

Non-nominative arguments, active impersonals, and control in Latin

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6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some active impersonal constructions with non-nominative (accusative and/or oblique) arguments in Latin, in relation to (i) the presence of the accusative with some verbs (e.g. *me pudet* I.ACC shame.PRS.IND.3SG ‘it shames me’), (ii) the alternation accusative/dative with other types of verbs (e.g. *me/mihi decet* I.ACC/DAT become.PRS.IND.3SG ‘it becomes me’), (iii) the accusative/oblique realization of the verb’s argument(s), according to the verb/predicate and the type of construction (e.g. *me eius miseret* I.ACC he.GEN take.pity.PRS.IND.3SG ‘I take pity on him’, *me*-I.ACC *latet*.escape.PRS.IND.3SG ‘it escapes me’, *mihi*-I.DAT *liquet*.be.clear.PRS.IND.3SG ‘it is clear to me’, *nivit sagittis* snow.PRS.IND.3SG lightning.ABL.PL ‘it snows (with) lightning[s]’), (iv) the relationship among the impersonal active, personal active, and passive patterns, which are sometimes available for one and the same verb (e.g. *fallo* ‘to deceive’).

The discussion is organized as follows. Section 6.2 illustrates the role played by the notion of control in some voice alternations in Latin. Section 6.3 describes impersonal constructions and the strategies realizing them, focusing on some ‘impersonal’ patterns with active verb morphology and accusative/oblique arguments. Evidence is provided in Section 6.4 for their witnessing the existence of a dependent-marked active/agentive-coding subsystem, already attested in Early Latin in some grammatical domains, whereby inactive arguments are coded in the accusative,¹ the case of canonical objects/patients of transitive clauses and of ‘inert’

¹ In Early Latin inactive/nonagentive arguments in the accusative rather than the expected nominative case obtain in nominal clauses involving ellipsis of the verb *sum* ‘to be’ (i), exclamative–presentative patterns introduced by *eccum*, *eccillam*, *eccillum* (through univerbation of the adverb *ecce* ‘here’ and the accusative of the pronouns *is*, *ille* ‘he’, *iste* ‘this’ (ii) (Cennamo 2001, 2009: 311–313), and with second declension thematic/weak ‘neuters’ of the *o*-stem (e.g. *uterum* ‘belly’, *corium* ‘skin’, *caelum* ‘sky’) (with corresponding ‘secondary’ forms of animate masculine/feminine gender, depending on the noun), occurring in syntactic contexts with an inactive S (i.e. unaccusative structures), illustrated in (iii) for a passive construction, with the neuter variant witnessing the early occurrence of the accusative to mark inactive arguments (Lazzeroni 2002a, 2002b, Rovai 2007a; 2007b, Cennamo 2009: 314)):

(Collinge 1978), less affected arguments (the dative for experiencers), the verb reverting to the default third-person singular ‘impersonal’ active form. Finally, Section 6.5 provides the conclusions.

6.2 Control and voice alternations in Latin: active–medio-passive, active–impersonal

Control, the semantic spectrum reflecting the degree of ‘primary responsibility of a participant over the verbal process’ (Lakoff 1977), plays an important role in the encoding of transitivity and of the argument structure of the clause in Latin, both synchronically and diachronically (Cennamo 1998: 83–88, 2001: 54–58, 2009, 2011, 2016: 967–971, 2020, also for the transition from Latin to Romance).² This notion involves various transitivity features such as agentivity, volitionality, individuation of the clause nuclear participant(s) (e.g. animacy, definiteness, referentiality), and the aspectual nature of the predicate (i.e. the types of eventualities) (Timberlake 1977: 162, Lehmann 1988: 57–61, Comrie 1989: 61–62, Klaiman 1991). For instance, with animate subjects it determines fluctuations between the active voice and the medio-passive *-r* form,³ that acts as a syntactico-semantic detransitivizer, turning a transitive causative verb into an intransitive one, marking the affectedness/lack of control of the subject over the verbal process, as shown in (1)–(2):

- (i) *fortunatum Nicobolum*
 lucky.ACC Nicobolus.ACC
 ‘How lucky is Nicobulus.’ (Plaut. *Bacch.* 455)
- (ii) *sed eccum Amphitruonem, advenit*
 but here.he.ACC Amphitruo.ACC come.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘But here comes Amphitruo.’ (Plaut. *Amph.* 1005)
- (iii) *detegetur corium*
 uncover.MPASS.PRS.IND.3SG skin.N/ACC
 ‘The skin is uncovered’ (Plaut. *Epid.* 65)
- Glossing of the examples follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules
 (<http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/files/morpheme.html>)

² The data analysed consist of literary and non-literary texts (including the inscriptions) from the earliest attestations to Late Latin, following the conventional periodization of Latin: Early/Pre-Classical Latin (250–81 BCE), Classical Latin (81 BCE–14 CE), Post-Classical/Imperial Latin (14–180 CE), Late Latin (180–600 CE), Medieval Latin (end of 500 CE–700 CE) (Feltenius 1977, Cuzzolin and Haverling 2009, Gianollo 2014: 949, note 3, Pinkster 2015: 5–6, Vincent 2016 for a more recent discussion in relation to the boundaries between Latin and Romance).

³ The original function of the *-r* suffix, either an impersonal (Ernout 1908–1909, Lindsay 1895: § 21) or a medio-passive suffix (Bassols de Climent 1948: § 5, Leumann, Hofmann and Szantyr 1965: § 162, note a), is controversial (Kurzová 1993: 157–171). In Latin it may be regarded as the marker of the non-active voice (Cennamo 1998: 78), employed for different types of intransitive structures, including middles, anticausatives, passives, and impersonals. This form only occurs in the tenses of the so-called *infectum* (i.e. in imperfective tenses, present, imperfect, future). In the tenses of the *perfectum* (i.e. in forms expressing perfective aspect, perfect, pluperfect, future perfect), a syntactic construction is employed, consisting of a form of the verb *sum* ‘to be’ + the past participle of the lexical verb (see Pinkster 1988: 220ff., 2015: 230–242, Cennamo 2005: 178–179, Gianollo 2014: 949–951).

in control, marking a volitional (3c) and non-volitional action (3d), respectively (Cennamo 1998: 83–88, Cennamo, Barðdal, and Eythórsson 2015: 699–700):

- (3) a. *me magis de Dionysio delectat*
 1SG.ACC more about Dionysus.ABL delight.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘I prefer Dionysus (lit. (it) delights me more about Dionysus).’
 (Cic., *Q. Fr.* II, 13)
- b. *non tam ista me sapientiae ... fama*
 NEG SO DEM.NOM 1SG.ACC wisdom.GEN fame.NOM
delectate...
 delight.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘I am not so much delighted with that reputation for wisdom ...’
 (Cic., *Amic.*, 15, 11)
- c. *interea ... nos delectabimus*
 in.the.meantime 1PL.ACC delight.FUT.IND.1PL
 ‘In the meantime we shall organize our own pleasure.’
 (Cic. *Att.* II, 4.2) (Cennamo 1998: 84)
- d. *et enim si delectamur cum scribimus*
 and indeed if delight.PRS.IND.MP.1PL when write.PRS.IND.1PL
 ‘Indeed, if we enjoy writing.’ (Cic., *Fin.*, I, 3)

Lack of control of the A/S argument over the verbal process can be marked not only by the *R*-ending, as illustrated in (1b) (*excitor* ‘I wake up’), (2b) (*rumpor* ‘I burst’), and (3d) (*delectamur* ‘we enjoy’), but also through the default third-person singular active voice in so-called impersonal function, as in (3a), where *me delectat* literally means ‘it delights me, I happen to be delighted’, the pattern underlining the involitionality, ‘inertness’ of the verbal argument and the ‘happenstance’ nature of the verb eventuality (Barðdal 2004, 2008, 2014, Cennamo, Barðdal and Eythórsson 2015: 700) (Sections 6.3.1.2, 6.3.1.3). In the following discussion, we investigate (i) the verbs entering this construction and their lexico-aspectual characteristics,⁵ (ii) the different coding of the optional

⁵ In our discussion we follow the Vendler (1967)/Dowty (1979) four-way classification of the inherent temporal properties of verbs, subsequently refined within different frameworks (see Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2005, Van Valin 2005, Rappaport Hovav 2008, 2014, Ramchand 2008, 2019, Beavers and Koontz-Garboden 2020, and related references): *states* (non-dynamic, durative eventualities) (*know, stay*), *activities* (dynamic, durative eventualities lacking a final point/result state (i.e. atelic) (*sing, walk, work*), *semelfactives* (instantaneous eventualities lacking a final point/result state (i.e. punctual activities) (*cough, jump*), *achievements* (dynamic, instantaneous eventualities inherently encoding a final point/result state) (i.e. punctual) (*break, explode*), *accomplishments* (dynamic, durative eventualities lexicalizing a final point/result state) (i.e. telic) (*change, sink, appear*), *degree achievements* (Hay et al. 1999 / *gradual completion verbs* (*cool, grow*) (Bertinetto and Squartini 1995) (dynamic, durative eventualities denoting the gradual approach to a final point along a scale, which may or may not be attained and which can be ‘the final goal or a further stage’ (Bertinetto and Squartini 1995: 13) (i.e. verbs of variable telicity). The last class of verbs instantiates so-called *non-quantized change*, since the final point they lexically entail is non-specific, unlike achievements and accomplishments, which realise *quantized change*, as they lexicalize a specific final state (Beavers and Koontz-Garboden 2017: 855). A verb’s meaning consists of two components, a structural aspect (i.e. its event structure template) and a root (i.e. its idiosyncratic aspect), which differentiates it from other verbs of the same aspectual class, i.e. sharing the same event structure template (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2005).

argument(s) occurring in this pattern, and (iii) its ‘impersonal’ status vis-à-vis the other impersonal strategies in Latin.

6.3 Impersonals, detransitivization, and control in Latin

The third-person singular of the active and passive voice are the two impersonal strategies appearing in various types of subjectless constructions in Latin, optionally figuring with a non-nominative argument, depending on the construction (Cuzzolin and Napoli 2010, Pinkster 2015).

Passive and Impersonal are marked systems of correlations among (morpho)syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features, realizing different points along a Detransitivization continuum, illustrated in Table 6.1 (Givón 1984, Shibatani 1985, also Cennamo 1997, 2005, 2010, 2016 for Latin and Romance).

Passives, O-oriented patterns with defocusing of the A argument, optionally surfacing as an adjunct (oblique/prepositional phrase) (Shibatani 1985, 1994, Givón 1984: 565–572, Siewierska 2008), share with impersonals the pragmatic notion of agent defocusing, and differ in the extent to which the agent (either S or A, according to the syntactic valency of the verb) is either lacking or implied and syntactically expressed (see also Cennamo 1997, 2003: 57–58, 2011 and discussion in Malchukov and Ogawa 2011).

Therefore, Impersonality can be conceived of as a cline, whereby one goes from a logically implied (but unexpressed) argument (A/S/O) to a situation where the eventuality described by the verb is seen as taking place by itself, with no underlying argument (Cennamo 1993, 1997, 2003, and 2016 for Romance). The extent to which the underlying argument (when there is one) (either A, S, or O) is either understood or syntactically expressed, varies within languages (see Malchukov

Table 6.1 The passive–impersonal continuum

Agent-defocusing (e.g. Agent suppression) >
Stativization (Perfective–resultative perspective on the event/ Marked verbal morphology) >
Subjectization of a non-Agent (Patient/Benefactive/ Recipient, an original DO/IO) >
Topicalization of a non-Agent >
Affectedness of surface subject

Source: Cennamo (1997: 145, 2006: 313, 2016: 967).

A recent revision of the distinction is put forward by Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (2020: 227–234), who propose the presence of templatic entailments (e.g. notions such as causation, change, possession, co-location) also in the root component of some verbs. As we shall see (Section 6.3.1.4), this proposal leads to interesting results for the analysis and interpretation of verbs acquiring a different meaning in the involuntality/impersonal alternation in Latin, an issue that however we only tangentially address in the present chapter and that we leave for further investigation.

Table 6.2 Synthetic and analytic passives

SYNTHETIC (<i>infectum</i>)	ANALYTIC (<i>perfectum</i>)
<i>laudatur</i> (present) 'he is (being) praised'	<i>laudatus est</i> (perfect) 'he was praised/'he has been praised/'he is (a) praised (man)' (i.e. extolled, praiseworthy) (adj.)
<i>laudabatur</i> (imperfect) 'he was (being) praised'	<i>laudatus erat</i> (pluperfect) 'he had been praised/he was praised' (adj.)

and Ogawa 2011 for an overview of the different functional varieties of impersonal constructions across languages).

In Latin the voice strategies employed for the passive–impersonal continuum reflect the morphological *aspectual* cleavage in the verbal system between forms expressing imperfective aspect (roughly an ongoing, continuous, repetitive action) and forms conveying perfective aspect (roughly a completed action) (Cennamo 2005: 178–179, 2020: 111, Pinkster 2015: 230–257). The former are *synthetic* (realized by an inflexional ending added to the verb stem, the *-r* suffix), the latter are *analytic* (instantiated by a syntactic construction, a form of *sum* 'to be' + past participle), as illustrated in Table 6.2 for the first conjugation verb *laudo* 'to praise'.

Thus, passives are instantiated by the *-r* suffix in imperfective tenses (4a) (*impediretur*), and by a form of the verb *sum* 'to be' + the past participle of the lexical verb in perfective tenses (4b) (*dies datus ... est*). The agent is optionally expressed, surfacing in the ablative if [–animate] (4a) (*his rebus*) and by means of a prepositional phrase introduced by the prepositions *a, ab* + ablative (more rarely *per* + accusative) if [+animate], as shown in (4b) (*ab dis*) and (4c) (*ab hostibus*) (Cennamo 1998: 80, Pinkster 2015: 245–250).

- (4) a. *his rebus cum iter ... impediretur*
 DEM.PL.ABL thing.PL.ABL if path block.MP.IPF.SBJ.3SG
 'If the way is blocked by these things.' (Caes. Gall. 2, 17, 5)
- b. *optatus hic mi/ dies*
 desired.M.SG.NOM DEM.M.SG.NOM 1SG.DAT day
datus hodie est ab dis
 give.PRF.PTCP.M.SG.NOM today be.PRS.IND.3SG by gods.PL.ABL
 'This day of my desire has been given to me today by the gods ...'
 (Plaut. Per. 773b–4) (Pinkster 2015: 245)
- c. *ab hostibus conspiciabantur*
 by enemy.PL.ABL recognize.MP.IPF.IND.3PL
 'They were recognized by the enemies.' (Caes. Gall. 2, 26, 3)

As for the impersonal pole of the passive–impersonal continuum, in the *imperfective* aspect, i.e. in the tenses of the *infectum* (present, imperfect, future), there occurs a *synthetic* form, the unmarked third singular of the *-r* form (*amatur, itur*)

(5a–b). Some experiencer verbs exhibit the third singular of the active inflection (e.g. *pudet* ‘it fills with shame/one feels ashamed’) (5c), in alternation with the *-r* form with other experiencer verbs (e.g. *miseret/miseretur* ‘it feels pity for’) (see Flobert 1975: 499, Fedriani 2014: 154–158, Pinkster 2015: 132–135 for the different chronology of attestation of the active impersonal form with these verbs):

- (5) a. *amatur*
 love.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
 ‘One loves, we/you/I love.’
- b. *itur*
 go.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
 ‘One goes; we/you/I go.’
- c. *pudet*
 feel.shame.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘There is shame/One feels ashamed (lit. (it) shames).’

The same variation obtains with these verbs in the *perfective* aspect, i.e. in the tenses of the *perfectum* (perfect, pluperfect, future perfect), where there occur either the default third-person singular active, as in (6a) for the verb *pudeo* ‘to be ashamed, to feel shame’, or a form of the verb *sum* ‘to be’ in the third-person singular + the (neuter singular) past participle of the lexical verb, as in (6b–d), or of the gerundive (formed from the stem of the *infectum* with the *-nd-* infix and the inflectional ending of first and second declension adjectives) (with a deontic value) (e.g. *amandus* ‘to be loved’) (Pinkster 2015: 62–63), in the neuter singular form, as in (7) (Woodcock 1959: 167, Flobert 1975: 499–500, Pinkster 1992, 2015: 290–300, Cennamo 2005, 2020):

- (6) a. (*me*) *puduit*
 1SG.ACC feel.shame.PRF.IND.3SG
 ‘I was ashamed; there was shame (on me).’
- b. *puditum est*
 feel.shame.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘One was ashamed.’
- c. *amatum est*
 love.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘One has loved; we/you/I have loved (indef.).’
- d. *itum est*
 go.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘One ran; running took place.’
- (7) *amandum est*
 love.GER.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘One has to love; loving is to take place’

On the basis of their *characteristics* and *function* (e.g. whether (i) lacking a participant, (ii) implying an S/A argument, or (iii) instantiating an existential-presentative pattern), the *strategies employed* (the active and/or passive verbal morphology) and the *marking of arguments* with monovalent/divalent verbs (e.g. accusative and/or dative, ablative), a number of impersonal constructions can be identified in Latin (some of which instantiate different diachronic stages), summarized in Section 6.3.1 and illustrated in Sections 6.3.1–6.3.3.

6.3.1 Active impersonal verbs and constructions

The third-person singular active inflection is a common agent-defocusing strategy, already attested in Early Latin, used to denote the existence and taking place of an eventuality, discussed under the heading ‘impersonal’ verbs in traditional reference grammars and analyses (Löfstedt 1936, Woodcock 1959: 166–171, Leumann, Hofmann and Szantyr 1965: §221, Ronconi 1968: 14, Bauer 2000: 103–120 and the recent discussion in Pinkster 2015: 94–97, 192–195, 750–552).

Since its earliest occurrences this pattern is found with different verb classes, of different argument structures, and in different constructions, including *weather verbs* (Section 6.3.1.1), *impersonal* and *existential* uses of *BE* and *HAVE* (Section 6.3.1.2), *impersonal forms of divalent verbs* (e.g. fixed forms such as *inquit* ‘it is said’), *modal verbs* (e.g. *oportet* ‘it is proper, necessary’, *potest* ‘it is possible’, *licet* ‘it is possible’, *libet* ‘it pleases’), *other impersonal uses* of verbs attested in Late Latin (e.g. *horret* ‘it is dreadful’, *valet* ‘it is possible’, *dicit* ‘it is said’) as well as a number of *experiential verbs* (e.g. *pudet* ‘it fills with shame’, *miseret* ‘it moves to pity for’, *paenitet* ‘it causes regret’, *placet* ‘it pleases’, *delectat* ‘it delights’) (Section 6.3.1.3). The third-person singular active form is also characteristic of existential-presentative constructions in Late Latin, most typically with an accusative S/O argument (Section 6.3.3).

6.3.1.1 Weather and natural conditions verbs

Verbs denoting atmospheric and natural events and conditions most typically occur in the default third-person singular active (8), sometimes with an overt dummy subject, the demonstrative neuter pronoun *hoc* ‘this’, depending on the verb, as in (8b) (that could exemplify, however, the adverb *hoc* ‘here’) (Leumann, Hofmann and Szantyr 1965: §§ 45c, 220, Neue-Wagener 1985: 647–650, Pinkster 2015: 193–195):

- (8) a. *ut multum pluerat*
 as a.lot rain.PLPF.IND.3SG
 ‘As it rained heavily.’ (Plaut., *Men. Prol.*, 63)
- b. *hoc... lucebit*
 DEM.N dawn.FUT.3SG
 ‘It will become light.’ (Plaut., *Curc.*, 1, 3, 26)

The different case marking for the substance participant is viewed as reflecting its argument (if in the accusative) vs adjunct (if in the ablative) status ('satellite' in Pinkster 2015: 194, Dahl 2020). For some verbs (e.g. *ningo* 'to snow') the ablative and the accusative are found already in Early Latin (9a–b). For other verbs (e.g. *pluo* 'to rain'), the two case forms are well attested in Classical Latin, as shown in (9d–f), with the accusative for the substance participant being less common than the ablative (Pinkster 2015: 193, Dahl 2020: 133).

In Classical authors weather and natural condition verbs are also found in monovalent patterns with the source of the eventuality as subject (instantiated by a [\pm animate] Nominal) (10) (see Neue-Wagener 1985: 647–650, Pinkster 2015: 193–195, Dahl 2020, and further examples therein):

- (10) a. *dies illuxisset*
 day.NOM dawn.SBJV.PLPF.3SG
 'It had dawned.' (Cic., *Diu.*, I, 50)
- b. *caelum tonat*
 sky.NOM thunder.PRS.IND.3SG
 'The sky is thundering.' (Verg., *Aen.*, 9, 541)
- c. *tonans Juppiter*
 thunder.PRS.PTCP.NOM Jupiter:NOM
 'Jupiter thundering.' (Horat. *Carm.* 3, 5, 1) (Neue-Wagener 1985: 648)

Examples of the substance participant as subject are attested at a later stage, as shown in (11a–b) (from the first century CE), often in a non-literal meaning of the verb (e.g. FALL for *pluo* 'to rain' in (11) (Pinkster 2015: 193):

- (11) a. *pluit... nimbus... teretis mali...*
 rain.PRS.IND.3SG cloud.M.NOM round.N.GEN.SG apple.N.GEN
 'A shower of shapely apples rains down'
 (Col. 10.364–365) (Pinkster 2015: 193)
- b. *stridentia funda saxa pluunt*
 whistle.PRS.PTCP.F.SG.ABL sling.F.SG.ABL stone.N.PL rain.PRS.IND.3PL
 'From a whistling sling stones are raining.'
 (Stat. Pap. *Thebais* 8.416–417) (1st cent. CE)

A later development is also the divalent, causative use of some of these verbs (e.g. *pluo* 'to rain'), with the NOM–ACC case frame, first attested in Christian Latin and in Bible translations (Pinkster 2015: 194–195) as shown in (12a), a word-by-word translation of the Hebrew original (Dahl 2020: 133) and in (12b), with an unexpressed object and the modal verb *possum* 'can' (example from Pinkster 2015: 195):

- (12) a. *Igitur Dominus pluit super Sodomam*
 therefore Lord.NOM rain.PRS.IND.3SG over Sodoma
et Gomorram sulphur et ignem a Domino
 and Gomorra sulphur.N and fire.ACC by Lord
de caelo
 from heaven.ABL
 ‘The Lord let it rain sulphur and fire over Sodoma and Gomorra, from
 the Lord out of heaven.’ (Vulg., *Gen.*, 19, 24)
- b. *Agricola ... pluere vineae suae non*
 farmer rain.PRS.INF vineyard.DAT own.DAT not
potest
 can.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘A farmer ... He has no power to send rain on his vineyard (lit. he
 cannot make rain on his vineyard.’
 (August. *Psal.* 66.1) (Pinkster 2015: 195)

As for the lexico-aspectual properties of the atmospheric and natural condition verbs found in the active impersonal construction in Latin, they include most typically verbs of emission, that can be viewed as intermediate between states and activities (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995: 91, 169, 138–142, 237–238 and discussion of weather verbs in Levin and Krejci 2019, Eriksen, Kittilä, and Kolehmainen 2015 for a typological overview). They range from the more stative-like light emission (e.g. *luceo* ‘to be light’) (13a), to the more processual-like substance (e.g. *pluo* ‘to rain’, *roro* ‘to drop, distil dew, bedew, moisten, wet’) (13b), and sound (e.g. *tono* ‘to thunder’) (13c), *bucino* ‘to sound on a trumpet’) (13d) emission. Also other activity and change-of-state verbs may be used to denote atmospheric/natural conditions in this pattern: *adflo* ‘to blow’ (> *adflat* ‘it is blowing’) (13b), *lapido* ‘to throw stones’ (> *lapidat* ‘it is raining stones’) (13f), *vesperasco* ‘to get dark’ (> *vesperascit* ‘it is getting dark’) (12e), *sicco* ‘to dry’ (> *siccat* ‘it is dry’) (12f), *dissereno* ‘to become clear’ (> *disserenat* ‘it becomes clear’) (13h) (examples from Pinkster 2015: 193, see Neue-Wagner 1985: 647–650, see Pinkster 2015: 192–195 for a detailed analysis and further examples and lists of verbs occurring in this pattern as well as Section 6.3.1.4).

- (13) a. *priusquam lucet, adsunt*
 before be.light.PRS.IND.3SG be.present.PRS.IND.3PL
 ‘They are present before it is light.’ (Pl. *Mil.* 3, 1, 115)
- b. *si roravit quantulumcumque imbris*
 if bedew.PRF.3SG how.small how little heavy.rain.GEN.M
aut si adflavit
 or if blow.PRF.3SG
 ‘If the smallest sprinkle of rain has fallen or if it has been blowing’
 (Plin. *Nat.* 17, 74)

- c. *ut valide tonuit!*
 how heavily thunder.PRF.3SG
 ‘How heavily it thundered!’ (Pl. *Amph.* 5, 1, 10)
- d. *Saepe declamante illo ter*
 often speak.PRS.PTCP.ABL he.ABL three-times
bucinavit
 trumpet.PRF.3SG
 ‘Often while he was speaking the trumpet would blow three times.’
 (Sen. *Con.* 7*pr.*1) (Pinkster 2015: 195)
- e. *Et vesperascit et non*
 and get.dark.PRS.IND.3SG and not
noverunt viam
 know.PRF.IND.3PL way.ACC
 ‘And it is getting dark and they do not know the way.’ (Ter. *Hau.* 248)
- f. *Reate imbri lapidat*
 Reate.ABL rainstorm.ABL throw.stones.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘At Reate there was a rainstorm of stones.’ (Liv. *Ab Urbe Cond.* 43, 13, 4)
- g. *ubi pluerit et siccaverit*
 where rain.FUT.PRF.3SG CONJ dry.FUT.PRF.3SG
 ‘Where it will rain and it will dry up.’ (Cato, *Agr.* 112, 2)
- h. ... *hiemabit ... disserenabit*
 be.winter.weather.FUT.PRS.3SG clear.up.FUT.PRS.3SG
 ‘It will be winterish and it will clear up.’ (Plin. *Nat.* 18, 356)

The S argument, when present at argument structure, is either thematically underspecified or non-agentive. Alongside avalent patterns, also monovalent and even divalent ones can be found (see Late Latin transitive *pluo* ‘to rain’, *lapido* ‘to throw stones’ (attested from the Augustan age) (Lewis and Short 1942, *s.v.* *lapido*) (e.g. transitive *sicco* ‘to dry up’, *dissereno* ‘to clear up’), their degree of syntactic elasticity varying according to the verbs, their argument structure and uses in different authors and genres (e.g. poetry vs technical works or legal texts) as well as the semantic, lexico-aspectual, and syntactic changes these verbs undergo in the course of time.

6.3.1.2 Active impersonal constructions with BE and HAVE

The third-person singular active is also found with the verb *sum* ‘to be’, in existential patterns with infinitives and subordinate clauses (the accusative and infinitive or finite clauses introduced by the conjunction *ut* ‘that, so that’ + the subjunctive), occurring also with a modal meaning, ‘it is possible’, ‘it is allowed’ (14a–b). This construction is rare in Early Latin and becomes more common in (post-) Augustan poetry and Christian writers, probably owing to the influence of an analogous Greek pattern (example (14a) and discussion from Pinkster 2015: 95).

- (14) a. *Scire est liberum ingenium*
 understand.PRS.INF be.PRS.IND.3SG children.GEN nature.N.SG
atque animum
 CONJ mind.M.ACC
 ‘It is obvious that their natures and inclinations are fundamentally
 honourable ...’ (Ter. *Ad.* 828–829)
- b. *non erat ut fieri posset*
 NEG can.IMPF.IND.3SG that happen.PRS.INF can.IMPF.SBJV.3SG
 ‘It could not happen.’ (Lucr. *De Rerum Natura* 5, 979)

There also occur impersonal patterns consisting of an adjective in the unmarked neuter singular form or an adverb + the third person singular of the verb *sum* ‘to be’: *manifestum est* ‘it is clear’, *recte est* ‘it is right’, *bene est* ‘it is good’, *sero est* ‘it is late’, etc. (Lindsay 1907: 52–53, Bassols de Climent 1948: 94, Ronconi 1968: 13, Pinkster 2015: 96).

Analogous adverbial existential patterns are found in Classical Latin as well as in Late Latin, with the third-person singular active of the verb *habeo* ‘to have’ (15a–b) (Leumann, Hofmann, and Szantyr 1965: §221, c, Pinkster 2015: 97):

- (15) a. *Bene habet. Iacta sunt*
 good have.PRS.IND.3SG lay.PRF.PTCP.F.PL be.PRS.IND.3PL
fundamenta defensionis
 foundation.PL.N defense.GEN
 ‘That’s good. The foundations of his defence have been laid.’
 (Cic. *Mur.* 14)
- b. *Ostria vero necesse habet ... permittere*
 oysters certainly necessary have.PRS.IND.3SG allow.PRS.INF
interdum
 occasionally
 ‘Occasionally it is necessary ... to allow oysters.’ (Anthim. 49)

In Late Latin the third-person singular active of the verb HAVE is frequently found in existential constructions, with a non-agreeing nominal (16), a pattern also occurring with other verbs (Svennung 1935: 475–477, 572–573, Leumann, Hofmann, and Szantyr 1965: §221, c, Cennamo 2011: 177–179, Pinkster 2015: 97 and Section 6.3.3):

- (16) *...habet in biblioteca Ulpia*
 have.PRS.IND.3SG in library.ABL of.Ulpian.ABL
in armario sexto librum elephantinum ...
 in chest.ABL sixth.ABL book.ACC.SG consisting.of.ivory.tablets.ACC.SG
 ‘There is a book consisting of ivory tablets in the sixth chest in
 Ulpian’s library.’ (Hist. Aug. *Tac.* 8, 1)

6.3.1.3 Active impersonals of (in)transitive verbs and control

The third-person singular of the active voice in impersonal function, to denote the taking place of an event, is also found with non-meteorological, (in)transitive (i.e. divalent/monovalent) verbs, already in ancient legal texts (e.g. the XII Tables) (17a), and other Early Latin texts (17b–c) (Lindsay 1907: 52–53, Bassols de Climent 1948: 94, Ronconi 1968: 13). Indeed, the third-person singular active in impersonal function, to mark a generic, indefinite human participant, is also attested with an accusative argument in some early authors (e.g. Caecilius, Cato, Varro), as shown in (17b–c) (Woodcock 1959, Ronconi 1968: 13, Rosén 1970, Cennamo 2009):

- (17) a. *si in ius vocat*
 if in law:ACC call.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘If one (the person so entitled or authorized) calls (a person) to court.’
 (Leg. XII Tab.I,1) (Rosén 1992: 388)
- b. *multa quae non volt, videt*
 many: ACC.PL REL.ACC.PL NEG want.PRS.IND.3SG see.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘One sees a lot of things/several things that one would not like to see.’
 (Caec. 175 Ribb.) (Ronconi 1968: 14)
- c. *selibram tritici... indat,*
 half.a.pound.ACC wheat.GEN take.PRS.SBJV.3SG
bene lavet
 well wash.PRS.SBJV.3SG
 ‘One (the farmer) should take half a pound of wheat, one (he) should wash it well.’
 (Cato, Agr., 86)

However, patterns such as *in ius vocat* in (17a) and *selibram indat* in (17c) may also exemplify, instead, the omission of a third-person subject/agent (the plaintiff in (16a), the farmer in (17c), that is implied and contextually recoverable (Bassols de Climent 1948: 94, Bauer 2000: 107, Pinkster 2015: 750–751).

In point of fact, in Latin the third-person singular active (alongside the third-person plural) is commonly employed for a participant that has not been mentioned in discourse, whose identity is recoverable either from the preceding context or from ‘general knowledge’ (Meillet and Vendryes 1924: 306, Herman 1991: 416–425, Bauer 2000: 107, Pinkster 2015: 750–754, also Section 6.3.1.2). This characteristic, related to the pro-drop nature of the language, decreases in Late Latin (Herman 1991: 416–418), when ‘zero subjects’ are replaced by ‘pronominal (chiefly demonstrative) elements’ (Herman 1991: 417, Pinkster 2015: 750–752 for discussion). In technical texts (e.g. legal documents, medical, veterinary, and agricultural treatises), the subject is generally unexpressed, already in Early Latin (e.g. the XII Tables, and Cato’s *De Agricultura*, Varro’s *De Re Rustica*), in patterns which may be ambiguous between a generic, referential indefinite ‘impersonal’ interpretation and a referential definite one. The unexpressed agent/subject may refer to the participant featuring in particular genres (e.g. the farmer, the patient, an animal), as also illustrated in (16a, c) (Pinkster 2015: 750–751), or its identity

is recoverable from the wider context. At times it is indeed difficult to detect the function of the third-person singular active form, and generally to differentiate the generic indefinite use of the pattern from its reference to an unexpressed, contextually recoverable subject/agent (Pinkster 2015: 750–751 for a recent and nuanced discussion). For instance, in (18) the verb forms *est*, *sentit*, *sapit*, appear to have a clear generic indefinite reference ('someone'), denoting a participant whose identity is unknown, unnecessary to define, and who does not comprise either speaker or hearer (i.e. the Speech Act Participants (SAPs)):

- (18) *Senex quom extemplo est, iam nec*
 old.man.NOM when immediately be.PRS.IND.3SG now neither
sentit nec sapit, / aiunt
 hear.PRS.IND.3SG neither know.PRS.IND.3SG say.PRS.IND.3PL
solere eum rursus repuascere
 be-accustomed 3SG.ACC back renew.childhood.PRS.INF
 'As soon as someone is an old man and no longer has his senses or wits
 about him, they say that he enters his second childhood.'
 (Pl. *Mer.*, 295–296) (Pinkster 2015: 751)

As pointed out by Pinkster (2015: 750), in Classical Latin the indefinite pronoun *aliquis* 'someone' would be used as the subject of the clause introduced by the conjunction *quom* 'when' in (18), unlike the subjectless third-personal active forms of the verbs.

By contrast, in Late Latin texts the generic indefinite reference of the third-person singular active is more clearly identifiable and accompanied also by a different syntax of the pattern, as for impersonal *debet* (= *decet*, *oportet*) 'it is necessary', attested in early Latin (e.g. Varro) without a complement (19a), occurring in Late Latin texts such as the *Mulomedicina Chironis* (end of the fourth century CE) with an active infinitive and an O argument, as in (19b) (Löfstedt 1936: 136–137, Bauer 2000: 122 for a discussion of the issue and further examples):

- (19) a. *ut debuit...*
 as must.PRF.IND.3SG
 'As it ought to be.' (Varro, *L.L.* 10, 1, 1)
- b. *sanguinem emittere ... de capite debet*
 blood.ACC let.INF from head.ABL must.PRS.IND.3SG
 'One ought to let blood from its head.' (*Mul. Chir.* 33)

Further evidence for the early occurrence of the third-person singular active as an agent-defocusing strategy comes from fixed impersonal forms of divalent verbs such as *inquit* (< *inquam* 'to say') (and more rarely *ait* (< *aio* 'to assent, affirm')) 'it is said, someone says/objects', used when quoting a saying, the opinion of an 'imagery opponent' (Ronconi 1968: 14, Pinkster 2015: 753–754). The vitality of this strategy already at an early stage, is witnessed by the occurrence of several divalent (NOM–ACC/DAT case frame) and monovalent verbs, also in the

third-person singular active impersonal form, optionally accompanied by either an ACC or a DAT argument (patient–theme/experiencer), according to the syntactic valency of the verb, and an infinitive or accusative and infinitive clause as subject, as in (20a–b) (e.g. *deceat* (*me*-ACC/*mihi*-DAT) ‘it becomes, it befits (me)’, *delectat* (*me*-ACC) ‘it delights (me)’, *placet* (*mihi*-DAT) ‘it pleases (me)’ (Woodcock 1959: 168, Leumann-Hofmann and Szantyr 1965: § 60, 221, and Table 6.1):

- (20) a. *oratorem irasci minime deceat*
 speaker.ACC lose.his.temper.INF not.at.all befit.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘It is not at all fitting for a speaker to lose his temper.’ (Cic., *Tusc.*, 4, 25)
- b. *quam delectabat eum defections solis*
 how delight.IPF.IND.3SG 3SG.ACC eclipse.ACC.PL. sun.GEN
praedicere
 foretell.INF.PRS
 ‘How it delighted him to foretell eclipses of the sun.’ (Cic., *Sen.*, 49)

With some verbs, e.g. *deceo* ‘to suit, to become, to befit’, the verbal argument may alternate between the accusative and dative cases, in a seemingly free alternation, with no detectable difference, as shown in (21) (Bennett 1914: 106, 212):

- (21) a. *facis ut te deceat*
 make.PRS.IND.2SG as 2SG.ACC become.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘Do what becomes you.’ (Ter., *Andr.*, 2, 5, 10)
- b. *ita nobis deceat*
 thus 1PL.DAT become.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘It becomes us thus.’ (Ter., *Ad.*, 5, 8, 5)

Other (in)transitive verbs that are used impersonally in the third-person singular active voice, optionally taking a dative argument and followed by either an infinitive or an accusative and infinitive, as shown in (22) for the modal verb *licet* ‘it is permitted’, are *consto* ‘to be in agreement with’ (e.g. *constat* ‘it is agreed’), *praesto* ‘to stand out’ (e.g. *praestat* ‘it is preferable’), *appareo* ‘to appear’ (e.g. *apparet* ‘it is apparent’), *liqueo* ‘to be clear, apparent’ (e.g. *liquet* ‘it is clear’), modal verbs (e.g. *licet* ‘it is permitted’, *libet* ‘it is agreeable, it pleases’, *oportet* ‘it is proper, necessary’, *potest* ‘it is possible’) (Woodcock 1959: 170–171, Neue-Wagener 1985: 659–662, Bauer 2000: 95–97, 121–129, and Table 6.2):

- (22) a. *licuit esse otioso Themistocli* (infinitive)
 be.allowed.PRF.3SG be.INF idle.DAT Themistocles.DAT
 ‘It was allowable for Themistocles to be at leisure.’ (Cic., *Tusc.*, 1, 33)
- b. *te liquet esse meum* (accusative and infinitive)
 2SG.ACC clear.PRS.IND.3SG be.INF POSS.1SG.ACC
 ‘It becomes clear that you are mine.’ (Ov., *Tr.*, 1, 1, 62)

In Late Latin this pattern is also found with verbs with which it is unattested at earlier stages (e.g. *horret* ‘it is dreadful’ (< *horreo* ‘to shudder’), *valet* ‘it is possible’ (< *valeo* ‘to be worth’), *dicit* ‘it is said’ (< *dico* ‘to say’)) (Löfstedt 1911: 44–47, 1936:

131–142, Svennung 1935: 472–475, 612, Bauer 2000: 108–129, and discussion in Pinkster 2015: 134 for impersonal *horret*).

Also some divalent experiencer/psychological verbs occur in the default third-person singular (both in the *infectum* and in the *perfectum*) (e.g. *piget* ‘annoyance is at work’, *pudet* ‘shame is at work’, *paenitet* ‘remorse is at work’, *taedet* ‘weariness comes on’, *miseret* ‘pity is at work’) with O/S (the Experiencer) in the accusative and the A argument (the Stimulus) optionally expressed in the genitive (Woodcock 1959: 167, Fedriani 2013, 2014, Pinkster 2015: 132–135):

- (23) *(tui) me miseret/pudet*
 2SG.GEN 1SG.ACC pity/shame.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘I pity you/I am ashamed of you (lit. It pities/shames/ me of you).’

These verbs show alternation between the impersonal and personal pattern, rarely also the *-r* form for some verbs (e.g. *miserere* ‘to take pity’) (24d), already in Early Latin (Bennett 1914: 91, Woodcock 1959: 167, Ronconi 1968: 17), although mainly/only with the Stimulus as subject, depending on the verb and realized as a neuter pronoun (see *haec* ‘these’ in (24a) (Fedriani 2014: 139–140):⁶

- (24) a. *non te haec pudet* (personal) (Stimulus subject)
 NEG 2SG.ACC DEM.N.PL shame.PRS.IND.3PL
 ‘You are not ashamed of these things.’ (Ter., *Ad.*, 754, 9)
- b. *tui me pudet* (impersonal)
 2SG.GEN 1SG.ACC shame.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘I am ashamed of you.’ (Plaut., *As.*, 933, 6)
- c. *patris me miseretur* (impersonal)
 father.GEN 1SG.ACC pity.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
 ‘I take pity on my father.’ (Turp., 55)
- d. *aliquando miseremini sociorum* (personal: *miserere*)
 some.time pity.IMP.2PL ally.PL.GEN
 ‘Take pity for sometime on the allies.’ (Cic., *Verr.*, 1, 72)
- e. *ipse sui miseret*
 3SG.NOM REFL.3SG.GEN pity.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘He pities himself.’ (Lucr., *De Rerum Natura*, 3, 881)

A non-agreeing argument is also frequently attested (already in Early Latin) with the impersonal gerundive, as in (25) (Ernout 1908–1909: 297, Ronconi 1968: 200, Pinkster 2015: 290–291):

- (25) a. *(ut) vasa vinearia et olearia faciendum*
 in.order.to container of.wine and of.oil make
 in.order.to container.N.PL of.wine.N.PL CONJ of.oil.N.PL make.GER.N.SG
 ‘In order to make containers for wine and oil.’ (Varr., *r.r.* 1, 13)

⁶ We do not address in our discussion the syntactic status of the non-nominative arguments occurring with the verbs illustrated in (20)–(24) and their pivot/subject-like behaviour, investigated by Fedriani 2009, 2014: 123–24, Dahl 2012, Fabrizio forthcoming.

- b. *poenas timendum=st*
 punishment.ACC.PL fear.GER.N.SG=be.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘One should fear punishments.’ (Lucr., *De Rerum Natura*, 1, 111)

6.3.1.4 Active impersonals, non-nominative arguments, and control

Several verbs are attested in the pattern illustrated in Sections 6.3.1.2–6.3.1.3, both bivalent (in two case frames, NOM–ACC and NOM–OBL) and monovalent, belonging to all conjugations and to different aspectual classes: states (e.g. *attineo* ‘to pertain’, *deceo* ‘to become’, *poeniteo* ‘to repent’, *doleo* ‘to grieve’, *consto* ‘to agree with’, *placeo* ‘to please’, *liceo* ‘to be permissible’, *resto* ‘to remain’, *vaco* ‘to be free (from labour), leisure’), activities (e.g. *iuvo* ‘to delight’, *lateo* ‘to conceal’, *fugio* ‘to escape’, *fallo* ‘to deceive’, *lapido* ‘to throw stones’) and changes of state (e.g. *illucesco* ‘to throw light upon’, *gelo* ‘to freeze’, *contingo* ‘to reach’, *accido* ‘to happen’, *appareo* ‘to appear’, *venio in mentem* ‘to come to one’s mind’), with different attestations in the history of the language. States (namely experiencer verbs) appear to instantiate the core of this type of ‘impersonal’ structures (Tables 6.3–6.5) (Barðdal 2004, Barðdal and Eythórsson 2009).

Table 6.3 Personal~impersonal alternation with divalent verbs (NOM–ACC)

Verb classes	Divalent verbs. Case frame: NOM–ACC	
	Personal	~ Impersonal
<i>Activity</i>	<i>iuvo</i> ‘to delight’ <i>lateo</i> ‘to conceal’ <i>delecto</i> ‘to amuse’ <i>fugio</i> ‘to flee, run away, escape’ <i>praetereo</i> ‘to pass by, omit, forget’ <i>fallo</i> ‘to deceive’ <i>lapido</i> ‘to throw stones (at someone)’	<i>me iuvat</i> ‘it is useful, it pleases me’ <i>me latet</i> ‘it escapes me’ <i>me delectat</i> ‘it delights me’ <i>me fugit</i> ‘it escapes me’ <i>me praeterit</i> ‘it escapes me’ <i>me fallit</i> ‘I am wrong/I happen to be wrong’ <i>lapidat</i> (Ø) ‘stones fall (lit. it falls stones)’
<i>State</i>	<i>attineo</i> ‘to hold, concern, pertain’ <i>deceo</i> ‘become’ <i>paeniteo</i> ‘repent, displease’ (caus.) <i>misereo</i> ‘feel pity’ (caus.) <i>pudeo</i> ‘ashame’ (caus.) <i>pigeo</i> ‘to trouble’	<i>me attinet</i> ‘it concerns, pertains to me’ <i>me decet</i> ‘it becomes me’ <i>me paenitet</i> ‘it displeases me’ <i>me miseret</i> ‘it pities me’ <i>me pudet</i> ‘it ashames me’ <i>me piget</i> ‘it irks, disgusts me’
<i>Change of state</i>	<i>illucesco</i> ‘to throw light upon’ <i>gelo</i> ‘to freeze’ (caus.)	<i>illucescit</i> (Ø) ‘it daybreaks’ <i>gelat</i> (Ø) ‘it freezes’ (Imperial age, Plinius)

Table 6.4 Personal~impersonal alternation with divalent verbs (NOM-OBL)

<i>Verb classes</i>	Divalent verbs. Case-frame: NOM-OBL (DAT/GEN)	
	Personal	~ Impersonal
<i>Activity</i>	<i>expedio</i> 'to help out, promote'	<i>expedit mihi</i> 'it is useful, it helps me'
<i>State</i>	<i>doleo</i> 'grieve' (caus.) <i>consto</i> 'to agree with' <i>placeo</i> 'to please, like' <i>liceo</i> 'to be permissible'	<i>mihi dolet</i> 'it grieves/pains me' <i>mihi constat</i> 'it is certain to me' <i>mihi placet</i> 'it pleases me' <i>mihi licet</i> 'it is permissible to me'
<i>Change of state</i>	<i>contingo</i> to 'touch, reach'	<i>mihi contingit</i> 'it happens to me'

Table 6.5 Personal~impersonal alternation with monovalent verbs (NOM (-DAT))

<i>Verb classes</i>	Monovalent verbs. Case frame: NOM (-DAT)	
	Personal	~ Impersonal
<i>Activity</i>	<i>roro</i> 'to fall, drop, distil dew'	<i>rorat</i> 'it drizzles, dew falls'
<i>State</i>	<i>liqueo</i> 'to be liquid, clear' <i>resto</i> 'to remain' <i>oporteo</i> 'to be necessary' <i>vaco</i> 'to be free, have time, leisure' <i>hiemo</i> 'to winter, be cold, wintry' <i>sto</i> 'to remain'	<i>mihi liquet</i> 'it is clear to me' <i>mihi restat</i> 'it remains to me' <i>oportet</i> 'it is necessary' <i>mihi vacat</i> 'it lacks me, there is time, leisure' (Ø) <i>hiemat</i> 'it is wintry, cold' (Ø) <i>stat</i> 'it is agreed/decided'
<i>Change of state</i>	<i>accido</i> 'to fall upon, happen' <i>dissereno</i> 'to clear away' <i>venio in mentem</i> 'to come to one's mind'	<i>mihi accidit</i> 'it happens to me' (Ø) <i>disserenat</i> 'it clears away, it is clear' <i>mihi venit in mentem</i> 'it comes to my mind'

The distribution and different interpretations of the various voice forms in which 'impersonal' verbs may occur, reveal that patterns such as *me pudet* 'it shames me', *me miseret* 'it pities me', *me libet* 'it pleases me', *me fallit* 'it deceives me', *me fugit* 'it escapes me' instantiate structures reflecting the degree of control

of the A/S argument and the spontaneous manifestation of the verb's eventuality, its happenstance nature.

Indeed, lack of control/involitional/spontaneous manifestation of the verb's eventuality appears to be the unifying parameter for the occurrence of the accusative with so-called impersonal verbs of traditional grammar, accounting for the occurrence of the accusative and/or the dative with impersonal constructions such as *mihi libet* 'it pleases me', *me fallit* 'it deceives me', *me fugit* 'it escapes me', *me pudet* 'it shames me', *me miseret* 'it pities me', as also illustrated in (26)–(27). For example, the impersonal form *me fallit* in (26d) can be contrasted with the personal passive form *fallor* in (26c). In both patterns the S/O argument is affected by the verbal process, but in the impersonal encoding the focus is on the taking place of the event itself, as involving an inactive argument, marked in the accusative case, the canonical case for 'inert' participants (Collinge 1978). The difference between the two patterns can be provisionally described as being one of control/spontaneous manifestation of the event, whereby *me fallit* in (25d) would mean 'I happen to be wrong' while *fallor* in (25c) would just denote the affectedness of the S/O argument: 'I am wrong, I am deceived' (Ronconi 1968: 16–17, Cennamo 2010, Cennamo et al. 2015: 700):

(26) a. *fallo* 'to deceive':

active transitive use: 'deceive somebody'

Tibi *videor* *esse* *quem* *tam* *aperte*
2SG.DAT seem.PRS.IND.MP.1SG be.INF REL.ACC.SG so openly
fallere *incipias* *dolis*
deceive.INF begin.PRS.SBJ.2SG fraud.ABL.PL

'Do I seem to you to be one whom you can begin to deceive so openly with fraud?'

(Ter. *Andr.* 493)

nisi memoria me fallit
if.not memory.NOM 1SG.ACC deceive.PRS.IND.3SG

'If memory does not deceive me.' (Au.Gel., NA, 20, 1, 14, 3)

b. *reflexive: me fallo*:

nisi me forte fallo
if.not 1SG.ACC accidentally be.in.error.PRS.IND.1SG

'If I am not wrong (lit. If I am not accidentally deceiving myself).'

(Cic., *Phil.*, 12, 21, 8)

c. *medio-passive -r form: fallor* ('I am deceived (passive), I am mistaken (middle)')

nisi fallor
if.not be.in.error.PRS.IND.MPASS.1SG

'If I am not mistaken.'

(Cic., *Att.*, 4, 19, 1–4)

- d. *impersonal: me fallit* ‘I am wrong (I happen to be mistaken) (lit. me deceives).’

quod me non fefellit
 as.far.as.this 1SG.ACC NEG be.in.error.PRF.3SG

‘I was not (I did not happen to be) mistaken as far as this is concerned.’
 (Cic., *Ver.*, 19, 2, 1, 19, 3–4)

With some activity verbs in the corresponding active impersonal form the verb acquires a different meaning, denoting an atmospheric event, as with *roro* ‘to drop, dew’, already attested in Early Latin (27a) and *lapido* ‘to throw stones’ (unattested before the Classical age), that in the corresponding active impersonal form means ‘it rains/falls stones’, occurring with an argument in the ablative in (27b) (see Tables 6.3–6.5):

- (27) a. *ante rorat quam pluit*
 before drizzle.PRS.IND.3SG than rain.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘It drizzles before raining.’ (Varr., *De lingua latina*, 7, 58)
- b. *Reate imbri lapidavit*
 Reate.ABL rain.ABL throw.stones.PRF.3SG
 ‘At Reate it rained heavily.’ (Liv., *Ab Urbe Condita*, 43, 13)

This pattern seems to be only marginally attested with change-of-state verbs (e.g. *illucesco* ‘to throw light upon’, *gelo* ‘to cause to freeze’, *accido* ‘to fall upon, happen’, *contingo* ‘to reach, attain, befall’), at times with an accusative and/or a dative argument (Tables 6.3–6.5), as shown for the verb *venire* ‘to come’ in conjunction with a prepositional complement introduced by the preposition *in* ‘in(to)’ + an abstract nominal in the accusative, *mentem.ACC* ‘mind’ in (28), in the expression *venire in mentem* ‘to come/fall to one’s mind’, with O in the dative and A in the accusative, as in (28b), the predicate denoting a mental process. The event structure template of the verb *venio* (accomplishment) remains the same in the new meaning acquired by the predicate, whereas its root loses its idiosyncratic meaning of ‘motion towards a goal’, while retaining its templatic meaning of ‘transition into a state’.

- (28) *venire in mentem* ‘come to one’s mind’

- a. active intransitive use:

istuc mihi venit in mentem
 DEM.N.SG 1SG.DAT come.PRS.IND.3SG in mind.ACC
 ‘This comes to my mind.’ (Ter., *Hau.*, 888–889)

- b. *ei venit in mentem hominum*
 3SG.DAT come.PRF.3SG in mind.ACC man.GEN.PL
fortunas (DAT-ACC)

fate.ACC.PL

‘Men’s fate came to his mind (lit. to him-DAT came to mind men’s destinies-ACC).’ (Cn. Naev., *Pun.*, 20, 1)

As pointed out above, they could be better described as patterns denoting the lack of control of the A/S argument/s and the involitional/spontaneous manifestation of the verb eventuality. The latter is realized in its taking place and as affecting a core argument, expressed either in the accusative, the canonical case for objects, i.e. inactive arguments or in the dative, the case of experiencers/beneficiaries and generally for arguments with a lower degree of affect-edness (Næss 2009: 573–574), depending on the verb and its original case frame.

It is control, therefore, that seems to be involved in the personal vs impersonal encoding of some (in)transitive predicates in Latin. Some of them involve mental process verbs, while others belong to different subclasses, e.g. activity verbs (e.g. *fallo* ‘to deceive’, *delecto* ‘to delight’, *fugio* ‘to pass by’), states (e.g. *attineo* ‘to pertain’), and changes of state (e.g. *venio in mentem* ‘to come to one’s mind’, *illucesco* ‘to throw light upon’).

A better characterization of the predicates figuring in this construction could be cast in lexico-aspectual terms: only *activity*, *state verbs*, and *accomplishments* appear to allow this type of (in)transitive alternation (albeit the issue needs further investigation).

Thus, other verb classes alongside emotion and mental process verbs allowed this alternation in early Latin. Such forms as *me delectat*, *me fallit*, *me poenitet*, *mihi libet/dolet*, therefore, i.e. the various subclasses of third-person singular impersonal verbs usually listed in traditional grammars, may be regarded as the crystallization of a usage that must have been productive at earlier stages of the language, an issue that we leave for further investigation.

This interpretation accounts for the coexistence, in Early Latin, of the personal and impersonal forms.

6.3.2 Impersonals with passive morphology/syntax

Already in Early Latin, the impersonal active could alternate with the impersonal passive pattern, the *-r* form, in the unmarked third-person singular, in the tenses of the *infectum*, and with a synthetic construction, the neuter form of the past participle of the lexical verb + the third singular of *sum* ‘to be’ in the tenses of the *perfectum*, in a number of impersonal constructions, covering different types and degrees of agent defocusing. The impersonal passive is employed for atmospheric and natural conditions verbs, where no participant is involved, as in (30a–b) and exceptionally with one argument verbs such as *bucino* ‘to sound, give signal with a trumpet’, mostly used in the impersonal form (30c) (Perseus, s.v. *bucino*):

- (30) a. *Ubi nubilabitur*
 where be/become.cloudy.FUT.PRS.MP.3SG
 ‘Where it will get cloudy.’ (Cato, *Agr.* 88, 2)

- b. *caletur*
 be.hot.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
 'It is hot.' (Plaut., *Capt.*, 80)
- c. *cum bucinatum est*
 when trumpet.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG
 'When it trumpeted.' (Varr. *R. R.* 2, 4, 20)

This pattern also occurs with monovalent (31a–b) (e.g. *itur*, *egetur*) and, more rarely, divalent verbs (31b) (e.g. *agitur*, *amatur*) most typically without an overt object (as well as with trivalent verbs) (Ernout 1909: 18, Napoli 2009, 2010, 2013, Pinkster 1992, 2015: 267–272 for further discussion, examples, and references). The implied agent can be referential, indefinite ('one, people') as in (31a–b), or referential, definite, as in (31c–f) (examples from Pinkster 2015: 267):

- (31) a. *sic itur ad Astra*
 in.this.way go.PRS.IND.MP.3SG to star.N.ACC.PL
 'In this way one goes to Heaven.' (Verg., *Aen.*, IX, 641)
- b. *quid agitur, Calidore? amatur*
 what do.PRS.IND.MP.3SG Calidore? love.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
atque egetur acriter
 CONJ be.poor.PRS.IND.MP.3SG highly
 'How goes it, Calidore? One loves and is extremely insolvent.'
 (Plaut., *Pseud.*, 273)
- c. *propter ipsam viam qua Assoro itur*
 near same.ACC road.ACC that.ABL Assorus.Abl go.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
Hennam
 Henna.ACC
 'Close to the road that people take from Assorus to Henna (lit. near that road from which one goes from Assorus to Henna).'
 (Cic. *Ver.* 4.96) (Pinkster 1992: 163)
- d. *Itur ad te, Pseudole*
 go.PRS.IND.MP.3SG to 2SG.ACC Pseudolus.VOC
 'You are being approached, Pseudolus (lit. One goes/there is going towards you).'
 (Pl. *Ps.* 453–454)
- e. *Eatur. Sequere hac*
 go.PRS.SBJ.MP.3SG follow.IMP.MP.2SG. this.way
 'Let's go, then. Follow me this way.'
 (Ter. *Hau.* 743)
- f. *bene ambulatum est?*
 well walk.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG
 'Did you have a good walk?' (Plaut. *Tru.* 369–370) (Pinkster 1992: 170)

The overt expression of the Agent (through a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition *a(b)* + the ablative case) (32a–b), can include the speaker/hearer, as in (32b) and (32c), from Late Latin (eighth century CE) (Löfstedt 1942: 205), but is rare in Early Latin, and not very frequent also at later times (Pinkster 1992,

Napoli 2010, 2013 for a perceptive and nuanced analysis of the lexico-aspectual constraints on its occurrence):

- (32) a. *cum a Cotta resisteretur*
 when by Cotta:ABL resist.SBJV.IMPF.MPASS.3SG
 'If there was resistance on the part of Cotta.' (Caes., *BG*, 531, 1)
- b. *peccatum a me maxime-st*
 sin.PRF.PTCP.N.SG by I.ABL highly-be.PRS.IND.3SG
 'I have been grievously in fault.' (Ter., *Hau*. 632) (Pinkster 1992: 167)
- c. *interrogatum est ei a nobis*
 interrogate.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG 3SG.DAT by 1PL.ABL
 'He was interrogated by us (lit. was interrogated him by us).'
 (*Form. Marc. Suppl* 2. 108, 1)

The impersonal passive is also found with some experiencer verbs most typically occurring in the third-person singular active impersonal form (*miseret, pudet, taedet*, etc.), as shown in (33a–b) for *miseret* 'it feels pity' (see Flobert 1975: 499–500, Fedriani 2014 for the different times of attestation of the impersonal active and passive forms with these verbs):

- (33) a. *quam matris nunc patris me miseretur*
 more mother.GEN now father.GEN 1SG.ACC feel.pity.PRS.IND.3SG
magis
 more
 'Now I pity my father more than my mother.'
 (*Turp.* 55 Ribb. Ap. Non. 477.15) (Ronconi 1968: 17)
- b. *me eius miseritum est*
 1SG.ACC 3SG.GEN pity.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG
 'I pitied him.' (Pl., *Tr.*, 430)

This pattern also occurs with transitive verbs taking a non-accusative object (e.g. *noceo* 'to harm', *invideo* 'to envy', *resisto* 'to resist'), verbs which cannot occur in a corresponding personal passive, but only in the impersonal passive pattern with the agent optionally expressed as a prepositional phrase, as shown in (34) (Michaelis 1993):

- (34) a. *a nobis non parceretur labori*
 by 1PL.ABL NEG spare.FUT.MPASS.3SG toil.DAT
 'Toil will not be spared by us.' (Cic., *Att*, 2, 14, 2)
- b. *omnibus his resistitur*
 all.DAT DEM.DAT.PL resist.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
 'All these are resisted.' (Caes., *BC*, 4, 1)

The impersonal passive, therefore, may mark either maximal agent defocusing (i.e. lack of a participant), as with weather verbs (30) or different degrees of (semantic, pragmatic, syntactic) defocusing of the A/S participants, as in (31)–(34). In the latter constructions A/S may be referential indefinite, denoting a participant in the universe of discourse whose identity is unknown to both speaker and hearer, as in (30a) or as participant with a specific reference, referring to any participant in the universe of discourse, including also SAPs, either contextually recoverable or optionally expressed by means of a prepositional phrase, as in (32) (see further discussion in Pinkster 1992, 2015, Pieroni 2000, Napoli 2009, 2010, 2013, and further references therein):

6.3.3 Existential–impersonal constructions

In Late Latin the impersonal passive and active forms often occur with a non-agreeing argument (in case, number, and/or gender), as shown in (35). Example (35a) exhibits lack of number agreement of the verb (in the default third-person singular) (*imponatur*) with the preverbal plural argument in the accusative (*ipsos ficos*), conveying given information, while (35b) displays lack of gender agreement of the past participle (*factum*) with the verbal argument in the accusative (*missam*), conveying new information. The non-agreeing argument in the accusative case can occur in pre/postverbal position, conveying non-topical information, as illustrated in (35b–c) (Cennamo 2000, 2009, 2011):

- (35) a. *Ipsos ficos imponatur* (+given)
 DEM.ACC.PL fig:ACC.PL gather.PRS.SBJ.MP.3SG
 ‘One should gather these figs.’ (Ruf. *De Pod.* 35)
- b. *cum factum fuerit missam* (+new)
 when make.PRF.PTCP.N.SG be.PRF.SBJ.3SG Mass.ACC
 ‘When the Mass is over.’ (*Per. Aeth.*, 32, 2)
- c. *bonum aerem facit* (+new)
 good.ACC weather.F.ACC make.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘It is good weather (lit. it makes good weather).’ (*Sal. Vit. patr.* 5, 11, 51)

This pattern appears to develop rare analogous (albeit mostly philologically uncertain) Early Latin constructions (Ernout 1908–1909, Bauer 2000: 109–110, Cennamo 2011: 178 and, more recently, Pinkster 2015: 268–269, who denies the existence of impersonals with accusative arguments in Early Latin, in line with Calboli 1962: 7–56, who views the construction as a Late Latin development; see also Adams 2013: 240–242 for a discussion of Late Latin examples):

- (36) a. *me ... despiciatur*
 1SG.ACC despise.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
 ‘I am despised/one despises me.’ (Plaut. *Cas.* 185)

- b. *agitandum est vigiliis*
 do.GER.N.SG be.PRS.IND.3SG sentinel.ACC.PL
 ‘One must be on guard.’ (Plaut., *Trin.*, 869)
- c. *vitam vivitur*
 life.ACC live.PRS.IND.MP.3SG
 ‘One lives life.’ (Enn. *Trag.* 202)

As pointed out (Section 6.3.1.2), existential *habeo* ‘to have/hold’ also occurs in this construction in Late Latin, as in (36), clearly anticipating later Romance developments (Cennamo 2011: 177–178):

- (37) *in Hebraeo... non habet hunc numerum*
 in HEBREW.ABL NEG HAVE.PRS.IND.3SG THIS.ACC NUMBER.ACC
 ‘In Hebrew this number does not exist (lit. not has this number).’
 (Hier., *Ezech.*, 11. 297B)

6.4 The impersonal active, non-nominative arguments, and alignment

As illustrated in Section 6.3, the active impersonal in Latin is not always employed as an agent-defocusing strategy, unlike the passive impersonal form. Whereas the use of the latter in such patterns as *curritur* ‘running takes place’, *pugnatum est* ‘fighting took place’, seems to be a means of foregrounding the event and of defocusing the agent (only rarely overtly expressed) both in the *infectum* and in the *perfectum*, the use of the third singular active with an accusative argument in O/S function, rather seems to be a strategy for signalling lack of control/involuntariness of the participant over the verb eventuality, which is portrayed as affecting it. The verbal argument occurs either in the accusative, the inactive case, or in the dative, the case of experiencers/beneficiaries, and generally for arguments with a lower degree of affectedness (Næss 2009: 573–574).

Active impersonal patterns with an accusative/oblique argument like *me pudet*, *me fugit*, *me delectat*, *me/mihi decet*, therefore, show a striking similarity with analogous constructions in languages with semantic alignment (Donohue 2008, Malchukov 2008, Mithun 2008, and contributions in Malchukov and Siewierska 2011). For instance, in several Australian languages (e.g. Murrinh-Patha and Waray (Walsh 1989: 428–429, 432, Evans 2004: 178), Iwaidjan (Evans 2004), Umpithamu and the Lamalamic languages (Verstraete 2011)), involuntary physical processes occur in the impersonal form, characterized by the lack of cross-referencing bound pronouns prefixed to the verb root, marking the subject and object status of verbal arguments (Walsh 1987: 426, Verstraete 2011: 607), the ‘experiencer object construction’, as in (38a) vs (38b), the plain intransitive form (Walsh 1987: 429, Evans 2004: 178):

- (38) a. *dam -ngi -kule*
 3SG.SUBJ -3.subj 1SG.OBJ.cough
 (experiencer–object construction) (Murrinh-Patha)
 ‘I feel like coughing; I am going to cough.’
- b. *ngi -kulurrk -nu* (Murrinh-Patha)
 1SUBJ -cough -FUT
 ‘I’ll cough.’
- c. *pulnu pan -laki -nj* (Waray)
 sickness 1.OBJ-push-REALIS
 ‘I am sick (lit. sickness it pushes/tosses me).’

This pattern is at times undistinguishable from an objectively inflected intransitive. For instance, in (38c), exemplifying a noun–verb construction in Waray (Walsh 1987: 432, Evans 2004: 178), a third-person singular subject is not marked (i.e. there is zero marking on the verb). The pattern is therefore ambiguous between a quasi-transitive construction (with *pulnu* ‘sickness’ as subject and *pan* ‘me’ as object) or an objectively inflected monovalent verb, illustrated in (38a) for the verb COUGH.

Comparable involitionality constructions from Western Indo-European languages such as Icelandic and Lithuanian are illustrated in (39):

- (39) a. *mig dreymdi ömmu* (Icelandic)
 1SG.ACC dream.PST.3SG grandma.ACC
 ‘I dreamt about grandma.’ (Barðdal 2004: 108)
- b. *Joną purto (nuo šalčio)* (Lithuanian)
 Jonas.ACC shaking.PRS.3SG from frost.GEN
 ‘Jonas is shaking (from the cold).’ (Wiemer and Bjarnadóttir 2014: 306)

The patterns in (38)–(39) are reminiscent of the Latin ‘impersonal’ verbs optionally taking a non-nominative argument, as in (40) (Cennamo 2011):

- (40) a. *me (ACC) pudet (3SG.IMPERS) (fratris) (GEN)* (transitive impersonal)
 b. *me (ACC) pudet (3SG.IMPERS)* (intransitive)
 ‘I am ashamed (of my brother) (lit. (it) shames me of my brother).’

The Latin construction exemplified in (40), discussed in Section 6.3.1.4 for the types of eventualities involved, indeed are similar to structures found in languages with semantic alignment, where impersonal verb forms correlate with involuntary/unintentional eventualities (physiological and/or psychological processes, according to the language(s)) (see Walsh 1989, Evans 2004, Verstraete 2011 for Australian languages; Roberts 2001 for Amele, Papua New Guinea, Klammer 2008 for Kambara, Austronesian; Mithun 2008 for American Indian languages; Malchukov 2008, Malchukov and Ogawa 2011 for a general discussion). Analogous patterns are also found in the coding of experiencers in Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan languages of the Himalayas (Bickel 2004), South-Asian languages (Verma and Mohanan 1990) as well as a number of Western Indo-European

languages (e.g. Icelandic, Lithuanian) (39) (Barðdal 2004, Barðdal et al. 2012, Wiemer and Bjarnadóttir 2014, Holvoet 2016, Lavine 2016) and in the Balkans (i.e. Eastern Indo-European) (see Friedman and Joseph 2018 for a recent discussion).

Also in Latin, therefore, there appears to be the same correlation between impersonal verb forms and involuntary/unintentional eventualities that one finds in several semantically aligned systems, a phenomenon that has been widely investigated for its semantics, syntax (especially in relation to the subject status of non-nominative S/A arguments) and areal distribution across languages, both synchronically (see contributions in Bhaskararao and Subbarao 2004) and, more recently, diachronically (see Barðdal and Eythórsson 2009, Barðdal et al. 2012, Montaut 2013 and other contributions in Seržant and Kulikov 2013). Unlike in other early Indo-European languages (e.g. Sanskrit (Hock 1990) and Hittite (Luraghi 2010, Inglese 2020: 33)), displaying the same type of patterns, the construction in Latin is not confined to few experiencer/psychological verbs/predicates (i.e. states), but it also occurs with other types of eventualities, including activities and accomplishments, as illustrated in Section 6.3.1.4.⁷

The lack of control/affectedness of S, however, may also be conveyed by the passive voice (the *-r* form in the *infectum*, *sum* ‘to be’ + past participle in the *perfectum*), that may act as a detransitivizer, turning a transitive verb into an intransitive one, marking an inactive subject, as pointed out in Section 6.2, and further exemplified below (Cennamo 1998: 81, 2020):

- (40) a. *excito* ‘I awaken’ > *excitor* ‘I wake up’
 b. *gravo* ‘I oppress’ > *gravor* ‘I have difficulties’
 c. *rumpo* ‘I break’ > *rumpor* ‘I burst with envy’
 d. *me praecipito* ‘I throw myself’ > *praecipitor* ‘I fall down’
 e. *augeo* ‘I increase’ > *augeor* ‘I grow’

The difference between the two strategies seems to lie in the defocusing of the S/A argument and the foregrounding of the event in the impersonal active pattern, unlike in the personal passive construction, that only signals affectedness of the subject.

6.5 Conclusions

The notion of control plays a major role in the encoding of transitivity in Latin, determining voice fluctuations with animate subjects and the ‘impersonal’ encoding of eventualities.

⁷ The issue, however, needs further quantitative and qualitative investigation, with a more fine-grained analysis of the lexico-aspectual and thematic constraints on this type of intransitive alternation/voice strategy, as resulting from the interplay of the templatic and idiosyncratic aspects of verb meaning and their internal structure, in line with recent approaches (Beavers and Koontz-Garboden 2020), as well as a study of the diachronic development of this construction in Latin.

In particular, we have shown that some impersonal constructions represent a different clause type, and could be defined as involuntality/lack of control patterns, similar, in their semantics and formal marking, to analogous involuntary, ‘impersonal’ constructions in languages with semantic alignment (sub)systems (e.g. (Northern and North-Western) Australian languages such as (non-)Pama–Nyungan (Murrinh-Patha, Waray) and Iwaidjan), Kambera—Austronesian, Amele—Papua New Guinea, Tunica for American Indian languages, as well as Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman languages of the Himalayas, South-Asian, and Western Indo-European languages).

We have also demonstrated that active and passive impersonals, although overlapping in some of their functions, are not equivalent in Latin. Whereas impersonal passives foreground the event and defocus the agent, that may be lacking at argument structure, unexpressed, or realized as an oblique (dative/prepositional phrase), in some of its uses the impersonal active pattern (with an optional non-nominative argument, according to the syntactic valency and degree of syntactic elasticity of the verb) points to the existence of a dependent-marked subsystem of active–inactive alignment in early Latin, probably in use throughout the history of the language, sensitive to the notion of control and to the lexico-aspectual characteristics of verbs.

The data investigated, therefore, give further evidence for regarding Latin as a language with syntactically based (nominative–accusative) and semantically based alignment patterns, while also pointing to the usefulness of recent nuanced approaches to verb meaning for a better understanding of involuntality patterns in Latin and their diachronic development.

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