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**INDO-EUROPEAN VERBS WITH THE SUFFIX *-ē*.  
EVIDENCE OF ERGATIVE SYNTAX IN LATIN AND LITHUANIAN**

Certain Latin impersonal verbs require the accusative of the person affected and the genitive of the person or thing toward which the feeling is directed, e. g.:

(1) pudet	mē	tuī
shames	me	you
(3rd sg. pres.)	(acc. sg.)	(gen. sg.)

'I am ashamed of you.'

(2) paenitet	mē	hūjus	factī
repents	me	this	act
(3rd sg. pres.)	(acc. sg.)	(gen. sg.)	(gen. sg.)

'I repent of this act.'

(3) eum	taedet	vītae
him	is weary	life
(acc. sg.)	(3rd sg. pres.)	(gen. sg.)

'He is weary of life' [Bennett, 1945, 140].

When an original personal construction comes to be felt as an impersonal construction frequently an original nominative case is replaced by an accusative case. Examples of this exchange are noted in the Baltic languages. Thus Jablonskis, 1957, 622–623, considered the following sentence taken from native Lithuanian sources as incorrect:

(4) Čià	jõ	surašýta	këturis	sásiuvinis
Here	by him	written	four	fascicles
	(gen. sg.)	(neuter sg.)	(acc. pl.)	(acc. pl.)

'Here four fascicles were written by him.' He would correct this to:

(5) Čià	jõ	surašýti	keturi	sásiuviniai
Here	by him	were written	four	fascicles
	(gen. sg.)	(nom. pl.)	(nom. pl.)	(nom. pl.)

The incorrect portion is, namely, the substitution of the accusative plural (*kēturis sásiuvinius*) for the nominative plural (*keturì sásiuviniai*). And, in fact, V. Ambrazas, 1979, 17, writes that the etymological construction (6) *rāšoma láiškas* 'a letter is being written' with *láiškas* 'letter' in the nominative singular is being replaced by (7) *rāšoma láiškq* with *láiškq* 'letter' in the accusative singular. With reference to the Latvian debitive construction Endzelīns, 1901, 66, wrote that '... das logische Subjekt stets im Dativ, das Objekt dagegen meist, namentlich in der jetzigen Schriftsprache, im Nominativ, seltener im Akkusativ steht: (8) *man jāēd sàusa màize* oder auch (9) *man jāēd sàusu màizi* 'ich muss trockenes Brot essen'.'

But in 1932, 43, he wrote that the object of the debitive should be in the nominative case, e. g., (10) *jākuļ rudzi* (nom. pl.), not *rudzus* (acc. pl.) 'the rye must be threshed'; (11) *jāpanāk valdības sastādīšanās* (nom. pl.) not *sastādīšanos* (acc. pl.) 'the formation of the government must be achieved.' In the written language only the personal pronoun may appear in the accusative, e. g., (12) *man tevi* (acc.) *jāaicina* 'I must ask you.' Whatever Endzelīns or language purists may think, the tendency of Latvian will be to replace the nominative with the accusative, at least in some meanings.

Benveniste, 1971, 159, has shown how the accusative has replaced the nominative in the Old Armenian transitive perfect. Bogoljubov, 1982, 21, gives examples from many languages, including North Russian (13) *u volkov tut korovu* (acc.) *jideno* 'here a cow was eaten by the wolves'; (14) Pol. *pracę* (acc.) *rozpoczyna się o ósmiej* 'work begins at eight', etc.

It seems to me then that in the Latin constructions given above the accusative of the person affected replaces an earlier nominative. Thus the etymological predecessors of the Latin impersonal sentences (1), (2), and (3) are (15), (16) and (17) below respectively:

(15)	* (egō)	pudeō	tuī
	I	am ashamed	of you
	(nom. sg.)	(1st sg. pres.)	(gen. sg.)

(*pudeō* is attested, but the usage is rare).

(16)	* (egō)	paeniteō	hūjus	factī
	I	repent	this	act
	(nom. sg.)	(1st sg. pres.)	(gen. sg.)	(gen. sg.)

The meaning and the syntactic construction lead to the later interpretation of this verb as deponent and in the New Testament we find the 2nd pl. imperative *poenitemini* 'repent ye' (Mark 1, 15; Acts 3, 19.) This is clearly a late phenomenon.

(17) *is	taedet	vītae
he	is weary	of life
(nom. sg.)	(3rd sg. pres.)	(gen. sg.)

I have supported the notion [1980, 176–177] that the genitive case functioned with agentive (or ergative) meaning in Indo-European with the \*-t- participles. And even with these Latin impersonal forms the etymological \*-t- participles have the genitive agent. Thus from Plautus<sup>1</sup> *Mostellaria*, 1, 4, 5:

(18) ita	me	ibi	male	convivii
thus	me	there	badly	company
	(acc.)			(gen. sg.)
sermonis-	que	Taesum	est	
conversation	and	tired	is	
(gen. sg.)		(neut. sg. past	(auxiliary)	
		passive prt.)		

'I got so damn tired of the company and conversation' [Plautus, Loeb Classical Library, 320].

This is not, however, that point which I wish to make here. It seems to me that in addition to the participles in \*-t- the Indo-European stative verbs in \*-ē- may well originally have had an ergative syntactic pattern also, i. e., the subject (= patient) may have been in the nominative case and the agent in the genitive (= ergative).

Hermann, 1926, 286–287, would connect the Latin verbs in \*-ē- with the Lithuanian verbs in -ė- and assume a nominal origin for this class in Indo-European. Hermann, 1926, 286, notes a number of Lithuanian verbs expressing affect which according to him have the cause in the genitive case: *bjaurėtis* 'to be disgusted with,' *dėmėtis* 'to be interested in,' *dygėtis* 'to be disgusted with,' *domėtis* 'to be interested in,' *gedėti* 'to mourn for,' *gėrėtis* 'to be delighted with,' *laimėti* 'to gain, to win,' *liūdėti* 'to grieve for,' *norėti* 'to want,' *peršėti* 'to itch, to smart,' *skaudėti* 'to ache,' *sopėti* 'to ache,' *stebėtis* 'to marvel at,' *šykštėti* 'to be sparing with, to grudge.' Although Hermann lists these as taking a genitive object, it is interesting to note that in the modern language the syntactic relationships might be quite different. Although Basanavičius could use the genitive in such an expression as (19) *O jėi tū manęs (gen.) taip bjaūriesi...* 'but if you are so repelled by me...', we also encounter the instrumental case in (20) *Tókiu pasielgimū (inst.) visi bjaūrisi* 'everyone is repelled by such behavior' [Acad. Dict., Vol. 1, 796]. The Academy Dictionary [Vol. 2, 607] gives no examples of *domėtis* governing the genitive case, but only with *į* plus the accusative or with the instrumental, e. g., (21) *Jis viškuo (inst.)*

*dōmisi* 'he is interested in everything.' For *gedėti* we encounter the genitive government, e. g., (22) *Gėdi tėvo, bernėlio* '...mourns for the father, the child', but also supported by the preposition *dėl* 'for' as in (23) *Aš gedù dėl mamytės* 'I mourn for mother' [Acad. Dict., Vol. 3, 195]. The Academy Dictionary [Vol. 7, 54] gives examples of *laimėti* with accusative government, e. g., (24) *Ji laimėjo sultōno mēilę* (acc.) 'She won the love of the sultan,' but also with the genitive in the expression *laimėti laiko* 'to gain time'. It seems to me that most Lithuanians would interpret this genitive as a partitive genitive, but one must remember that a contemporary interpretation does not guarantee the historical interpretation. At this writing the Academy Dictionary has not gone as far as *stebėtis*, but in the one-volume Kruopas Dictionary (p. 739) we encounter the examples (25) *Jō darbaīs* (inst. pl.) *visi stēbisi* 'Everyone marvels at his works' and (26) *Visi stēbisi iš manės* (gen.) 'Everyone marvels at me.' One may assume perhaps that in the latter example the genitive is merely reinforced by the preposition *iš* 'at.' The historical syntax and the changes noted in each verb should be studied in much greater detail, but the general point is made that the contemporary syntactic relationships do not necessarily reflect the original ones.

Note the vacillation in Lithuanian as to whether the participles in *-t-* should take an agentive complement in the genitive case or an instrumental complement in the instrumental case. Paulauskienė, 1979, 99, quotes:

(27)	...kuĩ	devýnis	mėnesius	peĩ	metùs	žėmė
	... where	nine	months	in a	year	earth
						(nom. sg.)
	ėsti	sniėgo	(sniėgù)	nuklóta...		
	is	by snow	(with snow)	covered...		
		(gen. sg.)	(inst. sg.)	(nom. sg. fem. participle)		

'...where nine months in a year the earth is covered by (with) snow.'

In principle the agent should be in the genitive (if animate) but in the instrumental (if inanimate), but how would we translate such an English sentence as 'the cat is fed by the robot'? Would it be (28) *kātinās ròboto* (gen.) or *ròbotu* (inst.) *valgydinamas*? Is the robot an instrument or an agent? According to Foster, 1979, 493–494, in the Ozark dialect of English it is difficult to imagine a non-agentive subject of a transitive verb. Thus a sentence such as (29) *The rockslide sunk the canoe* must be replaced by (30) *The canoe sunk because of the rockslide*. Apparently for the speakers of non-standard English from the Ozark mountain area *rockslide* cannot be considered agentive and therefore cannot govern a transitive verb. With the substitution of standard English *sank* for nonstandard *sunk* both of the preceding sentences are possible for me.

In the Indo-European languages, however, in collocations with the *-t-* participle an etymological agentive in the genitive case seems to be older, as attested by such forms as Gk. *Diós-dotos* 'given by Zeus' and Old Indic (31) *pátyuh* (gen.) *kritā satī* 'the wife bought by the spouse,' etc., see Schmalstieg, 1980, 174–177. Even in Slavic I assume an earlier genitive, thus Old Russian (32) *ubъjenъ otъ Jaropolka* (gen.) 'killed by Jaropolk,' although perhaps reflecting a South Slavic model (cf. Slovene (33) *ubit od Jaropolka*) shows the original genitive case reinforced by the preposition *otъ*. The replacement of the genitive by the instrumental has, of course, actually taken place in Russian. With the passive participle forms in Russian the distinction between agent and instrument has been lost grammatically and the instrumental case functions to denote the agent, cf. modern Russian (34) *ubit Jaropolkom* (inst.) 'killed by Jaropolk.' In some other collocations, however, the distinction is alive even in Russian where one can say (35) *šapku unosilo vetrom* (inst.) 'the cap was carried away by the wind,' but not (36) *\*šapku unosilo soldatom* (inst.) 'the cap was carried away by the soldier.'

A distinction between agent and instrument would on the surface seem to be connected with animate and inanimate performers of an action. It seems to me, however, that in the earliest stages of Indo-European the genitive case could be used to denote an inanimate performer of an action. In Georgian at least the ergative case of an inanimate performer or agent is possible (Aronson, 1982, 250):

(37)	im	çqaro-	s	tbil-	ma	çqal-
	that	spring	(gen.)	warm	(erg.)	waters
	eb-	ma	irem-	i	mo-	a-
	(pl.)	(erg.)	deer	(nom.)	(prefix)	(version vowel)
	rčín-	a				
	cured	(encodes erg.)				

*im çqaros tbilma çqalebma iremi moarčina* 'The warm waters of that spring cured the deer.' (Aronson, 1982, 222):

(38)	sakartvelo-	s	mecniereba-	ta
	Georgian	(gen.)	sciences	(gen. pl.)
	aķademia-	m	gvi-	maspinjl- a
	academy	(erg.)	us	hosted (encodes erg.)

'The Georgian Academy of Sciences hosted us.'

I assume then that the Indo-European *\*-ē-* verbs were intransitive and had an ergative syntax, i. e., a. subject (= patient) in the nominative case and an agent in the genitive case. Thus in a Lithuanian sentence such as (19) we are accustomed



to thinking of the nominative subject *tu* 'you' and the verb *bjaūrisi* 'are disgusted' as taking a genitive object *manēs* 'me.' But if we assume ergative syntax then *tū* is the patient and *manēs* is the agent.

Similarly in the hypothesized Latin sentence number (17) one assumes the nominative *is* 'he' to be the subject and the verb *taedet* 'is weary' to take a genitive object *vītae* 'life.' But if one assumes an ergative syntax *is* 'he' becomes the patient and *vītae* is the agent. The replacement of the nominative *is* by the accusative *eum* takes place when the construction becomes impersonal. Hermann, 1926, 284–286, compares the Greek collocation (39) *khřé mé* (acc.) *tinós* (gen.) 'I need something' with the Lithuanian *-é-* stem verbs, which as noted above, he would derive from nouns. One should note, however, that in the Greek collocation a dative as well as an accusative is possible, and that Schwyzer, 1966, 72, gives the example (40) *khřé sé* (acc.) or *soí* (dat.) *tinós* 'you need something.' Syntactically this can be compared then exactly with the Lithuanian collocation (41) *táu* (dat.) *reikia kō* (gen.) 'you need something.' In the Greek example one can suppose the replacement of the nominative case by the accusative or dative and in the Lithuanian example one can assume the replacement of the nominative case by the dative.

In the Indo-European languages it surely wasn't only the verbs in *\*-ē-* or even the *\*-t-* participles which had ergative syntax, but other intransitive types also, cf., e. g., the German (42) *mich* (acc.) *wundert des schwarzen Ritters* (gen.). As in the Latin sentences (1, 2, and 3 above) with the impersonalization of the collocation an accusative *mich* has replaced a nominative *ich* 'I' [Guxman, 1967, 64–65].

Many collocations in which the genitive case appears to be the object of a transitive verb reflect an ergative syntax which was reevaluated and restructured as Indo-European became a nominative-accusative language. (See the seminal article by Marvan, 1973.) I think it is fundamentally difficult for Indo-Europeanists to shift their view and imagine the nominative case as the case of the patient in constructions other than obvious passives. It is also difficult for most Indo-Europeanists to imagine the genitive case as the agent, since outside of the Baltic languages it is not so obviously attested as such. But the Baltic languages furnish the key to the solution. In other Indo-European languages the ablative and/or instrumental have taken over many of the agentive functions of the old genitive (= ergative).

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