian texts of the medieval
period show no such predilection on the part of
stare for metaphorical locatives, Catalan texts show
estar as following in this regard its Peninsular
congeners. I cite an interestingly inconsistent
example from the Libre de Contemplació of Ramon
Llull:

(21) So per que, Sènyer, molt home veg que està
      [estar] en peccat e nol pot hom alterar ni
      mudar de vicis en vertuts,... e per assò, ab
      poca de diligencia e ab poca de devocio no pot
      hom alterar lome qui es [ésser] en grans
      peccats e en greus culpes.   (17)
      'And this, Lord, so that many a man should see
      that he is in a state of sin and he cannot be
      be changed, nor can vices be changed into
      virtues... and so, with little diligence and
      little devotion a man who is in a state of
      great sin and grave guilt cannot be changed'.

It is a short semantic step from a prepositional
phrase which expresses a state to a past participle
or adjective of similar value. These latter comp-
lement types take much longer to establish themselves,
however. In the texts I have sampled, the Poema de
mio Cid has no examples of past participle comple-
ments with estar; El Conde Lucanor has the sole
instance

(22) ... estó agora mucho afincado de mengua de
      dineros (85)
      '... I am at the moment very pressed through
      lack of money'

and although by the time of the Celestina examples
are more frequent, there are many cases in which a
past participle with apparently 'resultant state'
value is accompanied by ser, e.g.:

(23) En Dios y en mi ánima, que en ver agora lo que
      has porfiado y como a la verdad eres reducido,
      no parece sino que vivo le tengo delante. (72)
      'By God and my soul, seeing now how you have
      argued and how you have come round to the truth,
      it seems that he is standing alive in front of
      me'.

Keniston (1937: 472) traces the demise of ser in
this context through the sixteenth century. Only
the most marginal examples of adjective complements

with estar occur until fairly late on in the medieval
period: thus in El Conde Lucanor I noted

(24) Quando el philósopho que estava cativo... (58)
     'When the philosopher who was captive...'

where the choice of estar is most likely to be det-
ermined by an understood locative adverbial (see
Saussol (39-40) on similar examples in the Poema de
mio Cid). Even in the Celestina, adjectives with
estar are in a significant minority, and are clearly
linked with the idea of 'resultant state' - espantado
'frightened', ensañada 'annoyed' (themselves past
participles), perplejo 'perplexed', discorde 'out of
tune', loco 'gone mad' and lleno 'full'. The
Castilian chronology seems to be paralleled by
Portuguese. But Catalan quite noticeably lags be-
hind its neighbours. No examples of estar with past
participle complements emerged from the Llull sample
I examined, although there were clear instances in
the fifteenth century Tirant lo Blanc, e.g.:

(25) ... hages bona confianca que lo Fill e la Mare
     t'ajudaran en aquesta gran tribulació en què
     posat estàs. (127)
     '... have confidence that the Son and the
     Mother will assist you in this great tribulation
     in which you are now placed'.

Genuine adjective complements with estar were not
even to be found in Tirant.
     The extension of estar to past participle comp-
lements in Castilian, Portuguese and Catalan makes
possible the development of a systematic opposition
between *ESSERE and STARE in the form of the action
passive and the resultant state passive. It seems
that Catalan is slower to achieve this, no doubt
because of the continuing importance of estar in its
'full' meaning of 'stay'. But achieve it it even-
tually does, and thereby takes the critical step that
sets it on the same path as Castilian and Portuguese.
The further development that we have noted in modern
Catalan towards estar becoming associated with
adjective complements is not necessarily attributable
solely to Castilian interference (although of course
it may be, as Falk contends); it may simply repres-
ent the later 'drift' of Catalan towards a Castilian-
like situation.[9] The remarkable similarity of
Castilian and Portuguese (and there is no reason
here to assume mutual interference - there are,
after all, a number of dissimilarities in the

development of copular patterns in the two languages)
may be accounted for by the early achievement by
STARE of copular status in both languages, and by
subsequent simultaneous expansion by 'drift' to more
contexts. Once the systematic opposition between
*ESSERE and STARE is reached, it is natural that
these languages should capitalise on it. It is
interesting to observe that as the domain of estar
is being marked out in the three Peninsula languages
under review, so that of ser/ésser is undergoing
restriction. In particular, the use of ser/ésser as
perfect auxiliaries is on the wane, (cf. Vincent,
this volume) so that in all the modern languages the
only perfect auxiliary is for Castilian haber, for
Portuguese ter (archaically haver) and for Catalan
haver. This means that there is a very clear formal
opposition in these languages between ser/ésser +
past participle, which functions only as an action
passive, estar + past participle, the resultant
state passive, and ter/haber/haver + past participle,
the perfect. Overall, estar is therefore able to
compete, so to speak, very forcefully with ser/ésser.
This contrasts with the Italian situation, where the
frequency of essere is extremely high, due to its
use not only as a copula and action passive auxil-
iary, but also as the perfect auxiliary for all
intransitive and reflexive verbs (and, in combina-
tion with ci, as the existential verb). Signific-
antly, the generalisation of Catalan haver as the
perfect auxiliary is rather later than in Castilian
and Portuguese. While in the Celestina sample I
examined there were only three examples of ser still
being used as a perfect auxiliary[10] and many exam-
ples of haber being used as the auxiliary for
intransitive verbs, in Tirant the rule still seems
to be that intransitives and reflexives take ésser.
Obviously this hypothesised dependency between the
expansion of estar and the falling of ser/ésser as a
perfect auxiliary should not be taken too far - it
is well to remember that Rumanian has generalised
the auxiliary too, yet here a sta has not progressed
as far as in Ibero-Romance (though Copceag and
Escudero (349) optimistically suggest that Rumanian
may be on the way to a Castilian-like situation).
But it is a factor which may well play a rôle in the
encouragement of the development of STARE.

In conclusion, it is clear that the histories
of *ESSERE and STARE should be thought of as a
Romance, rather than as simply an Ibero-Romance,
phenomenon. All the Romance languages present at
the early medieval stage individual and interesting

distributions of the two verbs which suggest the
development of much earlier preferences during the
Vulgar Latin period. The motivation for these early
choices seems scarcely to run deeper than general
semantics, extension and restriction of fields of
reference operating more or less haphazardly, but
with a general drift towards the proliferation of
copular verbs. The crucial association of STARE
with locative adverbials, which takes place in vary-
ing degrees in the three main Peninsular languages,
ensures the strength of estar there and paves the
way for association with other contexts. Morpholog-
ical developments, such as the obsolescence of seer,
and syntactic developments, such as the generalis-
ation of a perfect auxiliary, conspire to create the
opposition between ser/ésser and estar that we know
today. And it is precisely this interplay of seman-
tic and morphosyntactic factors that has produced
the complex synchronic situation in the Peninsular
languages and the intriguing similarities and dis-
similarities in their development.

NOTES

1. A convenient annotated bibliography of the
chief contributions to the topic appears in Navas
Ruiz (1977: 97-114).
2. Counterexamples to this very general rule
have been proposed. They fall into two categories:
(a) usages which appear to be elliptical and are not
spontaneously accepted by all native speakers, e.g.
El mar está espejo ('the sea is [like] a mirror')
= el mar está [hecho un] espejo ('the sea is [has
been] made a mirror'), (b) one or two idioms, e.g.,
estar pez de ('to be ignorant of').
3. These are: (a) sentences in which the subject
of the copula represents an 'event', e.g., la
reunión es en el Aula Magna ('the meeting is in the
Great Hall'), (b) cleft structures, e.g., donde se
reúnen los ministros es en el Palacio Real ('where
the ministers are meeting is in the Palacio Real'),
where the collocation of copula and locative adverb-
ial is merely a surface phenomenon.
4. In a sample consisting of the first four
chapters of Mercè Rodoreda's La plaça del Diamant
(Club Editor, Barcelona, 1962), I found 11 clear
examples of the resultant state passive usage with
estar as against one with ésser.
5. Huguet (1946) gives the phrases ester sur
les piedz, ester à droict and laisser ester as sur-
viving in sixteenth century French; ester is not

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attested, however, in Rickard (1968).

6. Unfortunately, the data Badía presents is too restricted to admit of principled description. Although he speaks (135) of 'confusión de usos entre ser y estar', his examples of estar being used for ser all involve the infinitive, which may only indicate that, as in the Béarnais dialects I have referred to, estar supplies this form for the *ESSERE paradigm too.

7. Two well-known course books in modern Provençal, Bayle (1980) and Bazalgues (1975), make no mention of esta. I found no instance of the verb in a sample of Mistral's prose I examined.

8. Castilian estar also progressed in this direction: Bouzet (1953: 42-3) and Keniston (475) locate sporadic examples of noun complements.

9. Cf. Badia (1964: 66): '... no hem de veure, en aquesta extensió desmesurada d'estar, un castellanisme sistemàtic, sinó que molt sovint es tracta de les darreres etapes d'una evolució que el castellà realitzà en poc de temps, però que en català ha estat lenta i laboriosa'.

10. With pasar, caer and venir; two of these examples are undoubtedly the result of 'balancing' against passives:

Deshecho es, vencido es, caído es... (65)
'He is undone, conquered, [has] fallen...'