Applicative and Causative in Ancient Greek and Latin: Evidence from verbal prefixation

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Many languages have different types of verbal derivation that affect the number of verb arguments and/or the typology of their coding. Typically, the number of core arguments may either decrease or increase; alternatively, a change occurs in the semantic role of one or more arguments, but not in valency. In the present paper, we address these types of verbal derivation, in Ancient Greek and Latin and, specifically, focus on the applicative and causative constructions. Typically, in the so-called "causative alternation", the argument in the A function, that corresponds to the syntactic subject of the causative construction, becomes $\varnothing$ in the so-called "inchoative construction" (Haspelmath 1993); whereas, the argument in the O function, that corresponds to the direct object of the causative construction, takes the S function and becomes the syntactic subject of the inchoative construction: "the sun melted the snow" vs. "the snow melted". In the "applicative alternation", S (intransitive subject) becomes A (transitive subject), in the applicative construction, and a peripheral argument is taken into the core and bear the O (transitive object) role (Dixon & Aikhenvald 2000): e.g., Italian *Maria piange per la morte di Mario* "Maria is weeping for Mario's death" (in which the verb has valency #1 and "Mario's death" takes oblique case marking) vs. *Maria piange la morte di Mario* "id." (in which the verb has valency #2 and "Mario's death" is the direct object). In previous studies, applicative has never (or very little) been investigated in Indo-European languages and, especially, Classical languages. In addition, the relationship between applicative and causative has not yet been addressed. In the present paper, we investigate the strategies to encode the applicative category in Ancient Greek and Latin, and discuss the relationship between applicative and causative, from a historical and typological perspective. We show that verbal prefixation represents a strategy to encode categories such as applicative and causative, by operating on verbal actionality and valency and by affecting the semantic role of verb arguments (cf. Romagno 2003, 2004, 2008). Moreover, we provide evidence that applicative and causative can be defined by identical parameters, that are manifested in different degrees