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The extended accusative/restricted nominative in perspective

1. The difference between accusativity and ergativity, according to a popular view, is essentially one of different patterns of identifying and distinguishing the core relations in transitive and intransitive clauses for purposes of grammatical, and possibly also lexical, rules and regularities, including rules of relational coding (by means of cases, adpositions, agreement or cross-reference, linear order) and syntactic rules for transforming basic clause constructions and for adapting independent clauses to the requirements of coherent discourse. In this view — which I have previously (Plank 1979 a) termed 'paradigmatic-identificational' — the single intransitive core relation, regardless of its semantics, may either be identified with the agent relation in transitive clauses (in basic constructions), resulting in the nominative-accusative pattern (1), or with the patient relation in transitive clauses (in unmarked constructions), resulting in the ergative-absolutive pattern (2).

(1)	AGT AGT/PAT	PAT	V _{trans} V _{intrans}
(2)	AGT	PAT AGT/PAT	V _{trans} V _{intrans}

A further paradigmatic-identificational pattern of typological repute has been called active-inactive: here the intransitive core relation is alternatively identified with the transitive agent or patient, depending on the active or inactive/inert, dynamic or static nature of the

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This collection of 20 papers places well-balanced emphasis both on linguistic theory and on the detailed analysis of very diverse individual languages. The focal is to further the development of holistic (or systemic) typology by focussing on grammatical core relations ('subject' and 'object') as possible determinants of holistic types.

The contributions explore on three basic questions: They investigate the nature of grammatical relations, they discuss those expressions that establish the relational structure of clauses in the first place, and they examine the appropriateness of relational clause structures as a crucial parameter for language typology. The discussions are founded on rich empirical material from many languages that have so far received insufficient attention from the point of view of relational typology.

These contributions were selected from the papers prepared in connection with a conference in Hannover, Federal Republic of Germany, on ergative, accusative and active language types.

Mouton de Gruyter

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intransitive actant's role, as shown in (3) (where, however, I continue to use the relational labels of agent and patient).

(3)	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">AGT AGT</div>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">PAT PAT</div>	V_{trans}
			$V_{intrans}$
			$V_{intrans}$

On balance, (1) appears to be the most common pattern cross-linguistically, followed by (2). Further patterns of identification and distinction of core relations across clause types are easily conceivable (see Kibrik 1979 for the full picture), but have figured less prominently in morphosyntactic typology than the previous three, being on balance much rarer than these. One of these conceivable further patterns – with the two transitive core relations being identified with one another, while being distinguished from intransitive actants – has even been presumed unattested (at least for purposes of relational coding) in functionally minded typological circles. If existing, that pattern would violate the functionalist maxim of drawing distinctions only where syntagmatically necessary, insofar as no distinction is drawn where functionally most necessary (i.e. between the co-occurring core actants of transitive clauses), while the distinction actually drawn (viz. between non-co-occurring intransitive actants on the one hand and both transitive core actants on the other) is functionally rather unnecessary. Insofar as the functionalist maxim incorporates a parsimony principle, it would, furthermore, help understand why patterns (1)–(3) should be so frequent, more frequent at any rate than patterns where all three core relations are being distinguished: parsimoniously, these patterns draw less than the maximum number of distinctions possible, by means of identifying – arbitrarily, it would seem from a functionalist perspective – core relations across clause types that are considered distinct on relational-semantic grounds and/or on the grounds of their occurring in different clause types (transitive vs. intransitive) in the first place. If parsimony in this functionalist sense were the sole motivating force behind the patterns of cross-clausal identifications and distinctions, one would of course wonder why pattern (1) should outrank (2) in overall frequency, both patterns being equally parsimonious solutions. And one might wonder whether it is really appropriate to seek such functional motivation for pattern (3), which admittedly is as parsimonious as patterns (1) and (2) in

drawing only one distinction, without, however, crucially involving any reference to the distinction of transitive and intransitive clause types: the pattern of (3) would seem to result automatically from a distinction of core actants in terms of their semantic relations, regardless of the clause types in which they occur – and thus would render clause-type distinctions strictly speaking irrelevant as a basis for defining relations as well as patterns of relational identification.

Reserving judgement on such issues, it is appropriate to acknowledge a typologically fertile implication of the paradigmatic-identificational view. Its focus on cross-clausal patterns manifesting themselves in individual rules and regularities has no doubt furthered the recognition of one aspect in which the typological affiliation of languages may be a matter of degrees: different rules and regularities may exhibit different patterns even within one and the same language (while, on the other hand, certain kinds of rules and regularities may pattern the same in all languages, and therefore are rather unsuitable for purposes of typological comparison). The characterisation of whole languages as accusative, ergative, active, predominantly accusative etc., mixed accusative-ergative, morphologically ergative-syntactically accusative, etc. should thus be seen as a secondary matter, following from an examination of the language's rules and regularities (of those whose patterning is cross-linguistically variable, that is). In fact, there is a further possibility of languages lacking typological homogeneity: instead of, or in addition to, being of a 'mixed' character by virtue of different rules and regularities patterning differently (the patterning of each individual rule or regularity being consistent, though), a language may exhibit a 'split' on account of rules or regularities of a given kind failing to consistently identify and distinguish the same core relations all the time, following one pattern in some circumstances (e.g. the accusative pattern in the present tense, an imperfective aspect, with particular classes of verbs, or with pronominal actants), and another pattern in other circumstances (e.g. the ergative pattern in the past tenses, a perfective aspect, with other classes of verbs, or with nominal actants). It should not be forgotten that there are yet further respects in which whole languages may be categorised as more or less, fully or marginally, prototypically or dubiously accusative, ergative, and active, depending on their share of grammatical and lexical features supposedly implied, of necessity or in tendency, by the accusative, ergative, or active conception of basic clause constructions. These respects, going beyond taxonomies

of paradigmatic-identificational patternings, have been emphasised in particular by Klimov (1973, 1977, also in this volume).

For present purposes we may disregard certain problems of the descriptive categories employed (including that of their general typological availability and invariability): viz. of the semantic relations of agent and patient; of the notion of core (or participant), as opposed to peripheral (or circumstantial), relations; of the categorisation of verbs (or, more generally, predicates), and of entire clauses including their core relations, as transitive and intransitive; and of the distinction between basic and non-basic (such as passive or antipassive) clause constructions. I assume that the relevant paradigmatic-identificational patterns involve, more or less directly, semantic relations such as agent and patient (understood rather liberally), and disregard, at least initially, where and how genuinely syntactic relations such as subject and object may come in (if they do come in). The focus of the present paper is on a diachronic issue, concerning the possibilities of transitions between (what are describable as) accusative, or otherwise non-ergative, and ergative, or otherwise non-accusative, patterns of cross-clausal identification of core relations. This diachronic issue has wider typological implications, though, some of which bear on some of the matters that are initially disregarded or taken for granted.

2.1. One mechanism by which an ergative pattern can become accusative is not difficult to imagine if ergativity and accusativity are conceived of in terms of the above paradigmatic-identificational patterns. Such a transition comes about diachronically when grammatical (or lexical) rules or regularities cease to identify the intransitive core relation with transitive patients, aligning it with transitive agents instead. This kind of transition is aptly referred to as an extension of the ergative, originally comprising only the transitive agent relation (regardless of whether the rules or regularities in question concern case marking or other morphological coding or syntactic behaviour), which simultaneously amounts to a restriction of the absolutive, previously comprising the transitive patient and all intransitive core relations.¹ The final result of these inseparable extensions and restrictions is automatically in accordance with the nominative (historically, the extended ergative)-accusative (historically, the restricted absolutive) pattern of cross-clausal identification. On the assumption that such changes tend to be gradual, intermediate stages of this kind of development could

be expected to conform to the active-inactive pattern (3), with some intransitive actants already realigned with transitive agents, while others continue to align with transitive patients. This intermediate pattern should transparently reflect relational-semantic distinctions while being insensitive to clause-type distinctions. It would seem decidedly less plausible to expect the ergative first to be extended to intransitive patients before eventually covering intransitive agents as well: that intermediate pattern would seem to lack any relational-semantic or morphosyntactic motivation, although it does not really compare unfavourably on the criterion of parsimony.

Developments away from ergativity, ideally towards accusativity, that are interpretable in terms of the mechanism of the extended ergative/restricted absolutive are not unknown. Thus, in Kartvelian languages and dialects an originally ergative case marker was extended to code also intransitive actants, if not always all of them (as in Mingrelian), but primarily active, dynamic ones, yielding an active-inactive pattern (3) in some languages and dialects (see Boeder 1979 for a detailed account). Similarly in Udi, of the Lezgian subgroup of Northeast Caucasian, where in addition dative marking appeared on transitive patients (see Schulze 1982). In Akkadian and perhaps further Afroasiatic languages a similar extension of ergative, or active, case marking, purportedly reconstructible for Proto-Afroasiatic, seems to have taken place (cf. Diakonoff 1965, Sasse 1982). In the (apparently) Yukian language Wappo an (extrapolated) ergative case marker has encroached on the domain of absolutive marking, at least in main-clause intransitives, though not in subordinate and equational clauses (cf. Li & Thompson 1976, Li, Thompson & Sawyer 1977). In Burushaski verbal suffixes, originally in person/number/class-agreement only with transitive agents, were extended to intransitive verbs (cf. Trask 1979: 401). The split-ergative agreement morphology on verbs reconstructed for Tibeto-Burman seems to have been realigned in accordance with the accusative pattern (cf. Bauman 1979). In Sherpa, a Tibeto-Burman language, there is a tendency for ergative case markers, limited to perfective aspect in a typical 'split' system, to be extended to intransitive, or perhaps rather not-so-transitive, actants of verbs with incorporated patient or other objects, especially when these intransitive or not-so-transitive verbs are stative verbs (such as verbs of experience), the extended ergatives appearing in perfective as well as imperfective intransitive/not-so-transitive clauses (cf. Givón 1980, also hazarding the speculative inference that the marker *-ga* in

Japanese is an original ergative marker that has been extended to intransitives along similar lines). Indo-European perhaps should also be included in this list, on the assumptions that one case-marking morpheme (viz. *-s*) had originally patterned ergatively or actively, and was later extended to intransitive actants without relational-semantic (though not without other) limitations (cf. Schmidt 1979 for arguments pro and con).²

Not all of these instances are uncontroversial as far as the data and/or their interpretations are concerned. Individual developments may require much subtler semantic or morphosyntactic analyses, paying more attention in particular to parameters of split alignments; some reconstructions or historical speculations may turn out too shaky to support interpretations of theoretical significance. Such reservations notwithstanding, there still remains sufficient evidence to justify claims of historical reality for the present mechanism by which ergative patterns may become accusative or otherwise non-ergative such as, preferably, active-inactive — if this is not itself the original state of the pattern. Among the instances where an ergative has not been extended to all core actants in all intransitive constructions, I am not aware of one where the ergative is extended to intransitive patients while intransitive agents continue to align with transitive patients as restricted absolutes. Even in Sherpa, where intransitive or not-so-transitive actants of stative verbs seem preferred targets for extended ergatives, these actants are not normally prototypical patients.

2.2. It must be emphasised that the locus of change with the extended ergative/restricted absolute is the intransitive clause: nothing happens to transitive clauses *per se*. Of course it is also conceivable for the ergative pattern of cross-clausal identification of core relations to be transformed into another pattern in a different manner, with the actual change manifesting itself in transitive clauses, without anything happening to intransitive clauses, except secondarily when comparing their core actant to the two core actants in transitive clauses. Thus, an accusative pattern would result if transitive agent and patient in basic constructions switched roles with regard to rules and regularities pertaining to core relations. For example, if a transitive agent would exchange its ergative (or, more generally, oblique) case marker (so far not used to code transitive patients nor intransitive actants) for the case marker that is also used, and continues to be used, for intransitive

actants, while the transitive patient in turn exchanges its case marker (so far identical with that on intransitive actants) for the previous ergative or some other oblique marker, the resulting pattern would be nominative-accusative — of the same type, that is, with which one would end up if the ergative were extended into, and the absolute removed from, intransitive clauses. Such restructurings in transitive clauses would find sufficient motivation in particular in languages with split ergative-accusative systems, where a coexisting transitive construction used, for example, with different tenses or aspects or with different referential categories of actants and showing an accusative pattern of its core actants, could serve as an analogical model. An accusative pattern could, in a seemingly more complex fashion, also be the result of the instalment as new basic and unmarked transitive construction of a previously available derived and marked construction of an intransitive nature with an agent in the core relation and the patient in a more peripheral relation, crowding out the hitherto prevailing basic construction of clauses with agents and patients in core relations and with patients behaving like intransitive actants.³

Developments away from ergativity by means of such more or less complex mechanisms of change centring on transitive clauses are actually on record. Thus, Bynon (1979, 1980) discusses Iranian, especially Kurdish, languages and dialects returning, partly or entirely, to non-ergative patterning in their case marking and verb and clitic agreement/cross-reference, i.e. to a patterning that had always been characteristic of case marking and agreement, and of syntactic transformations and adaptations, in transitive clauses not in the past tense. Payne (1980) shows in detail how the reconstructible ergative pattern of case marking and agreement in past tenses in the eastern Iranian Pamir languages is, under the influence of a coexisting accusative patterning in present-tense transitives, de-ergativised, with somewhat different results in different languages or dialects; concerning case marking, the absolute on transitive patients was commonly exchanged for an oblique form, later often differentiated from the general oblique case, also found with transitive agents, by means of additional specifically accusative prepositions or postpositions (or suffixes); and the oblique (patternwise ergative) form on transitive agents was commonly exchanged for the absolute (patternwise eventually nominative) form. The neighbouring Dardic languages may have undergone similar kinds of developments away from (split) ergativity (cf.

Skalmowski 1974). Stump (1983) compares the progress of developments away from (split) ergativity in the modern Indic languages, likewise involving exchanges of ergative (oblique) for nominative case marking on transitive agents and of absolutive for accusative (oblique) case marking on transitive patients, usually accompanied by changes in verb agreement in the same direction patternwise, present-tense accusative-type transitive constructions motivating all these restructurings. Schmidt (1972) briefly surveys restructurings of originally ergative patterns in the present-tense case marking of Kartvelian languages such as Georgian (the older preterite/aorist continuing the ergative pattern), in the noun-phrase ordering in West Caucasian languages such as Adyghe (the older affixal ordering continuing the ergative pattern), and in the person agreement in East Caucasian languages such as Tabasaran (the older class agreement continuing the ergative pattern). Vaxtin (1979: § 3) speculates that Eskimo may have been moving away a little from full ergativity, insofar as verb agreement in the interrogative and the imperative moods in transitive clauses does not follow the ergative pattern as consistently as in the indicative mood, on the basis of which the two other moods were historically developed. Dixon (1979: 100) hints at a re-interpretation of an erstwhile marked, derived intransitive antipassive construction as the new unmarked, basic accusative-type transitive construction in the Australian language Warrgamay. In much more detail, McConvell (1981) argues how Lardil has presumably become *ergative* in its relational morphology and syntax, *accusatively* patterning non-finite subordinate clauses, as well as perhaps non-basic not-so-transitive antipassive constructions, having provided the model for the restructuring of finite main-clause types, once tense distinctions had been obliterated by phonetic attrition in main clauses. (Contrary to previous assumptions, the accusative-type Northwestern Australian languages are presumably, according to McConvell and others, descended from ergative-type ancestors as well, their metamorphosis generally centring on transitive constructions.) In the history of Romance languages such as Italian and French the ergative patterning of gender/number agreement of non-attributive past participles (i.e. when used in periphrastic verb forms with *essere/être* and *avere/avoir*), already limited in transitive constructions to patients (syntactically speaking, objects) preceding the past participle in the literary languages, tends to retreat colloquially and dialectally by way of the suspension of agreement with preposed patients/objects in transitive clauses.

The resulting patterns in some of these instances of transitive-centred developments are not strictly speaking nominative-accusative à la (1). Thus, the changes in transitive clauses may leave the original behaviour of patients (concerning case marking, agreement, etc.) unaltered while nominativising the transitive agent, with all three core relations thus coinciding (in defiance of the functionalist syntagmatic distinction requirement, mentioned in § 1), as occasionally in Iranian and Indic languages. Or they may alter only the behaviour of transitive patients, abandoning their identification with intransitive actants without establishing alternative cross-clausal identifications (in defiance of functional parsimony requirements), as also occasionally in Iranian. These changes may also lead to eventual identifications of transitive patient with transitive agent, both transitive core relations thus being distinguished from intransitive actants (in defiance again of the requirement of syntagmatic distinction), as in particular in the case re-distributions in Pamir languages such as Rošani, and also in the Italian and French developments, where past participles with *essere/être* continue to agree with intransitive actants, setting these off from both transitive agents and patients, with neither of which past participles with *avere/avoir* are much inclined to agree. (Iranian languages may exhibit similar non-ergative, non-accusative, non-active agreement patterns; cf. Comrie 1978: § 1.1 on the dialect Dānesfāni.) Sometimes, however, the innovations are in perfect accordance with the accusative pattern. Thus, the transitive patient in the present-tense basic construction in Georgian acquired a case marker (viz. dative) different from the identical (nominative) case marking on transitive agents and intransitive actants. The intransitive past-tense verb-agreement markers in Persian were transferred to transitive past-tense verbs, excluding agreement with transitive patients. Person agreement in Tabasaran likewise accords unique treatment to transitive patients. And more or less canonical accusative patterns would also seem to result from the re-analysis of the intransitive antipassive as basic transitive construction in Warrgamay (the typological evaluation of the re-analysis in Lardil being complicated by, among other things, the multiplicity of alternative markings on transitive agents). Needless to emphasise, an active-inactive pattern, with non-uniform behaviour of intransitive core actants (as shown in (3)), cannot be the result of exclusively transitive-centred developments of a pattern where all intransitive core actants are treated uniformly.

3.1. Nominative-accusative patterns would turn ergative-absolutive, or otherwise non-accusative, by analogous mechanisms. The counterpart to the extended ergative/restricted absolutive can accordingly be referred to as the extended accusative/restricted nominative. A transition from (1) to (2) would thus come about when grammatical (or lexical) rules or regularities ceased to identify the intransitive actant with transitive agents, aligning it with transitive patients instead. This extension of the accusative, originally comprising only the transitive patient relation, would simultaneously amount to a restriction of the nominative, originally comprising the transitive agent and the intransitive core relation, the final result of these inseparable extensions and restrictions, when carried through, being in accordance with the ergative (historically, the restricted nominative)-absolutive (historically, the extended accusative) pattern of cross-clausal identification. As with developments in the opposite direction, one could expect intermediate stages of such extensions and restrictions to conform to the active-inactive pattern (3), with some (viz. inactive, static, patient) intransitive actants already realigned with transitive patients, while others (viz. active, dynamic, agentive ones) continue to align with transitive agents. A priori one would perhaps not expect the accusative first to be extended to intransitive agents before eventually covering intransitive patients as well, for the same reason that makes it seem rather unlikely for ergatives to be extended to intransitive patients first and to intransitive agents later: viz. lack of relational-semantic motivation (in spite of conforming to the requirements of parsimony).

3.2. The locus of change with the extended accusative/restricted nominative would be the intransitive clause: nothing would happen to the transitive clause *per se*. Again as before, it is not difficult to imagine other ways of transforming an accusative into a non-accusative, specifically an ergative pattern, with the locus of change being in transitive clauses. Such developments could come about through relatively straightforward reversals, complete or partial, in the morphosyntactic behaviour of the core actants in transitive clauses. An alternative, seemingly more tortuous path away from accusativity would be the instalment as new unmarked, basic construction of a previously available, though not necessarily transitive construction of clauses with patients in a core relation, and aligned with intransitive actants (if not themselves intransitive actants), and

with agents in a more peripheral relation, on the condition that the previous pattern of alignment of patients with intransitive actants is maintained. (Passives would seem to be suitable candidates if new basic constructions were to be installed on existing models.) With these various mechanisms, changes in the identification of core relations across clause types would be secondary, if inevitable, consequences of innovations in transitive clauses. Active-inactive patterning, as in (3), again is not a possible outcome of exclusively transitive-centred developments of patterns where all intransitive core actants are treated uniformly.

Virtually all of the more familiar, and also of the not so familiar or more controversial, instances of developments of ergative from non-ergative patterns in fact are assumed to have centred on transitive clauses (see Anderson 1977, Comrie 1978, Dixon 1979, Trask 1979 — to mention only some recent general surveys). The preferred avenue to ergativity here seems to be via the instalment of new basic constructions deriving from passives or other constructions (such as perfective-aspect or stative nominalised constructions⁴) according the patient a special pragmatic, hence syntactic status that is also characteristic of most basic intransitive core actants. It seems much less usual for accusatively patterning transitive constructions in split systems to be restructured in analogy with co-existing ergatively patterning constructions. The ancient Indo-Iranian languages (and perhaps Old Armenian) are the best documented instances of developments towards (split, viz. past-tense/perfective-aspect) ergativity along the preferred avenue. Some such development seems also reconstructible for Polynesian languages (although much else about the direction of typological developments is controversial). Assuming that not only Eastern Austronesian (especially Polynesian) but also Western Austronesian (especially West Indonesian and Philippine) languages evince ergative patterning, — insofar as transitive constructions where patients rather than agents tend to be pragmatically, hence syntactically, primary are common in the western branch of Austronesian, — developments bringing about this kind of patterning would also have to have centred on transitive clauses (if there were such developments, i.e. the pattern was not ancestrally ergative; see e.g. Hopper 1979 for pragmatic motivation of patient primacy in these languages, and Starosta, Pawley & Reid 1982 for a recent attempt at reconstructing the history of relevant grammatical features of Austronesian). Ergativity in Enga and other Papuan languages has

been conjectured to have emerged from the re-analysis of original, increasingly frequent passives as new basic constructions a long while ago (cf. Li & Lang 1979: § 4). A little less speculative, though not entirely uncontroversial, are claims for passive sources of basic ergative-patterning basic constructions in Basque (Trask 1977), Ancient Egyptian (Westendorf 1953), and some modern Aramaic dialects (Steiner, this volume, § 3.3.5). In the Carib language Makúsi, the reconstructed preferred order agent + patient + verb has been changed to patient + verb + agent, apparently by grammaticalisation of right-dislocation of afterthought constituents, rendering an accusative-type ordering pattern ergative, because intransitive core actants continued to occur preferably in preverbal, or rather clause-initial, position (cf. Derbyshire 1981). Finally, and perhaps least familiarly, what has been interpreted as an ergative-like patterning in Ozark English (by Foster 1979) has evolved from essentially Standard American English accusative patterns by way of syntactically manifest pragmatic constraints on transitive clauses, leading to changes of their basic construction.

3.3. What is peculiar, on the other hand, about the intransitive-centred mechanism by which accusative patterns could become ergative, or active or otherwise non-accusative, is that actual instances of such extensions of the accusative/restrictions of the nominative are apparently hard to come by. In fact, Anderson (1977) and, less categorically, Dixon (1979: 78, 101) deny that such developments ever occurred, paying attention, however, only to canonical ergative and not to other non-accusative patterns. Although this estimate would seem over-pessimistic (or over-optimistic, depending on one's theoretical position and on the conclusions one believes can be drawn about it), it is true that only very few manifestations of this mechanism seem to have made their way into the typological literature. The numerous cases referred to as 'extended accusatives' by Moravcsik (1978: § 2.1) certainly do not fill the bill: non-nominative case-marking and failure to govern verbal agreement of the single core actants of ('impersonal') verbs of emotion, sensation, accidental happenings, and existence in Indo-European and other languages are not the result of documented or reconstructible historical developments realigning nominative-marked and agreement-governing intransitive actants with transitive patients. The diachronic developments one tends to find with such 'extended accusatives', on the contrary, realign them with

nominative-marked and agreement-governing transitive agents and intransitive actants, transforming a kind of active-inactive pattern into a straightforward nominative-accusative pattern of case marking and verb agreement. Developments which are more appropriately characterised as extensions of the accusative in a diachronic sense, and which have not escaped the attention of individual typologists (in publications more recent than Anderson 1977), include the following.

3.3.1. In the three Australian instances mentioned by Dixon himself (1979: 78, 1980: 338), the case marking system as a whole was not completely accusative at the outset of the development at issue, but rather split accusative-ergative, the choice between marking patterns being determined by the semantic categories of individual actants. Diachronically, an accusative case marker, occurring with (at least some, in particular 1st and 2nd person) pronouns and perhaps certain kinds of nouns (such as proper names or nouns referring to humans) in the transitive patient relation in the other Australian languages too, was extended to all kinds of nominal constituents in the intransitive core relation in Dhalandji, and to proper names in that relation in Warluwarra and in the Western Desert language. Thus, an innovated ergative pattern, with the extended accusative case coding (some) transitive patients as well as (some, or all) intransitive actants — which is, patternwise, the absolutive combination — and the restricted nominative coding (some) transitive agents — patternwise ergatives —, can come to coexist with an ergative case marking pattern of longer standing, with the absolutive case coding (other) transitive patients and intransitive actants and the ergative case coding (other) transitive agents.

From Dixon's accounts the accusative does not seem to have been gradually extended to intransitive actants strictly in accordance with the relational distinction between active, dynamic agents and inactive, static patients, so as to yield the typical active-inactive pattern (3) as an intermediate stage in the development of Dhalandji or as the (apparently) current stage in that of Warluwarra or the Western Desert language. Instead, actants that are overall more likely than most others to play active, dynamic roles of agents, viz. those referring to bearers of proper names, were the first (or rather the only ones so far) to acquire the extended accusative in intransitive clauses in Warluwarra and the Western Desert language. This manner of extension is not altogether surprising, considering

the rationale of case marking in these languages. After all, patients with referential meaning of basically the same kind – viz. actants referring to speaker, addressees, and perhaps other humans, all of which are predestined to agenthood – were, and continue to be, the domain of accusative case marking in transitive clauses too, whence it was being extended into intransitives. Thus, what appears to re-assert itself in this process of extending the accusative/restricting the nominative is the underlying functional rationale of employing case markers to signal that an actant assumes a semantic relation to which it is not really predestined on account of its referential semantics, rather than to code particular semantic (or syntactic) relations as such. And this manner of employing case markers as such is essentially independent of the morphosyntactic distinction between transitive and intransitive clause types, for which reason it might not be entirely appropriate crucially to refer to that distinction to define identificational patterns and their metamorphosis in the first place.

If, to extrapolate to the analogous development in the opposite direction, the extension of an ergative marker into intransitive clauses proceeded in the same manner, one would expect actants that are predestined to play inactive, static roles of patients – the domain of functional ergative marking in transitive clauses – to acquire the extended ergative marking first. This, however, is not what one usually finds in the attested instances of the extended ergative/restricted absolutive (see § 2): rather than initially singling out intransitive actants with inanimate referents, which are in general not preferred as active, dynamic agents, the extension of ergatives tends to proceed along relational-semantic lines when it is gradual, affecting intransitive agents first, which prototypically will be animate if not human. These different manners of extension could suggest inferences about different underlying rationales of relational coding systems in the languages concerned. Those patterns which are the (ergative) point of departure or the (non-ergative, specifically accusative) eventual result of extensions of the ergative/restrictions of the absolutive might be less susceptible to functional motivations of the kind prevalent in Australian languages some of which show extensions of the accusative/restrictions of the nominative.

3.3.2. Although Uralic languages, perhaps with the exception of Ostyak, are not normally regarded as ergative, the history of the

Finnic group (comprising Finnish, Karelian, Veps, Vot, Estonian, and Livonian) includes a development that is interpretable as an extension of an 'accusative'. Quotes are appropriate here because the development at issue did not really involve a case that is usually so called (the recognition of such a case is notoriously controversial in these languages anyway), but rather the distribution of the partitive case (see Itkonen 1979 for details). The distributional pattern of that case in early Proto-Finnic is reconstructible as accusative insofar as the partitive (deriving from an original local, rather than grammatical, case of separation) could code patients in basic transitive clauses, alternating with the accusative and the nominative according to certain referential-semantic and syntactic conditions (having to do with such distinctions as that between definite and indefinite quantity), but could on no condition code transitive agents nor intransitive actants. In later Proto-Finnic the partitive extended its distribution into intransitive clauses, though not into all of them nor strictly in accordance with the relational-semantic distinction between intransitive active, dynamic agents and inactive, static patients – for which reasons the resulting pattern, still maintained in modern Finnic languages such as Finnish, cannot exactly be called ergative-absolutive or active-inactive. The intransitive clauses admitting the partitive as a case marker for their core relation, again alternating with other case marking according to certain referential-semantic and syntactic conditions (having to do with such distinctions as those between affirmation and negation and between reference to indivisible wholes and indefinite quantities of divisibles), have been characterised as 'existential', in the sense that they express, rather than presuppose, the existence, the coming into existence, the cessation of existence, or essential changes of state of their core actant. The originally accusatively patterning partitive has, thus, been extended to a major class of inactive, static patients in intransitive core relations. (In a complete picture of the Finnic developments one would also have to consider person/number agreement, which in the modern languages evinces the same extended-accusative patterning as the distribution of the partitive case insofar as verbs do not agree with partitively marked core actants; and one should perhaps consider the distribution of further non-nominative grammatical cases as well, summarily referred to as 'accusative' variants and argued to pattern absolutely, or rather inactively, by Itkonen 1979.)

Note that the Finnic manner of extending the partitive (patternwise originally an accusative), while rather closely resembling the expected gradual progression along relational-semantic lines yielding the active-inactive pattern (3), fundamentally differs from the Australian manner of extension, where the accusative instead seems to be extended along referential lines, first reaching intransitive actants referring to proper-name bearers, which — and this is the link to relational-semantic distinctions — are predestined to play active, dynamic, agentive roles. Case marking in Finnic in fact can be argued to have an underlying functional rationale, but its manifestation (e.g. in nominative case marking for transitive patients in agent-deprived clauses; cf. e.g. Comrie 1975) is quite different from the one that is found so commonly in Australia, and that was seen to motivate the particular manner of extending the accusative in Warluwarra and the Western Desert language (and probably also in Dhalandji). To motivate the Finnic manner of extension, one could point to relational-semantic similarities uniting intransitive and transitive inactive, static, patient-like actants, as indicated above. But that might not be the whole story yet. Considering the regularity at issue, viz. the range of occurrence of the partitive case alternating with non-partitive case marking, it might not really be appropriate to compare relations in different clause types in the first place, expecting to find one or another identification of intransitive actants with transitive core relations. The regularity at issue might simply be sensitive to semantic relations, regardless of the types of clause in which they occur — which would exclude the possibility of alternative relational identifications between intransitive and transitive clauses. As a matter of fact, morphosyntactic and lexical devices coding semantic distinctions similar to those coded by the Finnic partitive vs. non-partitive case opposition — viz. essentially distinctions between partial and total involvement of actants, between quantified and unquantified, or indefinitely and definitely quantified reference to actants — tend to pattern absolutely, or inactively, in all languages with pertinent coding devices (cf. Moravcsik 1978: § 2.1). This universal invariability would seem to suggest that the paradigmatic-identificational pattern to be observed in Finnic and all other languages coding such distinctions is more or less a secondary phenomenon, automatically implied by the semantic nature of the distinction coded, with its prototypical focus on inactive, static, patient-like actants. And the focus on this kind of semantic relation seems quite natural, con-

sidering that transitive active, dynamic, agentive actants will on the whole be less amenable to the same semantic distinction, being almost invariably conceived of as totally involved and rarely as indefinitely quantified. From that perspective, what has happened in Proto-Finnic times essentially was the introduction of morphosyntactic coding for this semantic distinction, in the form of the grammatical partitive case historically deriving from a local separative case. The eventual distribution of that case, alternating with non-partitive case marking, over the core relations of different clause types can, then, be seen as an inevitable concomitant of the relational-semantic focus of the meaning opposition concerned.

3.3.3. Linear constituent order, when relationally determined, may unequivocally show accusative or ergative patterning, as exemplified by (1'), with intransitive core actant like basic-construction transitive agent preceding the verb, and (2'), with intransitive core actant like basic-construction transitive patient following the verb. (Recall also the transitive-centred ordering change in Makúsi, mentioned above, § 3.2.)

- (1') AGT + V_{trans} + PAT
 AGT/PAT + V_{intrans}
- (2') AGT + V_{trans} + PAT
 V_{intrans} + AGT/PAT

Thus, altering the order of intransitive core actants from preverbal (as in 1') to postverbal position (as in 2'), while keeping the ordering in basic transitive clauses constant (as in both 1' and 2'), would amount to an extension of the accusative/restriction of the nominative in our paradigmatic-identificational sense. Something like this in fact may have happened in the history of Romance languages, specifically of Spanish. As Myhill (1982) shows, constituent ordering in 17th century Spanish tends to be in accordance with (2'). To be more precise, as the relevant constituent ordering rules in Spanish were, and are, not strictly relationally determined: Myhill observes a statistical preference for intransitive core actants to follow the verb (54% of the intransitive clauses counted, 61% if the intransitive actants were full noun phrases rather than pronouns), and for agents in transitive clauses to precede the verb (65% of the transitive clauses counted, 58% if transitive agents were full noun phrases

rather than pronouns), patients in transitive clauses being almost always postverbal (unless a clitic, in which case they are generally preverbal).⁵ To make our diachronic point, it remains to demonstrate that constituent ordering earlier patterned accusatively — in terms of statistical preferences, if not categorically — and that an ordering change, increasing the frequency of postverbal positioning of core actants, occurred in intransitive rather than transitive clauses. Granting that Proto-Romance, viz. (late) Latin, is appropriately taken as the ultimate point of reference for the development at issue, this demonstration is somewhat complicated by the fact that the original preferential ordering pattern, viz. (4), is not unequivocally accusative.

$$(4) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{AGT} + \text{PAT} + V_{\text{trans}} \\ \text{AGT/PAT} + V_{\text{intrans}} \end{array}$$

In terms of (preferential) immediately preverbal position, the intransitive core actant in (4) could be associated with transitive patients, implying an absolutive interpretation; in terms of (preferential) clause-initial position, it would have to be associated with transitive agents instead, implying a nominative interpretation. Taking into account the entire system of ordering rules in (late) Latin and its Romance successors, I suppose one could argue, however, that the nominative-accusative interpretation of pattern (4) is more appropriate after all, in particular when transitive patients turn up increasingly frequently in postverbal positions. (Analogous arguments, incidentally, should justify an accusative interpretation of the ordering pattern (4) originally obtaining in Makúsi too.) And what has happened then must be interpreted — patternwise — as an extension of the accusative/restriction of the nominative, insofar as the frequency of postverbal intransitive actants increased to a much larger extent than that of postverbal transitive agents.

This extension of accusative ordering has been presented as being a matter of statistical frequency, without paying attention to possible differentiations of intransitive clauses, with respect to which the extension of the accusative might eventually turn out to have been almost categorical rather than purely statistical. The obvious distinction is that between intransitive active, dynamic agents and inactive, static patients: and in fact, postverbal positioning seems to have been more frequent with intransitive inactive, static patients than with their active, dynamic, agentive counterparts. But it might

be that the frequencies reflect this relational-semantic distinction only secondarily, the primary factor influencing the pre- or postverbal positioning of intransitive actants — as well as of the transitive core actants — being of a pragmatic kind. The relevant ordering rules in 17th century (and later) Spanish indeed are largely pragmatically determined: core actants are in initial position when they are, roughly speaking, relatively more topical than the rest of the clause, and they tend to follow the verb when they are less topical than the verb and, thus, part of the comment. From that perspective, the extension of the accusative appears as a matter of actants in different core relations differing in the frequency of their being part of the commentative part of a clause, once the relevant ordering rules have become sensitive to topic-comment structuring. It would not seem implausible to assume, then, that intransitive core actants, especially inactive, static, patient-like ones, should on the whole be closer to transitive patients than transitive agents concerning the likelihood of serving as (part of the) comment,⁶ hence of occurring in postverbal position. This should be true in particular of the core actants of intransitive verbs of existence, of coming into existence, or of appearing on the scene (literally or metaphorically), which are almost predestined to appear as comment in presentative constructions — and such verbs, including verbs that can be employed in similar function, are no negligible minority among the intransitives. Thus, what looks like a statistical manifestation of the active-inactive pattern (3), hence like an analogue of the Finnic pattern of the distribution of the partitive case, could find its ultimate motivation in the different pragmatic propensities of actants in different clausal relations. In this sense, the pattern of cross-clausal identification of semantic relations would then have to be considered an epiphenomenon and not really explicable in terms of the core relations as such. It would not come as a surprise if rules and regularities sensitive to such pragmatic distinctions tended to pattern in the same manner in all languages that have such rules or regularities, rather than to show typological variation.

3.3.4. A further instance of the extended accusative/restricted nominative is as yet not on the typological record, so far as I know. It actually involves the cases usually so called; and the language concerned is also familiar, even though perhaps not at the late stage of its development that is of interest here. As is well known, the nominal case marking of (Classical) Latin was among the hardest

suffering victims of the drift from synthetic to analytic coding in the evolution of the Romance languages via the various manifestations of Late (including 'Vulgar') Latin, the traditional inventory of six nominal cases being gradually reduced to smaller systems of two or three and eventually of one or two nominal case forms. As is also well known, when nominative and accusative forms were competing for survival, it often was the original accusative rather than the nominative that was victorious, giving rise to the invariable nominal forms of later Romance languages.⁷ The issue here, however, is not whether the loss of nominal case differentiation, with the undifferentiated forms deriving from earlier accusative forms, is appropriately interpreted as a complete extension of the accusative to all transitive and intransitive core relations: I suppose it is not, once case marking rules differentiating between any of the core relations have been effectively lost. But there are stages of this overall development, notably in Medieval Latin, where this interpretation is no doubt justified, insofar as the use of the accusative was extended while still in paradigmatic contrast with the nominative.

Considering that Medieval Latin in its various manifestations, unlike other varieties of Late Latin or of the emerging national Romance languages, was no one's native language, but had to be learned in schools as a second language by all those speaking and writing it, it would actually be surprising if its speakers and writers had always performed faultlessly. Though Medieval Latin (especially prior to the Carolingian Reform in the mid-8th century) certainly was no 'dead' and static language comparable to the later Humanistic Latin, nor a pidgin in the sense of serving only rather rudimentary needs of communication (it was, on the contrary, *the* language of the intellectual life of the Middle Ages!), the extant manuscripts contain a fair share of grammatical lapses, in principle recognisable as errors by authors or scribes and their educated readers. Some of these look like errors in the use of the case forms that interest us here, with accusatives appearing where the norms of Latin would lead one to expect nominatives. Frequently these errors can be explained as due to contaminations of active and passive constructions: what begins as an active construction, with the object accordingly in the accusative, is concluded, often with several subordinate clauses in between, as a passive verbal construction that would have required the initial actant to be in the nominative (see Norberg 1944: 21–32 for numerous examples).

Interferences from the spoken popular languages, with their more advanced reduction of the case system, may have been another source of erroneous uses of accusative forms instead of nominatives. Apart from disregarding such sporadic erroneous 'extensions' of the accusative, we may also neglect for our purposes its not-so-sporadic but rather complete extension in certain declension classes that was almost as characteristic even of early varieties of Medieval Latin (perhaps less so after the Carolingian Reform) as it was of the spoken popular languages. Perhaps the most striking development of this kind is the tendency of 1st declension accusative plurals in *-as* to replace nominative forms in *-ae* in subject function in intransitive as well as in transitive clauses, almost completely superseding them in 7th/8th century Gallic versions of Medieval Latin, and much earlier elsewhere, in continuation of a morphological feature of Latin popular (though not literary) speech presumably deriving from Italic dialects (cf. Norberg 1943: chap. II).

The relevant instances of extended accusatives, which are neither mere errors of performance (even though they contradict the norms of earlier, especially Classical Latin)⁸ nor results of the abolishment of the paradigmatic contrast between accusative and nominative in the respective declension classes, occur in examples such as the following, all from the 8th century Rhaetian *Lex Curiensis*, where such extensions seem particularly frequent (see again Norberg 1944: 26–32, for the data and further discussion):

- (5) a. *illum servum ignibus concremetur* 'this servant (ACC SG) is to be burnt (3sg) at the stake'
- b. *eum teneatur obnoxius* 'he (ACC SG) is to be considered (3sg) guilty (NOM)'
- c. *in eorum loco alius [= alios] meliores mittantur* 'in their stead worthier others (ACC PL) should be delegated (3pl)'
- d. *medietatem de ipsam rem, quod ad sponsam suam donavit, ad parentes sponsi reddatur* 'half (ACC SG) of the property that he has given to his bride is to be returned (3sg) to the parents of the bridegroom'
- e. *antequam de ipsa causa eos interrogentur ...* 'before this trial they (ACC PL) should be interrogated (3pl)'
- (6) a. *ille heres, cui talem servum in porcionem venit* 'that heir to whose share such (ACC SG) a servant (ACC SG) falls (3sg)'

- b. ... nisi ad filios suos post suam mortem ipsam porcionem revertat 'if that (ACC SG) share (ACC SG) does not return (3sg) to his sons after his death'
 - c. si [puella] patrem aut matrem non habuerit, nisi sub tutore viventem fuerit ... 'if a girl has had neither father nor mother, and has not been (3sg) while alive (ACC SG) under the tutelage of a guardian'
- (7) Nullus Romanus barbara[m] cuiuslibet gentes [= gentis] uxorem habere presumat, nec barbarum Romana sibi in coniugium accipere presumat 'No Roman man should presume to take a foreign woman of whatever descent as his wife, nor should a foreign man (ACC SG) presume (3sg) to take a Roman woman in marriage'

The incidence of such extended accusatives is strikingly non-random. They are most frequent by far in non-basic intransitive constructions, i.e. with core actants of detransitivised passive verbs as in (5). They are less frequent, though still common enough in basic, i.e. non-passive intransitive constructions as in (6) — where it may sometimes, though certainly not always, be plausible to point to more or less synonymous transitive constructions as possible sources of contaminations (thus, compare *qui talem servum accepit* 'who has received such a servant (ACC)' with the relative clause in (6a)). They are extremely rare, if attested at all, in transitive constructions: in fact, the only example Norberg found in one manuscript of the *Lex Curiensis*, (7), may be due to a scribal error, since the two other manuscripts, whose reliability is generally superior, here have the nominative *barbarus* for the transitive agent. These frequencies of occurrence of the extended accusative, though overall perhaps lower, are certainly no idiosyncratic characteristic of the *Lex Curiensis* or of relatively late texts written in Rhaetia, but seem to be broadly representative of Medieval Latin in general (and maybe of other Late Latin varieties as well; cf. e.g. Väänänen 1981: 116). It is instructive, incidentally, to compare this distributional pattern with that found in converse intransitive-centred developments of extensions of the ergative/restrictions of the absolutive: in particular the developments in Kartvelian languages and dialects, mentioned in § 2.1, represent a mirror-image of the Medieval Latin picture, with the core actants of passives being the last to receive extended ergative marking (cf. Boeder 1979: 469, *passim*).

Apart from being optional rather than categorical (though less sporadic than the erroneous case uses mentioned above), these extensions of the accusative/restrictions of the nominative in Medieval Latin were gradual rather than complete, yielding the typical active-inactive rather than an ergative-absolutive pattern. Active, dynamic, agentive intransitive core actants categorically resisted the extension of accusative case marking, clinging to the traditional nominative just like basic-construction transitive agents, while inactive, static intransitive patients — of which the core actants of detransitivised passive verbs (as in 5) are the most archetypal manifestations — were ready to sacrifice their traditional nominative case marking in order to share the accusative with basic-construction transitive patients (as well as with certain adverbials of space and time and value, with body-part and other nominals in a relationship of 'pertinence', and with certain extra-sentential constituents — to mention only some of the more important areas of the extending domain of accusative case marking (on which see e.g. Norberg 1943: chapters VI–IX, 1944: chap. I)). Although it could seem appropriate, at least in part, to account for this Medieval Latin manner of extending the accusative/restricting the nominative in terms of cross-clausal comparisons, stating that intransitive core actants were realigned with transitive patients subject to relational-semantic limitations, syntactic clause-type distinctions as such perhaps should not be considered the ultimately most crucial parameter for defining this change of patterns. It may be more appropriate simply to state that the accusative-nominative contrast was (re-)semanticised, with the accusative serving to code inactive and the nominative to code more active actants, the distribution of accusative and nominative across transitive and intransitive clause types then following as an automatic consequence from this relational-semantic distinction drawn independently of clause-type distinction.

This interpretation may gain in plausibility when it is recognised that the Medieval Latin tendency towards active (restricted nominative)-inactive (extended accusative) patterning was not an intermediate stage in the development towards an ergative-absolutive pattern, reflecting relational-semantic distinctions as opaquely as the nominative-accusative pattern. There is no evidence, either in Medieval Latin or in other Late Latin or early Romance varieties, to suggest that accusative case marking ever tended to be extended to all intransitive core actants regardless of their semantic relations,

while keeping clear of basic-construction transitive agents. When accusative forms were extended beyond the semantically defined limits of the active-inactive pattern, they tended to appear indiscriminately in intransitive-active and transitive-agent functions, crowding out the remaining nominative forms more or less simultaneously. In view of this development that is so familiar from the history of the Romance languages, the inclination of Medieval Latin (which, though a learned language, was never completely out of touch with the evolving popular languages) to employ the nominative as an active and the accusative as an inactive case may be characterised as an interlude, though not in the metamorphosis of an ergative from an accusative pattern, but in the abolition of the nominative-accusative contrast in nouns, i.e. of a nominal case marking rule that had originally patterned accusatively.

It ought to be noted that the active-inactive development in Medieval Latin was exclusively one of case marking: agreement, also serving the purpose of relational coding, continued to pattern nominatively (unless involving past participles, when it may have patterned absolutely – cf. § 2.2). Thus, examples such as (5b/c/e) above show that finite verbs and predicative adjectives may agree in person, number, and gender – and may disagree in case (cf. *obnoxius* NOM rather than *obnoxium* ACC in (5b)) – with intransitive core actants even if these are in the extended accusative case rather than in the nominative. Example (6c) is an isolated exception proving this rule, the predicative adjective, *viventem*, here being in the accusative. The agreement preferences with extended accusatives, incidentally, argue against impersonal or demotional-passive (cf. e.g. Comrie 1977) analyses of such constructions in Medieval Latin: with agreement rules continuing to identify the core actants in examples such as (5) and – usually – (6) with transitive and intransitive core actants in the nominative case, constructions such as those exemplified in (5) and (6) would seem to differ from canonical intransitive constructions with subjects that govern verb agreement solely by virtue of the extended-accusative marking on their core actants.

The relational-semantically determined manner of extending the accusative/restricting the nominative in Medieval Latin bears no further resemblance to the manners in which such extensions/restrictions were achieved in Proto-Finnic and in Spanish, insofar as neither core actants of intransitive ‘existential’ verbs (as in Proto-Finnic) nor core actants in the commentative part of intransitive

clauses (as in Spanish) were preferred targets for extending the accusative. On the contrary, intransitive verbs of existence, coming into existence, and appearing on the scene, even though not infrequent among the pertinent active verbs (cf. 6), are a clear minority among the verbs admitting accusative marking on intransitive core actants, simply on account of most of these verbs being passive (cf. 5); and in the majority of the examples assembled by Norberg (1944) the intransitive core actants in the extended accusative are topical rather than commentative, unlike typical accusative patients in transitive clauses. On the other hand, there could seem to be some similarity to the referentially determined manner of extending the accusative/restricting the nominative in Warluwarra and the Western Desert language, insofar as in Medieval Latin too the overwhelming majority of accusatively marked intransitive actants refer to persons – a referential class almost, if not exactly, co-terminous with that of bearers of proper names. However, this similarity appears to be rather superficial. Rather than reflecting the same kind of functional motivation that is so common in Australian case marking systems (calling for overt relational marking only if a referent contracts an unaccustomed semantic relation, such as a person appearing as patient), the predisposition of personal actants to receive the extended accusative marking in Medieval Latin ought to be seen in connection with the prevalence of passives. This type of intransitive construction is the prototypical domain of patients in the core relation, differing from active intransitive constructions in excluding active, dynamic agents as core actants; and, presupposing a correlation of personhood and topic-worthiness, persons ought to be likelier than non-personal referents to fill the patient role in passive constructions, where patients rather than agents are prototypically topical.

4. To summarise this survey, there are intransitive-centred and transitive-centred mechanisms of changing the patterns of cross-clausal identification of core relations, and there are actual instances of both transitive-centred and intransitive-centred changes both away from ergative patterning (towards accusative, active, or otherwise non-ergative patterning – cf. § 2) and away from accusative patterning (towards ergative, active, or otherwise non-accusative patterning – cf. § 3) that can be interpreted in terms of these mechanisms. (It is another matter whether this is necessarily always the most illuminating interpretation.) The several instances of in-

transitive-centred extensions of the accusative/restrictions of the nominative in three Australian languages, in Proto-Finnic, in 17th century (or earlier) Spanish, and in Medieval Latin (§ 3.3) are especially significant as Anderson (1977: 353 f.) has tried to claim support for a particular theoretical position from the supposed non-attestation of this kind of development.

Anderson (and similarly Dixon 1979: 78) suggests that it is not really very surprising that ergatives should, while accusatives conversely should not, be extendable to intransitive core actants. According to Anderson (and others), in the vast majority of languages, including those where ergatives were extended to intransitive core actants, these actually have something in common with transitive agents that is obscured by the ergative patterning of cross-clausal identification: viz. they are in the syntactic relation of subject. On the assumption that syntactic rules generally follow the accusative pattern of cross-clausal identification while morphological rules may pattern ergatively in some languages, the morphological rules in these languages can be expected to realign in order to reveal rather than to obscure the 'underlying' syntactic pattern of identification across clause types, distinguishing in particular syntactic subjects (found in both transitive and intransitive clauses) and objects (found only in transitive clauses). Note that Anderson invokes concepts which, though familiar, have not figured in the paradigmatic-identificational account of accusativity, ergativity, and activity outlined in § 1: syntactic relations such as subject and object. (Dixon 1979: § 6.2 in addition recognises a syntactic category of 'pivot', resulting from cross-clausal identifications for purposes of certain syntactic rules operating on 'shallow' structures.) The relations we have assumed so far were semantic, subcategorised according to their occurrence in transitive or intransitive clauses (and also in basic or non-basic constructions). As it is controversial whether syntactic relations such as subject (or also pivot) come about simply by virtue of syntactic rules identifying relations that are distinct semantically or occur in distinct clause types, or whether they are the result of particular matchings between relational-semantic and pragmatic levels of clause structure that are essentially independent of comparisons across clause types, it is not clear whether an appeal to syntactic subjecthood (or pivothood) in order to explain morphological re-identifications is consistent with the purely paradigmatic-identificational view as presented above, or requires conceptual enrichments. The assumption of an additional

level of clause structure in terms of genuinely syntactic relations, with a strong universal preference to pattern accusatively (i.e. subsuming intransitive actants and transitive agents under the syntactic category of subject), would, at any rate, account for the observation that accusative patterns are overall most frequent in the languages of the world.

In light of the findings in § 3.3, Anderson's considerations must at least be relativised. By the same logic one would have to conclude that (some or, in Dhalandji, all) intransitive core actants and transitive patients must have something in common syntactically so as to invite extensions of the accusative from transitive patients to (some or all) intransitive actants — if not generally, then at least in the languages where such extensions of the accusative occurred. This supposed common syntactic denominator, obscured by the original accusative patterning but revealed by the innovated non-accusative patterning, could be that transitive patients and intransitive core actants are both subjects or — if this possibility is admitted for intransitive actants — objects. Here the analogy evidently collapses. No matter whether syntactic subjecthood and objecthood are conceived of in terms of paradigmatic-identificational patterns established by syntactic rules or in terms of an extra structural level resulting from matchings of relational-semantic and pragmatic levels, there seems to have been little *syntactic* incentive to extend the accusative/restrict the nominative in the languages where this development occurred, except perhaps in the Australian instances (though from the information available to me about Warluwarra (Breen 1976), Dhalandji (Austin 1981), and the Pitjantjatjara dialect of the Western Desert language (Blake 1976: 488), the syntactic rules in these languages do not seem to pattern ergatively to any notable extent, if at all). The rules whose patterning changed from being accusative to being non-accusative would, in terms like those of Anderson, all have to be characterised as relatively 'superficial' morphological or morphosyntactic ones (concerning accusative case marking in the Australian languages and in Medieval Latin, partitive case marking in Finnic, and constituent ordering in Spanish); but these very rules are about the only ones in these languages (again, with the possible, but at any rate less than glaring, exception of the Australian languages) to pattern non-accusatively,⁹ the syntactic rules in particular generally operating in terms of an 'underlying' accusative pattern. Indirectly, this apparent lack of syntactic motivation for extensions of the accusative/

restrictions of the nominative throws doubt also on the general validity of Anderson's syntactic rationalisation of the converse intransitive-centred development of extending the ergative while restricting the absolutive.

It has been repeatedly emphasised in the present paper (especially in § 3.3) that different core relations in transitive and intransitive clauses may have different semantic and pragmatic properties and propensities in common. Thus one may, but does not have to, resort to syntactic relations such as subject and object when seeking common features of distinct clause types. If rules and regularities exist or are introduced in a language that refer to such common properties or propensities, be they semantic, pragmatic, or also syntactic (and to determine what kinds of categories individual rules and regularities are actually sensitive to is not always an easy task), particular patterns of cross-clausal identifications of core relations will be automatic consequences, given that the properties and propensities concerned are instantiated in different clause types. As mere consequences, paradigmatic-identificational patterns in themselves would not seem to be particularly crucial to descriptive and explanatory accounts of the intransitive-centred developments considered. It is presumably rare for languages to change the alignment of (some or all) intransitive core actants with respect to individual grammatical or lexical rules and regularities arbitrarily, with nothing but functional parsimony motivating either pattern of cross-clausal identification. Thus, the search for explanations, for reasons or causes of extensions of the accusative/restrictions of the nominative as well as of extensions of the ergative/restrictions of the absolutive, ought to focus on the whys and the wherefores of the rules and regularities referring to different core relations in terms of various semantic, pragmatic, and morphosyntactic distinctions. Appeals to the functional maxim of parsimonious but otherwise arbitrary alignments usually will not do for an explanation. That maxim should not prove very useful for explanatory purposes even in the case of diachronic realignments that are incidental to changes not affecting relational rules and regularities as such and that are, therefore, arbitrary with respect to the rules and regularities incidentally involved — as when the identificational pattern (say, of case marking) obtaining at a given time is disturbed by some phonological development (effacing case endings of a particular phonological shape in particular syntagmatic, though phonologically relevant environments), quite incidentally transforming the

pattern into its opposite number (as envisaged by Dixon 1977: 390 and Anderson 1977: 322).

Transitive-centred mechanisms of change, like those surveyed in §§ 2.2 and 3.2, suggest even more strongly that it is of less than crucial importance for descriptive and explanatory purposes to take a paradigmatic-identificational view of accusativity, ergativity, and other more or less parsimonious systems of relational distinctions. It seems not very illuminating in general to interpret these changes as, first and foremost, realignments of transitive core actants relative to the core actant of intransitive clauses. If transitive core actants are realigned relative to core actants in other clause types, it is usually a coexisting transitive construction in a split system that serves as the model. Otherwise changes of identification across transitive and intransitive clause types are naturally accounted for as incidental concomitants of more thorough alterations of the relational structure of transitive clauses, perhaps related to intransitive or not-so-transitive structures (such as passives or antipassives) by virtue of these serving as diachronic sources of the innovated transitive constructions. In spite of such possible relationships of historical ancestry, the morphosyntactic behaviour of intransitive actants should not be seen as a model successively motivating that of transitive agents and of transitive patients, the alternative choices being equally arbitrary, as long as they are within the limits of functional parsimony.

There is a familiar alternative to the paradigmatic-identificational view of relational typology, which I have previously (Plank 1979 a) termed 'syntagmatic-constructional'. In this view, the difference between accusativity and ergativity is primarily a matter of different basic constructions, the agent being pragmatically privileged (with regard to topicality and related factors), hence syntactic subject, in an accusative construction, while in an ergative construction it is the patient that has these pragmatic privileges, hence is the syntactic subject.¹⁰ (The difference between accusativity and ergativity on the one hand and activity on the other would in a sense appear to be rather more elementary from a syntagmatic-constructional perspective, inasmuch as properly syntactic relations (such as subject and object), in contradistinction to semantic relations, may not be definable in clauses with agents and patients in languages thoroughly conforming to the active-inactive pattern, or may have to be defined in a manner that is essentially different from that yielding mere mirror-image differences between accusative and ergative relational

syntax.) In non-basic constructions definable in terms of syntactic relations, such as passives corresponding to basic accusative constructions or antipassives corresponding to basic ergative constructions, these pragmatic privileges are re-distributed, with patients thus functioning as syntactic subjects of passives and agents of antipassives. Given that intransitive core actants (though not necessarily all of them) are almost by default granted the same pragmatic privileges in their (basic or non-basic) clauses, hence are syntactic subjects of intransitive constructions, different patterns of relational identifications across transitive and intransitive clause types are nothing but consequences of differences in the construction of basic clauses that concern the distribution of pragmatic privileges among co-occurring core relations, i.e. of the conferment of syntactic subjecthood upon agents or patients. Insofar as the transitive-centred developments mentioned in §§ 2.2 and 3.2 involve the instalment of new basic transitive constructions, often deriving from non-basic passive or antipassive constructions, the syntagmatic-constructional perspective would seem to be the only one allowing plausible descriptive, and eventually explanatory, accounts. In the instances of transitive core actants altering their behaviour under the analogical influence of a coexisting transitive construction, characteristic in particular of developments away from split ergativity (cf. § 2.2), the syntagmatic-constructional view should prove more illuminating than the paradigmatic-identificational view as well — unless the transitive constructions coexisting prior to such a change turn out to be arbitrary alternatives unrelated to any pragmatic and relational-syntactic differences, and the result of the change likewise lacks any pragmatic and relational-syntactic motivation. Needless to say, so much arbitrariness is not usually found, even though no motivation may be so strong as to preclude change.

5. Judging from the variety of transitive-centred and intransitive-centred mechanisms of transforming the various patterns of cross-clausal identification of core relations into one another, accusativity and ergativity in particular should not be expected to be homogeneous phenomena, in spite of the undisputed possibility of lumping all sorts of patternings together under these headings when taking a paradigmatic-identificational perspective. (Active-inactive patternings, when not original, can come about diachronically only by way of intransitive-centred developments, and therefore ought to be more homogeneous.) Superficially the paradigmatic-identi-

ficational patterns may look the same, but their pragmatic, semantic, or syntactic determinants are likely to differ, depending on whether the pattern has come about through intransitive-centred developments (as surveyed in §§ 2.1 and 3.3), or through one or the other kind of transitive-centred developments (as surveyed in §§ 2.2 and 3.2). Cross-linguistic synchronic comparisons should confirm such differentiations suggested by different kinds of origin of accusative and ergative patternings.¹¹

In § 1 it was mentioned that the typological affiliation of whole languages may, in several respects, be a matter of degrees: if the degrees to which languages are characterisable as accusative, ergative, or active should turn out to correlate with differences in the kinds of origins of the patterning in individual rules and regularities, this would further corroborate that impression of heterogeneity. In terms of the proportion of rules and regularities that exhibit this or that pattern, it would seem that these languages will be most highly accusative or ergative in which the patterning of a rule has been altered, not so long ago, in the respective direction by means of the transitive-centred development of installing a new basic construction of clauses with agents and patients (cf. §§ 2.2, 3.2): such basic constructions will be the point of reference of numerous rules and regularities, including relational-coding rules and transformational and adaptational rules adjusting basic clauses according to the requirements of discourse, whose patterning is predetermined by the relational structure of basic constructions. Splits, though somewhat detracting from the overall typological purity of a language, are not incompatible with this kind of origin, but reflect limitations of the domain of an innovated basic construction coexisting with another basic construction (e.g. in different tenses or aspects or with different verbs). With other transitive-centred developments, in particular with changes in the behaviour of transitive core actants motivated by the morphosyntactic treatment of the corresponding semantic relations in coexisting constructions in split systems (cf. § 2.2), it would actually be surprising if there were no further rules and regularities in the language already exhibiting the innovated pattern: the more rules and regularities operate in terms of a particular relational distinction, the likelier it seems that this distinction will serve as a model for analogical change. Only in the case of intransitive-centred developments (cf. §§ 2.1, 3.3) not much seems to be inferable about rules and regularities other than those directly involved: in principle it should be possible for two successive

historical stages of a language to differ in nothing else, or at least in nothing else inherently related to the difference at issue, except the absence or presence of an ergative, accusative, or active pattern in a particular, often innovated, rule or regularity. Intransitive-centred changes, describable as extensions of the ergative or accusative/restrictions of the absolutive or nominative, are thus apparently least dependent on the overall typological make-up of a language.

If the typological purity of an accusative, ergative, or active system is measured in terms of grammatical and lexical features supposedly connected with accusative, ergative, and active structures by categorical or statistical implication (as suggested in Klimov 1973, 1977), the resulting picture may be essentially the same. As many proposed implications are controversial, any conclusions of this kind are bound to be extremely preliminary. Nevertheless, it seems relatively safe to assume that extensions of the ergative or accusative/restrictions of the absolutive or nominative can in principle come about without being necessarily accompanied by acquisitions or losses of features supposedly implied by ergative or accusative structures. Even though isolated intransitive-centred developments may have little relevance for holistic, or systemic, typology, it is remarkable how frequently active-inactive patterns show up in such developments as final, intermediate, or initial stages, considering that active systems have been claimed to be essentially different from both ergative and accusative systems. What is actually puzzling is that active-inactive patterns cannot be due to transitive-centred changes, which are those most likely to be indicative of holistic-typological change. The puzzle, thus, is how and from what source active systems (as opposed to individual rule-specific active-inactive patterns) evolve — if in fact they ever do evolve from other systems. (Note that Klimov 1977: chap. V contends that they do not, at least not from accusative or ergative systems, but maybe from what he calls the 'class' system.)

One implication of paradigmatic-identificational patterns, also recognised in systemic typologies, pertains to the relative markedness of the core relations that are differentiated; this familiar implication deserves special mention in a paper focusing on intransitive-centred developments because such developments tend to interfere with it, at least when ergatives and accusatives are extended in terms of case (and adpositional) marking. The notion of markedness is notoriously complex and controversial; nevertheless, it often seems plausible to distinguish core actants as relatively more and

less marked, and to interpret, for example, differences between formally more and less (ideally zero) complex relational coding, between the usability of actant forms only within or also outside syntactic constructions (as, e.g., in citation), and between the optionality and the obligatoriness of the presence of a case or adpositional marker in minimal clauses as manifestations of differences in markedness. These various manifestations ideally ought to be in harmony: an actant that is more marked (m) on one criterion should not normally turn out to be less marked (u) on another criterion.

Returning to the three major identificational patterns as presented in § 1, each should in principle admit two alternative distributions of markedness among the two relations that are distinguished: the nominative and accusative in (1), the ergative and absolutive in (2), and the active and inactive in (3).

(1) a.	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> AGT: <u>u</u> AGT/PAT: <u>u</u> </div>	PAT: <u>m</u>	V _{trans}
			V _{intrans}
b.	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> AGT: <u>m</u> AGT/PAT: <u>m</u> </div>	PAT: <u>u</u>	V _{trans}
			V _{intrans}
(2) a.	AGT: <u>m</u>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> PAT: <u>u</u> AGT/PAT: <u>u</u> </div>	V _{trans}
			V _{intrans}
b.	AGT: <u>u</u>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> PAT: <u>m</u> AGT/PAT: <u>m</u> </div>	V _{trans}
			V _{intrans}
(3) a.	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> AGT: <u>m</u> AGT: <u>m</u> </div>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> PAT: <u>u</u> PAT: <u>u</u> </div>	V _{trans}
			V _{intrans}
b.	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> AGT: <u>u</u> AGT: <u>u</u> </div>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> PAT: <u>m</u> PAT: <u>m</u> </div>	V _{trans}
			V _{intrans}

As it happens, however, the nominative-accusative pattern seems to imply the markedness distribution shown in (1a), the ergative-absolutive pattern the markedness distribution in (2a) (cf. e.g.

Dixon 1979: § 2.3), and the active-inactive pattern the markedness distribution in (3a) (according to Klimov 1977: chap. V, although case marking as such is rare, at best occurring with pronouns, in languages classified as active). While the combination of ergative-absolutive patterning and markedness distribution shown in (2b) is commonly presumed unattested, a few 'exceptional' languages are usually mentioned as exhibiting the combination of nominative-accusative pattern of case marking and markedness distribution shown in (1b): Cushitic languages such as Oromo, Dasenech, and Kambata; Yuman languages such as Mohave; Wappo, already mentioned above; the non-Pama-Nyungan Australian language Malak-Malak; the Melanesian language Houailou; perhaps varieties of Maidu, a Californian Penutian language; and perhaps some of the older Germanic languages with overt nominative desinence for some noun classes but zero accusative marking, although according to other markedness criteria the nominative here remains less marked than the accusative (cf. Dixon 1979: § 2.33, Mallinson & Blake 1981: 47 f.). In fact, the combination in (2b) too has been claimed to be 'exceptionally' realised in at least one language: Finnish, where Itkonen (1979) recognises an 'inverted' ergative system on account of the patterning of the marked partitive case (and also the marked accusative case) and the unmarked nominative case, outlined above in § 3.3.2.¹² The 'exceptional' active-inactive-type combination (3b) is also attested (e.g. in Eastern Pomo); however, it is probably unjustified to regard unmarked active case/ marked inactive case as exceptional in the first place because the numerical preponderance of attestations of (3a) is not exactly overwhelming (cf. DeLancey, this volume, § 2).

If these observations about the attestation and frequency of the (a) and (b) combinations of (1)–(3), or at least of (1) and (2), are basically correct, one would of course like to know why the combinations in (a) are generally preferred to those in (b), if the latter are at all possible. The prevalence of (1a) and (2a) has often been motivated functionally, pointing out that core actants not requiring syntagmatic differentiation, viz. those in intransitive clauses, are the most natural candidates for unmarked status, with the markedness distribution among syntagmatically co-occurring core actants then being an essentially arbitrary decision (cf. e.g. Dixon 1979: § 2.3). Note, however, that if it is taken for granted that an intransitive core actant is naturally unmarked, it would seem more appropriate to regard the paradigmatic-identificational

patterns (1a) and (2a) as being implied by, or in fact as rather trivial automatic consequences of, alternative choices of markedness distributions among transitive core actants, rather than vice versa. I suppose one could go further (than, e.g., Heath 1976, whose criticism is along these lines) in challenging the theoretical significance of the paradigmatic-identificational approach to the present explanatory issue. Thus, one would have to show that the more or less marked status of the two transitive core actants is no arbitrary matter, with the need for overt syntagmatic distinction as the sole *raison d'être* for drawing markedness distinctions. Markedness distributions instead would have to be shown to be motivated by aspects of the syntactic structuring primarily of transitive clauses. The syntagmatic-constructional view offers such structural motivation: it would not seem implausible for topical actants to be generally less marked than non-topical actants, whose overt coding should rather be indicative of the semantic relations they bear.¹³ As the transitive agent is the preferred topic, hence the syntactic subject, in accusative constructions, and the patient in ergative constructions, according to a syntagmatic-constructional view, it would be only natural for them, as well as the preferred topics by default in intransitive clauses, to be relatively less marked.

However, it would be an oversimplification to assume that pragmatic and pragmatically based syntactic clause structuring alone may motivate markedness valuations: there are all kinds of, in particular semantic, parameters with respect to which the members of case oppositions may be assigned different markedness values. Accordingly, if cases (or also adpositions) are not really used for coding syntactic relations such as subject and object that are demonstrably derivative of pragmatic clause structuring, motivating the unmarked status of subject/preferred topic, one should not be surprised to encounter markedness distributions not harmonising with the pragmatically induced ones. In principle, therefore, this approach would be more liberal than the paradigmatic-identificational one insofar as it does not at all proscribe combinations of cross-clausal alignments and markedness distributions like those in (1b), (2b), nor those in (3a/b), both of which are 'spoilt' by some marked intransitive core actants. Still, it would make specific predictions about the occurrence of these combinations: such combinations should only be expected with case (or adpositional) marking not used for coding pragmatically based syntactic relations such as subject as such, but for coding other

distinctions, such as relational-semantic ones, with different markedness evaluations (if any). It would be an empirical issue, then, to ascertain whether in the languages showing the 'exceptional' combinations (1b) and (2b), as well as in those active-type languages showing either the allegedly typical combination (3a) or perhaps the not-so-typical combination (3b), it is really the syntactic relation of subject that is coded by the marked case that is patternwise a nominative (1b) or an absolutive (2b), or an active (3a) or inactive (3b), the corresponding unmarked cases coding objects or whatever non-subjective syntactic relations. If not, these combinations should not *a priori* be regarded as exceptional from the present perspective. If they are nevertheless rarer than the rival combinations, in particular (1a) and (2a), the reason should be that case (or adpositional) marking of core relations such as agent and patient is not so likely to be entirely uninfluenced by pragmatic considerations of topic-comment structuring, stipulating that subjects/preferred topics be relatively unmarked, unless there is separate coding of relational-syntactic/pragmatic structures (e.g. by means of verb agreement or linear order).

It is not my purpose in this paper to offer synchronic analyses of languages with marked nominatives/unmarked accusatives (1b) or unmarked ergatives/absolutives (2b) in order to explain away their alleged exceptionality. Instead, to return finally to diachronic matters, it should be pointed out that intransitive-centred developments may easily wreak havoc on what appear to be optimal combinations of identificational patterns and markedness distributions from a paradigmatic-identificational perspective. Thus, given an optimal ergative-type combination such as (2a), extending the ergative/restricting the absolutive yields the not-so-optimal accusative-type combination (1b), or — if not carried through — the active combination (3a), likewise not-so-highly valued. Analogously, given an optimal accusative-type combination such as (1a), extending the accusative/restricting the nominative yields the not-so-optimal ergative-type combination (2b), or — if not carried through — an active combination such as (3b), apparently even less highly valued than (3a). On the other hand, such intransitive-centred developments may just as easily remedy what appear to be not-so-optimal combinations. Thus, given (2b), extending the unmarked ergative/restricting the marked absolutive would yield (1a), while, given (1b), extending the unmarked accusative/restricting the marked nominative would yield (2a).

In §§ 2.1 and 3.3 essentially all these developments have been exemplified, except that leading from (2b) to (1a), improving upon a not-so-optimal ergative-type combination. In the case-marking developments where combinations appear to change for the worse from a paradigmatic-identificational perspective (e.g. with the extended ergative in Kartvelian, Afroasiatic, and perhaps Sherpa, or with the extended accusative in Finnic and perhaps the few pertinent Australian languages), it generally seems feasible to explain away the apparent decreases in optimality, along the lines suggested above: the kind of markedness distribution that seems appropriate for the case oppositions at issue is not the same as that according patients and all intransitive actants (2a), or agents and all intransitive actants (1a), unmarked status on ultimately pragmatic grounds. The Medieval Latin extension of the accusative/restriction of the nominative could be accounted for in the same manner as, say, mirror-image developments in Kartvelian, as attempts to adapt an existing case opposition to a relational-semantic distinction so far not transparently coded in terms of cases. However, there are indications that the nominative was not really unmarked in all respects vis-à-vis the accusative with a significant proportion of nominals in late Latin and the early Romance languages (cf. Plank 1979 b), nor even in Classical Latin (as suggested by Lehmann in this volume, § 2.1), so that the point of departure of the extension of the accusative/restriction of the nominative in Medieval Latin may actually have been more like (1b) than like (1a), its result thus being an improvement on a not-so-optimal accusative-type combination. Further instances of comparable developments may be rare; it is, nevertheless, tempting to derive a generalisation from this case of an improvement, provided this is the correct interpretation: Whenever conflicts arise, for whatever historical reasons (e.g. as results of phonological changes effacing particular inflections and thus upsetting markedness distributions), between an identificational pattern and a no-longer-so-optimal markedness distribution, it is likely that attempts will be made to the effect of adjusting the identificational pattern, by way of extending the currently unmarked case to intransitive core actants. Should this prove unfeasible in the long run, on account of the majority of rules other than those of case marking continuing the original (also syntagmatic-constructionally supported) cross-clausal identification, something is likely to be done about the case opposition and its markedness evaluation.

Notes

1. Terms such as 'extended ergative/accusative' have been used by others (e.g. Moravcsik 1978, Dixon 1979), though not necessarily in the purely diachronic sense that is intended here.
2. A further intransitive-centred development has been reported from Waxi, a Pamir language, by Payne (1980: 179–181, drawing on Soviet descriptions). In the upper dialect of Waxi, a straightforward nominative-accusative pattern of case marking coexists with a pattern, restricted to the past tense and to 1st and 2nd person singular pronouns in the transitive agent relation, where the transitive agent is in the oblique form, the transitive patient optionally carries a specifically accusative marker, and the intransitive core actant is in the absolute form. That oblique marking — presumably continuing the historical Iranian ergative, without qualifying synchronically as an ergative because transitive patients (being in the accusative) and intransitive core actants (utilising the absolute form) are not case-marked identically — now, may extend to intransitive core actants, subject to the same restrictions applying also to oblique marking of transitive agents (i.e. verbs must be past-tense and the actants 1st or 2nd person singular pronouns). In Payne's example illustrating this extension of oblique marking, the intransitive core actant actually is active, dynamic, and agentive, the verb being 'to go' in the past tense. This may reflect the statistically preferred, or even the only possible, usage of the extended oblique marking, in which case the resulting pattern would be non-canonically active-inactive (non-canonical, because the inactive, static transitive patient is in a different case from its intransitive counterpart, viz. in the accusative); or it may be an accident, in which case the resulting pattern, with no further relational-semantic limitations on the eligibility of intransitive core actants for oblique marking, would be canonically nominative-accusative, like the coexisting case-marking pattern in non-past tenses. Regardless of what is the correct interpretation of the resulting pattern, the change at issue is comparable to the previous instances of extended ergatives/restricted absolutes insofar as a trait originally unique to transitive agents was generalised to intransitive core actants.
3. It is questionable whether basic ergative constructions, in spite of admitting two semantic relations such as agent (or perhaps rather cause) and patient, are really syntactically transitive in the same sense as basic accusative constructions are. If they are not, but rather contain patients as the only core relation, with agents (or causes) assuming a more peripheral relation, this would to some extent undermine the paradigmatic-identificational approach that takes the comparison of transitive and intransitive clauses as its starting point, simultaneously providing support for the syntagmatic-constructional view of the typological differences at issue, briefly set out in § 4 (cf. also Plank 1979a). Perhaps, for purposes of the paradigmatic-identificational approach, the notion of transitivity should be seen more as a semantic one, applying more or less to any clause, and verb, admitting the semantic relations of agent/cause and patient (or at least to any basic-construction clause, or verb, of this kind).
4. Cf. Trask (1979) for an attempt to differentiate kinds of ergative languages according to such different kinds of origins, the common denominator being, however, that the developments leading to ergativity are transitive-centred. Intransitive-centred developments lie outside the purview of Trask's differentiation.
5. Myhill's calculations are based on Cervantes' *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. The pattern as such in fact would seem to have been rather common in earlier stages of the other Romance languages as well, and presumably still is in most, except French, where subject-verb inversion has generally been given up again, leading

- to re-accusativisation by means of extending the (statistical) ergative (defined in terms of preferred preverbal positioning)/restricting the (statistical) absolute (defined in terms of frequent postverbal positioning).
6. This point is made, and receives empirical support, in several contributions to Plank (1984).
7. Consult any historical grammar or handbook for a more accurate account of that competition, and Plank (1979b) for a functional interpretation.
8. They are also unlikely to be errors due to interference of Rhaetian popular speech of the time, where, for example, pronominals such as *eum/eos* (as in 5b/e) had long disappeared, and synthetic verbal passive forms (as in 5) were no longer available either.
9. Taking into account only such rules and regularities whose patterning is cross-linguistically variable, that is.
10. This is a view that can be associated, as far as ergativity is concerned, with the traditional 'passivists'; cf. Plank (1979a) for a brief and selective historical survey. It has not always been recognized that the notion of pragmatic privileges is rather complex, involving a whole set of (not necessarily harmonising) factors of deictic and thematic structuring.
11. It should be remembered that the distinction between transitive- and intransitive-centredness is also necessary for synchronic accounts of split systems, to distinguish, for instance, between a situation like that obtaining in Mayan languages where the patterning of *intransitive* clauses varies with aspect or perhaps other distinctions such as that between main and subordinate clauses (cf. Larsen & Norman 1979), and one obtaining in other split ergative-accusative languages where the construction of the *transitive* clause, and hence the cross-clausal alignment pattern, varies with distinctions of aspect, tense, and the like.
12. Mandarin Chinese has occasionally been taken for another 'exception' of this kind; however, Li & Yip (1979) argue convincingly that analyses of *bā* as a marked absolute are untenable.
13. This generalisation is necessarily tentative. No doubt there are languages with overt topic markers that are relatively more marked than markers of commentative constituents (if there are any). However, it often seems that these overt topic markers are perhaps more appropriately characterised as specifically coding contrastive topics than as markers of actants that are continuously topical throughout sections of connected discourse, once they have been established as topics of discourse. Such continuity topics would generally seem to be relatively unmarked.

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