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AND
LINGUISTIC THEORY

FROM DESCRIPTION TO EXPLANATION

FOR THE 60TH BIRTHDAY OF ALEKSANDR E. KIBRIK

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Объединенные тематикой научной деятельности одного из ведущих российских лингвистов, Александра Евгеньевича Кибрика, 60-летию которого посвящен этот сборник, статьи затрагивают актуальные проблемы теории языка, типологии и прикладных исследований. В типологических статьях используется материал малоизученных языков Кавказа, Африки, Латинской Америки и др. В сборнике приняли участие многие известные отечественные и зарубежные лингвисты — теоретики и типологи. Сборник включает статьи на русском и английском языках.

Для широкого круга лингвистов, для студентов и аспирантов.

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MAY HE PROSPER IN OFFSPRING AND WEALTH

A few jubilee remarks on the typology of labile verbs
and Sanskrit *púṣyati* ‘prosper; makes prosper’^{*}

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(Leiden University)

Bei den Sätzen mit Verben muß man <...> unterscheiden, ob das Verb allein steht oder noch eine Ergänzung, ein Objekt, fordert, ob es nach der gewöhnlichen Ausdrucksweise intransitiv oder transitiv ist. <...> Nun ist aber die Unterscheidung nicht so wesentlich, da intransitive Verben transitiv und transitive intransitiv werden können. Wäre sie von großer Bedeutung, so würden wir wohl eine Verschiedenheit der Form zwischen den beiden Kategorien antreffen.

H. Hirt. Indogermanische Grammatik. Teil VII. Syntax II. Heidelberg, 1937. S. 28.

0. Introductory remarks

The present article deals with labile verbs, i. e. verbs with unstable valence properties. In sections 1–3 I will survey this phenomenon from the general-typological perspective, focusing particularly on its diachronic aspects. Sections 4–5 contain a brief survey of labile forms in Vedic Sanskrit. In sections 6–7 I will concentrate on one particular Vedic verb, *púṣyati* ‘prosper; makes prosper’, discussing in detail its syntactic patterns, their possible origins and developments and the typological implications thereof.

1. Basic definitions and terminological remarks

The term ‘labile’ refers to verbs (or, to be more exact, verbal forms) which can show valence alternation with no formal change in the verb. Typical examples of labile patterning are (1)–(5):

^{*} I am much indebted to A. Lubotsky, N. Nicholas, I. Nikolaeva and Ja. Testelet for critical remarks and comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

- (1) Russian
 a. *Ivan čitaet knigu*
 Ivan is reading a book.
 b. *Ivan čitaet*
 Ivan is reading.
- (2) a. *John ate the cake.*
 b. *John ate.*
- (3) a. *Mary gave John an apple.*
 b. *Mary gave an apple to John.*
- (4) a. *John opened the door.*
 b. *The door opened.*
- (5) Lezgian [Haspelmath 1993a: 289]
 a. *Ajal.di get'e xa- na*
 child (ERG) pot break-AOR
 The child **broke** the pot.
 b. *Get'e xa- na*
 pot break-AOR
 The pot **broke**.

Correspondingly, alternations like those between (a) and (b) in the above examples can be said to exemplify different kinds of labile patterns. Since members (a) and (b) of pairs like (1)–(2), (4)–(5) also differ in terms of the transitive/intransitive distinction, the phenomenon of lability can be qualified as ‘fluid transitivity’ (cf. [Dixon 1994: 6]).

Leaving out of consideration labile patterns like (1)–(2) (transitive vs. objectless transitive, often also referred to as absolute transitive), as well as valence alternations exemplified by (3), I will focus on pairs like (4)–(5). Unlike (1)–(3), sentences (a) and (b) in (4)–(5) do not share the subject, but the object of the transitive clause (a) corresponds to the subject of its intransitive equivalent (b)¹, whereby the meaning of the verb in (a) can be roughly defined as ‘CAUSE’ + meaning of the verb in (b) (e. g. ‘cause to open; make open’ etc.). This type is generally termed ‘causative/inchoative’ (cf. e. g. [Haspelmath 1993]), ‘causative’ (cf. [Levin 1993; Levin, Rapoport 1994]) or ‘ergative’ alternation (for the latter term, see below).

It has long been noted that the causative type of lability is common in (and perfectly compatible with) the languages of the ergative syntactic type; cf. e. g. [Kibrik et al. 1977: 74–77; Dixon 1994: 218]. It is no accident that the term ‘labile’ was coined in the grammars of the Caucasian languages, in which the ergative type is fairly common. In particular, the causative labile patterning is a typical feature of the East Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestanian) languages (cf. (5)), to the syntactic study of which the addressee of the present Festschrift has contributed so much. The same type of lability is met in Polynesian (cf. e. g. [Tchekhoff 1973] on labile syntax in Avar and Tongan) and a variety of other languages.

¹ Whence the terms ‘S = A type’ for the cases like (1)–(2) and ‘S = O type’ for the cases like (4)–(5) (cf. [Dixon 1994]).

However, as is well-known, we do not have to undertake a long field trip to Caucasus or somewhere at the end of the world to find examples of causative lability. The same phenomenon is well-attested in English, which clearly outranks many ergative languages in the number of verbs with labile patterning (like *open* in (4)) and, moreover, many newly-built or borrowed verbs, including numerous technical and scientific terms, follow the same pattern perfectly; cf. *liberalize*, *oxidize*, etc. Ironically enough, English linguistics has shown little interest in a convenient terminology for this phenomenon. There is no consensus on whether pairs like *open* (intr.) — *open* (tr.) should be treated as one lexical unit in two different syntactic uses or two units², and no generally accepted term for such pairs. The term ‘ergative’, which is quite common in the modern English studies (cf. e. g. [Keyser, Roeper 1984]), typically refers to the intransitive member of such pairs rather than to the whole pair (which is thus left without a special label) and is undoubtedly infelicitous and misleading. For the history of this terminological use (probably going back to Halliday [1967: 44ff.] and Anderson [1968: 12ff.]), and its severe criticism (with which one cannot help agreeing), see [Dixon 1994: 18–21]³. Some other terms like ‘double-faced’, ‘amphibious’ (both in [Visser 1970: 99]), ‘ambitransitive’ (e. g. [Dixon 1994: 18, 54, 217f. et passim]) remain thus far associated with just one author. Finally, a variety of terms, such as ‘transitive-intransitive’ (cf. e. g. [Anderson 1968: 12, fn. 13]), ‘causative-decausative’ [Dolinitina 1989: 26f]), ‘voice-neutral’ (cf. [Tchekhoff 1980]), ‘voiceless’ or ‘non-diathetic’ (both in [Schmalstieg 1982: 124]), ‘S = O verbs’ (e. g. [Dixon 1994]), ‘optionally transitive’ (cf. [Miller 1993: 179f.]), albeit semantically more transparent, appear too heavy and, most likely, have no future. The term ‘labile’, used in this paper, is not yet widely accepted either; moreover, it was ostracized and condemned by Hewitt [1982] (incidentally, the only article in English contained in the MLA Bibliography database which has the term ‘labile’ in its title). Thus far this term occurs almost solely within the limits of the Caucasian linguistics⁴, as well as in general and typological studies by Caucasianists *par excellence* or, at least, by scholars who did extensive research in Caucasian languages⁵ (the only exception I am aware of is [Drossard 1998]). Yet, the term ‘labile’ seems to have more chance to survive, and its appearance in a few recent monographs such as [Dixon 1994] (alongside ‘ambitransitive’) or [Song 1996: 26] (alongside ‘zero-derivation’) is symptomatic.

Incidentally, there is yet another, albeit indirect, consideration in favour of the term ‘labile’. As is well-known, a few key terms and scientific metaphors have been borrowed by syntacticians from chemistry; cf. ‘valence’, ‘n-valent’, syntactic trees (~ chemical formulae). The term ‘labile’ refers in chemistry to compounds amenable to chemical changes. Thus, using this term in syntax would be one more chemical meta-

² Cf. e. g. [Walton 1965] for a survey of different treatments of such pairs in standard English grammars and [Montemagni 1994] for lexicographic aspects of this problem.

³ One also has to mention the term ‘symétrique’, quite common in the French linguistic tradition, which is also infelicitous and hardly less confusing than ‘ergative’ (cf. e. g. [Bernard 1972: 227ff.]).

⁴ Cf. e. g. [Klimov, Alekseev 1980: 259–262; Šejxov 1987].

⁵ Cf. [Hewitt 1982; Haspelmath 1993a: 289–293; 1993b: 92, 109, note 7; Mel’čuk 1988: 213ff.; Nichols (e. g. 1984: 195)].

phor — entirely in the vein of the syntactic tradition of this century — resting upon the parallelism between unstable chemical compounds and syntactically «unstable» (transitive-intransitive) verbs.

2. Where labile verbs come from and how they disappear?

Lability and labile verbs are not among the most popular subjects in general linguistics, but quite a lot can be extracted from grammars of individual languages and especially from studies on North-Caucasian, Germanic (particularly English) and Romance languages. For Caucasian, see e. g. [Tchekhoff 1973; 1980; Šejxov 1987]. For English, one has to mention the classical grammar by Jespersen [1927: 332–337], where he draws attention to what he calls the ‘*Move and Change-class*’, i.e. one of the main semantic classes of verbs displaying causative lability (*move, turn, boil, improve*, etc.); cf. also [Smith 1978]. Among recent studies, see, for instance, [Keyser, Roeper 1984; Levin 1993; Levin, Rapoport 1994; Kitazume 1996]. For French, cf. e. g. [Blinkenberg 1960: 103ff.; Bernard 1972: 227ff.; Junker 1988].

As for the general theory and typology of labile verbs, little has been done till now. One has to mention Polinskaja’s PhD thesis [1986], where lability in ergative languages is thoroughly discussed. A short but informative excursus on Lezgian labile verbs by Haspelmath [1993a: 289–293] contains some useful criteria for distinguishing between labile patterning proper and transitive verbs with free omission of arguments. In his recent article, Drossard [1998] makes several important observations on the interplay between lability and orientation (Agent-oriented/Patient-oriented distinction) and discusses labile patterning in nominal constructions. This is just the beginning and, hopefully, the phenomenon in question will have better luck in linguistic studies than the corresponding terms have had thus far.

In what follows I will focus on some diachronic aspects of lability. There is no need to argue that languages differ in the number of labile verbs, ranking from just a few (as is, for instance, the case with Russian) to some hundreds (English). Nor is there any doubt that the degree of (causative) lability (which can be easily specified by the number of labile verbs in the dictionary) does not remain unchanged in the history of languages. There must be then a limited number of mechanisms and scenarios which lead to the rise or loss of labile patterning.

Surprisingly enough, this subject was not paid sufficient attention in general and typological linguistic studies. Some valuable generalisations can be extracted from studies on the history of individual languages or language families, however.

It is interesting to note that the same tendency is often shared by all or most of the members of a genetic group/family even after they have split apart. For instance, according to Sevortjan [1958], Turkic languages have been steadily losing labile patterning⁶, the traces of which can be found both in modern Turkic languages and in old

⁶ «Первообразные глаголы во многих (если не во всех) случаях исторически не имели постоянного значения переходности или непереходности. Один и тот же глагол был переходным и непереходным, в зависимости от состава предложения» [Sevortjan 1958: 26].

Turkic texts and dictionaries. One of the typical mechanisms of such «delabilisation» can be illustrated by Azerbaijani *törän-* 'be born, arise' / *törät-* 'beget, create'. As Sevortjan [ibid.: 38] suggests, this pair goes back to the labile verb meaning 'be born, arise; beget, create'. The underlying verb was retained in intransitive uses, for instance, in Turkish (*türe-*), Azerbaijani (*törä-*), Turkmen (*döre-*) and Khakas (*töri-* 'be born'), while its reflex in Kirghiz, *törö-*, is transitive ('beget'). Thus, by taking the transitivizing (causative) suffix *-t-* or the intransitivizing (anticausative) suffix *-n-*, the originally labile verb has split in Azerbaijani into two lexical units, losing lability. This strategy is quite common in languages which show causative lability. For instance, Hewitt [1980: 178ff.] noticed it in Daghestanian (ergative) languages like Lezgian, where a causative morpheme can be used «to form causatives from basically intransitive roots or to emphasize the transitive function of an otherwise neutral (= labile. — L. K.) root» [ibid.: 180]; cf. also [Kibrik A. A. 1999].

By contrast, Germanic languages (and, particularly, English) have considerably extended the range of labile verbs. The well-documented history of English and other Germanic languages provides us with rich evidence for this process. From naive speculations on this change as resulting from the general tendency towards clarity («Anschaulichkeit»), peculiar to the English language, history and philosophy, in the vein of Neophilologie [Perl 1931], syntacticians passed on to more serious accounts in terms of the features of the corresponding verbs and constructions.

On the one hand, there were some causes of a purely phonological nature. For instance, Old English intransitive *meltan* and transitive-causative *mieltan*, *myltan* have merged in modern English *melt* (cf. [Visser 1970: 131ff.]). On the other hand, several syntactic processes contributed much to the increase of lability. In particular, some (basically) transitive verbs can already be employed intransitively both with and without a reflexive pronoun (cf. *hide* / *hide himself*, etc.) in Old English, but in later periods the tendency to suppress the reflexive marker seems to become stronger [Hermodsson 1952: 65f.; Visser 1970: 145ff.].

One also has to mention an interesting attempt to arrange English labile verbs as a continuum according to whether transitive uses occur earlier, later or simultaneously with the intransitive ones [Kitazume 1996]. Correspondingly, labile verbs ('ergatives' in Kitazume's terms) fall into 'transitive-base' (e. g. *fasten*: the earliest transitive and intransitive attestations in 900 and 1225, respectively, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*), 'intransitive-base' (e. g. *fly*: 1607 and 1000, respectively) and 'transitive-intransitive-base', or 'typically ergative' (e. g. *open*: both transitive and intransitive around 1000). The same approach applied by Junker [1988] to the French de-adjectival labile verbs, like *grandir* (← *grand* 'big, tall') 'grow, make taller', *embellir* (← *bel-* 'beautiful') 'become/make beautiful, embellish', reveals an interesting morphological correlation: verbs with a derivational prefix (like *em-* in *embellir*) are initially transitive (i. e. their transitive uses are attested earlier, cf. *embellir*: transitive since 1100 and intransitive since 1671), while prefixless verbs are initially intransitive (cf. *grandir*: since 1460 and 1260, respectively).

In spite of the important findings mentioned above, quite a lot is still unclear about the evolution of the syntactic type and many cases of the rise of lability remain unaccounted.

3. Labile patterning and the ancient Indo-European syntactic type

While labile alternations in English, French and some other modern languages are well-studied, whichever terminology is used ('ergative', 'causative-inchoative', etc.), little has been done in the grammar of the ancient Indo-European languages. Without mentioning that the term 'labile' is unknown to most Indo-Europeanists, the corresponding phenomenon, albeit noticed in passing in a number of handbooks, was not paid due attention thus far. And yet, its importance and relevance for the ancient (or Proto-) Indo-European syntax can hardly be overestimated.

On the one hand, it has long been a commonplace that the Indo-European syntactic type changed considerably, and in some of the oldest Indo-European languages, like early Vedic (especially in the language of the most ancient Vedic text, the *Ṛgveda*, hereafter RV) and (Homeric) Greek, a number of verbal forms could be used both intransitively and transitively, while in later periods this phenomenon is less frequent or exceptional. To state it in terms of lability, the ancient Indo-European (and, presumably, Proto-Indo-European) syntactic type was much more labile than that attested in younger languages. One of the most explicit statements expressed on this issue by H. Hirt, which I have made the epigraph of the present article, clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of the traditional description of the ancient Indo-European syntax in terms of the transitive/intransitive distinction alone.

Thus far we have no full treatment of the lability phenomenon available, although several valuable observations and remarks are scattered throughout grammars and special studies on Vedic, Greek, etc. A comprehensive description of syntactic classes and types capturing the main correlations between transitivity and lability of verbal forms, on the one hand, and morphological categories and oppositions, such as diathesis (active/middle), tense (present/perfect/aorist), finite/non-finite distinction, on the other, still remains a desideratum for the grammars of individual Indo-European languages (in particular, Vedic) and, in my opinion, a prerequisite for studying (Proto-)Indo-European syntax.

I will of course make no attempt to present a full inventory of labile forms attested in Vedic; this task requires a monographic study. I will confine myself to some preliminary remarks, pinpointing several «spots» of the verbal paradigm where labile patterning seems to be especially common and outlining a few mechanisms which might have led to the rise of this phenomenon in Indo-European.

4. Labile patterning of the Vedic middle and perfect forms

4.1. Finite middle forms

Labile patterning in finite middle forms results from the polyfunctionality of the middle diathesis. Specifically, the middle inflection can express either the self-beneficiant meaning with no valence change (cf. the textbook example act. *yájati* 'sacrifices' — med. *yájate* 'sacrifices for oneself'), or an intransitivizing derivation, like passive, reflexive, anticausative (decausative). Correspondingly, in the cases where the

middle diathesis can have both of these functions with a given verb, its middle forms can be employed either transitively with the self-beneficiant meaning⁷, or intransitively, and thus display labile patterning.

For the ‘class I presents’ (in the traditional notation), which is the largest and most productive present type in the Vedic verbal system, the full list of verbs with such a polysemy is compiled by Gotō [1987: 48ff.]. Here belong the following presents: *códate* ‘impels; rushes, hastens’, *námate* ‘bends’, *bhárate* ‘brings (for oneself); brings oneself’, *vahate* ‘carries; drives, goes’, *śráyate* ‘lays, fixes on, fastens; leans on’, *svádate* ‘makes/is sweet’. Cf.:

- (6) a. *sváda-* *sva* *indrāya* *pavamāna* *pītāye* (RV 9.74.9)
 be/make.sweet:PR-2SG.IMPV.MED Indra:DAT Pavamāna:VOC drink:INF
 Be sweet for Indra, O Pavamāna (= Soma sap), for drinking.

- b. *sváda-* *sva* *havyā* (RV 3.54.22)
 be/make.sweet:PR-2SG.IMPV.MED oblations:ACC
 Make the oblations sweet [for yourself].

- (7) a. *vṛṣā* *coda-* *sva* *mahaté* *dhánāya* (RV 1.104.7)
 bull:NOM rush:PR-2SG.IMPV.MED big:DAT contest:DAT
 Rush [like] a bull for a big contest!

- b. *vṛṣṇe* *coda-* *sva* *su-* *ṣtutīm* (RV 8.75.6)
 bull:DAT impel:PR-2SG.IMPV.MED beautiful-praise:ACC
 Send forth your beautiful praise for the bull.

Labile syntax is also attested for some other present formations with middle inflexion⁸, but full lists of such verbs, like that made by Gotō for class I presents, do not exist yet.

4.2. *-āna-participles*

Labile patterning is also very common for middle athematic participles built with the suffix *-āna-*⁹. A typical example is the participle *hinvāná-* (root *hi-*), which occurs 18 times in intransitive (passive) constructions, as in (8a), and 10 times in transitive constructions (as in (8b)) in the Ṛgveda¹⁰, cf.:

- (8) a. *sómo* *hinv-* *ānó* *arṣati* (RV 9.12.8)
 Soma:NOM impel:PR-PRTC:NOM.SG.M flows
 Soma, being impelled, flows.

- b. *dhíyo* *hinv-* *ānā* *uśíjah* (RV 2.21.5)
 thoughts:ACC impel:PR-PRTC:NOM.PL.M Uśijas:NOM
 Uśijas, impelling the (religious) thoughts...

⁷ In other terms, in the transitive-affective use (cf. e. g. Gotō 1987: 27).

⁸ In particular, for thematic presents with nasal affixes, cf. e. g. *pínvate* ‘swells’ (intr.) (for instance, in RV 5.63.1, 8.12.5) / ‘swells (tr.), makes swell’ (for instance, in RV 1.125.5). For details, see [Kulikov 1995].

⁹ Cf. already [Delbrück 1888: 264].

¹⁰ For more details about *-āna-participles* derived from the nasal present stems, see [Kulikov 1995].

4.3. *Labile perfects*

Yet another part of the paradigm which is relevant for the discussion of lability is the perfect tense system. Unlike the formations discussed in the preceding sections, perfect forms of some verbs show labile syntax regardless of the diathesis. Typical examples are perfects of the verb *vr̥dh-* ‘grow, increase’: both active and middle forms can be employed either intransitively or transitively. For instance, the 3rd person plural active form *vāvr̥dhúḥ* occurs 6 times in intransitive usages, as in (9a), and 14 times in transitive-causative usages, as in (9b):

- (9) a. *rudrā́ ṛtásya sádaneṣu vāvr̥dh- uḥ* (RV 2.34.13)
 Rudras:NOM law:GEN residences:LOC grow:PF-3PL.ACT
 Rudras have grown in the residences of the truth.

- b. *índram ukthā́ni vāvr̥dh- uḥ* (RV 8.6.35)
 Indra:ACC hymns:NOM grow:PF-3PL.ACT
 The hymns have increased Indra.

The labile syntax of the early Vedic perfect (especially common in the RV) may originate in the predominant intransitivity of the Proto-Indo-European perfect, of which some traces can still be found in early Vedic and Homeric Greek¹¹. A detailed discussion of the syntactic development which the Proto-Indo-European perfect could have undergone goes beyond the scope of the present paper, but an approximate scenario can be outlined as follows. Originally, the active/middle opposition was irrelevant for perfect forms, most of which were employed intransitively. Later on, in some Indo-European languages (in particular, in Vedic and Ancient Greek), the active/middle distinction was introduced in the perfect paradigm, by analogy with the present system forms. Correspondingly, by analogy with the present pairs like med. *várdhate* ‘grows’ (intransitive) ~ act. *várdhati* ‘makes grow, increases’ (transitive-causative), the newly-built perfect middle forms have taken over the intransitive function, and the transitive-causative usages of active perfects became more frequent. However, this process was not finished yet by the time of the RV, and active perfects are still quite common in the (more archaic) intransitive usages. Thus, both usages co-occur, which implies the labile syntax of perfect forms.

5. Labile patterning of active forms and Vedic active *-ya*-presents

The lability of active forms is less common and therefore was paid still less attention in Indo-European studies. While the «fluid transitivity» of middle and perfect forms is generally accounted for by the semantics of these categories (which, incidentally, may be genetically related and go back to the same Proto-Indo-European source¹²), the labile syntax of some active forms outside the perfect system is considered a rare and abnormal phenomenon.

¹¹ For Greek, see, for instance, [Chantraine 1927: 26ff.]; for Vedic, cf. [Renou 1924; 1925: 144–148]. For a general discussion, see [Kulikov, forthcoming].

¹² The common origin of the Indo-European perfect and middle was suggested by Kurylowicz and Stang in the ‘30s; see also [Kortlandt 1979: 66ff]. For a survey of the problem, see e. g. [Neu 1985; Di Giovine 1996: 235ff].

One of the few such forms mentioned in the literature is the thematic aorist *arīṣat* ‘harmed’. Finite aorist forms are employed intransitively, as in (10a), while all participial forms derived from the aorist stem (*rīṣant-* 6×, *rīṣant-* 1×) are transitive-causative, meaning ‘harmer’, cf. (10b):

(10) a. *ágne sakhyé mā rīṣā- mā vayám táva* (RV 1.94.1)
 Agni:VOC friendship:LOC not harm:AOR.INJ-1.PL.ACT we your
 O Agni, may we not be hurt in your friendship.

b. *prāti śma rīṣa- t- o daha* (RV 1.12.5)
 against harm:AOR-PRTC-ACC.PL.M burn:PR-2SG.IMPV.ACT
 Burn the harmers! (i. e. those who harm us)

Jamison [1983: 144, fn. 79a] takes the participle *rīṣant-* as resulting from the haplology of the reduplicated causative aorist (*a*)*rīriṣat*, thus accounting for its transitive-causative syntax. This explanation is plausible but, in my opinion, unnecessary, since *arīṣat* is not the only thematic aorist which displays labile syntax in Vedic. Both intransitive and transitive-causative usages are attested, for instance, for the aorist injunctive *tamat* ‘is/makes exhausted’. One of the four Vedic attestations of this form is transitive (in the RV), while three others, in the Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa (a much younger text), are intransitive:

(11) a. *ná mā taman ná śraman ná-utá tandrat* (RV 2.30.7)
 [This Soma-pressing (?)] should not make me exhausted, tired or languid¹³.

b. *mā tamo mā yajñás taman mā yájamānas tamat* (TB 3.7.2.7)
 Do not be exhausted, [o charcoal], let the sacrifice not be exhausted, let the sacrificer not be exhausted.

Bearing in mind transitive-causative uses of thematic aorists as exemplified by (10)–(11), as well as the labile syntax of some other derivatives of the root *rīṣ-* and its Avestan cognate (cf. below on *rīṣyati*), I cannot rule out that the participle *rīṣant-* (or, at least, its short vowel variant *rīṣant-*) belongs to the thematic aorist, so that *ī* results from the secondary lengthening of *i* in the open syllable before *ṣ*¹⁴, which is hardly less probable than the spontaneous haplology *rīri-* → *rī-*.

In what follows I will focus on the labile syntax of some active present forms — more specifically, on present formations derived with the suffix ‘-ya- (the ‘present class IV’).

The majority of the active -ya-presents are intransitives referring to inactive non-controllable events, most of which are emotional (cf. *rāṇyati* ‘rejoices, is/becomes glad’, *krúdhya* ‘is/becomes angry’ etc.) or physiological states and processes (cf. *kṛṣyati* ‘is/becomes lean’, *médya* ‘is/becomes fat’, *jūryati/jṛyati* ‘grows old, decays’ etc.). Some of them do not occur in Vedic with the middle inflexion, some others do so only rarely or exceptionally, so that, in fact, the term ‘active [-ya-presents]’ refers hereafter to *activa tantum* or *quasi-tantum*. All these -ya-presents are intransitive, meaning

¹³ Thus [Geldner 1951: I, 314; Elizarenkova 1989: 271, 681]. Less likely is the syntactic analysis suggested by Delbrück [1900: 29f.] and hesitantly adopted by Renou [1967 (EVP XVI): 97]: the construction in question is intransitive, with the subject in the accusative, allegedly due to its inactive character.

¹⁴ Details of this process (briefly mentioned, for instance, by Wackernagel [1896: 92f.], Kuiper [1934: 224, fn. 4], Renou [1952: 43]) are unclear, but the same regularity may account for some other, at first glance, abnormal forms, such as caus. *dūṣayati*, opt. *pūṣema* AV, etc.

‘be/become Q’ (where Q stands for a state or quality), while the corresponding causative meaning (‘make Q’) is typically expressed by the productive causatives derived with the suffix *-áya-* (*krodháyati* ‘makes angry’, *medáyati* ‘makes fat’, etc.).

There are, however, two active *-ya-*presents attested both in intransitive and transitive-causative usages. One of them, *riṣyati*, is solidly embedded in the Ṛgveda and later texts in the intransitive usage (cf. (12a)), but occurs once in the causative sense¹⁵, cf. (12b):

(12) a. *sá ghā vīró ná riṣyati* (RV 1.18.4)
This man is not **hurt**.

b. *ṛdūdāreṇa sákhyā saceya yó mā ná riṣyet* (RV 8.48.10)
I wish to be in friendship with the companion of pleasant nature (sc. Indra), who should not **harm** me.

Nevertheless, the labile syntax of this *-ya-*present can be safely reconstructed for early Vedic (and, presumably, for Proto-Indo-Iranian), matching with the lability of the thematic aorist *ariṣat* discussed above, as well as the labile patterning of the Avestan cognate *irišiiēiti*¹⁶. The transitive occurrence in (12b) may thus be a trace of this archaic syntactic feature.

The second labile *-ya-*present, *púṣyati* ‘prosper, makes prosper’, is of particular interest. On the one hand, it is well-attested in the RV both in intransitive and transitive uses, for which see below. On the other hand, the lack of cognates in Avestan, as well as other Indo-European languages, proves its relatively young age, so that this *-ya-*present may provide valuable evidence for recent developments giving rise to the labile patterning¹⁷.

Before I pass on to considering *púṣyati* in detail, one has to emphasize that transitive occurrences of both *púṣyati* and *riṣyati* are attested in the RV only (for transitive attestations of *riṣyati* in Āraṇyakas, see fn. 15). This is yet another piece of evidence for higher degree of lability of early Vedic compared to that attested in more recent texts.

6. Syntactic patterns of Vedic *púṣyati*

6.0. Preliminary remarks

The active *-ya-*present *púṣyati* is generally considered one of the (relatively few) formations which can be employed in both intransitive and transitive-causative usages, i. e. both in the sense ‘prosper, thrive’ and ‘make prosper, make thrive’; cf. Böhtlingk

¹⁵ Not counting three transitive occurrences of *riṣyati* (‘punishes, harms’) in one passage of the Śāṅkhāyana- and Aitareya-Āraṇyakas. Both of these late texts belong to the Ṛgvedic school and the occurrence in question may be a replica of the archaic transitive usage attested in the Ṛgveda.

¹⁶ Transitive (‘harm, make hurt’) e. g. in Vīdēvdāt 15.11 (*irišiiēiti*), 7.38 (subj. *irišiiāt*); intransitive (‘be hurt’) e. g. in V 13.37 (*irišiiāt*), V 15.48 (*irišiiān* ‘they will not be hurt’); cf. [Bartholomae 1904: Sp. 1485f.; Lühr 1994: 89].

¹⁷ I leave out of consideration two more active *-ya-*presents which might belong with *púṣyati* and *riṣyati*, namely *duṣyati* ‘spoils’ and *śāmyati* ‘becomes peaceful’. Both of these are generally employed intransitively, while proposed instances of the transitive usage (*duṣyati* ‘spoils’ (tr.) in the AV-Paippalāda; *śīmyati* (*śāmyati*, *śāmyati*) ‘makes peaceful’ (?) in the mantras of the Yajurveda) are suspect and unclear.

& Roth's dictionary [1865: T. IV, Sp. 808] s. v. *púṣyati*: a) 'gedeihen'; b) 'gedeihen machen, gedeihen lassen'. While intransitive usages (cf. (18)–(19) below) give rise to no questions, some occurrences constructed with accusatives are problematic. Beside clear instances of forms meaning 'make prosper, increase' (cf. (20)–(21)), we find a few difficult cases. Consider some examples together with traditional translations:

- (13) *eté ta indra jantávo víśvam puṣya-nti*
 these your Indra:VOC people:NOM.PL all:ACC prosper:PR-3PL.ACT
vāryam (RV 1.81.9)
 desirable.good:ACC.SG
 Diese Leute hier **bringen** für dich, Indra, allen begehrenswerten (Besitz) **zur Blüte** [Geldner 1951: I, 105].

Geldner's translation, albeit syntactically impeccable, conforms badly to what we know about the Vedic mythology. It is typically the function of the deities, not of the men, to augment or bring to prosperity goods of all kinds (*víśvam vāryam*)¹⁸.

Still odder are translations suggested for the following passage occurring in two Brāhmaṇas, Śatapatha and Taittirīya:

- (16) *ná puṣtām paśú mánya- ta iti; tásmād rājā*
 not fat:ACC cattle:ACC think:PR-3SG.MED thus therefore king:NOM
paśūn ná puṣyati (ŚB 13.2.9.8 ≈ TB 3.9.7.2)
 cattle:ACC.PL not prospers
 [They say:] «It thinks not of the fat cattle», — whence the king does not **rear** cattle [Eggeling 1900: 326]
 ... Therefore ... the king does not **feed** cattle [Dumont 1948: 484]

One needs not argue how weird a cattle-breeding king (*rājā*) looks within the context of the traditional Indian culture.

To conclude this short selection of suspect transitive-causative translations, let me quote one more Ṛgvedic passage, with the translation proposed by Renou:

- (17) *tvám <...> śrávo váso puṣtīm ná puṣya- si* (RV 6.2.1)
 you glory:ACC Vasu:VOC prosperity:ACC as prosper:PR-2SG.ACT
 toi, tu **fais fleurir** le renom (des hommes) comme une floraison (de richesses), ... ô Vasu. [Renou 1964 [EVP XIII]: 36]

Obviously, Renou tried to stick as close as possible to the original syntactic construction, but what can be meant by 'tu fais fleurir ... une floraison'?

In order to answer this and similar questions, let us have a closer look at typical constructions attested with the present *púṣyati*.

6.1. Intransitive: <*X_{NOM}* + prospers>

púṣyati occurs some 10 times in the intransitive usage in the RV. Typical examples are:

-
- ¹⁸ Cf., for instance:
 (14) *sárasvatī ... vāryam dāt* (RV 10.17.7)
 May Sarasvatī give [us] desired goods.
 (15) *śrād víśvā vāryā kṛdhi* (RV 8.75.2)
 [O Agni], guarantee all desired goods!

- (18) *tarāṇir īj jayati kṣéti puṣyati* (RV 7.32.9)
 fast:NOM only wins dwells prospers
 Only the one who is fast is victorious, dwells (in peace), prospers.
- (19) *asmín puṣya-ntu gópatau* (RV 10.19.3)
 this:LOC prosper:PR-3.PL.IMPV.ACT herdsman:LOC
 With this herdsman [cows] should thrive.

6.2. Transitive: <X_{NOM} + P_{ACC} + makes prosper, increases>

The transitive-causative pattern can be exemplified by the following passages:

- (20) *viśvā vidvāṃ ārtvijyā dhīra puṣya-si* (RV 1.94.6)
 all:ACC.PL knowing:NOM offices.of.a.ṛtvij:ACC.PL wise:VOC prosper:PR-2SG.ACT
 [You, o Agni], the wise one, knowing all the offices of a ṛtvij (priest), make [them] flourish.
- (21) *sá mudā kāvya purú viśvam bhūma-iva puṣya-ti* (RV 8.39.7)
 he joy:INS poetic.inspirations:ACC many everything:ACC earth:NOM
 like prosper:PR-3SG.ACT
 By [his] joy, he (sc. Agni) [makes thrive] many poetic inspirations, as the earth makes thrive everything.

It must be emphasized that this transitive pattern occurs in the RV only, practically disappearing in later texts¹⁹. This is yet another piece of evidence for the change of the syntactic type (high degree of lability → low degree of lability) after the early Vedic period and, particularly, after the Ṛgveda.

6.3. Intransitive with content accusative

6.3.1. Intransitives with ‘etymological’ accusative <X_{NOM} + P^{pus}_{ACC} + prospers>

The symbol P^{pus} denotes an abstract nominal derived from the root *puṣ-*, meaning ‘prosperity, thriving’ or the like. This pattern occurs only once in the RV (6.2.1; cf. below for this attestation), but becomes common in late Vedic texts (Brāhmaṇas), cf.:

- (22) *sahasra-poṣaṃ puṣya-nt-īty, eṣā hi paśūnāṃ sahasra-poṣaṃ puṣya-ti* (KS 24.6:95.17–18)
 thousand-prosperity:ACC prosper:PR-PRTC-NOM.SG.F so she because
 cattle:GEN.PL thousand-prosperity:ACC prosper:PR-3SG.ACT
 «[She is] prospering thousandfold prosperity», — so [they say], since she prospers thousandfold prosperity in cattle.
- (23) *jamadagniḥ sarvān poṣān apuṣya-t* (PB 22.7.2)
 Jamadagni:NOM all:ACC.PL prosperous.things:ACC.PL prosper:IMPF-3SG.ACT
 Jamadagni prospered in all prosperous things.

No doubt, to the same syntactic type belongs the expression *puṣtīm ... puṣyasi* met at RV 6.2.1 (example (17)), which thus must be translated (literally) as ‘you prosper prosperity’, i. e. ‘you are prosperous’.

¹⁹ Except for two occurrences in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa.

Constructions like *sá puṣṭīm puṣyati* are fairly common with a number of verbs in ancient Indo-European languages and have been repeatedly discussed. The traditional term for the accusative nominal in this pattern is ‘content accusative’ (Inhaltsakkusativ), which implies that the nominal in question refers to a concept inherent to the meaning of the verb. In the simplest cases it is derived from the same root (cf. *puṣṭīm*, (*sahasra-*)*poṣam*), which prompts another traditional term, *figura etymologica*, or ‘etymologischer Akkusativ’. Examples of such kind can also be found, for instance, in Latin (cf. *vivere vitam*, *militare militiam*), English (cf. *live a life*, *fight a fight*) and other languages.

6.3.2. Intransitive with accusative of parameter/scope: <X_{NOM} + P_{ACC} + PROSPERS>

Very similar to constructions with etymological accusative are patterns with the accusative referring to some aspect(s), parameter(s) or scope of prosperity. Examples are:

- (24) *sā vīt su-vīrā marúdbhir astu <...>*
 this tribe:NOM good-men:NOM Marut:INS.PL be:PR-3SG.IMPV.ACT
púṣya- nt- ī nṛmṇám (RV 7.56.5)
 prosper:PR-PRTC-NOM.SG.F manliness:ACC
 Let this tribe be full of valiant sons with [the help of] Maruts, ... prospering in manliness.
- (25) *prajāṃ kṛnv- āthām ihā puṣya- tam*
 offspring:ACC make:PR-2DU.IMPV.MED here prosper:PR-2DU.IMPV.ACT
rayīm (AV 14.2.37)
 wealth:ACC •
 [O you, two parents,] produce offspring, prosper here in wealth.

This pattern shares some features with those discussed under 6.2. and 6.3.1. Morphologically, it looks very much like the transitive pattern <X_{NOM} + P_{ACC} + *makes prosper, increases*>, where the accusative P_{ACC} refers to a parameter or scope of prosperity. It is obviously for this reason that constructions like (13), (16), (17) were interpreted as transitive-causative by many translators. Syntactically, this pattern is most closely related to the intransitive type with content accusative, however. Like (*sahasra-*)*poṣam*, *puṣṭīm* etc., *nṛmṇám* ‘manliness’ and *rayīm* ‘wealth’ in (24)–(25) refer to some aspects of prosperity, or, to state it in general terms, to the parameter or scope corresponding to the domain of prosperity²⁰. This semantic type is discussed in detail by Oertel [1926: 31ff.], who rightly argues that the accusative in such constructions is to be regarded «as an accusative of content or reference <...> rather than as accusative of the direct object» [emphasis is mine. — L. K.]²¹. Another term commonly used in the literature to refer to such accusatives, ‘accusative of relation’ or

²⁰ The parameter of prosperity can also be expressed by the instrumental case, as in (26):

(26) *púṣyati prajāyā paśúbhiḥ* (TS 2.1.9.4 = 2.4.6.7)
 prospers offspring:INS cattle:INS
 He prospers (= abounds) in offspring and cattle.

This pattern (attested in the Saṃhitā and Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya school only) is irrelevant for our discussion and I leave it out of consideration.

²¹ Cf. also [Gaedicke 1880: 88ff.; Delbrück 1888: 175f.; Jamison 1983: 29, fn. 9].

‘accusative of result’, appears somewhat misleading; I prefer to call this type ‘accusative of parameter/scope’. Just as *nṛmṇám* ‘manliness’ and *rayím* ‘wealth’ denote scopes of prosperity, so too *paśūn* in the Brāhmaṇa passage (16) quoted above without doubt refers to yet another area of thriving, namely cattle, or, to say it more explicitly, abundance in cattle which is in possession of the person referred to by the subject (in our example, the king). Thus, (16) has to be translated as follows:

- (16) ... *rājā paśūn ná puṣyati* (ŚB 13.2.9.8 ~ TB 3.9.7.2)
... the king does not prosper in cattle.

No doubt, to the same usage also belong the RVic passages 1.81.9 and 6.2.1 quoted above (examples (13), (17)):

- (13) *eté ta indra jantávo víśvam puṣyanti vāryam* (RV 1.81.9)
These peoples of yours, o Indra, prosper in all desirable goods.

- (17) *tvám <...> śrávo váso puṣtīm ná puṣyasi* (RV 6.2.1)
You, o Vasu, prosper in glory [= you are glorious], as one [prosper] in prosperity [= as one is prosperous].

It is most instructive that ‘etymological’ and ‘non-etymological’ accusatives are coordinated within one sentence, which clearly points to their structural affinity.

In semantic terms, the difference between patterns with ‘etymological’ and ‘non-etymological’ accusatives can be characterized as that between semantically empty (= inherent to the meaning of the verb) and non-empty parameter/scope noun, respectively. Of course, this distinction is by no means clear-cut, and we are probably dealing with a continuum of «emptiness». In particular, *puṣtí-* ‘prosperity’ seems to be more abstract (and thus more «empty») than *póṣa-* ‘abundance, prosperity’. Furthermore, when constructed with the genitive referring to the scope of prosperity, as e. g. in the case of *paśūnām sahasra-poṣam* ‘thousandfold prosperity in cattle’ (example (22)), *póṣa-* becomes still more concrete, so that, semantically, *paśūnām sahasra-poṣam* belongs with non-etymological accusatives.

Beside *púṣyati*, there is a number of other intransitive verbs which can be constructed with the accusative of parameter. Here belong, for instance, *pávate* ‘becomes clean, purifies (himself)’ (cf. *ghṛtám pavasva* RV 9.49.3 ‘purify yourself [into] ghee’; see [Gotō 1987: 207]), *dī-* ‘shine’ (cf. *rayím asmāsu dīdhi* RV 2.2.6 (lit.) ‘shine wealth for us’), *arṣ-* ‘flow’ (cf. *abhí vástrā suvasanāny arṣa* RV 9.97.50 ‘flow (for) well-fitting (lit. well-clothing) clothes’), etc.²²; for a rich collection of examples, see [Gaedicke 1880: 88ff., 156ff.]. However, unlike other verbs constructed with accusative of parameter/scope (many of which also refer to prosperity and well-being), *púṣyati* can be employed in transitive-causative uses (discussed in section 6.2) as well. Obviously, the morphological similarity between these two accusative patterns has given rise to numerous misinterpretations and erroneous translations (some of which are mentioned above). The difference between these two uses of *púṣyati* is by no means a recent discovery; it has been repeatedly noticed in Vedic studies, cf. [Delbrück 1888: 177f.; Henry 1891: 37f.²³;

²² For this type of construction, see e. g. [Renou 1957: 119 (= *Choix d'études* ... II, 757)].

²³ Henry [op. cit.], was in fact too categorical when claiming in his comment on AV 13.2.10 that *púṣyati* can never be used transitively («Le verbe *puṣ* est intransitif ici comme partout: il n'est nulle part nécessaire de lui supposer un sens transitif»).

Oertel 1926: 31ff.; Haudry 1977: 195ff.; Jamison 1983: 142 and fn. 77]. So more surprising is the fact that again and again one encounters odd and forced translations, like those cited in examples (13), (16), (17)²⁴. Although in some two or three unclear cases syntactic ambiguity of constructions with *púṣyati* cannot be ruled out²⁵, most often, the type of construction can easily be identified by the type of subject. Specifically, only gods, but not adepts, can be said to increase, bring to prosperity wealth, cattle, offspring, etc., while the subject of prosperity is typically an adept (in particular, a sacrificer or a priest). In some rare cases when gods are said to prosper, the parameters of prosperity are quite specific (*rūpá-* ‘(divine) form’, *kṣatrā-* ‘superior power’, etc.) and can hardly relate to adepts.

7. *púṣyati*: from intransitive to transitive pattern

While the distinction between the etymological and non-etymological accusatives cannot conceal the semantic and syntactic affinity of the patterns $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + P_{\text{ACC}}^{\text{pus}} + \text{prosper} \rangle$ and $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + P_{\text{ACC}} + \text{prosper} \rangle$, the opposition between both of them, on the one hand, and the transitive pattern discussed under 6.2, on the other, is far more crucial. Strictly speaking, the relation between patterns $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + P_{\text{ACC}} + \text{prosper} \rangle$ and $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + P_{\text{ACC}} + \text{makes prosper, increases} \rangle$ cannot be taken as truly causative. Although the present *púṣyati* is attested in constructions meaning, for instance, ‘the king prospers (in wealth)’ or ‘Indra makes the king’s wealth increase’ and the like, we do not find purely causative pairs like (i) ‘the king prospers’ ~ (ii) ‘Indra makes the king prosper’

²⁴ In this paper I focus on the present forms only, but the same objection is valid for a good many forms outside the present system, above all for perfects (*pupóṣa* ‘has prospered’, etc.). Cf., for instance, Gonda’s translation of the perfect participle *pupuṣvān*, which appears quite forced:

(27) *ṛcām tvaḥ pōṣam āste pupuṣ- vān* (RV 10.71.11)
 stanzas:GEN abundance:ACC sit:PR-3SG.MED prosper:PF-PRTC:NOM.SG.M

One sits augmenting the abundance of holy stanzas. [Gonda 1957: 79 (= Selected studies I, 70)]

No doubt, this occurrence also belongs to the pattern ‘intransitive with accusative of parameter/scope’ and should be translated accordingly:

He sits, prospering in (= successful in the composition of) stanzas.

²⁵ Here may belong, for instance, the following RVic passage:

(28) *pró tyé agnáyo ’gnīṣu víśvam puṣya- nti vāryam* (RV 5.6.6)
 before these fires:NOM fires:LOC all:ACC prosper:PR-3PL.ACT desirable.good:ACC

Geldner [1951: II, 9] prefers an intransitive interpretation:

Diese Feuer (haben) unter (allen) Feuern den Vorrang; sie haben alles Begehrtenwerte in Fülle.

By contrast, Renou and Elizarenkova translate this form as transitive-causative:

Ces-fameux feux sont en avant parmi les (autres) feux; ils font fleurir tout bien-d’élection. [Renou 1964 (EVP XIII): 22]

Они дают процветание всему желанному богатству (Elizarenkova).

Since Agni (= fire) appears in the Vedas both as a subject (cf. RV 4.8.5; 6.2.1; TS 7.1.9.1) and a causer of thriving (cf. RV 1.94.6; 5.26.6; 8.39.7), both interpretations are at first glance semantically acceptable. However, *víśvam puṣyanti vāryam* is a sacred formula meaning ‘they prosper in all desirable goods’, as in RV 1.81.9 (example (13)). The formulaic character of this expression practically rules out other (albeit syntactically and semantically possible) interpretations, in favour of Geldner’s translation.

or (iii) ‘the king’s wealth increases’ ~ (iv) ‘Indra makes the king’s wealth increase’. To be more exact, *púṣyati* occurs in usages (i) and (iv), but not in (ii) and (iii)²⁶. Thus, although the syntactic behaviour of *púṣyati* can be qualified as labile (cf. the valence difference between patterns with and without accusative object), it cannot be treated as an instance of *causative* lability *sensu stricto* (type S = O), unlike *ríṣyati* and numerous middle and perfect forms discussed earlier. In order to express the causative meaning of type (ii), *puṣ-* takes the causative suffix *-áya-*, as in (30):

- (30) *tám no agne <...> rayīm sahasva ā bhara*
 this:ACC us Agni:VOC wealth:ACC powerful:VOC here bring:PR-2SG.IMPV.ACT
sá kṣep-aya- t sá poṣ- aya- t (RV 5.9.7)
 he:NOM dwell-CAUS-3SG.INJ.ACT he:NOM prosper-CAUS-3SG.INJ.ACT
 O powerful Agni, bring hither this wealth to us; he (sc. Agni) will make [us] dwell in peace and prosper.

One more feature which is relevant for the distinction between $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + (P_{\text{ACC}}) + \text{prosper} \rangle$ and $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + P_{\text{ACC}} + \text{makes prosper, increases} \rangle$ can be formulated in terms of referential identity. While in the former case the subject of prosperity and the possessor of P (wealth, cattle, offspring, etc.), be it an adept or god, is obviously the same person, in transitive patterns the subject refers to a deity who increases goods, power etc. possessed by someone else, namely by the adept(s) of this deity.

The morphological similarity between the two accusative patterns attested with *púṣyati*, i.e. transitive proper and intransitive with accusative of parameter, suggests one more scenario of the rise of labile patterning, in addition to those mentioned and briefly discussed in section 2:

I. $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + \text{prosper} \rangle$: (e. g.) *The sacrificer prospers*

The intransitive verb takes a content accusative (a semantically empty ‘etymological accusative’).



II. $\langle X_{\text{NOM}} + P_{\text{ACC}}^{\text{pus}} + \text{prosper} \rangle$: *The sacrificer prospers (in prosperity)*

²⁶ Some two or three cases which can be interpreted as belonging to the causative type (ii) (and are thus translated by some Vedic scholars) are syntactically ambiguous. For the reasons of space I quote here only one such example:

- (29) *té syāma yé agnáye dadāś-úr havyádātibhiḥ*
 those be:PR.OPT:1PL.ACT who Agni:DAT offer:PF-3PL.ACT sacrificial.gifts:INS
yá īm púṣya- nt- a indh-até (RV 4.8.5)
 who him prosper:PR-PRTC-NOM.PL.M kindle:PR-3PL.MED

Geldner’s and Renou’s translations obviously rely upon the assumption that the accusative *īm* is syntactically connected with both verbal forms, *púṣyantaḥ* and *indhate*:

Wir möchten die sein, die den Agni mit Opfergaben beschenkt haben, die ihn entzündeten und großziehen. [Geldner 1951: I, 429]

Puissions nous être ceux qui toujours-ont-satisfait Agni par les dons d’offrande, / qui l’allument en le faisant prospérer. [Renou 1964 (EVP XIII): 13]

However, Agni is never said to be brought to prosperity by adepts (sacrificers). Under a different syntactic analysis (which seems to me more attractive), *īm* is connected with *indhate*, while the participle *púṣyantaḥ* has no object. Thus, the occurrence in question falls into the intransitive type:

Let us be those who have presented Agni with sacrificial gifts, who, prospering, kindle him.

Instead of an 'etymological accusative', the verb can be constructed with a semantically non-empty 'non-etymological accusative', referring to parameter or scope of prosperity.

⇓

III. $\langle X^i_{\text{NOM}} + (X^i)'s \text{ } P_{\text{ACC}} + \textit{prosper} \rangle$: *The sacrificer prospers in wealth*

The parameter (property) expressed by the accusative is reinterpreted as possessed by someone non-identical with the subject.

⇓

IV. $\langle X^i_{\text{NOM}} + (Y^j)'s \text{ } P_{\text{ACC}} + \textit{makes prosper, increases} \rangle$: *Agni makes wealth increase*

Vedic *púṣyati* probably stopped at this stage, but, theoretically, it might have made one step further, substituting a noun referring to the possessor of parameter (property) for P_{ACC} and thus developing the causative pattern proper.

The turning point in this scenario is the III $\rightarrow$ IV transition, when the reference of the possessor of P_{ACC} is «switched» ($i \rightarrow j$). This process, which might be called 'alienation of parameter', seems to be one more possible way to arrive at causative lability. Example (23) is especially instructive as an illustration of the ease of the transition from an intransitive with a content accusative to a transitive. The intransitive interpretation of *bhūma víśvam puṣyati* 'the earth thrives in everything [what exists on it]' is almost undistinguishable from the corresponding transitive, 'the earth makes thrive everything [what exists on it]'. By analogy and, particularly, by means of similes like [*agnih*] *kāvya puṣyati* 'Agni makes thrive poetic inspirations' ~ *bhūma víśvam puṣyati* 'the earth makes thrive everything', this transition could have expanded to other constructions, giving rise to the labile patterning of *púṣyati* 'prosper; makes prosper'.

To conclude, the scenario of the syntactic evolution of Vedic *puṣyati* sketched above can be placed into a broader perspective. Although our discussion did not go beyond the scope of one particular verb, *púṣyati*, its syntactic features are important evidence for a typological study of lability. An easy transfer from the content accusative constructions to the transitive-causative pattern may imply that languages where intransitive constructions with content accusative are common have at their disposal an additional «resource» for developing causative lability. Verification of this assumption requires both an extensive study of the old Indo-European syntax, particularly from the point of view of the transitive/intransitive distinction, and further typological evidence from non-related languages.

* * *

Alongside purely linguistic matters, there is something else which, in my opinion, links the subject of this paper with the addressee of the present Festschrift. Aleksandr Evgen'evič exemplifies a rare (if not to say unique) integrity of the two processes which were in the spotlight of the last three sections, 'prosper' and 'make increase, prosper' (both rendered by Ṛgvedic *púṣyati*). His own prosperity requires and implies, as a *conditio sine qua non*, the prosperity of people and things around him; and *vice versa*.

And since everything in our life is so intimately interconnected, it will be appropriate to conclude this article with the following verse, slightly modifying Vedic sacred formulae discussed above:

*ojaś ca viśvaṃ vāryaṃ ca
prajāṃ sarvāṇi karma ca
sakhīn uta śiṣyān puṣyet*

May he prosper in vigour and all kinds of wealth,
in offspring and all kinds of works,
in friends and students!

ABBREVIATIONS OF TEXTS

AV = Atharvaveda	ŚB = Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa
KS = Kāṭhaka	TB = Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa
PB = Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa	TS = Taittirīya-Saṃhitā
RV = Ṛgveda	V = Vīdēvdāt

GRAMMATICAL ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — accusative	INS — instrumental
ACT — active	INTR — intransitive
AOR — aorist	LOC — locative
CAUS — causative	M — masculine
DAT — dative	MED — middle
DU — dual	NOM — nominative
ERG — ergative	OPT — optative
F — feminine	PF — perfect
GEN — genitive	PL — plural
IMPF — imperfect	PR — present
IMPV — imperative	PRTC — participle
INF — infinitive	SG — singular
INJ — injunctive	TR — transitive
	VOC — vocative

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