The bad behaviour of trivalent verbs in the ablativus absolutus *

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0   Introduction

In this paper I will try to give an explanation of an on first view rather incomprehensible phenomenon first alluded to in Bolkestein (1985 a 218, note 26) It is there argued that Latin trivalent predicates such as *aspergere* 'to sprinkle', *circumdare* 'to surround' and *donare* 'to give', which allow two syntactic patterns, namely an accusative plus dative (Dat-) and an accusative plus ablative (Abl-) pattern, select their pattern according to the relative degree of «cohesiveness» with respect to the surrounding discourse of their two non-subject constituents that pattern will be chosen in which the most cohesive of these two constituents is accusative object («x_2») The selection of syntactic pattern, in other words, is motivated by pragmatic phenomena

One exception was pointed out to exist, namely the behaviour of such trivalent verbs when occurring in an ablativus absolutus (AA-) construction in this construction the pattern selected is almost invariably the accusative plus dative pattern rather than the accusative plus ablative pattern (In fact in 351 attested prose-instances of the trivalent verbs mentioned the ratio of Abl- *vs* Dat-pattern is ca 56,6% *vs* 43,4%, whereas within the AA construction only 10% of the patterns are in the Abl pattern) [1] The question is, of course, why is this the case?

I will suggest that the tendency is due to the special nature of the AA
construction, and that the «deviant» behaviour of the verbs under consi-
deration is one more argument in support of those analyses in which the
underlying structure of sentences containing an AA construction is vi-
ewed as quite different from those containing a participium conjunc-
tum (PC), as has been argued in Van der Linden (1955) and lately also in
Vester (1983, 147 ff), Pinkster (1984, 188 ff) and Hoff (n d) As so often,
some of the observations in more traditional grammars of Latin, such as
e g Kuhner-Stegmann (I, 786) and Szantyr (139) will turn out to be not
only right but also justifiable in more ways than was deemed necessary
at the time they were first formulated
     I will first discuss the nature of the «deviant» cases and then make
some remarks concerning the AA construction in general

1   *Trivalent verbs in the AA-construction*

   In the following sentences the patterns which are possible in principle
are exemplified

1	*a)*	vallo	urbi	circumdato	cives	fugerunt
		palisade$_{abl}$	city$_{dat}$	surrounded$_{abl}$	citizens$_{nom}$	fled$_{3pl}$

«after a palisade had been put around the city, the citizens fled»

	b)	urbe	vallo	circumdata	cives	fugerunt
		city$_{abl}$	palisade$_{abl}$	surrounded$_{abl}$	citizens$_{nom}$	fled$_{3pl}$

In 1 a) the trivalent verb has the Dat-pattern, in 1 b) the Abl-pattern
As observed above, 1 a) is relatively much more frequent than 1 b), al-
though in the case of main clauses the pattern exemplified by 1 b) is more
frequent
     In 1 a-b) the AA construction and the main clause happen to have no
constituent in common, that is, there is no coreference between an entity
in the state of affairs designated by the AA and an entity in the state of
affairs designated in the main clause In fact, the instances of the Dat-
pattern found *all* concern instances in which the dative constituent of the
trivalent verb is either completely coreferential to a constituent in the
main clause (as in 2 a), or stands into a narrow semantic relation to a
constituent in the main clause, as in 2 c) In the case of complete corefe-
rentiality, however, 2 b) is the expression used rather than 2 a) (Accor-
ding to the data in Hoff [n d] the coreferent constituent will in 85% be
explicitly expressed in the main clause, and only in 5,4% with the AA)

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cause of the distribution of pattern in the AA was the existence of a «surface filter» the AA
might be avoided because of possible resulting ambiguity This had to be dropped, howe-
ver, in view of the isomorphy of abl and dat with most noun classes in latin, and in view
of the fact that many instances of the Dat-pattern in the AA are ambiguous anyhow (at least
if the context is left out of consideration)

2 *a)* | vallo | urbi | circumdato | milites | eam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| palisade$_{abl}$ | city$_{dat}$ | surrounded$_{abl}$ | soldiers$_{nom}$ | (it)$_{acc}$ |

oppugnabant
besieged$_{3pl}$

«after having surrounded the city with a palisade, the soldiers besieged it»

b) | vallo | circumdato | milites | urbem oppugnabant |
|---|---|---|---|
| palisade$_{abl}$ | (∅)surrounded$_{abl}$ | soldiers$_{nom}$ | city$_{acc}$ besieged$_{3pl}$ |

«after having put a wall around (it), the soldiers besieged the city»

c) | circumdata | laevo | bracchio | togae | lacinia | hortatus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| surrounded$_{abl}$ | left$_{dat}$ | arm$_{dat}$ | cloak$_{gen}$ | flap$_{abl}$ | warned$_{nom}$ |

est   (Vell 2, 3, 1)
be$_{3sg}$

«after having surrounded his left arm with a flap of his cloak, he admonished »

Thus 2 *b)* is a representative example of a trivalent verb in an AA construction a Dat-pattern, with the dative unexpressed (∅), and its coreferential entity expressed in the main clause, in just a few instances the dative is expressed in the AA as in 2*c*), but in that case not coreferential to, but semantically related to a constituent in the main clause

Three facts should be pointed out with respect to the above data

ı) All instances of the Dat-pattern of trivalent verbs in the AA are instances in which the non-accusative constituents of the trivalent verb (the dative constituents) are more cohesive than the «accusative» constituent (although in the AA it is the ablative case form, I will call it an «accusative», because it would be Obj of the active voice and is Subj of the passive participle) The cohesiveness is mostly «forward» in these cases, ı e to the following context, in this case constitued by the main clause Consequently, the selection of pattern does not obey the cohesiveness rule claimed to hold in a majority of cases in Bolkestein (1985 *a*, *b*)

ıı) Since the dative constituent is coreferential to a main clause constituent, these instances could also quite well have been expressed as 3, had the speakers (authors) wished to do so

3 | milites | urbem | vallo | circumdatam oppugnabant |
|---|---|---|---|
| soldiers$_{nompl}$ | city$_{acc}$ | palisade$_{abl}$ | surrounded$_{acc}$ besieged$_{3pl}$ |

«the soldiers besieged the city (after it had been) surrounded by a palisade»

In 3 the patient object of the main clause, *urbem* 'city', is accompanied by a conjunct participle (PC) of a trivalent verb in the Abl-pattern, plus an ablative constituent *vallo* Also, as opposed to 2*b*), in 3 the «greater cohesiveness» -rule is not violated (*urbem* will score as cohesive within the sentence because it fulfills a semantic function in two states of af-

fairs) Indeed instances such as 3 are not unusual at all both patterns oc-
cur frequently in the PC construction (more than 25% of the 351 regis-
tered attested instances are passive PC's)

From i) and ii) the conclusion arises that in our material, the Dat-
-pattern is used in spite of the fact that the dative constituents involved
are more cohesive than the «accusative» constituent, and the AA is cho-
sen in spite of the fact that a PC construction with the verb in the other
pattern would have been possible in principle

iii)   Although the cohesiveness-rule should lead to selection of the Abl-
-pattern, consider the result of selecting both the right pattern and the,
apparently preferred, AA-construction

4	urbe	vallo	circumdata	milites	(eam)
	city$_{abl}$	palisade$_{abl}$	surrounded$_{abl}$	soldiers$_{nom}$	(it)$_{acc}$
	oppugnabant				
	besieged$_{3pl}$				

In 4, we are dealing with what generally is considered to be an unaccep-
table pattern in Latin the Subj (in this case Patient Subj) of the (passive)
AA construction is coreferential to a constituent —in this case the pa-
tient object— in the main clause

Now, although violations of this rule do occasionally occur, cf e g
K -St (I 786 f), if they do, they do so not just randomly but under spe-
cific extenuating circumstances, as has been convincingly shown by Van
der Linden (1955) and Hoff (n d) Moreover, according to Hoff, in the who-
le of Caesar *BG*, the percentage of coreferentiality between the subject of
the AA and a constituent in the main clause is no more than 5% of the
total number of AA's (90% concern some form of coreferentiality between
a non-Subj of the AA and some entity in the main clause) Thus one may
indeed claim that pattern 4 is avoided in Latin, and only admissable un-
der specific conditions

It turns out, that in the case of our attested AA cases of trivalent verbs
the speaker did not in fact have real choice as to the selection of syntactic
pattern for the trivalent verbs the choice was between either AA and Dat-
-pattern (in violation of cohesiveness) or PC and Abl-pattern (obeying co-
hesiveness) [2] The fact that AA was chosen in our instances, in violation
of the cohesiveness rule, suggests that there is more to the difference be-
tween the AA and the PC construction than the treatment of the two con-
structions in grammars like K -St and Sz (i e usually taken together)

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[2] In the first three Abl-patterns alluded to in note 1, on the one hand the cohesiveness
rule is obeyed, the Subj of the trivalent verb in the AA being more cohesive than the non-
-Subj, and on the other hand there is no coreference between it and the Subj or Obj of the
main clause, therefore there is no conflict between the motivation for AA and the motiva-
tion for Abl-pattern In the last case both Subj and non-Subj are cohesive, but neither of
them is coreferential in a straightforward way to a main clause constituent

implies It must mean that they cannot simply be regarded as two «realizations» of one underlying structure, or as two complementary expressions, the AA just filling the gap in the defective participle system created by the absence of an active perfect tense participle, as suggested in Haiman (1983, 124 f), and implied in e g Chausserie-Laprée (1969, 133)'s treatment

I will now consider whether perhaps more evidence can be found for the view that AA construction and the PC are essentially different

2   *Ablativus absolutus* vs *Participium conjunctum*

The motivation for expressing a state of affairs in an AA construction instead of a PC construction if the latter would have been possible, as in the case of our trivalent verbs with two case patterns, is, according to K - St (786), motivated by «das Streben das Satzglied mit groszere Nachdrucke hervor zu ziehen und von der ubriche Rede zu trennen» (cf also Sz [I, 139]) This motivation may also cause the use of an AA even in those «dispreferred» instances in which there is coreferentiality between the subject of the AA and some constituent, e g the subject or object, of the main clause, cf the examples in K -St , and in Van der Linden (1955, passim) The latter (22 f) also defends the view that the two constructions are not at all equivalent, formulating this as follows (my paraphrase, AMB) in the case of an AA two processes are posited, between which some relation exists (cf for a similar formulation Rubio [1966, 162]), whereas when a PC construction is used, two processes are mentioned, but only one of them (the main clause one) is posited Van der Linden points out that in accordance with this difference the participle in a PC is more easily omittable syntactically as well as semantically, whereas this is impossible in the AA construction In fact this non-omittability of the participle in the AA construction is an argument against analysing the AA, as e g Rubio (1966, 161) does, as having arisen out of a nominal peripheral or satellite ablative expanded by an optional attributive participle, cf Pinkster (1984, 162 f) The AA construction in this respect is completely similar to the so-called dominant participle (or *ab urbe condita-*) construction, as argued in Bolkestein (1981, 207 ff) they are both clearly different in this respect from either PC or participles which function as an attributive modifier

Van der Linden distinguishes a number of factors which may motivate the use of the «dispreferred» AA instead of a PC if the latter would have been possible, subclassifying these factors along the parameters of «extenuating» *vs* «exploiting» motives and «structural» *vs* «stylistic» motives (1955, 104 f) Some of these are clearly connected with the fact that two separate states of affairs are asserted between which a relation exists

Hoff (n d) also stresses the non-equivalence between AA and PC, ex-
plaining the «dispreferred» AA instead of PC in terms of both «structu-
ral» and «stylistic» motives among other, he points out that using a PC
would sometimes have led to ambiguity as to interpreting it as an attri-
butive modifier or as a PC the latter functions as a predicative modifier,
cf Pinkster (1984, 182, 188 f) More important, however, according to
Hoff, is the fact that the AA often has a specific pragmatic function, na-
mely that of presenting «thematic» information Whether Hoff's term
«thematic» is meant in the sense in which the notion «theme» is defined
in Functional Grammar (FG) or in that of FG «topic» is not quite clear
to me in FG theme is defined as an extra-predicational constituent pre-
senting the domain with respect to which the following predication is re-
levant, cf Dik (1978, 132 f), whereas topic (141) is defined as an
intra-predicational constituent which is the entity «about» which the pre-
dication predicates something (often «old» or «given» information, but
nor necessarily so it may just be assumed by the speaker in a given set-
ting to be shared information, and it should not be equated with subject)
Indeed the AA is often, though not exclusively, used for presenting «old»
or «given» information at the beginning of a sentence its pragmatic func-
tion might in such case be viewed as that of theme A PC on the other
hand will rarely have this pragmatic function in fact, as is pointed out
by several authors, cf Pinkster (1984, 200), predicative modifiers often
seem to carry focus in the sentence as a whole, i e to present the most
salient information in a given setting (It is my impression that this ten-
dency is stronger in the case of adjectival and substantival predicative
modifiers than in the case of participles)

Moreover, it should be realized that, although perhaps frequent, the
thematic use is not a necessary pragmatic function of the AA construc-
tion although the distribution of topical and focal information in a sen-
tence, and/or the relation of «relevance» between one thematic state of af-
fairs and another («rhematic»?) state of affairs may well influence the se-
lection of one construction *vs* another construction [3], there is, in the case
of the AA, certainly no one to one relation between pragmatic structure
on the one hand and syntactic/semantic structure on the other (cf Chaus-
serie-Laprée [1969, 109 ff , 120 ff] for a survey of various different func-
tions of the AA in Latin narrative discourse)

There have been some attemps to differentiate the AA and the PC con-
struction in terms of a more or less formal representation of their status
in the structure assumed to underly sentences containing them Pinkster
(1984, 182, 188 f) tries to differentiate the —predicative— PC from both
attributival modifiers and from adverbial satellites and subordinate sa-

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[3] In Bolkestein (1985*b*), for example, it is argued that the condition for the use of the
Latin nominativus cum infinitivo (the «personal passive») should be formulated in terms
of a required distribution of topic and focus in the sentence

tellite clauses in the semantic functions manner, time or place by means of certain tests (eg the behaviour as to coordination and collocation, and *substitution possibilities*) He points out (1983, 210), however, that whatever theoretical framework one uses, it is notoriously difficult to formally represent predicativa in general, the PC included, in such a way that justice is done to its semantic and syntactic differences to these other constructions

In Vester (1983, 147 f) one finds a proposal for formalization within an FG framework, in which the PC is indeed differentiated by means of its formal representation both from attributives and from the AA construction The latter is analysed as an embedded predication with satellite status fulfilling the semantic function circumstance, possible causal, temporal or other interpretations being a matter of the interplay between contextual and lexical information, cf also Rubio (1966, 162) This embedded predication has, just as in the case of the dominant participle, undergone a category changing rule (from predication to NP) by means of creating a verbal adjective out of the predicate (cf Bolkestein [1981, 207]) The PC, on the other hand, is, in Vesters analysis, not a satellite fulfilling a particular semantic function, but a *modifier attached to the predication as a whole*, which falls within the scope of e g its tense operators

Rather than discussing the merits of Vesters proposal, I want to stress the fact that a formal representation in which the PC is differentiated from the AA with respect to its status in the underlying structure is not just an aim in itself such a representation makes sense to the degree to which *it is a visualization of the intuitively felt differences alluded to above*, and it will be necessary, if one discovers specific rules which are sensitive to this differentiation between the underlying structures e g because they operate upon only one of them (Moreover, the two different constructions may themselves be the output of further rules which had different semantic or pragmatic input)

Since the purpose of my paper is to show that the «bad behaviour» of trivalent verbs in AA constructions is not just pure chance, but due to the fact that the choice between an AA and a PC is not random, I will, rather than go into the details of necessarily theoretical framework-bound formalizations, offer some further observations which, to my opinion, confirm that the *intuitively felt difference indeed exists*

3   *The distribution of adverbs of time*

K -St (I, 789 f) observe that in sentences containing participles one may encounter various adverbial expressions specifying the temporal relation between the state of affairs expressed by the main clause and the state of affairs expressed by the participle K -St mention *simul, extemplo, statim, vixdum* which all indicate that the two states of affairs are in

very close succession, or almost overlap In other words they concern the size of the lapse of time between them, and also adverbs like *tum, inde, deinde, subinde, hinc* which are different from the first group in that they rather situate a state of affairs in time with respect to some orientation point given in the context In the examples given, K -St do not systematically differentiate between the AA and the PC construction where available, examples are given of both, cf e g 5-6

5   a)   quod   viso   statim   hoste   in deditionem   concessissent
            because seen$_{abl}$ at-once enemy$_{abl}$ in surrender   had-gone$_{3pl}$
            (Liv , 28, 7, 9)

            «because they had surrendered as soon as they had seen the enemy»

    b)   Calidius statim   designatus   declaravit   (Cic , Sen , 22)
            C $_{nom}$ at-once   appointed$_{nom}$ declared$_{3sg}$
            «as soon as C was appointed consul-to-be he declared»

6   a)   castris   positis populatur   inde agrum romanum   (Liv , 2, 39, 5)
            camp$_{abl}$ put$_{abl}$ destroyed$_{3sg}$ then field   roman
            «when he had made a camp, he subsequently destroyed the roman lands»

    b)   castra   posita   inde   munivit
            camp$_{acc}$ put$_{acc}$ then   fortified
            «after having made a camp he subsequently fortified it»

As is shown in 5, adverbs of the *statim*-group occur with both AA (5 a) and with PC (5 b) The group is not wholly homogeneous e g whereas *extemplo* may occur both in the participial phrase and in the main clause, *statim* is in the case of both AA and PC always construed within the participal phrase, usually preceding the participle, and cannot be considered to introduce the main clause or to belong within it (In a quick survey of *statim* in Livy I have not encountered instances of *statim* in the main clause expressing a close temporal succession between the state of affairs designated by the participle and the state of affairs designated in the main clause, i e 7 b) in the sense of 7 a)

7   a)   cum   Sura   nostro   statim   litteris   lectis   locutus   sum
            with   S   our   at-once letter$_{abl}$ read$_{abl}$ spoken   be$_{1sg}$
            (Cic , Fam , 5, 11, 2)

            «I have spoken with S as soon as I had read the letter»

    b)   litteris lectis   statim cum Sura nostra locutus sum

In itself the absence of 7 b) in the sense of 7 a) is rather remarkable, since *statim* may occur both within finite subordinate clauses introduced by e g *cum* 'when', *ubi* 'as soon as', etc , and at the beginning of main clauses following such temporal subordinate clauses) In any case, as 5 a-b) show, this group of temporal adverbs does not differentiate between the AA and the PC construction

As far as the group of *tum* is concerned, on the other hand, this group

cooccurs much more frequently with the AA construction, cf 6a), than with the PC 6b)[4] They belong to the main clause Note that this second class of temporal adverbs, as opposed to the first class, is *deictic* they refer to an orientation point in time, which is specified in the preceding context. The orientation point is, in our instances, constituted by the AA the fact that such referring adverbs are not unusual with AA but rather exceptional with PC (and other predicative modifiers, for that matter) may be interpreted as a confirmation of the intuition that the status of AA and PC in the structure of the underlying predications is different In fact the same line of reasoning could be followed with respect to other deictic adverbs, such as those which indicate that there is a causal relation between the two states of affairs, cf the example given by K -St (I, 790) of this phenomenon, which, according to them, occurs mainly in colloquial Latin

8   a)   Pompeius saucius   et   intorto   talo   idcirco

          P$_{nom}$ wounded$_{nom}$ and   sprained$_{abl}$ ankle$_{abl}$ therefore

          tardabatur   *(B Hisp , 39, 1)*

          was-slowed-down$_{3sg}$

          «O was slowed down because he was wounded and had sprained his ankle»

  b)   Pompeius   saucius   idcirco   tardabatur

          P   wounded   therefore   was-slowed-down$_{3sg}$

In 8a) a predicative adjective and an AA are coordinated (on the problems which the acceptability of this type of coordination raises for the analysis cf Pinkster (1984, 37, 194), and referred to by *idcirco* 'therefore' However, the presence of *idcirco* is decidedly less successful when the AA *intorto talo* is not present (8b)[5] (Other possible adverbs or particles which may be added to participial constructions such as *ut, tamquam* 'as if', etc , do not differentiate between the two constructions)

The phenomenon observed, namely that AA's are more frequently re-

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[4] In Vergil I have found just three instances with PC, cf Verg , *Aen* , 1, 225 (with *sic*), 2, 391 *((deinde)* and 5, 382 *(tum)*

[5] I would expect similar differences in frequency of occurrence with AA and PC of expressions in the main clause like *interim* 'in the meantime' (cf Caes , *BG*, 3, 3, 4), and also those indicating a concessive relation, such as *tamen* and *nihilominus* 'still', 'yet' (e g Sall , *C*, 26, 1, Caes , *BG*, 3, 14, 4) All of them I would expect to be relatively more frequent with AA than with PC K -St (II, 98 f) give no information about this, however A rather exceptional case, alluded to by Van der Linden (1955, 95) is Caes , *BC*, 3, 51, 5 *Sulla , liberatis suis, hoc fuit contentus* («S , after his people were liberated, was content with that») From the material in Chausserie-Lapree (1969, 515 f) it appears that *iam* tends to be more frequent with AA than with PC (cf e g Caes , *BG*, 3, 15, 3), the main clause may then be introduced by *repente* or *subito* (cf Liv , 32, 35, 2, Caes , *BG*, 7, 32, 2) As far as the occurrence of *quidem* is concerned, no indication about differences in frequency is given in Solodow (1978, 43 f , 61 f), who gives examples of both AA (Caes , *BG*, 7, 77, 14, Liv , 2, 31, 4) and PC (Cic , *Acad* , 1, 3, Liv , 1, 50, 3)

ferred to by deictic adverbs than PC's, is compatible with the view that
by the AA a state of affairs is independently posited Apparently, for a sta-
te of affairs to be deictically referred to by temporal or causal adverbia,
it must be independently asserted, if we consider predicative modifiers
such as PC's as not asserted in the required manner, the less frequent oc-
currence of such adverbs with PC's is understandable [6]

4   *Conclusion*

The non-representative behaviour of trivalent verbs with two case pat-
terns when occurring in the AA construction, namely the statistical pre-
ference for using the Dat-pattern, may be explained as due to the fact that
a conflict arises between obeying the cohesiveness rule and avoiding the
well-known constraint on the AA construction that —under normal cir-
cumstances— its Subj should not be coreferent to a constituent, e g a
Subj or Obj, in the main clause In cases in which there is no such con-
flict the Abl-pattern may be chosen In cases in which there is a conflict,
the AA of the Dat-pattern will be preferred even if a PC of the other pat-
tern would have been possible This seems to confirm the claim that the
state of affairs in the AA has a different status in the underlying predica-
tion than that of the PC Other evidence for such a claim may be found
in a difference as to the frequency of occurrence of temporal and causal
deictic adverbs with the main clauses which contain AA and PC cons-
tructions in general such adverbs, which explicitate the relation between
the two states of affairs, seem to be much more frequent in the case of AA
than of PC Thus, in whatever formulae the underlying structure of such
sentences will be represented, the two constructions must be clearly dif-
ferentiated in them

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[6] This paper is not an attempt to exhaustively list the ways in which the difference in
status of AA and PC may be confirmed One more type of evidence might be the possible
scope of the imperative and interrogative sentence type (in FG described as «predication
operators») in predications containing AA and PC It seems to me that an AA may more
easily lie outside of these sentence types of the main clause, itself having to be understood
as declarative, whereas this would not be possible with the PC construction Another type
of evidence could be a difference as to the possibility to answer questions with *quando* 'when'
and *cur, quare* 'why' However, attested material is lacking

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