

# “Intensive” verbal prefixes in Archaic Latin

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## 1. Introduction

The paper is organised as follows: in §1 I briefly show that aspectual readings are common in verbal prefixes of ancient stages within the I(ndo-)E(uropean) family, and that aspectual prefixes may be considered as a subpart of prepositions. In §2 I show that the hypothesis that aspectual values arise from a grammaticalization process is not completely satisfactory for Latin, since data are quite puzzling and various syntactic factors may be relevant; thus in §3 I give a brief outline of the effects of preverbatation with respect to the argument structure of verbs, in order to reach some generalizations. In §4 a syntactic analysis of two major types of aspectual prefixation is proposed. The data are collected manually from *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus a comedy of the end of the III century BC which I have chosen in order to gather data from a more expressive style. The entire text has been inspected, which allowed me a careful interpretation of the aspectual values involved.

Beside conveying mainly spatial values, Latin verbal prefixes, like in most ancient IE languages, could also convey aspectual meanings. The point, as I will show further, is to discuss which kind of aspect or action is involved. In (1), for instance, the verb *fugio* in the first part of the line is contrasted to the prefixed *effugio* (< \**ex-fugio*)<sup>1</sup>, where the prefix *ex* ‘from, away’ gives a resultative meaning to the verb.

- (1) *hoc se quisque modo fugit [...] at effugere haut potis est* (Lucr. 3, 1068-9)
- |               |                |                  |            |          |           |  |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|------------|----------|-----------|--|
| Hoc           | se             | quisque          | modo       |          |           |  |
| this:ABL;S    | himself:ACC;SG | everyone:NOM;SG  | way:ABL;SG |          |           |  |
| fugit...      | at             | <b>ex-fugere</b> | haut       | potis    | est       |  |
| escape:PRS;3S | but            | PV-escape:INF    | not        | possible | be:PRS;3S |  |
- ‘Everyone tries to escape from himself this way, but it is not possible to escape successfully’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Please note that in Latin prefixation is by no means an inflectional process: prefixed verbs are the result of derivation processes, and can modify the semantics of the roots they apply to.

<sup>2</sup> The translations were made by the author, unless specifically mentioned.

Verbal prefixes display similar effects in other ancient IE languages as well, most notably in ancient Greek (2).

- (2) *Kyklōps, eirōtāis m'ónoma klytón, autàr egō̄ toi ekseréō* (Homer, Od. IX, 365)  
*Kyklōps, eirōtāis m= ónoma*  
 Kyklops:VOC;S ask:PRS;IND;2S me:GEN;S name:ACC;S  
*klytón, autàr egō̄ toi eks-eréō*  
 illustrious:ACC;S then I:NOM;S you:DAT;S PV-speak:FUT;IND;1S  
 ‘Cyclops, you are asking of my illustrious name; then now I will *tell* it to you’

After prefixation with *ex* ‘from, away’, apparently homophonous with the preposition *ek* ‘from’, *eréō* (to speak) acquires the more complex meaning of ‘to tell’; in fact, the distinction is not properly aspectual, but it deals with Aktionsart, since a resultative component is incorporated.

In Latin, verbal prefixes (whether barely spatial or aspectual) are closely related to free particles of prepositional nature, as historical data can easily show. In ancient stages of Greek, and arguably of Latin, the constructions labelled as ‘tmesis’ (lit. ‘detachment’) suggest that preverbs were originally free-standing elements, mostly overlapping with historical prepositions (3-4). In the IE family, this pattern appears in archaic environments in Vedic and Old Irish as well, which, since at least the Neogrammarians have led scholars to postulate that all preverbs come from prepositions; this claim, as we will see below, has also deep consequences from a synchronic point of view (§4).

- (3) *sub vos placo* (referred to Ennius by Pomp.Fest.)  
 PV YOU:ACC;PL appease:PRS;IND;1S  
 ‘I beg you’
- (4) *Nūn d'áge nēa mélainan erússomen eis hála dían, en d'erétas epitédès ageiromen, es d'hecatómbēn* (Homer, Il. I, 141-143)  
*Nūn d= áge nēa mélainan erússomen eis*  
 now PRT= PRT ship:ACC;S black:ACC;S drag:SUBJ;1PL to  
*hála dían, en d= erétas epitédès*  
 sea:ACC;S shining:ACC;S PV PRT= rower:ACC;PL suitable  
*ageiromen, es d= hecatómbēn/ théiomen*  
 gather:SUBJ;1PL PV PRT= hecatomb:ACC;S place on board: SUBJ;1PL  
 ‘Now let’s drag a black ship to the shining sea; and quickly gather suitable rowers into it, and place on board a hecatomb’

The typology of aspectual preverbs does not seem much diversified, as the set of conveyed values is quite restricted. In particular, a terminative meaning is attested like in *pereo* ‘to die < to pass through’ (< *eo*, ‘to go’), or in *pervenio* ‘to reach < to come up to smth.’ (< *venio*, ‘to come’), or even an ingressive one as in *exorior* ‘to begin, to spring < to rise from smth.’ (< *orior* ‘to rise’); in fact, however, the most attested value has a more complex nuance, like the one in *perdoceo* ‘to teach someone deeply’ (< *doceo* ‘to teach’) or *prae-fringo* in (5).

- (5) *Quo pacto ei pugno praefregisti bracchium* (Pl., Mil. 27)

<i>Quo</i>	<i>pacto</i>	<i>ei</i>	<i>pugno</i>
which:ABL;S	manner:ABL;S	him:DAT	punch:ABL;S
<i>prae-fregisti</i>	<i>bracchium!</i>		
PV-break:PERF;3S	arm:ACC;S		

‘In what a fashion you broke its arm [of an elephant], with your fist!’

The meaning of the prefix in (5) is not simple to define. Tentatively, the label “intensive” may be suggested, since it highlights the strong effort the process is made with: for instance, in (5) above, it is not the completion of the breaking itself to be highlighted, yet, *prae-* ‘in front, beyond’ focuses expressively on the violent way in which the breaking happens. However, for the Latin system, this term cannot be taken safely, since it is used for a morphological category rather than for a kind of aspectuality (e.g. *cap-to* ‘to strive for’ < *capio* ‘to seize’). Furthermore, prefixed verbs like *perdoceo*, *prae-fringo* do not indicate only the intensive effort, but seem to carry a specific resultative value, which has much to do with the lexical properties of the verb the prefix applies to, as well as with the syntactic conditions (§ 3).

As a matter of fact, however Latin preverbs cannot be argued to bear Perfective meaning properly (that is, boundedness, or ‘aoristic’/‘complete’ values in a Comrieian fashion), since prefixed verbs usually do not meet the conditions which according to Ramchand (2008b) indicate perfectivity. For instance they are scarcely attested with *incipio* ‘to begin’, which means that an ingressive value is not frequent; they can get an ongoing interpretation with present stem inflection (in 6, the imperfect *educabant*), and they can also build present participles like *commemorantibus* in (7), that is, the event are not represented as bounded.

- (6) *quanto mitius stirpem educabant tanto ut reremur magis seueros esse*  
(Accius, Trag. Frag. XX.12)

<i>quanto</i>	<i>mitius</i>	<i>stirpem</i>	<i>e-ducabant</i>	<i>tanto ut</i>
how much	mild:CMP	ancestry:ACC;S	PV-guide:IPFV;3PL	much COMP
<i>reremur</i>	<i>magis</i>	<i>seueros</i>	<i>esse</i>	
think:PASS;SUBJ;3PL	more	strict:ACC;PL	be:INF	

‘[it happened that] the more indulgent they were in the upbringing of their descendants, the stricter, we thought, they were’

- (7) *Cretensium legatis commemorantibus* [...] (Livius, Ab U.C. 43.7.1)

<i>Cretensium</i>	<i>legatis</i>	<i>cum-memorantibus</i>
Cretan:GEN;PL	messenger:ABL;PL	PV-recall:PTCP;PRS;ABL;PL

‘While the messengers from Crete envoys reported [...]’

More generally, prefixed verbs are not crucially sensitive to tense, since they can have present, past, or even future reference like in (8).

- (8) *Conlaudato formam et faciem et virtutem commemorato* (Pl., Mil. 1027)  
*Con-laudato formam et faciem*  
 PV-commend:IMP;FUT beauty:ACC;S and visage:ACC;S  
*et virtutem con-memorato*  
 and virtue:ACC;S PV-mention:IPV;FUT  
 ‘You shall commend her beauty properly, and her visage, and you shall mention her virtues’

In fact, perfective-terminative values are crucially encoded in Latin by the inflectional category of Perfect tense, rather than on prefixation.

Beside this, some cases are not easily attributed to a clear kind of aspect: in (9) for instance the prefix *prae-* ‘in front, beyond’ allows the verb *dicere* ‘say’ to predicate a property of its object, quite far from a strict aspectual nuance.

- (9) *Ad tuam formam illa una dignast. // Hercle pulchram praedicas* (Pl., Mil. 968)  
*Ad tuam formam illa una*  
 To your:ACC.S beauty:ACC.S she:F;NOM;S only:F;NOM;S  
*digna=st*  
 adequate:F;NOM;S=be:PRS;3S  
*Hercle pulchram praedicas*  
 Hercules pretty:F;ACC;S PV-tell:PRS;2S  
 There is only one [woman] adequate to your beauty. // By Hercules, you are representing her so pretty!

Two points have to be highlighted, then: (i) the aspectual meaning of the preverbs cannot be reduced to bare perfectivity features; (ii) it affects not only the verb, but also the complex of the verb and its arguments. The interpretation of ‘strong effort’ for prefixed verbs has to do with the presence of an argument which is in some way affected by the predication, that is, a result component seems crucial in the meanings carried out by prefixes. Therefore, I will henceforth refer to the aspectual semantics of prefixed verbs as resultative.

## 2. Aspectual prefixes and grammaticalization?

The aspectual meaning of Latin preverbs has been mostly analysed from a diachronic perspective. Aspectual values are conceived as emerging chronologically later (cf. Haverling 2010, García-Hernández 2005, Pinkster 1990, Barbenet 1913 among others) due to a metaphoric shift from their original spatial content, since they are generally homophonous with spatial prepositions like *ad*

'towards', *ex* 'from, away, out', *in* 'in', *cum*<sup>3</sup> 'with', *per* 'through' etc., and have local meanings both in nominal and verbal compounds (10):

(10) *incola* (farmer, < *in-colere*), *curia* (Assembly < *co-uiri* 'men'), *exeo* 'to go out'

In a broader perspective, aspectual preverbs are conceived as the diachronic output of a long grammaticalization chain, in which ancient free spatial particles<sup>4</sup> first became prepositions, then spatial prefixes, and finally aspectual prefixes. However, this picture is not fully satisfactory. On one hand, Latin encodes aspectual features by inflectional morphology mainly; secondarily, through adverbial modification (*subito*, *statim*, *brevi*, *saepe*), that is, preverbatation seems a satellite strategy within the system. On the other, a grammaticalization chain would entail that at least in ancient stages prepositions did not exist, but there is no evidence for this in any IE language; in fact, it is not possible to claim that the aspectual values of preverbs are later developments, since they are well attested already in Homeric Greek, II millennium BC. More crucially, not all P(reposition)s became aspectual prefixes: only a small group of them may bear resultative values (11):

(11) *con/cum* 'against', *ad* 'towards', *e/ex* 'out, from, away', *in* 'in, into', *per* 'through', *de* 'from, down', *ob* 'against, upon', *prae* 'infront'

In particular, all the preverbs in (11) correspond to 'proper prepositions', i.e. they are not morphologically complex, do not bear axial (Svenonius 2008, Cinque 2010)<sup>5</sup> content, and have simple directional features (source, goal, gradualness, up-down movement, against: all of them lexicalise a bounded Path)<sup>6</sup>. On

<sup>3</sup> I consider *cum* and the allomorph *con* a directional P, homophonous with the comitative one, following the etymological similarities with ancient Greek *katà* ('against, down'), cf. Pokorny (1959 s.v.).

<sup>4</sup> In many Indo-European languages the same elements which pattern as prepositions and verbal prefixes may also appear as adverbs, that is, without being followed by a nominal phrase nor being bound to a verbal root; further more, they are sensitive to specific syntactic constraints (typically first position in main clauses in Vedic), see Hewson-Bubenik (2006:6-9). This evolution can be easily conceived as a grammaticalization if one considers that many of the ancient adverbial particles were probably related to nominal roots (for instance lat. *ante*, Hitt. *hanza* < PIE \**h<sub>2</sub>ent-* 'front'); that is, the starting point is represented by full lexical elements, and the final step by functional ones.

<sup>5</sup> The opposition between proper/functional and improper/lexical prepositions is founded in typology: a proper P is more functional and has a bare directional function, whereas an improper P bears more features since it indicates a part of the space which the ground is referred to (cf. Italian *su* vs. *sopra*, or English *from* vs. *be-side*; see Cinque 2010).

<sup>6</sup> The P *sub* 'under', despite being a proper P, does not seem to admit aspectual readings: it lexicalises stative relation ('below') or an upwards movement which is usually unbounded. Accordingly, with the partial exception of *sufficio*, *sub-* verbs do not exhibit proper actional values: most commonly, it seems that the semantics of *sub* has to do with its lexical meaning of 'under, low', frequently with the negative connotation of 'doing something secretly'.

the contrary, complex P items like *supra*, *inter*, *extra*, etc. never take on aspectual values. Finally, as I will show further, even those preverbs which may have aspectual values, do keep trace of their spatial preposition status, mostly since their spatial semantics are not completely blurred, and their syntactic status is still transparent (see further). In other words, local meanings in preverbs are still active: preverbs bear the core function of the preposition they correspond to, and modify the meaning of the verb specifying typically a source, a direction, a contact, a movement up-bottom, like in (12) and (13).

(12) *De tegulis modo nescioquis inspectavit vestrum familiarium* (Pl., Mil. 173-174)

<i>De tegulis</i>	<i>modo</i>	<i>nescioquis</i>	
from shingle:ABL;PL	just	do.not.know.who:NOM;S	
<i>in-spectavit</i>	<i>vestrum</i>	<i>familiarium..</i>	
PV-look.at:PRF;3S	your:GEN;PL	servant:GEN;PL	

‘One of your servants, has just seen, looking at from the roof’

(13) *Rapido percurrens turbine campos* (Lucr. 4, 588)

<i>Rapido</i>	<i>per-currens</i>	<i>turbine</i>	<i>campos</i>
quick:ABL;S	PV-run:PRTC;PRS;NOM;S	whirl:ABL;S	field:ACC;PL

‘Running throughout the land with a quick whirl’

A further claim against a bare semantic origin of aspectual preverbs comes from the fact that they interact with all the syntactic elements in a complex fashion. For instance, they may deeply affect the relation of the verb with its arguments; in (14) *ob-* ‘against’ modifies the semantics of the verb *cubare* ‘to sleep, to rest’ increasing its agentivity, whereas in (15) *ad-* affects *tango* ‘to touch’ emphasizing the contact with an object.

(14) *Cui bini custodies semper totis horis occubant* (Pl., Mil. 212)

<i>Cui</i>	<i>bini</i>	<i>custodes</i>	<i>semper</i>
who:DAT;S	pairNOM;PL	watchmen	always
<i>totis</i>	<i>horis</i>	<i>ob-cubant</i>	
every:ABL;PL	hour:ABL;PL	PV-sleep:PRS;3PL	

‘To whom a couple of watchmen always stand guard every hour’

(15) *Ut eos qui ita vixerint aut non attingat aegritudo aut perleviter pungat animi dolor* (Cic., Tusc. III.25.59)

<i>Ut</i>	<i>eos</i>	<i>qui</i>	<i>ita</i>	<i>vixerint</i>
COMP	they:ACC;PL	who:NOM;PL	this way	live:SUBJ;PST;3PL
<i>aut non</i>	<i>ad-tingat</i>	<i>aegritudo</i>		
or non	PV-touch:SUBJ;PRS;3S	illness:NOM;S		
<i>aut perleviter</i>	<i>pungat</i>	<i>animi</i>	<i>dolor</i>	
or lightly	hit:SUBJ;PRS;3S	soul:GEN;S	pain:NOM;S	

‘So that, those who lived this way, either are not affected by illness or sorrow affects them very lightly’

Moreover, prefixes can affect the valency of predicates, cf. *venio* 'to come' vs. *in-venio* 'to find'<sup>7</sup>, *cubo* 'to sleep' vs. *occubo* 'to lie', *curro* 'to run' vs. *per-curro* 'to run through, to get somewhere running'. (cf. Romagno 2003). These data indicate that the aspectual meanings are just a part of the problem, and have to do with the syntactic relations held by preverbs not only with the verbal root, but also with the argument structure and with the Verbal Phrase. My hypothesis, then, is that preverbatation is the reflex of a syntactic process, and that resultative values arise under particular conditions. In the following section I will try to define the syntactic structures of the most attested aspectual constructions.

### 3. Resultative preverbs and argument structure: outline

In this section I concentrate on the actional properties of the predicates to which preverbs apply, in order to define the argument structures which are more frequently associated with resultative preverbs. Thus I firstly draw some distinctions following the well known Vendlerian typology of predicates<sup>8</sup>.

a. Stative verbs scarcely tolerate resultative modification triggered by prefixes. Possible exceptions are *per-timeo/ex-timeo* 'to be very afraid', but only when *timeo* entails a span of time, resembling an activity, and *-esco* verbs like *con-ticisco* 'to shout up', where dynamicity is added by the inchoative suffix *-sco*.

b. Activity verbs can be grouped in two categories: low transitivity predicates pattern as accomplishments when they host an object, whether overt or not, cf. *per-sequor* 'to follow persistently' (see below), whereas true unergatives do not usually tolerate resultative prefixation, cf. *tussio*, which is attested with *ex-* already in Celsus, with transitive construction.

c. Achievement verbs (whether volitional or not) tolerate resultative prefixes only under some conditions: *mordeo* 'to bite' when modified by *ad-* 'to' means 'to devour, to bite repeatedly', i.e. it takes on an intensive/resultative meaning if the prefix correlates to an object<sup>9</sup>; *tundo* 'to hit', if prefixed (*con-tundo*), does not indicate the single moment of hitting, but a quite long process of beating.

<sup>7</sup> Common in a comparative perspective, cf. Russian *idti* 'go, come' > *na-jti* 'find' (reviewer's comment).

<sup>8</sup> Please note that a detailed discussion of the interplay between preverbs and actional suffixes like *-sco* is outside the goals of this paper; fundamental on this topic, however, is Haverling (2000) and more recently (2010), in particular for the description of data.

<sup>9</sup> I thank one of the anonymous reviewer for having pointed out to me that in Plautus *admordeo* is only used with the even more figurated meaning of 'to extract money from something'. I do not think that this is a counterexample for my account, yet, it confirms the hypothesis, that the presence of an object allows the prefix to get more complex actional nuances. In detail, one could think that both the figurated meaning and the classical one ('to gnaw') were available with the prefixed verb, and that the textual characters of the comedies triggered a prevalent use of the more marked one.

More frequently prefixes modifying achievements maintain their etymological meaning<sup>10</sup>: *morior* 'to die' has comitative sense in *com-morior* (post-classical), *orior* 'to rise, to become visible' shows an anaphoric source when modified by *ex-* in *exorior*.

d. Accomplishments verbs, on the contrary, seem quite free to host preverbs which emphasize the result component, cf. *perdoceo* 'to teach (someone) right', *ecfugio* 'to escape successfully', *conseco* 'to split something with a cut', *expurgo* 'to clean something up' among others. The reason for this has to be sought in their semantic structure, which is characterised for dynamicity as well as for the possibility to have an object. In particular, the presence of an external object is crucial in order to the prefix to have a resultative reading. This can explain why even some intransitive prefixed verbs have resultative meaning provided that they appear in transitive constructions (16-18):

(16) *Multa monumenta vetustas exederat* (Cic., Tusc. V.23.56)

<i>Multa</i>	<i>monumenta</i>	<i>vetustas</i>	<i>ex-ederat</i>
many:ACC;PL	monument:ACC;PL	age:NOM;S	pv-eat:PPFV;3S

'The age had consumed many monuments'

(17) *Neque illic calidum exhibit in prandium* (Pl., Mil. 832)

<i>Neque</i>	<i>illic</i>	<i>calidum</i>	<i>ex-bibit</i>
and.not	at.that.time	hot.wine:ACC.S	PV-drink:PFV;3S

*in prandium*  
at lunch:ACC.S

'And that he did not drink (it) up, still hot, at lunch!' (Pl., Mil. 832)

(18) *Edormi crapulam et exhala* (Cic., Phil. 2.12)

<i>E-dormi</i>	<i>crapulam</i>	<i>et</i>	<i>ex-hala</i>
PV-sleep:IPV	drunkenness:ACC;S	and	PV-breathe:IPV

'Sleep the drunkenness off and breathe out!'

In the above constructions, the primary verb may have both an activity (intransitive construction) and an accomplishment (transitive) reading, but the former can be considered an instance of object-demotion: that is, the object position is empty but available in the syntactic structure (§ 4), thus enhancing resultative preverbatation.

The same pattern can be observed in verbs with non canonical objects, namely whose complement are represented by indirect objects or embedded clauses (19-20):

<sup>10</sup> *Simul primo concursu concrepuere arma* (Liv. VI.24.1) is problematic since *concrepo* 'to rattle, to creak, to make a noise' is quite similar to the simplex *crepo*; it is possible that the prefix *con-* conveys a comitative meaning since the verb occurs preferably with noises produced by two or more things clashing together.

- (19) *Quomque me oratricem hau sprevisi sistique exorare ex te?* (Pl., Mil. 1072)

*Quomque me oratricem hau sprevisi*  
 Why.then me:ACC suppliant:ACC;S not reject:PFV;2S  
*sisti=que ex-orare ex te?*  
 leave=and:PFV;2S pv-pray:INF to you:ABL  
 'Why didn't you reject me as a suppliant, but you let that I convince you with my prayers?'

- (20) *Adcuratote ut sine talis domi agitent convivium* (Pl., Mil. 165)

*Ad-curatote ut sine talis*  
 PV-be.careful:IMP;FUT comp without dice:ABL;PL  
*domi agitent convivium*  
 home:GEN;S drive:SUBJ;PRS;3PL banquet:ACC;S  
 'Be very careful, that they sit down at the table at home without dice'

Quite differently, some verbs which are inherently intransitive (whether unaccusative or unergative, 21-22) can take an object if a preverb increases their valency (Romagno 2003):

- (21) *Rostra Cato advolat* (Cic., Att. I.14)

*Rostra Cato ad-volat*  
 platform:ACC;PL Cato:NOM;S PV-fly:PRS;3S  
 'Cato flies at the speakers platform'

- (22) *Et argumentum et nomen vobis eloquar* (Pl., Mil. 85)

*Et argumentum et nomen vobis e-loquar*  
 And plot:ACC;S and name:ACC;S you:DAT;PL PV-tell:FUT;1S  
 'And now I will reveal both the topic and the title(of the comedy)'

More problematic are a number of unergative verbs which are attested with resultative preverbs even without an object (23-27):

- (23) *Eu hercle praesens somnium! Abi intro et conprecare* (Pl., Mil. 394)

*Eu hercle praesens somnium!*  
 Oh Hercules be.present:PTCP;NOM;S dream:NOM;S  
*Abi intro et con-precare<sup>11</sup>*  
 go:IMP inside and PV-pray:IMP  
 'Oh Hercules! Here is your dream! Come in, and pray thoroughly!'

<sup>11</sup> The verb *precor* is attested in absolute use (see *TLL*) especially in juridical/ritual/formulaic language.

- (24) *Ut tremit atque extimuit, postquam te aspexit* (Pl., Mil. 1272-73)  
*Ut tremit atque ex-timuit*<sup>12</sup>,  
 How.much tremble:PRS;3S and PV-be.frightened:PFV;3S  
*Postquam te aspexit!*  
 as.soon.as you:ACC;S see:PFV;3S  
 ‘How much she trembles, and how she’s got frightened, as soon as she saw you!’
- (25) *Perdormiscin usque ad lucem?* (Pl., Men. 928-930)  
*Per-dormisci=n usque ad lucem?*  
 PV-sleep:PRS;2S=NEG until to light:ACC;S  
 ‘Do you sleep soundly til dawn?’
- (26) *Quin iam prius quam sum elocutus scis, si mentiri volo* (Pl., Me. 155)  
*Quin iam prius quam sum.e-locutus*<sup>13</sup> *scis,*  
 Actually already before that PV-say:PFV;1S know:PRS;2S  
*Si mentiri uolo*  
 Whether tell.untruth:INF want:PRS;1S  
 ‘Actually, before I said so, you already know whether I want to utter an untruth’
- (27) *non solum hortabor ut elaboret* (Cic., Orat. 2.85)  
*nonsolum hortabor ut e-laboret*  
 not only encourage:FUT;1S COMP PV-labor:SUBJ;PRES;3S  
 ‘not only will I encourage him to exert himself’

To the best of my knowledge, however, only a few instances of this pattern are attested; even outside Plautus, unergative verbs scarcely tolerate aspectual prefixation (unless turned to transitive constructions), and do not appear before post-Augustean era.

Some remarks are in order. First, most aspectual preverbs exhibit the same resultative meaning, ‘to do something completely, to do well, to do something to the end, to do something in the right way’. Therefore, the label ‘intensive’, does not appear to be satisfying since preverbatation has not simply to do with a special effort or with ‘intensity’, but with the complete accomplishment of the verbal process, even from a qualitative point of view, and with its consequences. It should be noted that this does not involve telicity, since those events (cf. examples 6, 8, 16, 17, 18) are by no means conceived as single points, nor do they take place in a single point. In this light, only two kinds of verbs, accomplishments and some activities, can receive aspectual prefixes. This is coherent

<sup>12</sup> The verb *timeo* ‘to be afraid (of)’ can have an absolute construction, without an inherent object, cf. Pl., Amph.335 *timeo, totus torpeo* ‘I am afraid, I feel numb’ or Pl., Amph. 295 *Timet homo: deludam ego illum* ‘This man is afraid: I will deceive him’.

<sup>13</sup> Please note that, whereas in (22) *eloquor* was transitivised, here it lacks an object.

with other studies on resultative constructions in a comparative perspective (see Harley 2005), according to which the feature [+dynamic] is required in order to license a resultative interpretation.

Likewise, prefixed verbs with resultative meaning are syntax-sensitive: only verbs licensing an object, or verbs which are capable to host an internal argument, receive aspectual prefixation<sup>14</sup>. This condition on the syntactic structure (see below) is relevant for activities and intransitive verbs as well. As outlined above, resultative preverbs can apply on activity or intransitive verbs only if an object (overt or not) is also present; that is, verbs like *narro*, *bibo*, *edo*, which basically admit 'absolute' constructions with object demotion, have result preverbs, when an overt object is realised. Conversely, some unaccusative verbs such as *curro* or *volo* may increase their valency, becoming transitive, when they are prefixed.

However, the data in (23-27) seem to represent counter-examples, since they show unergative verbs, which admit result interpretation with prefixes, even without any object. In the following section I will try to explain this apparent exception. In order to do that, I will give a syntactic analysis of the two most widespread patterns.

#### 4. Analysis

4.1. I treat in a unitary fashion all the resultative prefixed verbs which entail a transitive structure, whether they are inherently accomplishment verbs (type *per-fringo*) or activity verbs (also intransitives) with a secondary object (*e-dormio*).

This type shows parallels with the constructions which are known as "weak resultatives" (Mateu 2012, Haugen 2009, Washio 1997 a.o.), that is, verbs entailing an external result, which is in some way expected given the kind of relation between the verbal root and its object (cf. 'to drink something up', 'to cut the meat thin', 'to freeze smth. solid'). The source for their resultative meanings is related to the syntactic structure they project. In particular, various scholars have proposed that some elements, like the particle *up* or the adjectives *solid* or *thin* above confer resultativity to the verb since they are inserted in a specific layer of the verbal Phrase. According to Ramchand's (2008a), the rightmost and lower field of the Verb Phrase (Res[ultative]P[hrase]) is the place where Resultativity features are checked. Taking Ramchand's model as a starting point, my proposal is that, in verbs of the *per-fringo/e-dormio* type, the object is generated in ResP, where the preverb modifies it in a relation of Small Clause.

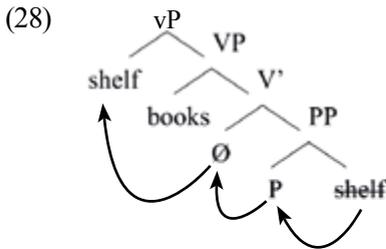
This analysis is possible provided that resultative preverbs are considered as lexical elements with prepositional status. Comparative data corroborate

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<sup>14</sup> This property has long been emphasised by Lehmann (1983), who referred to it as "P-government", cf. Acedo-Matellán (2010).

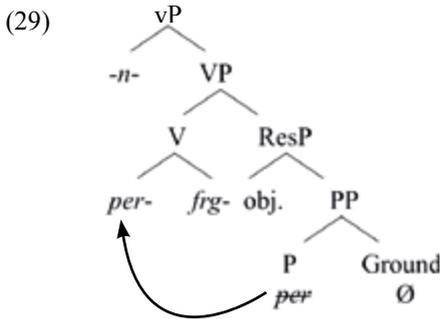
this claim, since in various languages, most notably in Germanic as well as in Slavic and Celtic, P(reposition)s may act as particles, and build actional/aspectual constructions together with the verb (Svenonius 2004, Ramchand-Tungseth 2006, Tungseth 2008: 125ff)<sup>15</sup>. The changes in the actional properties of the verb have two reasons: from a semantic point of view, particles represent a limit for the event, since they quantify it, “measure it out” (Tenny 1994), and this triggers a number of actional readings, most notably result interpretation. On the other hand, Ps act like heads, that is they are able to predicate on nominal elements within a Small Clause (cf. Den Dikken 1995). Such a predicative functions of Ps ensure that the object gains a resulting state, which is transferred onto the verbal complex.

The switch of prepositional elements, that is free lexical entities, to prefixes, namely morphs, is parametric within Latin and Slavic languages, and needs to be explained with some specific morpho-syntactic process. Tentatively, I assume that Ps incorporate to the verbal root, probably because those Ps, being complement-less, hence defective, need to move toward a higher predicative head. The idea that an element of the lower VP shell can move in a V-head position is well known since Hale, Keyser’s (1993) analysis of locatum/location verbs, where spatial nouns headed by abstract Ps get verbal status moving to the VP head.



It should be stressed that, as mentioned above, all prefixes involved in resultative structures in Latin come from abstract spatial Ps (Cinque 2010), which share directional features; the point is crucial, since Path features (cf. Harley 2005, Mateu 2012) are able to make the event bound to a limit, enhancing the measuring out effect. In a more formal way, then, one could claim that the abstract P predicating in the Small clause over the Object is the head of an abstract PathP, as represented in (29).

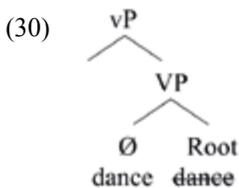
<sup>15</sup> As mentioned above (§ 1), resultative prefixes in Latin appear to be homophonous with a subset of Ps; from a theoretical point of view, however, Ps and prefixes coincide, the latter being the consequence of a morpho-syntactic process affecting the former.



4.2. A small number of object-less prefixed verbs like *e-loquor* ‘to tell smth.’<sup>16</sup>, *ex-timeo* ‘to be frightened’, *e-laboro* ‘to exert oneself’, *per-dormisco* ‘to sleep soundly’, can represent a problem at first sight, since the lack of an object makes them unbounded, that is, their result-orientation seems hard to be explained. A parallelism can be drawn with “strong resultative” verbs (Washio 1997, Mateu 2012 a.o., cf. to dance the night away, to hammer the metal flat, to work the debts off, to run the pavement thin), where resultativity cannot be inferred from verbal semantics, but it has to emerge from a complex syntactic process.

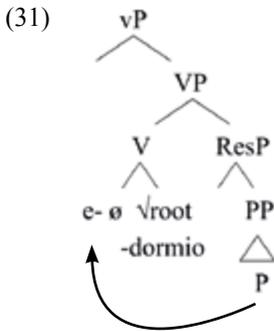
Following Mateu’s analysis (2012) of strong resultatives, then, I treat the *eloquor* type as complex predicates, where the PP which carries out resultative reading can not have scope on the empty object position. Therefore, a subtler analysis is required.

The keypoint is that these verbs, despite being unergatives (without a complement position) seem to have the same properties as transitive ones (they can receive an endpoint). Since Hale, Keyser (1993), the syntactic structure of unergative verbs like ‘to dance’ has been decomposed as ‘to make a dance’, that is they involve a null verbal head governing a root nominal element (30).



<sup>16</sup> The meaning of *eloquor* is properly ingressive (cf. Haverling 2000); however, its use in *Miles Gloriosus* is quite more complex, since characters use it when they want to declare their intention of not only beginning a tell, but also of doing that thoroughly; in other word, it seems that not only the starting point of the event is focused, but also its results, as if *eloquor* (of course when at the first person) patterns as a performative verb.

In this light, even if the complement is empty, the resultative PP may have scope on the nominal root embedded under the null head of VP, and the syntactic operations are quite similar to those involved in transitive verbs. Yet the main difference is that it is necessary to postulate an extra movement, in order to explain the conversion of the nominal root to a verb properly: this is captured by the process which Mateu (as well as Haugen 2009, and Hale, Keyser 1993) calls conflation, that is a special kind of movement, which is triggered by the need to fulfil an empty position in the syntactic structure. The conflation therefore makes the nominal root merge with its heading node, the null verbal head, giving rise to a lexical verb. Secondly, the groundless PP which makes the event resultative moves to the position of the null verb conflated to the verbal root: it should be noted, then, that unlike in the *perfringo* type, in the *edormio* type the prefix does not merge directly with the root, but it has to move upwards to the null verb position to which the root conflates (31).



The syntactic account given above for the *edormio* verb type looks quite costly if compared with the mechanism involved by the *perfringo* type, as it entails the conflation process, and a different kind of movement of the head of the resultative PP. Yet, this proposal may predict the very low frequency of resultative prefixes with non transitive verbs, which normally are not able to receive “intensive” reading since an unergative root cannot host a ResP unless it conflates to a transitivizing head.

More generally, the markedness of strong resultative constructions in Latin can be expected in light of the fact that they are mostly ruled out in Romance languages as well, as the oddity of constructions like “danzare via la notte”, can show<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> This is not surprising since Romance languages are basically “verb framed”, in Talmy’s terms (see Mateu 2012); as to Latin, the marginal availability of conflation constructions is to be evaluated in further research.

## Conclusions

This study identifies with more accuracy the aspectual values in Latin preverbs, labeling them as resultative, rather than “intensive”; despite the fact that data are quite confused between perfectivity and telicity, only resultative values seem coherent with both the semantics of prefixed verbs and the properties of prepositional particles in a comparative perspective. This goal is consistent with data from Ancient Greek, Sanskrit and Old Irish<sup>18</sup>, in which verbal prefixes carry actional values rather than proper aspectual features.

I have shown that the emergence of resultative values in prefixed verbs can be explained as instances of common syntactic processes. Like the prefixes which increase verb valency, resultative ones get their value as they modify the argument structure of the verb. In particular, a ResP hosts defective Ps which, licensing Path features, make the verbal root bounded, hence the verbal process resultative<sup>19</sup>.

The rarity of intensive prefixation with non transitive verbs can be explained only by syntactic reasons: it has not to do only with their semantics, but with the complexity of the processes involved.

More generally, Latin data are consistent with a synchronic analysis of actional preverbs as prepositional elements, in the light of influential comparative studies like Svenonius (2004), Ramchand (2008a) and Tungseth (2008). A further step of the research should deal with the parametric differences between the languages in which Ps do not univertbate with verbs, and those like Latin in which they become prefixes.

## Abbreviations

P	Preposition
PP	Preposition Phrase
Pv	Preverb
ResP	Result Phrase
VP	Verb Phrase

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<sup>18</sup> For a comparative overview see for instance Hewson, Bubenik (2006).

<sup>19</sup> Tentatively: all types of preverbs come from incorporated Ps: what changes is where they move. True local preverbs like *in-* of *inspecto* maintain an abstract or anaphoric ground as well as valency changing preverbs like *in-* of *invenio*. Here the P moves to an applicative head above VP on which the root incorporates. Aspectual preverbs derive from groundless Ps which incorporate directly on the root or on a null verb according to root’s semantics.

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## **Abstract**

Davide Bertocci

### ***"Intensive" verbal prefixes in Archaic Latin***

The goal of this paper is to give a brief outline of the synchronic conditions which trigger the emergence of aspectual values in Latin verbal prefixes. In particular, I will show that such a possibility is not the result of bare semantic effects, lexicalization of idioms or compounding strategies; rather, aspectual preverbalization crucially has to do with syntactic factors, namely the argument structure of the verb, the prepositional character of the prefixes, and the interactions between those components.

**Keywords:** Latin, prefixes, resultative, prepositions