

Article

# On the Latin Origins of Spanish *mediante*

Esther Artigas

Departament de Filologia Clàssica, Romànica i Semítica, Universitat de Barcelona, 08007 Barcelona, Spain; eartigas@ub.edu

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to contribute to the clarification of the linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances that accompany the emergence and behavior of *mediante* in the first centuries of Spanish. To this end, the origin of the Latin participle *medians*, *mediantis* is examined and the evidence of its ablative form *mediante* in various contexts is also analysed and discussed. We conclude from our study that (1) the appearance of *mediante* in Latin takes place at a relatively late stage of Latin, it having entered the language as a grammatical calque from Greek; (2) in Latin, prepositional values of *mediante*, which do not necessarily originate from Latin absolute ablative clauses, are already detected; and finally, (3) discursive traditions and historical-cultural factors, in particular those developed in Patristic and Scholastic Literature, are fundamental for the understanding, not only of the evolution of *mediante* in Latin, but also of its introduction into Spanish.

**Keywords:** Latin *mediante*; grammatical calque; participle clause; prepositional value; discursive tradition

## 1. Introduction

There is no dispute that *mediante*—a so-called improper, or imperfect, Spanish preposition—is derived from the Latin present participle *medians*, *-ntis* in absolute constructions. As it entered Spanish, it must have undergone a process of grammaticalization that led to the transcategorization from participle to preposition.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond these claims, the Latin origins of *mediante* have not been well defined, nor has their development in this language been sufficiently described and explained. This suggests not only a gap in the history of Latin which deserves consideration, but also deprives us of relevant data and the arguments necessary to explain the particular process of the incorporation of *mediante* into Spanish.

In this paper, therefore, we propose not so much a detailed history of *mediante* in Latin on the basis of an analysis and discussion of Latin examples and usage, but a contribution to the clarification of the linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances that accompany the emergence and behavior of *mediante* in the first centuries of Spanish.

To be clear, we aim to show that on the one hand, *mediante* is not a truly Latin verb. It appeared in Late Latin, having entered the language via a grammatical calque from Greek, specifically from the Bible. Nor does it seem that we should rule out the change represented by the calque in favor of one which involves a process of grammaticalization (cf. Garachana in this volume).

On the other hand, analyzing the meanings of *mediante* in its first appearances in Latin texts produces interesting and useful results which may be compared with those in the first centuries of Spanish: temporal value, when nouns denoting time are selected, and instrumental value and usages which derive from the instrumental in the remaining cases. At this point, the absolute character of the

<sup>1</sup> The statement is commonplace in all Spanish grammars; see [Sánchez López \(2014\)](#). On the grammaticalization process, see, among others, [Sánchez Lancis \(2001–2002\)](#) and [Castro Zapata \(2012\)](#).

constructions in which *mediante* appears should be discussed, since, as is well known, a participle in the ablative is not synonymous with an ablative absolute. We will see that the evolution of *mediante* in the direction of prepositional values does not originate in Latin absolute ablatives, but in other participial constructions, with a greater degree of integration in predication.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, we will show that already in Latin there are signs of the prepositional values of *mediante*, the consolidation of which, nevertheless, are indissociable from the growth of this form within Scholasticism. This finding should also serve as a basis with which to reexamine the explanation of the process of change by grammaticalization that is suggested for Spanish.

Finally, this paper aims to stress the importance of discursive traditions and historical-cultural factors in the evolution of linguistic units. The trajectory of Latin *mediante* allows us to distinguish two key moments on which we will focus: its appearance in the Patristic Period (between the 2nd century AD and the year 753), and the period represented by Scholasticism, (especially High Scholasticism, of the 13th and 14th centuries). By way of the Church Fathers, *mediante* entered Latin through a grammatical calque through contact with Greek. But the extension of *mediante* no doubt corresponds to the Scholastic period, when the syntactic reanalysis of this form occurred, as well as its establishment as a grammatical instrument for, among other things, the expression of cause. The repeated and intentional use of *mediante* in Scholasticism reveals once again the close link between linguistic change and discursive traditions (cf. Company 2008; Kabatek 2005; Llopis Cardona 2015). Thus, it seems appropriate for the explanation of the grammatical change not to limit oneself to strictly linguistic explanations, but to take into account historical and socio-cultural factors.

The singular history of *mediante* in Latin, from its appearance in Late Latin to its emergence within a very specific discursive tradition, has led us to organize this work chronologically and to center it in the periods and domains already mentioned. In part one (Section 2), we will document the late origins of the verb *mediare* and track its route into Latin. Then, in part two (Section 3), we will deal with its use and meaning across the Patristic Period. Part three (Section 4) is dedicated to the development and extension undergone by *mediante* in the High Scholastic period, especially the appearance of clear prepositional meanings. Finally, part four (Section 5) contains the author's conclusions.

## 2. Late Origins: First Evidence of *mediare*

An initial important point in the history of *mediante* is that the Latin verb *mediare*, to which the present participle *medians*, *mediantis* must be related, is not documented in the Latin of the ancient period; that is, neither in the Early nor in the Classical or Postclassical periods of the history of the language. In fact, the first examples we have are from Late Latin<sup>3</sup>.

A starting point in the trajectory of this verb is a passage from the *Vetus* version of the Bible which, as is well known, is the first Latin translation of the biblical text, which began on African soil not before the second half of the second century AD. The passage is from the Gospel of John (7:14), where it relates that Jesus, on his way through the lands of Galilee, went secretly to the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles; see example (1).

- (1) **Iam die festo mediante** ascendit Iesus in templum et docebat  
 Ἦδη δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς μεσοῦσης ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὸ ἱερόν καὶ ἐδίδασκεν  
 “Then **in the middle of the feast** Jesus went up to the temple and began to teach”

With the extreme formalism that characterizes the *Vetus Latina*, the text translates the corresponding Greek passage of the *Septuagint* entirely literally. It is not only a lexical calque, but also a strict

<sup>2</sup> Kortmann (1992, pp. 436–37) already showed that unrelated free adjuncts or dangling participles are also an important source of deparicipial prepositions.

<sup>3</sup> Latin examples adduced in this paper are extracted and quoted according to the corpus of Brepolis (CDL (n.d.): Cross Database Searchtool, Brepolis Library of Latin Texts Series A–B, Turnhout, Brepolis) and the THLL (1900–present): *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, Teubner, Stuttgart & Leipzig.

parallelism of the syntactic structure. In both cases, the statement is headed by an equivalent participle construction which diverges only in the obligatory case inflection: genitive in Greek, τῆς ἐορτῆς μεσοῦσης, and ablative in Latin, *die festo mediante*.<sup>4</sup>

A second piece of evidence, more or less immediate in chronology, is that of Irenaeus (ca. 130–202 AD), bishop of Lyon. The original Greek of his treatise *Against Heresies* has come to us in very fragmentary form, but we still have the Latin translation that followed the appearance of the Greek version. In it can be found the passage in example (2):

- (2) Omnes autem hi, multo posterius, **mediantibus iam ecclesiae temporibus**, insurrexerunt in suam apostasiam (Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus haereses* 3, 4, 3)  
 “All these, much later, **in the middle ages of the Church**, rose up in their apostasy”

The example, like the previous one, includes an incidental participial construction with the peculiarity that the agreement of the participle and its subject is made in the plural. Since its function is to explain *multo posterius*, it is clear that the value inferred is temporal: long after the institution of the church, having already exceeded half of its trajectory, in an already advanced stage.

This late appearance of *mediare* at the beginning of the Patristic Period, as well as its later diffusion in the same area, leads us to conclude that the verb *mediare* must have been introduced into Latin as a neologism from Greek as a lexical calque. It is true that in Latin, the existence of an adjective *medius*, of the corresponding adverb *medie* and even of the abstract *medietas*, could make the incorporation of this verb as a denominative not totally alien, but we can still assume that there may have been some difficulties of integration. On the one hand, as we shall see, the evidence at our disposal for the period between 200 AD and 753 is scarce. And to this we may perhaps add some indications of what might be considered problems of inadequacy. For example, in the passage Hebrews (6:17), where God is said to guarantee by oath the fulfillment of his purposes, the Vulgate version of St. Jerome regularized and corrected the predicate *mediavit iurationem* to *interposuit iurisiurandum*—quite clear, but less truly Latin—with which Vetus had calqued, two centuries before, the Greek ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκω.<sup>5</sup>

If we are right in thinking that we are dealing with the incorporation of a lexical item through a calque which was somewhat favored in Latin by the existence of closely related forms, it is not improbable also to attribute to that particular way of entry the predominant use of *mediare* in its participial form, which was fixed in the ablative as a faithful transfer, as we have seen in (1), of the corresponding genitive in Greek.<sup>6</sup> In other words, Latin, also protected by a very specific discursive tradition, would have derived from Greek not only the lexical item, but also the type of construction in which it is most often represented.

### 3. The Long Patristic Period

A brief search in the Brepols corpus for the Patristic Period allows us to verify that the forms of the present participle of *mediare* are much more frequent than the finite forms of this same verb or those corresponding to the perfect participle. Likewise, we can observe the preponderance of the singular ablative *mediante*, followed at a considerable distance by the plural ablative *mediantibus* in greater numbers than other grammatical cases; see Table 1.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this paper, we argue that in Latin, these structures constitute not so much absolute ablatives as locative ablatives of temporal location. This is not a problem for the translation of the Greek construction, especially because this language also allows the use of the genitive for the expression of time, as well. See Crespo et al. (2003, pp. 138–39).

<sup>5</sup> We find a quite similar situation in the psalter of Monte Cassino, 54, 24: *viri sanguinum et fraudis non mediabunt* (Gr. ἡμισεῦσων) *dies suos* “men [guilty] of bloods and deceit will not reach half their days.” The Vulgate version corrects *mediabunt* to *dimidiabunt*.

<sup>6</sup> Regarding the comparison and behavior of absolute constructions, cf. Coleman (1989, p. 364). Reproduction of Greek patterns in late Latin can be explored in Moreno Hernández (1996, p. 472).

**Table 1.** Occurrences of *mediare* in the Patristic Period.

Forms of <i>mediare</i>	# of Occurrences	Frequency per Million Words
Present participle in sg. ablative ( <i>mediante</i> )	52	1.70
Present participle in pl. ablative ( <i>mediantibus</i> )	4	0.13
Present participle, sg. and pl., in other cases	2	0.06
Perfect participle ( <i>mediatus, -a, -um</i> )	14	0.45
Finite forms	7	0.22

On the other hand, the data suggest that as *mediante* emerged, we have a fairly fixed construction in Latin and, moreover, one linked to a language with a markedly biblical and hermeneutic character, which had developed in response to pragmatic discursive needs within a particular discursive tradition.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.1. Senses and Meanings

For analysis of the conditions that triggered the prepositional value of *mediante*, in all likelihood in Latin itself, it is fundamental to note the meanings with which the verb *mediare* was incorporated from Greek into Latin.

As recorded in the corresponding entry in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, the examples that attest to the use of *mediare* in Latin show that this verb corresponds to at least two Greek verbs: μεσώω and (ἐ)μεσιτεύω.<sup>8</sup> The first is based on the adjective μέσος “midway between” and means “in the midst of.” The second, on the other hand, is based on the agentive noun μεσίτης “intermediary, mediator” (a noun which Latin imported in the form of *mediator* at the same time as the verb *mediare*) and which means, consequently, “to be in the middle, mediate, interpose” and, by extension, “intercede” and even “guarantee”. Thus, in Latin, two basic meanings are distinguished for *mediare*: one, exemplified in example (3), corresponds to the value of “being in the middle” and selects, as in Greek with the verb μεσώω, nouns that designate units or periods of time and events associated with such units or periods. The second value, which we find in example (4), translates Greek μεσιτεύω and draws on the sense of “being in the middle, to mediate”. Unlike the first, it presents practically no restrictions in the selection of its subject.

- (3) Pisces scorpiones rapulatos. Coquis in liquamen et oleo et cum **mediaverit coctura**, tolles. (Apicius, *Brevis ciborum* 7, 89, 21)  
 “Scorpion fish with turnips. You cook the scorpions in garum and oil, and **halfway through the cooking**, you take them out.”
- (4) haec enim deitas inhabitans operabatur, haec inhabitans **mediabat** utrique eorum (*Collectio Avellana: Epistulae* 263, 1)  
 “For this divine nature worked by dwelling within; dwelling within, it **mediated** between both thing (the soul and body of Christ)”

#### 3.1.1. The Expression of Time

As for the occurrences of this verb in the participial form *mediante*, which is the most common and the one that interests us the most, we see an identical distribution of values. In the first place, the form *mediante* participates, in participial constructions that select as subjects temporal nouns or nominalized events associated with temporal units, as can be seen in examples (5)–(7).

<sup>7</sup> For the concept of discursive tradition and the relevance of discursive traditions in the emergence and expansion of linguistic change, cf. Kabatek (2005). A good review of the issue is in Llopis Cardona (2015), particularly interesting in our case because, differences notwithstanding, the analysis of *in hoc sensu* runs along a route which is, in many respects, similar to that of *mediante*, highlighting the importance of Scholasticism in the emergence and consolidation of this grammatical particle.

<sup>8</sup> We ruled out ἡμισεύω, being quite residual, and also διακόπτω, since the meaning of “cut in half” does not turn out to be relevant in the development of *mediare* in Latin.

- (5) *inoculari ficus locis siccis Aprili, umidis Iulio mediante poterit, Octobri mense locis tepidis* (Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus, *Opus agriculturae* 4, 10, 32)  
 “The fig tree can be grafted in April in dry places, **in mid-July** in humid (places), in the month of October in temperate (places)”
- (6) *et agatur nona temperius mediante octava hora, et iterum quod faciendum est operentur usque ad vesperam* (Benedictus de Nursia, *Regula* 48, 6)  
 “The None must be done earlier, **at half past eight/in the middle of the eighth hour**, and then go back to work on what has to be done by vespers”
- (7) *Iam enim mediante epulo rex locutus est sacerdotibus qui aderant* (Gregorius Turonensis, *Historiarum libri X*, 8, 1)  
 “So, **halfway through the banquet**, the king spoke to the priests who were present”

It is, however, a rather minor use. Of the 52 examples of *mediante* obtained in this period, only on 11 occasions is a subject expressing time selected, of which, in addition, six correspond to evidence derived or related to the biblical text *die festo mediante*, which we have illustrated in (1). For its part, the ablative plural form *mediantibus*, documented on a total of four occasions, only appears with a temporal noun in the example previously cited in (2).

However, additionally, instances of the temporal value are also scarce in the later development of the prepositional value. Perhaps we can already anticipate some reasons for this.

In this type of syntagm, the temporal noun with which *mediante* agrees is encoded by an ablative of temporal location or ‘time at or during which’. The syntagm functions as an adjunct located on the periphery of the sentence, whose degree of integration with respect to the nuclear predication is uneven. Thus, in example (5), we have in *Iulio mediante* an ablative of temporal location which is fully comparable to the temporal complements *Aprili* and *Octobri mense* in the same sentence, which, syntactically, function as adjuncts subcategorized by *inoculari* “graft”. In contrast, in (1) and (7) the scope of the ablative syntagma, as a free constituent, is extended to encompass the entire sentence. In fact, in (1) and (7) *mediante* is inserted on a distinct syntactic level, since it is not a complement of the verbal predicate directly, but of the whole of the predication for which it provides temporal coordinates. It is no coincidence that the temporal ablative appears at the beginning of the sentence, as is often the case in Latin with the expression of the concomitant circumstances (for example, in absolute ablative clauses or in subordinates of the historical *cum* sentences). In our opinion, the possibility of left-dislocation of these temporal complements may well have slowed down the evolution of *mediante* toward prepositional uses, as the syntactic level on which it is situated does not favor the creation of the points of integration which are necessary for such meanings to surface.

With specific regard to the participle, we should note that, with nouns denoting time, it is lexicalized as an adjective, functioning at the level of the noun phrase, not the level of the sentence. As an adjective, it indicates that the noun has the characteristic of “being in the middle” of the space that the noun represents. In this sense, the behavior of *mediante* is totally comparable in Latin to that of the adjective *medius*, an adjective which, as we have pointed out above, would have already formally favored the entry of the participle into the Latin language. Recall that the adjective *medius*, along with other locative adjectives (*imus*, *summus*, *ultimus*, etc.), can refer in Latin to the noun in its entirety or affect only a part of it. Thus, *medius mons* can mean “the middle mountain” or, with the partitive meaning, “the mountain in its middle,” that is, “the middle of the mountain”. This second sense of *medius*, which is partitive in nature, is shared with the meaning *mediante* has as an adjective of temporal location. We can exemplify what we are saying with these two passages of Gregory of Tours, see (8) and (9), where *medio* and *mediante* refer to half of the month to which they modify:

- (8) *Nam medio mense XI. adveniens, ( ... ) Pelagium papam perculit et sine mora extinxit.* (Gregorius Turonensis, *Historiarum libri X*, 10, 1)  
 “And when **the middle of the eleventh month** came, ... he struck Pope Pelagius and killed him without delay”

- (9) Sol eclypsin pertulit **mense VIII. mediante** (Gregorius Turonensis, *Historiarum libri X*, 10, 23)  
 “The sun suffered an eclipse **in the middle the eighth month**”

Finally, the fact that *mediante* does not develop verbal functions and behaves as a mere adjective prevents the noun with which it combines from having an active value. Therefore, in this type of clause, the syntactic and semantic behavior of *mediante* is equivalent to that of the mediopassive participle *mediato*. This is also related to the fact that in Late Latin, the present participle served to express not only a temporal relation of simultaneity, but also of an anteriority which in our examples (1) and (7) is marked, additionally, by the adverb *iam*.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the translation into Latin of the Greek aorist participle, this possibility compensated for the deficiency in Latin of an active perfect participle.<sup>10</sup>

To exemplify this, it is very significant how St. Augustine gathers and glosses, in three almost consecutive paragraphs of his *Treatises on the Gospel of St. John*, the sequence *die festo mediante* in our example (1), in order to clarify that the feast does not refer to a single celebration but to a succession of them, namely eight.<sup>11</sup>

- (10) a. docebunt sic eum adscendisse **mediato die festo**, id est **mediatis illis diebus** (Augustinus Hipponensis, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 28, 8)  
 “So shall they teach that he went up **in the midst of the feast**, that is, **in the midst of those days**”  
 b. adscendit autem postea, ut euangelium loquitur: **mediato die festo**, id est, cum iam illius diei festi tot dies praeteriissent quot remansissent (Augustinus Hipponensis, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 28, 10)  
 “Then he went up, as the gospel explains, **mid-feast**, that is, when the feast had gone for as many days as still remained”  
 c. adscendit ergo postea dominus ad diem festum, **mediante die festo**, et docebat (Augustinus Hipponensis, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* 29, 1)  
 “Then the Lord went up to the feast days, **in the middle of the feast days**, and began to teach”

### 3.1.2. From Instrument to Means, Mediation, Agent and Cause

The second sense which we have noted for *mediante*, namely that of interposition, which was brought into Latin from the Greek μεστρεύω ‘to be in the middle, to mediate, to interpose’, can be documented somewhat more widely throughout the Patristic Period, and also has a greater influence in the development of prepositional uses. The most general sense we get from the examples considered is, as we say, that of mere “interposition”, that is, the “situation in the middle” of the noun agreeing with *mediante*, which can be both inanimate (tangible or intangible) or animate (generally human).

- (11) In inferiore uero parte urbis, ubi templum in uicinia muri ab oriente locatum ipsique urbi transitu peruio **ponte mediante** fuerat coniunctum (Beda Venerabilis, *De locis sanctis* 2, 53)  
 “In the lower part of the city, where the temple had been placed in the vicinity of the wall to the east and had been attached to the city itself with an accessible passage, **with a bridge that was in the middle/by means of a bridge**”  
 (12) Non mirandum est, si uel de deo uel de homine probe non sentiant, qui utrumque a se **odio mediante** longinquant (Claudianus Mamertus, *De statu animae* 1, 1)  
 “It is not surprising if those who distance themselves from one another **as a result of the hatred between them/because of hatred**, do not think well either of God or of man”

<sup>9</sup> For the usage of *iam* as method for positioning a time interval on the timeline of the speaker, cf. Torrego (2010), pp. 14–15).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lorenzo (1998), pp. 43–44). Moreover, Coleman (1989), p. 371, n. 29) recalls that with deponent verbs, postclassical Latin often used the present participle (*ingrediens*) where a perfect active participle (*ingressus*) was available. In this regard, and with respect to *mediare*, it is worth recalling that the grammarian Charisius cites, in an exhaustive list of deponent verbs, a verb *medior* whose meaning is explained as *in medio esse* (Flavius Sospater Charisius, *Artis grammaticae libri V* p. 479, l. 22).

<sup>11</sup> Anselmus Laudunensis, *Glosae super Iohannem* 7, 14: *iam die festo mediante (quia per octonos dies agebatur hæc solempnitas) ascendit Iesus in templum et docebat.*

- (13) Unde **mediante uiro inlustri Lupone** duce per iussionem supra fati gloriosi principis Childerici haec omnia, que superius abentur inserta, in omnibus conseruari conuenit. (*Concilia Galliae* 511–695: *Concilium Modogarnomense a. 662–675*, SL 148A, p. 313)

“Thus, **by means/throught the offices of the illustrious Duke Lupo** by order of the glorious prince Childeric above mentioned, it is agreed to observe completely all these things stated above”

Although it may be thought that formally we are dealing with absolute participial clauses, consideration of these examples soon reveals the limited independence of constructions from the main phrase in which they are inserted.<sup>12</sup> It becomes clear that in (11) and (12), the nouns *ponte* and *odio*, on which the quality *mediante* is predicated, appear closely linked to the predicates “be attached” and “distance themselves” from their respective sentences, in respect of which they act as sociative-instrumental ablatives, as is typical of the argument structure of verbs that express notions of union or conciliation and their opposites. Thus, unlike the temporal values to which we have just referred, where the possible dislocation of the construction makes it more easily identifiable, here the connection established by the sociative-instrumental ablative (and its derived uses, especially the causal) with the predicate of the sentence undoubtedly constitutes a factor which favors the interpretation of *mediante* as a preposition:

to attach with a bridge in the middle → to attach by means of a bridge

(Material value, of means, with tangible things)

distance by the hatred interposed → distance because of hatred

(Figurative value, of cause, with abstract concepts)

The scope of *mediante* in these constructions is reduced to a noun: *pons* in (11), *odium* in (12) and *uir* in (13). That is to say, *mediante* in these cases is a constituent of the sentence; hence, it can express various semantic relationships between the construction in which it is inserted and the main sentence, and functions similarly to a preposition. Apart from the meaning, different syntactic behavior marks the difference between the temporal *mediante* and the *mediante* of means, since the former does not require the same integration in the sentence as the latter. When we say, returning to example (5), in mid-July, that is to say, when July is halfway through, the references we use to establish this notion of half do not exceed the limits of the temporal noun: we are speaking of half of the space between the 1st and 31st of July. Therefore, *mediante* or “in the middle” is related only to the temporal noun and not to the syntactic context of the sentence of which it is part. In a very different way, in (11), with *ponte mediante*, we are not referring to the middle of the bridge, but indicating that its position is more or less equidistant between the external references to it: the temple and the city, so that *mediante* or “in the middle of” establishes a syntactic and also semantic relationship with the predicate of the sentence, just as a prepositional phrase would do.

Again, the behavior of *mediante* with instrumental ablatives refers to the use of the adjective *medius*, this time when it affects the noun in its entirety: *medius mons* does not mean in these cases “the middle of the mountain” but “the mountain in the middle.” In fact, it is a question not so much of a different meaning of the adjective as a of different designation of the noun: the concept “mountain” is here designated as a class of entities and the adjective *medius* selects the one having the “middle” quality (Tarriño Ruiz 2009, p. 267).

Deserving of separate consideration are the cases in which *mediante* appears with a noun that refers to people and also to human qualities or attributes. These are usually in a hybrid context in which *mediante* allows for a reading with the basic meaning of “being in the middle”, as well as a reading that implies the extension of that sense to the notion of “intervention or intercession”. This

<sup>12</sup> We cannot ignore the difficulty, which has been abundantly demonstrated, in drawing precise boundaries between the constructions known as absolutes and those participles in concordance with distinct types of the ablative, especially those of concomitant circumstances. Cf., for example, Serbat (1979, pp. 353–54).

depends, in fact, on the noun which refers to the animated entity being seen either simply as the vehicle through which the predicate of the sentence acts or as the effective agent of mediation.

In the first of these possibilities, we are dealing with constructions whose syntactic and semantic characteristics are identical to those indicated above for examples (11) and (12). Thus, in the example (13), even though we have an animated feature [+ human], Duke Lupo's agentive ability is not verified, since it is not his function to observe the things prescribed by Childerico but to serve as a channel or vehicle for them to be observed. Likewise, in (14), Moses fulfills the role not of active mediator but of intermediary. Nor in (15) can the human attribute *anima* be considered an agent.

(14) Quod nimirum ueritas semper esse suum ut nobis, utcumque infunderet **Moyse mediante** insinuat dicens: ego sum qui sum (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob* 4, 32)

"Undoubtedly, the truth reveals that this is always his nature, whatever may be the way in which it has been imparted to us **through Moses**, when he said: I am who I am"

(15) miror autem tibi uideri sonitum uocis illius, qua dictum est: tu es filius meus, non **mediante anima** sed diuino nutu sola corporali natura sic fieri potuisse (Augustinus Hipponensis, *Epistulae* 169, 44, 3)

"I am surprised that you think that the sound of that voice with which it was said: You are my Son, could not had been be produced **by the soul** but by divine will under a purely corporeal nature"

In contrast, on other occasions, the agentive reading is imposed quite clearly; that is, the effective agentivity of the name that accompanies *mediante* is verified. Correspondingly, in these cases, *mediante* usually demonstrates a verbal behavior. Far from the merely adjectival function of the previous examples, it can be seen in (16) and (17) respectively that *mediante* develops the complements *cum possessoribus* and *inter carnem deumque*.

(16) aut eorum carpenta itinere longiore quassantur aut animalia attrita languescunt, **te custode atque mediante cum possessoribus** sine aliqua oppressione mutantur (Cassiodorus, *Variarum libri duodecim* 5, 10, 15)

"If the carriages are broken because of a road that is too long, or if the animals languish, through tiredness, **with you acting as a guardian and mediating with the owners**, they can be replaced without any pressure"

(17) Et filius ergo dei nascitur ex uirgine non principaliter soli carni sociatus, sed **anima inter carnem deumque mediante** generatus. (Rufinus, *Expositio symboli* 11)

"Thus, the Son of God is born of the Virgin not united directly to the flesh, but generated **with the soul mediating between the flesh and God.**"

In spite of what has been discussed so far, in the Patristic Period, we also find cases of absolute constructions with *mediante*, but these correspond in their entirety to lexicalized expressions that select God as the subject: *Deo mediante*, *Domino mediante*, *Christo mediante*, and are quite unproductive in Latin.

### 3.2. In Search of Other Values

The differentiation of senses and meanings of *mediante* that we have been discussing from the Patristic Period does not seem to be bound to a particular order of the constituents of the construction. Examples are distributed 50-50 between SV and VS orders, and many highlight the irrelevance of order, be they temporal senses, as in (18), or sociative-instrumental ones, as the frequent occurrences of *anima* in (19) show.

(18) a. Iam **die festo**, ait, **mediante** ascendit dominus in templum (Petrus Chrysologus, *Collectio sermonum* 85, line 9)

b. Sic die festo mediante ascendit dominus in templum (*ibid.* line 15)

c. quia Iesus [ . . . ] **mediante die festo** [ . . . ] ambulauit (*ibid.* 85bis)

- (19) a. uerbum autem incommutabile [...] particeps carnis effectum est rationali **anima mediante** (Augustinus Hipponensis, *Epistulae* 140, 44, 4)  
 b. tu es filius meus, non **mediante anima** sed diuino nutu (*ibid.* 169, 44, 3)  
 c. Propterea namque deus corpori **anima mediante** commixtus est (Dionysius Exiguus, *Exempla sanctorum patrum* 88)  
 d. et qui immensus est, capitur **mediante anima** deo et carni (*ibid.* 90)  
 e. qui **mediante anima**, in eius utero fieri dignatus est per humanitatem corpus. (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob* 18, 20)  
 f. Carnem quippe diuinitas **anima mediante** suscepit (*ibid.* 31, 23)  
 g. cum unigenitus dei filius in seipso intra uterum uirginis **mediante anima**, humanum sibi corpus creauit (*ibid.* 33, 16)  
 h. filius enim, inquit, dei nascitur ex uirgine, **anima** inter carnem deumque **mediante** generatus (Iohannes Cassianus, *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium* 7, 27)  
 i. qui inmensus est, capitur, **mediante anima** deo et carni (*ibid.* 7, 28)

It has proved to be impossible to document syntactically-possible prepositional values of *mediante* for this period of Latin, since there are no cases of non-agreement or of constituent order, which would be critical for their detection. Although some semantic contexts may suggest the incipient development of the preposition, it seems clear that these do not correspond with either those which select temporal nouns or even with nouns of effective agentivity, given the limited possibilities which these nouns have of being interpreted and reanalyzed as ‘means’. These points aside, prepositional values seem to appear quite clearly with nouns that have both the typical and derived functions of the instrumental ablative. This is perfectly logical because, semantically, the original values of *mediante* as an ablative are very close to its new prepositional functions.

#### 4. Scholastica mediante

During the centuries of the so called Carolingian Renaissance, and even in the following two centuries, the presence and use of *mediante* in Latin underwent no substantial change: perhaps the number of occurrences increases somewhat (68 cases between the 8th and 11th centuries), but it still does not have a significant frequency and, moreover, the differentiation of meanings does not depart fundamentally from those which we have pointed out. We do not think it necessary to dwell on this here, but by way of example, Table 2 gives the data collected for the 22 instances recorded for the 9th century:

Table 2. Distribution of uses of *mediante*, 9th century.

Lexical Feature	# of Occurrence	noun	Constituent Order
[+ temporal]	8	festus dies (6)	VS (4)/SV (2)
		octaua hora	VS
		regnum	SV
[− temporal] [± concrete]	14	anima (5)	VS (4)/SV (1)
		conciliator	SV
		delectatio	SV
		Dominus	SV
		intercapedo	VS
		pietas	VS
		scientia	SV
		sensus (2)	VS
uirtus	VS		

As we can see, the use of *mediante* with a temporal value is quantitatively less than its use in the sense of mediation, especially if we consider that 6 of the 8 occurrences revolve around *dies festus* of the biblical text. Meanwhile, among the nouns that do not relate to time, those related to human

entities predominate. As to the order of the constituents, this is quite free and does not seem to provide relevant information about the syntactic behavior of *mediante*.

In contrast (albeit slight) to this still very modest use of *mediante*, from the 12th century onward and mostly throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, the increasing presence of constructions in which *mediante* appears is striking, to the point that it becomes quite difficult to explain it away as a link in an evolutionary development that occurs uninterruptedly from the first Patristic examples.

To our knowledge, the arrival on the scene of Scholasticism—from the Early Scholasticism of the 11th and 12th centuries, but especially the High Scholasticism from the 13th century to the end of the Middle Ages—played a decisive role in this matter. As is well known, Scholasticism—as a dominant theological-philosophical doctrine in medieval thought—is characterized by continuity with respect to ancient Patristics, but, unlike the latter’s style of theology, it is marked by exegesis and biblical glosses, and is guided primarily by the criterion of authority. Scholasticism shifts to a more speculative theology, demonstrating its theses with reasoning and applying dialectic methods (Llopis Cardona 2015, p. 199). On the other hand, it is also important to bear in mind that Scholasticism expands its scope of work to other discursive contexts, largely due to the integration of Aristotelian philosophy in its theological doctrine. In this sense, we must not forget that much of the work of the scholastics and schools of translators during the 12th and 14th centuries is marked by translations into Latin of almost all the works of Aristotle and the numerous commentaries on these.

This is not our aim here, nor can we attempt to go into the detail of this very complex activity and its extremely varied results. We put forth this proposal because we believe it is possible to establish in the history of Latin a second entry point for constructions with *mediante*, transferred from Patristicism, but in much greater volume and with fairly fixed uses, which could well explain the common pattern with which the construction comes into Italian, French, Catalan and Spanish (cf. Garachana in this volume).

The Scholastics, imbued with patristic literature, but also concerned with reasoned arguments, found in the incorporation of *mediante* into Latin a particularly transparent and suitable linguistic element for the more explicit, or graphic, expression of means and cause. Since there was a guarantee of semantic proximity, existing construction with *mediante* could be reanalyzed and serve, along with other prepositional phrases, to make up for the progressive loss of the use of the ablative without preposition in medieval Latin.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.1. Development and Extension of *Mediante*

The hypothesis of the influence of Scholasticism in the development of the prepositional values of *mediante* is supported by the data. Indeed, quantitatively, they are quite striking: for example, in the number of uses of *mediante* in the works of each of the main representatives of High Scholasticism, which surpasses in each case the total of 52 uses we found across the earlier period; see Table 3. A comparison of the total figures for both periods is also overwhelming.

Broadening the focus somewhat over the centuries when Scholasticism flourished, we can see that as against 52 cases of *mediante* registered for the Patristic Period (understood to be, as we have said, between the 2nd century AD and 753), we find in the Brepols corpus 4545 occurrences for the entire Middle Ages, between the year 736 and 1500. Certainly, these figures should be considered in proportion to the number of words in the corpus for each period: 30,578,827 in the Patristic Period and 103,889,649 in the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, as percentages, the ratio is 1.70 occurrences per million words in the first period to 4.37 occurrences per million words in the second; see Table 4.

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<sup>13</sup> See Bastardas Parera (1953, pp. 50–51).

**Table 3.** Occurrences of *mediante* in the High Scholasticism.

Representatives of High Scholasticism	# of Occurrences in High Scholastic Period	# of Occurrences in Patristic Period
Albertus Magnus (c. 1193–1280)	59	
Bonauentura (1217/1218–1274)	364	
Rogerus Bacon (c. 1219–c. 1292)	61	
Thomas Aquinas (1224/1225–1274)	651	
Iohannes Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308)	131	
Guillelmus of Ockham (c. 1290/1300–c. 1349/50)	412	
Total	1678	52

**Table 4.** Frequency per million words of *medians*, *-ntis* in the Patristic Period and the Middle Ages.

	Patristic Period	Medieval Writers
nom. sg. m. f. n.–ac. n. <i>medians</i>	0.03 1/30,578,827	0.48 50/103,889,649
ac. sg. m. f. <i>mediantem</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.19 20/103,889,649
gen. sg. m. f. n. <i>mediantis</i>	0.03 1/30,578,827	0.11 12/103,889,649
dat. sg. m. f. n. <i>medianti</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.01 2/103,889,649
abl. sg. m. f. n. <i>mediante</i>	1.7 52/30,578,827	4.37 4545/103,889,649
nom.-ac. pl. m. f. <i>mediantes</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.08 9/103,889,649
nom.-ac. pl. n. <i>mediantia</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.009 1/103,889,649
gen. pl. m. f. n. <i>mediantium</i>	0.0 0/30,578,827	0.009 1/103,889,649
dat.-abl. pl. m. f. n. <i>mediantibus</i>	0.13 4/30,578,827	1.01 1058/103,889,649

We must say that this surprising sudden increase does not only have to do with occurrences of *mediante*. Unlike what we observed with respect to the first appearances of *mediare* in Latin, we now find that the participial form no longer exists only in the ablative case, but that there is also a slight extension to other cases in the paradigm. This is perfectly explicable and consistent with the extension undergone by the medieval Latin present participle.<sup>14</sup>

Along with the participle, in medieval usage there are also substantial increases, reaching hundreds of appearances, in instances of the finite forms of the verb, especially the present indicative, totaling 92 occurrences or 0.88 per million words compared to 0.22 or the 7 examples found in the Patristic Period. At this point, one could envisage a possible reformulation or at least a revitalization of the verb *mediare* as a denominative of *medius*, now encouraged by the extension of the present participle. In any case, the expansion and diversification of forms produces formally different utterances that are structurally and semantically similar, as illustrated in (20)–(22).

<sup>14</sup> This extension of usage is illustrated in the study by Mesa Sanz (2004) based on the difficulties of translating the Latin present participle in Romance languages.

- (20) semper **inter** sphaericum et planum **mediat** aer (Iohannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima* lib. 1, quaest. 6)  
 “There is always air **in the middle, between** the spherical and the plane”
- (21) Tertia opinio est adhuc **medians inter** istas duas opiniones (Franciscus de Marchia, *Quaestiones super Aristotelis Metaphysicam* lib. 1, quaest. 14)  
 “There is still a third opinion **which is in the middle/mediates between** these two opinions”
- (22) Utrumque autem istorum modorum accidit semper uno minus esse intervalla (quae sunt propositiones) quam terminos: semper enim assumptum medium est inter extrema conjungibilia per medium: et talis conjungibilitas non potest esse nisi termini in uno (**mediante inter** duo) superent propositiones (Albertus Magnus, *Analytica priora siue De syllogismo simpliciter (Commentarium in Aristotelis Analytica priora)* lib. 1, tract. 5, cap. 5)  
 “With regard to both modes [of syllogism], it is always the case that the intervals (which are propositions) are one less in number than the terms: for indeed, the middle [term] is always taken as lying between the extremes which are related through this middle term: and such a relationship cannot occur unless the number of terms exceeds the number of propositions by one (that is, **the one which mediates between them**)”

#### 4.2. Prepositional Values

The meanings of *mediante* in Medieval Latin did not differ significantly from those stated above, but the frequency of data allows us to specify some points and expand on others. Thus, first, we have the temporal sense, with the meaning “in mid-”. It is a rare, almost vestigial sense. In a constructional context, it appears with a noun designating a period of time for which *mediante* indicates an approximately halfway stage. Predominant by far are the names of the months, but other types of periodization and nominalization of events are not excluded.

- (23) Celebratum est autem hoc concilium Compostelle consilio regis et regine **mediante quadragesima** in era IC.LX—a. VIII Idus Marcii (*Historia Compostellana* 2, 52)  
 “This council was held in Compostela by advice of the king and queen **in mid-Lent** in the era 1160 on 8th of March”
- (24) et **novembrio mense mediante** (Theoctistus) ad hibernandum cum exercitu Saxoniam intravit (Ademarus Cabanensis, *Chronicon* 2, 13)  
 “And **in mid-November** (Teoctist) entered Saxony with his army to spend the winter”

The lexical features of the temporal terms naturally prevent them from functioning normally in non-temporal contexts, so it is not easy for the prepositional sense of *mediante* as we know it to be generated. However, if we consider the order of the constituents of the phrase as a way of detecting possible prepositional meanings (König and Kortmann 1991, pp. 114–15), we must say that in this period we observe certain alternations between SV and VS, which seem to depend on the greater or lesser degree of integration of the temporal complement into the predication and which, moreover, may guide later developments. Thus, in example (23) “mid-Lent” works directly as an adjunct of the verbal predicate “was held”. The VS order of the syntagm seems to demonstrate the strict relationship between *mediante* and the verb, and therefore, suggests a route to a prepositional use that would not succeed. However, in “mid-November” from example (24), the item in the topic position affects the entire sentence by setting the time frame in which the entry of Teoctist in Saxony occurs. Here, the different syntactic level of insertion of the adjunct appears to involve maintaining the Classical order of the constituents, and at the same time, poses serious difficulties for prepositional development. We will return to this when we consider the other meanings of *mediante*.

When *mediante* occurs in reference to ablative nouns whose function is not spatial-temporal, the syntagm in which it appears has principally either sociative-instrumental meanings, or causative and circumstantial ones. Because they all share common characteristics, these functions are often difficult to distinguish because they really depend on the lexical features and restrictions imposed by

the predicates and by the context itself. Thus, for example, in (25) and (26), we have the two nouns “glass” and “mirror,” with the feature [+concrete], which are easily interpretable as observational instruments. But while in (25) the predicate selects glass essentially as an instrument or medium through which a body is seen, in (26), the mirror appears as an object causing partial vision. Meanwhile, what differentiates *mediante Ioanne*, in example (29) from those immediately preceding it, *mediante interpositione* (27) or *mediante scientia* (28), is the feature [+ human]. This allows a controlled predication that is inconvenient for the abstract nouns (27) and (28), which are usually interpreted as modal or circumstantial complements.

- (25) Sed quando corpus album videtur **mediante vitro viridi**, sensus apprehendit aliter quam sit, quia apprehendit illud ut viride, et ita iudicat (Tomasso d’Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, quaest. 1, art. 11, contra 3)  
 “But when a white body is seen **through a green glass**, the sense apprehends it in a way which is different from what it actually is, since it apprehends it as green, and so it considers it to be”
- (26) Item, notandum quod speculum est causa partialis visionis quae causatur **mediante speculo** (Gulielmus Occamus, *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum* (reportatio), quaest. 4, p. 146)  
 “In the same way, it should be noted that the mirror is the cause of the partial vision that is caused **by the mirror**”
- (27) set multa bona in istis [particularibus] accidunt **mediante interpositione mali** (Rogerus Bacon, *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie Aristotelis* (*Metaphysica* I, II, V–X) lib. 9, p. 316)  
 “But many good things come to these particulars **through the interposition of evil**”
- (28) prudentia quae [...] ascendit per intellectum ad sapientiam descendit autem in artem **mediante scientia** (Bonaventura, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Visio prima, coll. 2, par. 13)  
 “Prudence, which [...] ascends through the intellect to wisdom, descends instead to art **by means of science**”
- (29) Petrus vero **mediante Ioanne** instruitur a Christo (Tomasso d’Aquino, *Super Euangelium Iohannis* reportatio, cap. 13, lect. 4, num. 1806, lin. 20)  
 “Peter is instructed by Christ **through John**”

The same difficulty in drawing precise boundaries between these phrases explains why, generally, all may be susceptible to reanalysis as the object of a preposition *mediante*, insofar as their respective semantic functions refer more or less metaphorically to the medium through which something occurs. In fact, as we are able to show, there are hardly any restrictions in these cases on the selection of the noun that agrees with *mediante*, with the single exception of temporal nouns.

Similarly, it is also interesting to see that an extension of categorial selection takes place in medieval Latin—unlike the previous period—since we find *mediante* agreeing not only with nouns, but also with pronouns, both personal as well as demonstrative and indefinite, and beyond that—in what undoubtedly represents an advance along the path toward prepositional senses—with relative pronouns (30) and (31), and even with interrogative pronouns that introduce completive clauses, that is to say, in indirect questions.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> We may add that when *mediante* appears in agreement with a relative pronoun, *mediante* usually precedes it. Among the Scholastic writers, we have only observed a clear reluctance to such anteposition in Thomas Aquinas.

	<i>quo/qua mediante</i>	<i>mediante quo/qua</i>
Albert the Great	0	7
Bonaventure	19	15
Roger Bacon	1	10
Thomas Aquinas	34	0
Duns Scotus	3	2
William of Ockham	2	17

- (30) Percussio balistae in sagittam generat actionem in sagitta, **mediante qua** sagitta uolat per aerem mouens se ipsam (Raimundus Lullus, *Excusatio Raimundi* (op. 141), quaest. 2, lin. 229)  
 “The blow of the crossbow on the arrow generates in the arrow an action **by means of which** the arrow flies by the air moving itself”
- (31) nam, quamvis species coloris sit illud **mediante quo** color videtur, tamen non oportet quod illa species videatur (Iohannes Buridanus, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima*, lib. 3, quaest. 11)  
 “For although the appearance of color is **the means by which** color is seen, it is not necessary that this appearance be seen”
- (32) sed non erit invenire **mediante quo** insit aeri: ergo inest per se (Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii in secundum librum Sententiarum*, dist. 13 C, art. 2)  
 “But it will not be found **through what** (light) is present in the air; then it is present by itself”

The above examples (30)–(32) highlight an extension of the scope of *mediante* that allows for the emergence of clearly prepositional senses. Moreover, it should be stressed that the subcategorisation of a relative pronoun by *mediante* stresses the coreferentiality of the phrase with the main predication, and is therefore far removed from the absolute construction.<sup>16</sup>

As a further demonstration of categorical expansion, we can add examples in which *mediante* subcategorizes a nominalized infinitive (33) and (34), or even grammatical words (35) and (36):

- (33) potest causare tristitiam vel delectationem in voluntate sine omni actu libere elicito, sed solum **mediante velle naturali** qui non est actus elicitus (Gulielmus Occamus, *Quaestiones uariae: Notabilia, dubitationes et determinationes*, quaest. 6, art. 9)  
 “It can cause sadness or delight in the will without a voluntarily unlawful act, but only **through natural will**, which is not an unlawful act”
- (34) Fundamentum autem filiationis est essentia **mediante actu passivo** originis, scilicet **mediante generari**, sicut est fundamentum paternitatis **mediante generare active** (Gulielmus Occamus, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum* (ordinatio), vol. 3, dist. 5, quaest. 2)  
 “The foundation of filiation is essentially **through a passive act** of origin, that is to say **through being generated**, just as the foundation of paternity is **through actively generating**”
- (35) In secunda autem solutione primo attribuebat accidenti quod quid est, [...] et **mediante quod quid est** attribuebat ei definitionem (Sigerus de Brabantia, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam* lib. VII, 10)  
 “In the second solution he attributed to the accident the *quod quid est* [...] and **by means of the quod quid est** he attributed the definition”
- (36) Quandoque significat differentiam et tunc construitur cum accusatiuo **mediante inter** (Folchinus de Borfonibus, *Cremonina* (Grammatica, orthographia et prosodia), pars 3, cap. 4, lin. 1191)  
 “And when (the verb *interest*) means a difference, then it is constructed in the accusative **with inter**”

Another factor that is useful in confirming the reanalysis of these constructions as prepositional phrases is the invariability of the case and number of *mediante* and the consequent lack of agreement between noun and participle. Although it is not always possible to find examples in the same Patristic context, the example in (37) is illustrative, in which number agreement is broken, and further in example (38), where the lack of case agreement paves the way for a phrase in which *mediante* governs an accusative as the object of the preposition.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> It is perhaps worth remembering that the ablative absolute of the Classical period has a syntactic limitation, in the sense that there can be no overlap between the subject and a nominal element of the main predicate. If there is such co-reference, a participial construction is employed, but not an absolute. However, it is also known that already in Low Latin and especially in Medieval Latin this prohibition is quite lax and there are numerous documented cases in which the subject of the absolute ablative may reappear in the main clause (Bassols de Climent 1945, vol. I, pp. 459–61).

<sup>17</sup> The same sequence *vobis mediante* in example (37) we find also in a letter from Berengaria of Navarre to the Bishop of Winchester, which asks him to mediate with his brother (<https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/765.html>). But we

- (37) episcopalem dignitatem ordinis a Deo **uobis mediante** recipiam (*Historia Compostellana* 3, 34)  
“That I may receive from God **through you** the episcopal dignity of the order”
- (38) Hilarius non intendit hic dicere quoniam sit distinctio personis suppositis secundum veritatem in hoc verbo Faciamus, sed **mediante falsum et verum** secundum oppositionem haereticorum, qui destruebant pluralitatem personarum (Alexander Halensis et al.ii, *Glossa in quattuor libros Sententiarum: glossa in librum primum*, dist. 23, num. 17, p. 231)  
“Here Hilary does not mean to say that in this verb faciamus there is a distinction between the supposed persons in accordance with the truth, but **through a false [God] and a true [God]** according to the opposing stance of the heretics, who denied the plurality of persons”

Finally, we must turn to the order of constituents. Although it is commonly accepted, somewhat simplistically, that medieval Latin had already consolidated the Romance verb inversion in sentences, it is important that in this paper we consider the extent to which not only syntactic context but also semantic conditions favor or not the positioning of the noun before the participle.

The truth is that the data is overwhelmingly in favor of the preposing of the participle; see Table 5. To prove this, we return again to the selection of the most representative authors of Patristic Period.

**Table 5.** Order of constituents of *mediante* in constructions in the Scholastic Period.

	# of Occurrences	N + <i>mediante</i>	<i>mediante</i> + N
Albertus Magnus	59	4	55
Bonaventura	364	30	334
Rogerus Bacon	61	2	59
Thomas Aquinas	651	138	513
Iohannes Duns Scotus	131	6	125
Guillelmus of Ockham	412	2	410

On the one hand, we must accept the validity of the observations made above regarding the constituent order of phrases containing temporal nouns, in the sense that the placing of *mediante* before the noun is in keeping with the greater dependence of the phrase on the verbal predicate. We will focus on example (39), where the first appearance of the phrase *anima mediante* sees its constituent order reversed immediately afterwards. Apart from the metric clauses that could be invoked for this kind of prose, it seems clear that the verb plays an important role in the encoding of these complements. First we have a transitive verb, *assumpsit*, with a direct object, *corpus*, and a syntagma *anima mediante* functioning as a peripheral adjunct expressing the circumstances involved in becoming the flesh of Christ. Meanwhile, *pervenit*, besides being an intransitive verb, is a motion verb, so that it is naturally completed by the argument *ad corpus*, but at the same time, their semantic characteristics clearly favor adding *mediante anima* to the verbal predicate as an adjunct with a prosecutive function, that is, as an expression of the means by which the spirit reaches the body.

- (39) [Christus] corpus assumpsit **anima mediante**: tum etiam ratione spiritualis influentiae, quae pervenit ad corpus **mediante anima** (Tomasso d’Aquino, *In III Sententiarum*, dist. 13, quaest. 2, art. 2)  
“[Christ] assumed a body **through the soul**: and also because of the spiritual influence that reaches the body **through the soul**”

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should recall that already in archaic Latin there is documentation of lack of number agreement with the participles of other verbs and first and second person plural pronouns. Thus, the grammarian Nonius Marcellus denounces the lack of agreement in Plautus, *Amphitryon* 400, *praesente nobis*, and fragment 6 of the comedy *Auctio* by Afranius, *absente nobis*.

Moreover, we may add that in the cases analyzed we have observed that the phrase comprising *mediante* + N usually occurs within affirmative statements or those framed positively. For example, there are syntactical contexts with adversative correlations such as *non ... sed, non ... nisi*, where *mediante* appears as the second term, that is, where it is not marked by negation. Interestingly, when that happens *mediante* precedes the noun. However, when *mediante* appears as the first term along with a negative element, especially the indefinite *nullus*, or in a context marked by negation, the order is invariably N + *mediante*. Example (40) is a good demonstration of this.

- (40) Ad tertium dicendum, quod esse naturale per creationem Deus facit in nobis **nulla causa agente mediante**, sed tamen **mediante aliqua causa formali**: forma enim naturalis principium est esse naturalis (Tomasso d'Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de ueritate*, quaest. 27, art. 1, resp. ad arg. 3)  
 "Thirdly, it must be said that God, through creation, does not make us the natural being **by means of any agentive cause**, but rather **by some formal cause**"

In our opinion, underlying this double order is the different semantic relation established with the predicate as a result of the different meaning which *mediante* acquires. When the ability to mediate is predicated on a noun representing an entity that is suspended by negation, it is difficult to reanalyze that entity as an instrument, a means, a cause, etc. The reasons are no different, for example, from those which make *obstante* a discourse marker in Spanish which appears mostly in the negative *no obstante*, where the suspension of the obstacle allows for its reanalysis as an inefficient cause. On the other hand, this is one of the few occasions where the suspension or exclusion of the noun with which *mediante* agrees allows the functional alignment of the phrase with authentic ablative absolutes, as happens, for example, in exceptive contexts.<sup>18</sup> This would justify in these cases the SV order and suggest that the verbal properties of the postposed participle have been preserved (Giacalone Ramat 1994, p. 890).

## 5. Recapitulation

*Mediante* enters Latin in the Late Latin (2nd century AD). It does so as a grammatical calque from Greek, but its addition is certainly favored by the existence in Latin of the adjective *medius*, which is widely documented. In the ablative case, *medio/media* and *mediante* share meanings and behavior. Both can refer to a noun designating it fully or in part. Just as *medio monte* can mean "mountain in the middle" or "halfway up, in the middle of the mountain," it is possible to interpret *ponte mediante* as "on the bridge in the middle, which mediates" or "halfway along, in the middle the bridge."

The partitive designation is given only to nouns which have the feature [+ spatiotemporal]. Specifically, *mediante* selects temporal or similar nouns, for example, *Iulio mediante* "in the middle, mid-July". In all other cases, which are the vast majority, *mediante* pairs with ablative nouns with a sociative-instrumental value in its various meanings, especially that of a medium or cause: *Deo mediante* "through/with the mediation of God" *odio mediante* "through/because of hatred."

Thus, the origin of the prepositional senses of *mediante* lies in a participial construction in the ablative case, but not, as is often claimed and as occurred with other deverbal prepositions, in an ablative absolute construction. The latter, given its syntactic level of integration into the nuclear predication, can hardly provide the integration points needed for such prepositional senses to emerge. Usually, the ablative which goes with *mediante* constitutes a complement subcategorized directly by the verbal predicate, suitable for reanalysis as a prepositional phrase. Meanwhile, in most cases, *mediante* is deverbalized and shows a purely adjectival behavior.

In the few cases found in Latin from the Patristic Period, prepositional values of *mediante* emerge in a literature organized around the biblical text and embodied in glosses, exegeses and commentaries. Centuries later, Scholasticism adopts limited use of *mediante* in the Patristic Period and generously adapts it to its argumentative way of doing theology. It is employed in the techniques and discursive

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Giacalone Ramat (1994), and the case of *excepto* in Molinelli (2001).

turns of Scholasticism, especially causal or justifying turns, which are at the basis of reasoning and the dialectic method. This discursive practice strongly promotes the use of *mediante* as the clear head of prepositional phrases, which is also worthy of note in explaining the emergence of *mediante* in Spanish and in approaching of grammatical mechanisms involved in its introduction.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond its morphological and lexical status, the semantic transparency of *mediante* is essential to its transcategorization. Its characteristic meaning (or rather, that of the whole of its semantic domain) allows it to function with ablatives of an instrumental nature, especially those of means and cause. In this way, its evolution undergoes a process of change along the lines of those that explain Latin prepositional uses of the nouns *causa* or *gratia* in the ablative singular (Fruyt 2011, p. 690), in which there is no semantic change and restructuring of meaning, but only a syntactic reinterpretation of the item in question. Thus, even though its Latin and deverbal origin has frequently led it to being lumped in with the others, *mediante* shares rather little with other Spanish prepositions, be they improper or imperfect, such as *durante*.

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<sup>19</sup> One aspect that we cannot address, but which, in our opinion, deserves study in some detail is the extent to which the causal relationship, which promotes, in our opinion, the development of *mediante* among the Scholastics, maintains only a connection with a certain discursive mechanism, or if it drives to the heart of fundamental doctrinal matters. Above we recalled how the Scholastics, and especially Thomas Aquinas, wove into their doctrine the major Aristotelian principles. On the principle of causality, formalized in the theory of four causes (matter, form, agent and end) is the source of all knowledge of the world and, specifically, the notion of efficient cause is essential in demonstrating the existence of God. Thus, it might not be unreasonable to think that the need for integration of these theoretical principles would have led Scholastics to use their own more elaborate channels and formulations for expressing cause.

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