

*eh₁-patientives and non-canonical argument encoding in Latin

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Latin displays a set of non-dynamic verbs formed with the Proto-Indo-European suffix *-eh₁ which, by etymological reconstruction, may be shown to constitute patientives derived from transitive roots (e.g. *iaceo*, ‘to lie’, *studeo*, ‘to give attention to, to be eager’, derived from Proto-Indo-European *H₁eh₁-, ‘to throw’, and *(s)te₂ud-, ‘to hit; push’, respectively). The formations constitute either one- or two-place predicates (with the latter commonly displaying (non-)canonical marking of the second argument by the ablative, dative or genitive cases) and may be categorized as prototypically unaccusative.

While it has long been known that the formant *-eh₁ could be employed as a passivization process in various IE languages, little study has been devoted to the interactions between alignment and argument morphosyntax in the encoding of the core arguments of this subclass of *eh₁-verbs in Latin.

The object of the present study is thus to attempt at delineating the encoding of core arguments in such predicates from a diachronic point of view and from an overall functional perspective. With the aid of a database containing all attestations of patientive *eh₁-verbs in Latin from earliest times up until ca 14 AD the distribution of core argument encoding is sketched out. By comparanda from other Indo-European languages it is suggested that, while the analytical primitive P of the PIE predicate has taken the role of S/A in Latin, the variation in non-canonical encoding of the second argument in two-place verbs to a greater extent hinges on the lexical semantics of the predicate rather than constituting an inherited feature.

This may be seen in e.g. *careo*, ‘to lack’, which normally encodes its second argument in the ablative:

(1) a. (...)	<i>careo</i>	<i>noxia.</i>	(Plaut. <i>Bacch.</i> 1004)
	I lack:PRS.3	guilt:ABL.SG	
b. (...)	<i>carebis</i>	<i>testibus.</i>	(Plaut. <i>Mil.</i> 1426)

It is likely that the verb was derived from a transitive root *k₁es- or *(s)ker(H)-, ‘to cut off’ and that a formation *C(e)C-éh₁- would have had a patientive meaning ‘to be cut (off from)’, cf. Gr. ἐκάρην, ‘to get cut’ (< *h₁é-(s)kr-eh₁-). The argument structure of the Latin predicate, however, does not present a simple inversion of A and P reconstructible for PIE; rather, the second argument encoding of *careo* adheres to the typical Latin pattern of two-place verbs of abundance and lacking. While it is clear that the non-canonical encoding of the second argument is due to the originally patientive semantics of the formations, the results of this study suggest that the argument morphosyntax of such predicates depended on lexical semantic features rather than representing a simple inversion of A and P.