Non-accusative second arguments of two-place verbs in Latin

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1 INTRODUCTION

The statistically predominant case form used for marking second arguments [1] of two-place verbs is the accusative We find it in roughly 90 percent of explicitly expressed second arguments It is followed in decreasing frequency by the dative, ablative and genitive case forms There are also a number of preposition complements, which I will leave out of account Examples of each of the case forms are given in 1-4

    1   Marcus amat patriam («Marcus loves his country») (Acc)
    2   Marcus favet filio («Marcus is indulgent to his son») (Dat)
    3   Marcus utitur opera mea («Marcus makes use of my support») (Abl)
    4   Marcus obliviscitur doloris («Marcus forgets his grief») (Gen)

The question of how to explain the occurrence of non-accusative case forms in instances like 2-4 has received much attention in Latin linguistics A widespread opinion takes the use of non-accusative case forms as a purely idiomatic phenomenon for which no synchronic explanation can be given Arguments in favour of this opinion are the following. *a*) Apart from the «deviant» non-accusative forms with the predicates involved we also find «normal» cases with the accusative, both before and after the classical period In Petronius there is a marked preference for the accusative with such verbs in the «vulgar» parts of his work (Petersmann, 1977, 60 ff) In fact, in the course of history the accusative prevails with most of the verbs *b*) The difference in case form is absent in derived no-

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minal expressions, so we find 1*a*-4*a*, all with genitive for the patient constituent

1*a* amor patriae («love for his country»),
2*a* favor filii («indulgence to his son»),
3*a* usus operae meae («the use of my support»), and
4*a* oblivio doloris («obliviousness of grief»)

Opposed to such a —purely allomorphic— approach there are quite a number of Latin linguists who regard the use of non-accusative case forms as governed by the same rules that hold for their use elsewhere, for example Serbat (1982a, 139 ff) There are also intermediate positions Our distinguished colleague Rubio (1966), for example, regards the ablative and genitive in instance like 3-4 as pure allomorphs The dative, however, according to him, expresses «interest» in 2, just as in 5

5   *tibi* aras («it is for yourself you plough», Plt , *Mer* , 71)

It is my aim in this paper to discuss a number of such proposals discussion of current synchronic treatments of the phenomenon and then add a number of diachronic considerations

2   CURRENT SYNCHRONIC EXPLANATIONS OF THE OCCURRENCE OF NON-ACCUSATIVES

The occurrence of «deviant» case forms for the second argument may be explained —and is in fact explained— in various ways It might be the case that the fact that the accusative is not used is due to a common feature of all the verbs and/or the cases involved A further explanation would then be required for the fact that **different** case forms occur (section 2 1) Alternatively, one might immediately concentrate on the individual case forms and the verbs with wich they are found As for the use of different case forms, this may be attributed to properties either of the verbs involved or of the noun phrases and their case forms, or of both (section 2 2)

2 1   *A common feature for all verbs governing non-accusatives control and passivization*

Several scholars assume that the deviant verbs have a feature in common which distinguishes them from those verbs whose second argument is marked by the accusative Thus Heilig (1978) states that the distinction accusative non-accusative correlates with the distinction between «actions» and «action-processes» —in the sense of Chafe (1970, 95 ff)— on the one hand and «states» and «processes» on the other Using a dif-

ferent terminology one may also say that the accusative is typical for
«controlled» states of affairs (Dik, 1978), whereas the non-accusative is
typical for «non-controlled» states of affairs There are a number of tests
that may be used in order to establish the controlledness of a certain sta-
te of affairs Some of these are the following (cf Pinkster, 1984,
section 2 4)

    i) Are there instances of the occurrence of the state of affairs in the
imperative?

    ii) Are there examples of the state of affairs embedded with verbs like
hortari («to urge»), *promittere* («to promise»), etc ?

    iii) Are there examples of combinations of the states of affairs with op-
tional manner, instrument, purpose and benefactive expressions?

An examination of the verbs that govern a dative case form shows that
no restrictions can be found Illustrations of this claim are the following

    6   animum adverte ac dicto pare («take notice and obey my word», Cic ,
        Rab Post , 29), imperative,

    7   bene facta tua me hortantur tuo ut imperio paream («your kindnes-
        ses do urge me to anything you wish», Plt , *Per ,* 841), embedding, and

    8   remissius imperanti melius paretur («the more indulgent the ruler
        the better he is obeyed» (Sen , *Clem ,* 1, 24, 1), manner satellite

The occurrence of other verbs in these kinds of environment may be res-
tricted, but as a general explanation the postulation of controlledness as
a criterion will not do

The notion of «control» is relevant for another type of explanation for
the occurrence of non-accusative case forms with two-place verbs It has
been observed that in many languages passivization is restricted to con-
trolled states of affairs in which an agent is involved patient relationship
between the two arguments involved in a predication For Latin, too,
«agentivity» or control has been said to be a condition for passivization
(Lehmann, 1982) In other studies (for example Serbat, 1981 *a,* 135 ff)
the possibility of passivization is ascribed to a semantic feature of «tran-
sitivity» of the verbs involved As for the verbs whose second argument
is marked by a non-accusative case, they are usually not found in a per-
sonal passive construction As a consequence these verbs are thought to
lack the feature «transitivity» However, in absence of independent argu-
ments for postulating the feature of «transitivity» [2] for these verbs the
whole line of reasoning is circular Assuming that the notions of «transi-
tivity», «agentivity» and «controllability» are used more or less in the
same way, the tests mentioned in the previous paragraph rather suggest

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  [2] The notion of «transitivity» in a semantic sense has been studied fruitfully by Hopper
and Thompson (1980) See also Tsuroda (1985) For the relation between «transitivity» and
«passivization» see Siewierska, 1984, 15 ff , a o

that there is no difference between the predicates in this respect Moreover, there are occasional instances of personal passive constructions for verbs governing a non-accusative (9) and there is an alternative expression type in the impersonal passive (10)

> 9   larix   ab carie aut tinea non nocetur («the larch is not injured by
>   dry rot or the worm», Vitr , 2, 9, 14), and
> 10 ne quid eis noceatur neu quis invitus sacramentum dicere cogatur,
>   a Caesare cavetur («pledges are given by Caesar that no wrong
>   should be done to them and that no one should be compelled to take
>   the oath of allegiance against his will», Caes , *Civ* , 1, 86)

While there is no complete one-to-one relationship between non-accusative on the one hand and non-controlledness and lack of passivization on the other, there is no complete one-to-one relationship between accusative and controlledness + passivisation either For example, emotion verbs like *dolere* («to be grieved») and *gaudere* («to be glad») govern accusative second arguments (11) —alongside ablative NP's and preposition complements— but do not regularly occur in the personal passive (late exceptions in TLL s v *dolere* 1819, 74ff , *gaudere* s v 1701, 66 f -only impersonal)

> 11 meum casum luctumque doluerunt («they grieved for my misfortu-
>   ne and sorrow», Cic , *Sest* , 145)

It appears, then, that in spite of the intriguing data with respect to passivization it is not possible to find a common feature for all verbs governing a non-accusative It might, however, be possible to discover some kind of regularity on a lower level I shall now turn to proposals which are pertinent to this lower level

2 2   *Specific features of the verbs and the non-accusatives*

In principle, the use of more than one case form for second arguments of two-place verbs may be explained in a number of ways I shall confine myself to two positions, viz one in which the occurrence of a specific case is attributed to the specific lexical meaning of a certain class of verbs, and another one in which the case is taken to signal a particular semantic function of the NP, or, in another terminology, has a specific semantic value of its own A grammar such as that of K -St actually combines both types of explanation

2 2 1   Non-accusative depends on lexical features of the verbs

As an example of the lexical approach I refer to K -St 's description of the use of the dative for second and third arguments (I, 311 ff) They mention four main classes of verbs that govern the dative, among which the

class of «Verben des Nutzens, Helfens und Schadens, Sorgetragens», etc containing such verbs as *auxiliari, opitulari* and *subvenire,* all meaning more or less «to help» Why in this particular case the dative is used is not immediately clear There are also verbs of the same class which govern the accusative, for example *iuvare* («to help») However, the more or less systematic association of this specific lexical class with the dative becomes apparent from instances of abnormal case usage, such as the use of the dative with *iuvare* in later authors Similar observations can be made with respect to other verbs governing a non-accusative (cf Pinkster, 1985, 174) Many linguists try to explain this by assuming that there is a natural relationship between the lexical meaning of the verb, which in the case of verbs of «helping» might be paraphrased as «an action carried out by an agent which involves another person who is not a patient», and the semantic value of the dative («interest») I come back to this later Another example of systematic association of a particular lexical meaning with a particular case is constituted by pairs of two-place and three--place verbs like *carere* («to lack») and *privare* («to bereave»), which both take the ablative, a phenomenon often extended to adjectival predicates The ablative with *carere* may be explained by referring to the fact that it also occurs with *privare,* which is more understandable within the synchronic system In most cases, however, no comprehensive explanation can be given on the basis of lexical meaning

2 2 2   Specific semantic value of the cases

Most explanations of the use of non-accusative case forms start with the assumption that each case morpheme has a specific semantic value (or —in the case of the ablative— at most three semantic values), which signals the semantic function in the predication or noun phrase of the nominal constituent marked by that case There are at least two difficulties in this approach The first is how to establish the semantic value of the cases The second difficulty is how to prove that with the verbs under discussion the second argument does in fact have the semantic function the case is supposed to signal There are many studies which deal with the first difficulty and almost none which deal with the second

1)   Out of the wealth of proposals for establishing the Latin cases I select Diver's (1982) paper and a study on the same problem in French by Huffman (1983) In French there are a number of verbs that govern a dative, whereas most two-place verbs are found with an accusative *obéir,* for example, takes the dative *(lui), dominer* the accusative *(le)*

    12   son fils *lui* obeit («his son obeys him»)

In order to establish the difference between *lui* and *le* Huffman (1983, 284)

starts from a sentence in which the accusative and dative are both present

> 13   Marie a demandé le livre, et Charles **le lui** a donné («Mary asked for the book and Charles gave it to her»)

In this sentence *le* seems to be more «affected» by the action than *lui* An examination of a large number of *lui-* and *le*-verbs in the *Mémoires* of De Gaulle shows that

> i) with *le*-verbs the subject is significantly more often animate than with *lui*-verbs, and
> ii) with *le*-verbs the object is significantly more often inanimate than with *lui*-verbs

Thus there seems to be a difference in the degree of participation in the action between accusative and dative constituents The same idea can be found in Diver (1982) for Latin According to him there exists in Latin a hierarchy of control among the cases (the genitive is left out of account)

	Nom	Abl	Dat	Acc
14 Degree of control	most	———	———	least
	(Prime mover)	(Accessory)	(Motivation)	(None of these)

He corroborates this diagram with the following example

> 15   non ego oppugnavi fratrem tuum, sed fratri tuo repugnavi («I did not "attack" your brother, but merely repelled your brother's attack», Cic , *Fam* , 5, 2, 10)

My data with respect to animacy of dative constituents in Latin differ from Huffman's for French With three-place verbs dative constituents are preponderantly human, with two-place verbs there is only a slight preference This certainly does not point to a similar function of the dative with two-place predicates and with three-place ones

ii)   In most studies the cases are assigned a less abstract semantic function than in Diver's approach The dative is regarded as a signal of «interest» or «benefit», the ablative is thought to express «instrument», etc Assuming that dative and ablative constituents do indeed have a «benefactive», «instrumental» function, etc , it is not difficult to test whether this is indeed the case We might expect the constituents involved to be subject to the same slection-restrictions as in their normal use Thus, taking the ablative as an example, we might expect the second arguments to behave like normal «instruments»

> 16   nec nos te fruimur et tu nobis cares («I have no chance of enjoying your society and you lack mine», Cic , *Att* , 2, 1, 14)

Animate nouns are hardly ever used as instrument satellites (only for soldiers under military command) Similarly, animate nouns are not used to express the «Source» and calling *nobis* in 16 an «ablativus separativus» does not tell us very much

Still assuming that the non-accusative arguments have a specific se-
mantic function, one might expect occasional prepositional substitutes,
just as we find, for example, *ad*+accusative instead of the dative with
verbs of communication and giving, or *pro*+ablative instead of the dati-
ve for expressing a «benefactive» relationship A review of the published
material of the TLL presents no convincing evidence of this kind, neither
in classical nor in Late latin In fact, as I observed above, the accusative
is the normal late Latin substitute One remarkable case is 17

> 17   ad tui oris imperium cunctus populus oboediet (*Vulg gen*, 41,40,
>   cf Itala, *l c*, and Euseb, *Emes*, serm 18, 49 *ori tuo*) («All people
>   will listen to your command»)

Here, however, a different explanation is possible just as well (cf Cic,
Caecin, 52), viz regarding the preposition phrase as a satellite This ex-
planation is valid in most of the prepositional expressions cited
in the TLL

Finally, if the occurrence of a non-accusative case form did indeed sig-
nal a semantic function different from the function(s) marked by the ac-
cusative, one would not so easily expect instances of coordination like 18,
which is completely comparable with 19

> 18   qui autem non defendit nec obsistit si potest **iniuriae** (dative) («who
>   does not prevent, however, or oppose wrong, if he can», Cic, *Off*,
>   1, 23), and
> 19   qui non defendit **iniuriam** neque propulsat («who does not ward off
>   and repel injury», Cic, *Off*, 3, 74)

(More examples in K -St 2, 564-565, Sz 824-825)

The idea that the use of a non-accusative form may be explained by
a specific function fulfilled by the constituent involved is defended espe-
cially for the dative The reason for this may be that there are a number
of verbs which seem to have different cases for the second argument in
combination with a difference in meaning metuere («to fear») is a favou-
rite example to prove that a difference in case form entails a difference
in meaning, the following examples may illustrate the point

> 20   quem metuunt oderunt («whom they fear they hate»,`Enn *Sc*,
>   402), and
> 21   etiamsi nos nobis non timeremus, tu tibi metuere deberes («Even if
>   we did not fear for ourselves, you ought to dread for yourself», Sen,
>   *Contr*, 1, 2,3)

It is clear that in 20 it is feared that someone may do something, in 21,
on the other hand, we have to do with something that might happen to
someone *quem* in 20 is the person to be feared, whereas in 21 *nobis* de-
notes the victim of actions someone might initiate The difference in my
paraphrase corresponds with a difference in case marking *(quem* versus
nobis) However, on further inspection the matter appears to be more dif-

ficult Alongside instances like 20 and 21 we also encounter 22, where we find both an accusative object constituent and a dative constituent

> 22   nullam maiorem **pupillo** metuunt **calamitatem** («they had no fear
>   that anything worse might befall their ward», Cic *Ver*, 1, 141)

Example 22 suggests that there is no **opposition** between the accusative and dative case, but that they mark different types of constituents either *metuere* is a two-place verb governing a normal accusative as its second argument and the dative constituent is a «benefactive» satellite, or *metuere* is a three-place verb with both an accusative argument and a dative argument In specific contexts either one or the other, or both may be absent Quite a few, if not all, of the verbs which are registered in our grammars as allowing different case frames are of this type As a consequence, ostensible case-alternation of this type cannot be taken as an argument that there must be a difference in meaning

Rubio (1966, 145 ff), as I observed before, made a distinction between the use of the dative case for second arguments and the use of other non--accusative cases Examples like 20-22 prove, according to him, that with typical two-place verbs like our initial example 2 *(favere)* the dative can always be regarded as marking «interest», just as in other cases an «interested» constituent may be optionally expressed However, such an approach does not take into account the difference between (obligatory) arguments and (optional) satellites, and, moreover, the semantic equivalence of the dative constituents involved is not proved

All this negative evaluation of the available proposals inevitably leads to the conclusion that there is no synchronic motivation for the use of a non-accusative case form for second arguments with two-place verbs

3   DIACHRONIC CONSIDERATIONS

Most scholars who, like myself, reject a synchronic explanation for the use of non-accusatives, do assume a (pre)historical source for the idiomatic expressions involved I will mention two sources for the use of non--accusatives, one which might be called «differential marking», following Bossong (1985) and another one which I will call «satellite absorption» As an example of the first I refer to a number of impersonal verbal constructions and related personal constructions where the «cause» of an emotion is expressed in the genitive and the «patient» of the emotion either in the accusative (the impersonal construction [ex 23]) or —occasionally— in the nominative

> 23   eum   iniuriae suae paenitere («that he repents of his wrong doing»,
>   Cic , *Off* , 1, 33), and
> 24   sapientem nihil opinari, nullius rei paenitere, nulla in re falli   («the

wise man never "supposses" anything, never regrets anything, is never wrong», Cic , *Mur* , 61)

Examples like 23 and 24 do not suggest an explanation **why** it is the genitive that is used to mark the cause of the repentance involved rather than other cases (see Sz   82 for speculations), they do, however, suggest that different case frames were available for different semantic function patterns before the historical period

As an example of satellite absorption take the use of the ablative for the constituent which refers to the source of an emotion with verbs like *dolere* («to grieve for»)

> 25   qui sociorum iniuriis   doleat («who deplores our allies' wrongs», Cic , *Ver* , 3, 6)

The ablative is regularly used for satellites to signal the «source» or «cause» of a certain situation One might consider *iniuriis* in 25 a satellite The use of the ablative would then be quite appropriate However, in view of the number of instances in which the source of the emotion is expressed I prefer regarding it as an argument The use of the ablative can be accounted for by assuming that the satellite in the ablative became part of the predicate frame of *dolere* while retaining its original case-form Notice that the emergence of this case pattern alongside the pattern with an accusative (see above) created a nice example of «differential object marking»

As an other example I refer to the only instance of productive use of a non-accusative in the classical period I am familiar with, although many examples come from poetry, viz the dative [3] The dative is frequently used with second arguments of compounds, for example 26

> 26   ipse adit reliquos, cohortatur ne labori succumbant» («He himself went up to the rest of the troops, and urged them not to give in to the strain», *Caes* , *Gal* , 7, 86, 3)

Lehmann (1983) was the first to observe that this is very remarkable What one does expect is either the «normal» accusative case for second arguments or the ablative and accusative case corresponding to the case pattern of the prepositions incorporated within the compound There are no prepositions governing a dative in Latin With the verbs involved the dative is usually said to be used for the so-called «figurative» meaning, prepositional expressions being the normal alternative for the «literal» meaning This observation may be true if a bit overstated, but does not explain **why** the dative is used The explanation for the use of the dative might be (as is observed by Lehmann) that there is no viable alternative (the accusative and ablative being excluded and the genitive being restricted to the noun phrase level) Another explanation that has been pro-

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[3] See also Petersmann (1977, 81) for Petronius' use of the dative

posed is that according to their meaning the compounds are associated
with certain meaning classes that prefer the dative For example *sub-*
-venire is more or less equivalent to *auxiliari* (both meaning «to help»)
and accordingly both govern the dative [4] However, this explanation can-
not cover all the compounds involved

A third alternative, which I would prefer —and it need not entirely ex-
clude Lehmann's alternative— is that many of these verbs were initially
one-place verbs, or two-place verbs which often occurred with only one
place occupied, with which a dative satellite expressing «interest» beca-
me associated habitually, to the extent that it gradually became part of
the predicate frame of the verb, thus yielding a two-place predicate Sug-
gestions along these lines have been made by Plank (1982, 92-93), Serbat
(1981*b*, 311) and others [5] The process involved is the reverse of the pro-
cess of argument «reduction» or intransitivization (Feltenius, 1977) The
more the second argument of such a new two-place verb loses its specific
semantic function, the more the justification for a specific formal mar-
king —which was justified when the constituent was a satellite— disap-
pears As a consequence, the normal case form for second arguments ta-
kes over The examples of compounds governing a dative case in archaic
Latin and an accusative in later periods, for example *antecellere* («to sur-
pass»), are proof of such a development The development of these com-
pounds may mirror the process which verbs like *favere* underwent in pre-
historic times

4   CONCLUSION

Adequate synchronic explanations for the use of a non-accusative case
form for marking second arguments of two-place verbs are lacking
A number of speculations have been proposed, but no objective proof is
presented Certain intriguing verbs or groups of verbs suggest a semantic
justification for the use of specific cases In other cases the use of a spe-
cific case may be due to the change of a constituent from satellite to ar-
gument In a historical perspective predicate frames apparently change,
both with respect to the number and meaning of their arguments and the
formal expression of the relation between these arguments and the verb [6]

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[4] Compare Bennett (II, 123) «Such compounds as do take the dative, take it because
their meaning is naturally adapted to constructions with an indirect object»

[5] For other types of change in the valency of verbs see Dik, ed (1985)

[6] I thank dr A M Bolkestein, Margreet v d Griend, Caroline Kroon and Hotze Mulder
for comments on an earlier version of this paper

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