The Role of Analogy in the Development of Latin AcI Constructions

The *Accusativus cum Infinitivo* (AcI) is a common form of indirect discourse found in Latin, as well as in several other older Indo-European languages. The following example illustrates this:

(1) (Caesar *Bellum Civile* iii.86)

Sci-o   me: paene   incre:dibil-em   re-m
Know-1st sg.   1st acc. sg .prn.   almost   incredible-m/f acc. sg.   thing-f acc. sg.

pollice:r-i:
promise-pass.inf.
        'I know that I am promising an almost incredible thing.'

The matrix verb is *scio* 'I know,' which takes as its argument a dependent clause whose subject, *me:* 'I,' is in the accusative case (contrast this with the nominative *ego*) and whose verb, *pollice:ri:* 'promise,' is in the infinitival form (contrast this with the finite *policeor* 'I promise').
        Passive matrix verbs can also take this construction as an argument in Latin, as illustrated by the following (from Maraldi 1983: 167):

(2) dic-itur   e-os   ven-isse
   say-3rd sg. pres. pass   3rd pron-m. acc. pl.   come-past inf.
 'It is said that they have come.'

        Passive matrix verbs do show variation, however, as to the type of infinitival complement clause they can take. Consider the following example (from Maraldi 1983: 173):

(3) Ill-e   dic-itur   ven-isse
   That-m. nom.sg.   say-3rd sg.pres.pass   come-past inf.
 'He (that one) is said to have come.'

In (3) we find the same matrix verb as in (2), *dicitur*, and although the verb of the dependent clause *venisse* is still in the infinitive, the subject of the dependent clause, *ille* 'that one/he', is in the nominative case rather than the expected accusative case, and it also appears in the higher matrix clause rather than the subordinate one. This type seen in (3) is referred to as the 'personal' passive/infinitive construction, while that seen in (2) is referred to as the 'impersonal' type (Woodcock 1959).
        According to Maraldi (1983),[1] the pattern seen in (2), the impersonal construction, is not attested in either Archaic (taken to refer to the period spanned by the 7th-3rd centuries BCE) or Old (covering from the 3rd to the early 1st century BCE) Latin. As he writes, the impersonal construction begins to be attested and grow in frequency of use from the time of Cicero (mid-1st century BCE) onwards. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to address what brought about the change in Latin from a system where passives did not take the standard AcI construction to

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[1] Contra Woodcock (1959), who claims that the type illustrated by *dicitur eos venisse* is attested first, while the type illustrated by *Ille dicitur venisse* is the innovation.

one in which they could. Utilizing data from de Melo (2006), it is shown that although passives are not attested in Archaic Latin with the AcI construction, deponent verbs are. Based on the idea that true passives were relatively later developments in the history of Latin (Rosén 1999), it is claimed that infinitival complements could not appear with passive matrix verbs until they had developed enough semantic weight to be considered a voice class of their own—this is considered to have occurred after the Archaic period. The infinitival clause seen in (3) is then taken to be the expected complement of passive matrix verbs due to general syntactic principles of Case assignment and unaccusativity (see Burzio 1986). Finally, it is argued that, due to their formal similarity to deponent verbs, the AcI construction was extended to passive matrix verbs through analogy, giving rise to the Classical construction seen in (2).

An interesting issue raised by this analysis is the relationship of analogy to the grammar, specifically with respect to cross-linguistic constraints. Burzio's generalization about passive forms being unable to assign accusative case is one of the foundations of Case theory in generative syntax (see Butt 2006). The development of the AcI with respect to passive matrix verbs provides an instance where analogical change can go against what is taken to be a basic constraint in the grammar—when the passives analogize to the deponents in taking the AcI construction, the resulting phrases are ones in which accusative case is assigned by a passive matrix verb. Given current understandings of Case assignment, this analysis would suggest that analogical change has the ability to override constraints associated with that process. We may even be dealing with a parametric change, as discussed in Roberts (2007), that affects the assignment of accusative case in Latin—a possibility that this paper also addresses.

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