

William R. SCHMALSTIEG
 State College, Pennsylvania

IN DEFENSE OF AN OLD IDEA: THE *-O STEM ORIGIN OF THE INDOEUROPEAN ABLATIVE CASE*

The purpose of this paper is to defend the old notion that the ablative case had its origin in the *-o stem noun class. This notion goes back at least to Brugmann (1911, 163 f.) who wrote: ‘Eine eigene Form hatte dieser Kasus im uridg. Zeit wahrscheinlich nur bei den o-Stämmen. Bei den andern Stämmen war die Genitivform (auf -es -os -s...) zugleich Trägerin der ablativischen Bedeutung’. Meillet (1964, 322) wrote: ‘La possession d’une finale d’ablatif singulier distincte de celle du génitif est l’une des caractéristiques du type thématique. Le fait pourrait être dû à la fixation d’une postposition -d(-t) indiquant le point de départ, cf. lat. *dē*’. The notion is disputed by Tronskij (1967, 80) who objects that with such a presupposition it is impossible to explain the merger of the plural ablative with the plural dative and the dual ablative with the dual dative and instrumental, since the original genitive case could have expressed the ablative meaning.

Following Mažiulis (1970, 160 f.) I assume that both the Lith. dat. sg. (*vilk*)-uo and the Lith. instr. sg. (*vilk*)-ū are derived from the same Baltic dative *-ō (with a later circumflex in the dative ending). In Mažiulis’ view the Greek situation is somewhat more archaic than the Lithuanian in that the dative and instrumental meanings are still expressed by a single case in Greek. I also agree with the old suggestion that the ablative ending represented by Old Lat. -od and Old Indic -āt both derive from the addition of the dental element to the etymological dative-instrumental in *-ō (see Mažiulis 1970, 106 with literature). The Greek dative-instrumental singular ending *-ō was further contaminated with an -i from a competing dative-instrumental singular ending *-oi evidence of which is found in the dative-instrumental plural *-ois. In Baltic contamination with the old competing dative-instrumental singular ending *-oi separates the dative Lith. -ui from the instrumental singular *-u < *-ō. The Old Indic dative singular ending *-ā was supplied with a particle -ya to distinguish it from the instrumental *-ā.

At an earlier epoch then the *-o stem dative, instrumental and ablative singular meanings were all expressed by *-ō, *-oN, or *-oi.¹ Since these case meanings were

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¹ It may be objected that it is hard to believe that formerly the meanings of the accusative, instrumental, ablative and locative were originally expressed by a single case, viz. *-oN. But I continue to maintain the

originally all expressed by the same ending in the singular it is not surprising that they are expressed by the same endings in the dual and plural. The Old Indic dative, instrumental and ablative dual form *dev-ābhyām* reflects the original morphological identity for expressing meanings which in the singular came to be separated morphologically. Similarly the dative and ablative plural form *dev-ébhyaḥ* reflects the original morphological identity expressing the corresponding meanings. Just as the singular pronominal instrumental ending of the pronoun *tena* replaced the etymological **-ā* in Old Indic *dev-éna* (Thum-Hauschild 1959, 32), the ending of the plural pronominal *táih* penetrated into the noun instrumental plural producing *deváih*. (In fact all of the Old Indic endings discussed above could have been imported from the pronominal stems.) Old Indic *-áih* also gives evidence of the early contamination of **-ō* with an **-i* from the competing dative-instrumental singular ending **-oi*.

The identity of the Lithuanian dative and instrumental dual also represents an archaism, the distinction between the two cases only represented now in some accent classes by the difference in intonation, e.g., **-o* stem dat. *lang-ám* '(to) two windows' vs. instr. *lang-aĩm* '(with) two windows'. Similarly in Slavic the identity of the **-o* stem dative and instrumental dual *dar-oma* '(to, with) two gifts' also reflects a morphological archaism. The morphological distinction between the **-o* stem plural dative and instrumental is a later development derived from the fact that the cases were distinguished in the singular. The Lithuanian **-o* stem instrumental plural is derived from an etymological dative-instrumental singular **-oi* (originally in competition with the etymological **ō*). The Slavic instrumental plural ending *-y* derives from **-oNs* like

notion that the original meaning of the accusative case was extremely broad. "Krys'ko (1997, 252) wrote that A. V. Popov (1881) showed with many examples that the accusative in the Indo-European languages can perform all the functions which other cases perform and showed that the object function of the accusative is the result of the refinement and differentiation of the primary 'independent' (circumstantial-defining) meaning of the accusative, the case of the object in the broad sense, indeed, not an object, but a disseminator of the action." (Schmalstieg 2004, 7).

One can also draw a parallel with the Semitic languages, which are traditionally described as having an etymological three-case system, viz. nominative, genitive and accusative. The accusative case has a vast number of functions in addition to the direct object function: determination of place or time, material, size, weight, condition (Brockelmann 1913, 266–270), object of motion (Brockelmann 1913, 282), point of departure [with verbs denoting motion away from something] (Brockelmann 1913, 285), object with verbs of speaking, ordering, answering (Brockelmann 1913, 286), verbs denoting filling and lack (Brockelmann 1913, 286 f.), etc., meanings which could be expressed by different cases in the more conservative Indo-European languages.

Although it is perfectly correct that reconstructions involve simplification, on the basis of the investigations of Popov and Krys'ko, and the typological parallels from Semitic, I do indeed believe that the early Indo-European case morphology was considerably less developed than that of modern Lithuanian, Old Indic, Latin, etc.

the accusative plural (see S c h m a l s t i e g 2004, 6). With the assumption of the original morphological identity of dative, instrumental and ablative cases, Tronskij's objection is effectively answered.

It might be superficially difficult to see how such apparently contrary notions as dative and ablative might be combined. H a u d r y (1982, 43) writes, however, that forms do not evolve in an isolated fashion, in a closed circuit. Their evolution is not only conditioned by their original constitution, but depends to a great degree upon their use, which can cause semantic changes which go as far as to reverse their meaning. Thus, for example, with its two occurrences of Latin *dē* and the old ablative-extractive suffix *-tus* the French word *dedans* 'within' (< *dē-dē-intus*) should, indeed, mean exactly the opposite, viz., *dehors* 'outside of'.

One can imagine then that the dative might come to be understood as an ablative in certain circumstances, cf. the Lithuanian use of the verb *atimti* 'to take away'. This might be exemplified by such Lithuanian sentences as (Daukšos *Postilė* 120): *Jam* (dat. sg. masc.) *atėmė visą šarvą ir ginklą jo* '(who) took away all his armor and weapon from him' (literally 'to him'); (LKŽ IV 80) *Ir atėmėi tiemdviem* (dat. dual) *tą meitėlį* 'you took away from both of them (literally 'to both of them') that hog'. Note that for the previous sentence the dictionary supplies the parenthetical explanation *iš tų dviejų žmonių* with a more modern ablative type meaning 'from both those persons.' Cf. also examples with *nuimti* 'to take away': (LKŽ IV 84) *Jam* (dat. sg. masc.) *šlovę nuėmė* '...took away glory from him (lit: 'to him')'; *aš nuimsiu nuo tavęs* (gen. sg.) *vargus ir nelaimes* 'I shall take away from you troubles and misfortunes'. It has been pointed out to me that in these sentences the dative case is being used with the meaning of 'external possession' or as the 'dativus sympatheticus'. But my thesis is that it is just such constructions which could serve at some future date for the reinterpretation of the dative as an ablative.

In general prepositions are later additions to forms with case endings, the case ending being primary. It is interesting to note that the Gothic preposition *fairra* 'far from' requires the dative case, showing that the dative case itself was probably originally sufficient to mark the place of origin, cf. Mark 12: 34 *ni fairra is þiudangardjai* (dat. sg.) *gudis* (King James translation) 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God'. According to D e l b r ü c k (1888, 143) with the Old Indic verb *vraśc-* + *á-* denoting 'to separate oneself from' the use of the dative is practically the same as if there were an ablative, e.g., Rig Veda 10, 87, 18: *á vṛścyantām áditaye* (dat. sg.) *durévāḥ* 'die Bösen sollen von der Aditi getrennt sein'. Note also E l i z a r e n k o v a 's (1999, 230) Russian translation: Пусть злоумышленники отделятся от Адити. In both the German and the Russian translations the notion 'separation **from**' is paramount.

Another example of the apparent reversal of meaning is supplied by the Baltic prefix **at-* which can denote some kind of separation or motion away, cf. Lith. *at(si)skirti* ‘to separate’, *atstóti nuo dūru* ‘to draw back from the door’. According to the Endzelīns (1905, 34–39 [1971, 554–559]) the Latvian preposition *at*, similarly to the Slavic prefix *отъ*, originally denoted only motion away from. The prefix *at-* has the same meaning in such compound forms as *atzars* ‘side-branch’, etc. The prefix *at-* may also denote, however, that the action expressed by the verb is directed backward. This meaning of the prefix arose from its original meaning in those circumstances when not only the point of departure of the motion, but also the goal of the motion was intended, cf. Latv. *atgāzties* ‘to lean back’, *atliekt* ‘to unbend, to straighten out’, etc. In addition the prefix *at-* may denote approaching and along with this the attainment of the goal, a meaning which goes back to the meanings discussed above. This meaning might arise in such sentences as Latv. *viltnieks... atlabināja tuo pie upes* ‘the impostor... lured her away to the river’ and *viņš atnācis atpakaļ* ‘he came back’ where *atpakaļ* ‘back’ was originally pleonastic and this pleonasm then conditioned the shift of the meaning *revenit* ‘came back’ to *advenit* ‘arrived’. Compare then Lith. *at-eiti* ‘to arrive’ which has almost exactly the opposite meaning of its Russian cognate *oto-jti* ‘to leave, to depart’. Likewise the East Baltic preposition *nuo* probably used originally with the accusative or locative case (cf. the Slavic cognate *na* ‘on, to; at’ and Old Prussian *na* and *no* ‘on, after, according to’) came to be used with the genitive case and to denote ‘down from, away from’ (Brugmann, Delbrück 1911, 790; Endzelīns 1905, 129–130 [1971, 431 f.]).

It is my view that the **-o* stem declension lies at the base of the expansion of the number of cases in Indo-European, a language which originally had split ergativity, viz., nominative-accusative syntax in the present, but ergative syntax in the preterit. The historical development is illustrated below:

	Early Period	
Active Present:		
<i>*vīr</i>	gh ^w en-t	por ^{k̃} -o-N
(abs. sg.)	(present tense)	(dat. sg.)
The man	kills	the pig
Middle Preterit:		
<i>*vīr-os</i>	(e-)gh ^w η-(t)o	por ^{k̃} (-o)
(erg./gen. sg.)	(preterit tense)	(abs. sg.)
The man	killed	the pig

The nominative-accusative syntax then replaced the old ergative type syntax and for the **o*-stem noun class there was a generalization of the ergative-genitive singular, which merged semantically with the older absolutive of other noun classes, such as the

consonant stems, to form a new nominative case. The dative-accusative singular object of the present tense then spread to the preterit tense.

A present sentence then would be of the type (the new functions in bold-face letters):

Later Period		
Active Present:		
*vīr-os	gh ^v en-t	porĕ-o-N
(erg./gen. sg. > nom. sg.)	(3 sg. pres. verb)	(dat. > acc. sg.)
The man	kills	the pig
Middle Preterit:		
*vīr-os	(e-)gh ^w η-(t)o	porĕ-o-N
(erg./gen. sg. > nom. sg.)	(3 sg. pret. verb)	(dat. > acc. sg.)
The man	killed	the pig

The non-sigmatic nominative singular derives from the etymological absolutive case and is characteristic of the consonant stems, e.g., **pater* ‘father’. The ending **-o-N* (or its sandhi variant **-ō*) had a large number of adverbial functions which eventually were individualized in the accusative, dative, instrumental and ablative cases, and at least in some of the pronouns locative. In Indo-European languages other than Baltic and Slavic the **-o* stem neuter nominative singular may derive from **-o-N*, see Schmalstieg 1997. In principle then a neuter agent in **-om* (deriving from the instrumental function) and a neuter patient in **-om* (deriving from the dative function) were possible, thus Latin:

Ingeni-um (< *-oN)	superat	pericul-um (< *-oN)
(nom. sg. neut.)	(verb)	(acc. sg. neut.)
character/natural talent	overcomes	danger

See also Schmalstieg 1988, 128–138; 2000, 58–68.

When the **-o* stem ergative-genitive singular case **-os* merged semantically with the absolutive case of the other stems to form a nominative case, in most of the Indo-European languages the etymological genitive ending **-os* was modified, cf. Old Indic *-asya*, Gk. *-oio*, or replaced, cf. Lat. *-i*, Balto-Slavic **-ā*. A notable exception is Hittite which retained *-aš* (< **-os*) for the genitive as well as the new nominative function.

Mažiulis (1970, 106) writes that the Lith. gen. sg. (*vīk*)-o (= Latv. *vīk-a*, Old Slav. *vīk-a*) is to be derived not from Indo-European **-ōd* but from Indo-European **-ō*. According to Mažiulis (1970, 21) stressed Indo-European **ō* gave Baltic *ō* which passed to Old Prussian *ō*, Lith. and Latv. *uo* whereas the unstressed variant passed to Lith. *ō* = Latv. *a*. Shields (2001) explains the Baltic **-o* stem gen. sg. ending as deriving from a deictic particle. Either Mažiulis’ or Shields’ suggestion would explain the difference between the Baltic genitive ending **-ā* (Lith. *-o*) and

the Baltic dative-instrumental in *-ō. If Mažiulis is correct the genitive ending *-ā could have the same origin as the dative-instrumental *-ō, and could thereby be the result of the semantic specialization of the original sandhi doublet (i.e., *-ā from unstressed position) with an old ablative (> genitive) meaning. If Shields is right, then the deictic particle -ā adopted both ablative and genitive function.

I conclude then that the creation of the *-o stem ablative case is a result of the remodeling of the *-o stem noun declension. This remodeling was occasioned by the shift of Indo-European from a split ergative to a completely nominative-accusative language. The meanings of the original ergative-genitive (*-os) were divided up. The older ending (*-os) merged semantically with the old absolutive case (e.g., in consonant stems) to form the new nominative case. In the non-Anatolian branches of the daughter languages for the genitive meaning the older ending (*-os) was for the most part either remodeled or replaced (*-osjo, *-ī, *-ā). At this time the ablative meaning, originally expressed by the ergative-genitive (*-os) was reassigned in some branches of Indo-European to the dative-instrumental singular case (*-ō, -oN, -oi), sometimes with the addition of a dental element. One can imagine a situation similar to the Lithuanian or Old Indic sentences described above where the etymological dative might have gained additional ablative function in certain contexts. In Hittite where a new *-o stem genitive was not created the ending -aš maintained its old ablative function along with the innovative ablative in -az.

GINANT SENĄ IDĖJĄ: IDE. ABLIATYVO KILMĖ IŠ O KAMIENO

Santrauka

Ginama sena (K. Brugmanno, A. Meillet) idėja, kad abliatyvas atsirado ide. prokalbėje iš o kamieno linksniuotės. Manoma abliatyvą buvus išvestą iš senojo datyvo-instrumentalio pridėdant dantinį priebalsį *-d/-t. Apskritai naujų linksnių atsirado tada, kai ide. prokalbėje, iš pradžių buvusioje ergatyvinės sandaros, susiformavo nominatyvinė sandara ir dėl to gerokai pakito linksniavimo sistema.

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William R. SCHMALSTIEG
 814 Cornwall Road
 State College, Pa. 16803
 USA
 [emily@leanonemily.com]