Differential Object Marking: Nominal and Verbal parameters: While Differential Object Marking (DOM) is seemingly determined by the same homogeneous set of semantic and discourse factors that apply to the nominal and verbal domains cross-linguistically (Serzant and Witzlack-Makarevich (2018)), their diverse diachronic origins suggest microvariations that may be spelt out so as to reveal different underlying mechanisms. Latin/Romance ad and Chinese ba represent two well-attested grammaticalization pathways in being derived from lexical prepositions and verbs respectively, and although both show DOM tendencies in selecting animate/referential objects and strongly transitive/telic verbs (see Nocentini (1985) for Romance and Li (2006) for Chinese), they also display colloquial differences which may be traced back to their nominal and deverbal origins respectively. Latin/Romance ad is originally a directional allative preposition which inherently selects definite/species objects in the sense of destination (1a) as well as human/animate/recipient/beneficiaries of two/three-place verbs (1b-d) (Adams and de Melo (2016)) whereas Medieval Chinese ba ‘to take/hold’ is reanalyzed as a preverbal element in restructuring contexts where the second verb phrase has a telic transitive verb and an object pronoun that is coreferential to the object of ba (1e) (Feng (2002)):

1a) ad era-m revide-bo
    AD mistress-ACC.SG see.again-FUT.1SG
    ‘I shall revisit our mistress (at her home).’ (Plautus *Truculentus* 320)

1b) ad cuius imperi-um cael-um terr-a mari-a serve-bant
    AD REL.PRO.GEN power-ACC heaven-NOM.SG earth-NOM.SG sea-NOM.PL serve-IMPERF.3PL
    ‘... whose power heaven, earth and seas served.’ (Jerome *Epistulae* 82.3)

1c) ego autem ad Deu-m clama-vi
    I but AD God-ACC.SG shout-PERF.1SG
    ‘But I shouted (something) to God.’ > ‘I called God.’ (*Sacra Biblia, Exodus* 14.15)

1d) Moses ora-bat ad Dominum
    Moses beg-IMPERF.3SG AD Lord
    ‘Moses was begging the Lord.’ (*Libri Maccabaeorum* 2.10)

1e) Wu ba gaohuang yong ren ci zhi
    Wu BA Emperor use blade stab him
    ‘Wu took the Emperor and stabbed him with a blade’ > ‘Wu stabbed the Emperor with a blade.’ (*Qian Han Shu pinghua* shang)

However, although ad does show signs of telicising the verb by adding a natural endpoint to the event as well as imposing ‘affectedness’ on the verb when used with verbs of vision (1a) where ad subtly changes the meaning of the verb from ‘to see’ to ‘to visit’ with a designated object of destination (ad eram ‘the mistress’), Romance ad has generalised to marking all human/animate (2a) and/or referential objects (2b) even of atelic verbs:

2a) conoz-o *(a) este actor
    know-PRES.1SG AD this actor
    ‘I know this actor.’ (Spanish) (Heusinger and Kaiser (2011:604))

2b) app-o vis-tu a custu / cussu
    have-PRES.1SG see-PERF.PTCP AD this / that
    ‘I saw this/that.’ (Sardinnian) (Floricic (2003:253))

*Ba*, on the other hand, is compatible with all telic transitive verbs, even if the object is inanimate and indefinite so long as it is quantised (2c) (Rosen and Ritter (2000)):

2c) ta ba yi ge jihui cuoguo-le
    he BA one CL opportunity miss-ASP
    ‘He missed an opportunity.’ (Liu (1997:94))

The nominal and verbal parameters of DOM may hence be extended to diachrony, since while Latin/Romance ad is more nominally-driven in beinganalysed to all human/animate/referential objects of atelic verbs (2a-b), Chinese ba is more verbally-driven as it is used with all telic transitive verbs selecting (in)animate/(non-)referential objects.

References: