

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT *PIE WAS 'VERB-FINAL'

D. M. Daly

University of Texas, Austin

Various types of syntactic evidence support the hypothesis that *PIE was a 'verb-final' language. Since a number of Indo-European languages are now SVO, this hypothesis has the corollary that these languages shifted from verb-final constructions. The existence of 'transitional syntactic forms' from Italian and Spanish provide evidence of such shifts, and thus support both the hypothesis and its corollary.

Several types of syntactic evidence support the hypothesis that Proto-Indo-European was a 'verb-final' language.¹ Delbrück² concluded from a study of early Indic sentence structure that *PIE was verb-final. Lehmann³ has proposed that reflexive verb forms and relative clauses without relative (pronoun) markers indicate that PIE was an OV language.

Since a number of Indo-European languages are now SVO (e.g., Spanish, Italian), a corollary of the claim that *PIE was 'verb final' is that these languages shifted from verb-final constructions. Such a shift might leave 'transitional syntactic forms'. The existence of these forms would provide strong support for both the hypothesis and its corollary.

Examples of such transitional forms may be noted in Italian and Spanish.

Consistent OV languages are post-positional; consistent VO languages are pre-positional. Latin, as an OV language, had bound personal pronoun forms with characteristic post-positions:

mecum	'with me.'
tecum	'with you'

These bound personal pronouns appeared, in Italian as:

mico	'with me'
teco	'with you'

with characteristic post-positions, and with a pre-positional variant:

con me	'with me'
con te	'with you'

During the Twentieth Century the pre-positional forms completely replaced the post-positional forms, which are now considered archaic.

The bound personal pronouns appear in Spanish as:

conmigo	'with me'
contigo	'with you'

The Spanish forms contain [-go] as the voiced counterpart of the Italian forms with [-co].

These examples of changes from post-positional to pre-positional forms of bound personal pronouns provide support for the transitional syntactic construction corollary, and thus for the hypothesis that *PIE was an OV language.

*I am grateful to W. P. Lehmann and C. L. Baker for their comments on earlier versions of this note.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ The term 'verb-final' is used interchangeably with 'OV' to denote a language with final predicates. A more accurate description would probably separate 'verb-final' into OV and SOV, depending on whether or not the language in question had a rule of Subject Formation.

² Delbrück, B. 'Die altindische Wortfolge ans dem Catapathabrahmana dargestellt'. **Syntaktische Forschungen**, Vol. III Halle. (1878).

³ Lehmann, W. P. 'A Structural Principle of Language and its Implications'. *Language* 49: 47-66 (1973).

From: Daly, D. M. 'Additional evidence that *PIE was verb final'. *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 1: 518-519 (1973).

Copyright © 1973 D M Daly and *the Journal of Indo-European Studies*. All rights reserved.