When Actions Turn into Nouns: A contrastive analysis of infinitives and deverbal nouns in Ṛgvedic Sanskrit, Homeric Greek, and Early Latin

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In ancient Indo-European languages, the infinitive arises from the grammaticalization of a deverbal noun as a part of the verbal paradigm (Kuryłowicz 1964: 158-170; Bauer 2000: 337-349; Kapović 2017: 104; Lundquist & Yates 2018: 2110). This process is somehow completed in some languages (Latin, Ancient Greek), where the infinitive shows the accusative government (Lat. *mulcere dedit fluctus* '(he) allowed (you) to rule the sea' Verg. *Aen*. 1.66; Gk. *líssom' Akhillêï methémen khólon* 'I beg (you) to let go (your) anger against Achilles' A, 283), while still ongoing in others (Vedic, Avestan), where it shows both genitive and accusative government (Ved. *kó* […] *gāt práṣṭum etát* 'who will go to ask it?' ṚV. 1.164.4d; *dhánānām sātáye* 'for the conquering of wealth' ṚV. 1.4.9c). As a result, the infinitive has acquired a consistent number of verbal categories in Greek and Latin (namely, tense, aspect and diathesis: Panagl 1987; Fabrizio 2018a-b-c), unlike in Vedic (García Ramón 1995, 1997, 2009; Lazzeroni 2012; Keydana 2013): as such, it is conceivable as an action noun (Comrie & Thompson 1985) and cross-linguistically as an Action-Argument (in Croft's terms: Croft 2001).

This contribution aims at: 1) investigating the morphological encoding of the Action-Argument correlation in three ancient Indo-European languages: Ṛgvedic Sanskrit, Homeric Greek, and Early Latin; 2) giving an account of the process of word-class change that the infinitive undergoes.

To do so, following the methodology adopted by Alfieri (2020), we collect at least 100 tokens of Action-Arguments in each language and carry out a morpho-semantic analysis of the means with which it is encoded (*e.g.*, the kind of suffixes involved; Spevak 2022: 61-62), and a syntactic analysis of the government strategy. We expect to find both nominal strategies (*i.e.*, primarily nominalizations by means of suffixes, with both accusative and genitive government, as Lat. *-tio*, *-tus*, Gk. *-sis*, *-tis*, *-tus*, Skt. *-ti*, *-tu*) and verbal strategies (*i.e.*, infinitives, with accusative government, as Lat. *-are*, *-ari*, *-isse*, Gk. *-ein*, *-nai*, *-men*, Skt. *-tavai*, *-ase*, *-mane*) to be adopted. We then put into relation the stage of grammaticalization of the infinitive (*i.e.*, the degree of its integration into the verbal paradigm) in each language with the frequency of the different Action-Arguments found.

We expect to conclude that the word-class change of the infinitive takes place in the following scenarios: 1) in Vedic, where the infinitive is not fully grammaticalized, a wider variety of nominal strategies to encode the Action Arguments are found; 2) in Greek and Latin, where the infinitive mood has a higher degree of grammaticalization, the Action-Arguments are encoded more frequently with verbal strategies; 3) lastly, fewer but more specialized nominalization strategies are found in Greek and Latin, alongside the infinitive.

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