

## Towards a Diachronic Account of P-lability in Latin: The Semantic Extension of the Active Intransitive as an Anticausative Strategy in Latin

Lability refers to the phenomenon in which verbs can show valency alternation without a formal change in verbal morphology (Kulikov & Lavidas 2014). Patient-preserving lability (abbr. P-lability) refers to the transitive-intransitive alternation with the preservation of the patient-like argument (e.g. tr. I open the door vs. intr. the door opens). In Latin, P-lability is used to express the causative-anticausative alternation (Cennamo & al. 2015, Gianollo 2014, Pinkster 2015). A case in point is the verb *verto* ('to turn into'), which can be used transitively in its causative sense (1a) and intransitively in its anticausative sense (1b).

- (1) (a) ne ea quae rei publicae  
 that not DEM.ACC.N.PL. REL.ACC.N.PL. republic:GEN.F.SG.  
 causa egerit in suam  
 for the sake of do:SBJ.PRF.3SG.ACT. in POSS.3SG.ACC.F.SG.  
 contumeliam **vertat.**  
 insult:ACC.FS.G turn:SBJ.PRS.3SG.ACT.  
 "In order that he (sc. Pompey) does not turn what he did for the sake of the republic into insult towards him"  
 (Caesar, *Commentarii belli civilis*, I, 8, 2; first century BC)
- (b) ut detrimentum in bonum **verteret**  
 so that damage:NOM.N.SG. in good:ACC.N.SG. turn:SBJ.PST.3SG.ACT.  
 "So that the damage turns into something good"  
 (Caesar, *Commentarii belli civilis*, III, 73, 6; first century BC)

The number of verbs displaying P-lability was limited in Early and Classical Latin, but heavily increased in Late Latin. Alternative strategies to express the anticausative of originally transitive verbs were the mediopassive (-r morphology) (2a) and the reflexive strategy (reflexive pronoun + active voice) (2b) (Cennamo & al. 2015, Feltenius 1977, Gianollo 2014, Pinkster 2015).

- (2) (a) id enim et in pus **vertitur**  
 DEM:NOM.N.SG. indeed also in pus:ACC.N.SG. turn:IND.PRS.3SG.MPASS.  
 "It (sc. the wound) turns also into pus"  
 (Celsus, *De medicina*, V, 26; first century AD)
- (b) cum terra in aquam **se**  
 when earth:NOM.F.SG. in water:ACC.F.SG. REFL.ACC.  
**vertit**  
 turn:IND.PRS.3SG.ACT.  
 "When earth turns into water"  
 (Cicero, *De natura deorum*, III, 31; first century BC)

This paper aims to clarify in which way the unmarked intransitive grammaticalized to a generalized anticausative strategy in Latin. By means of corpus research, we discuss the following factors: *Aktionsart*, verbal class, agentivity of the anticausative subject, causalness value (= [causative uses]/[anticausative + causative uses]; see Haspelmath 2014 and Heidinger 2015), date and register of the texts.

### Keywords

Latin, lability, anticausative, diathesis, *Aktionsart*, diachrony, functional typology

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