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The use of the dative with Latin compounds

1. A survey of the uses of the dative in Latin

The Latin dative is used in a number of functions, both as a marker of arguments of verbs and adjectives, and as a marker of satellites on various levels in the clause. In the latter function it resembles the use of the so-called ‘freier Dativ’ in German (see SCHMIDT 2006 for a recent survey) and the use of the dative in French (HERSLUND 1988). It marks beneficiary satellites such as eisdem in (1) – a so-called dativus commodi – and interactional satellites such as tibi in (2) – a so-called dativus ethicus – and many other expressions in between.

(1) Nec mirum, cum palam esset, ipsum quoque eisdem (scil. consuli-bus) et assurgere et decedere via.
   ‘And this was not surprising, for it was plain to all of them that he himself actually arose in the presence of consuls and made way for them on the street.’ (Suet. Tib. 31.2)

(2) At tibi repente paucis post diebus … venit ad me Caninius mane.
   ‘Well, you know, a few days later Caninius arrived at my house in the morning.’ (Cic. Fam. 9.2.1)

Its most common use as a marker of arguments is with trivalent verbs meaning ‘transfer by some entity, usually animate, A, of another entity, usually inanimate, B, to a third entity, usually animate, C’, or their antonyms ‘take away’. Examples are mihi in (3) and ei hospiti in (4), respectively. Communication is regarded as a form of transfer and the dative is also regular with verbs of that meaning, as in (5).

(3) Ea … dat mihi coronas.
   ‘She gives me garlands.’ (Pl. Aul. 23-5)
(4) *Aurumque ei ademit hospiti* …
‘He robbed him of his gold, his guest …’ (Pl. *Mos.* 481)

(5) *Dixi hoc tibi iam dudum et nunc dico.*
‘I told you this before, and I tell you again’ (Pl. *Mi.* 1059)

The use of the dative as marker of arguments of bivalent verbs is less frequent and quite diverse. Most of the verbs governing a dative belong to one of the following four semantic classes (N.B.: this statement cannot be reversed):

(i) verbs of helping, caring, and their opposites (ex. *noceo* ‘to harm’)
(ii) verbs of pleasing, flattering, and threatening (ex. *faveo* ‘to favor’)
(iii) verbs of ruling, obeying, and serving (ex. *impero* ‘to command’)
(iv) verbs of approaching and befalling (ex. *appropinquo* ‘to approach’)

Although it is difficult to find a common semantic denominator for these four classes it is clear that for the speakers of Latin the dative was associated with each of them. Therefore the dative was analogically extended to verbs with which the accusative is the normal case, but which are semantically close to verbs governing the dative. Thus, *iuvo* ‘to help’, normally used with the accusative, is also found with the dative in Late Latin (especially in medical treatises).

Another class of bivalent verbs that govern the dative is exemplified by the verb *haereo* ‘to stick to’ (see (6)), below. This verb can be seen as some form of non-causative counterpart of the trivalent verb *iungo* ‘to join’, with which the dative is regular as with other verbs of transfer (see (7)).

(6) *Potest hoc homini huic haerere peccatum?*
‘Can such an offence be fastened on this man?’ (Cic. *Q. Rosc.* 17)

(7) *Sive hunc oratorem, quem ego dico sapientiam iunctam habere eloquentiae, philosophum appellare malet, non impediam.*
‘Alternatively I shall raise no obstacle if he prefers to designate as a philosopher the orator whom I on my side am now describing as possessing wisdom combined with eloquence.’ (Cic. *de Orat.* 3.142)
2. Compounds and the dative (some statistical observations)

In their chapter(s) about the dative a number of grammars pay special attention to compounds that are formed through preverbal and govern the dative. With some compounds the use of the dative correlates with its use with the simple verbs (so for example: coniungo ‘to connect to’ ~ iungo ‘to join’, adhaereo ‘to adhere to’ ~ haereo ‘to stick’), but with the vast majority of compounds that govern a dative this is not the case. Since Latin has no prepositions that govern the dative, the dative cannot be ascribed to the preverbal element of the compound, which is possible with a number of compounds formed with a preverb related to a preposition governing the accusative or the ablative, as in (8) and (9) with the preverbs circum- and de-, respectively.

(8) Eho, istum, puere, circumduce hasce aedis et conclavia.
   ‘Hey, boy! Take this gentleman over the house, all the rooms.’ (Pl. Mos. 843)

(9) Iussin’ columnis deici operas araneorum?
   ‘Didn’t I tell you to clean the spiders’ webs off the columns?’ (Pl. As. 425)

In the middle of the nineteenth century someone, probably F. SCHULTZ, formulated a didactic rule stating that: compound verbs require the dative for their second or third argument. However, LEASE (1912: 299), in a rough but not less convincing survey of compounds in a corpus of texts that were used at the time in American high schools and colleges, showed that from the statistical point of view there is no need for such a rule at all. In his corpus, out of 765 bivalent or trivalent compounds only 61 are found with the dative, and many of these in combination with an accusative object or a prepositional phrase (that is as part of a trivalent frame). The number of compounds that govern the dative is much higher for those with the preverbs super-, ante-, and prae- than for, for example, circum- and pro-. In addition, many of the compounds that are used with a dative occur in alternative constructions as well (see below).

If the use of the dative cannot be ascribed to compounding as such, the only alternative explanation can be that the dative is required by the meaning of the compounds, and that is what Lease cautiously suggested and what had been proposed a year before by FAY (1911). In fact, this is how
KÜHNER and STEGMANN (1912: I.325-6), while still devoting a separate section to the matter and stating that ‘many’ verbs govern the dative, present the material. WOODCOCK follows a similar line, although he, too, has a separate section on compounds (WOODCOCK 1959: § 62). But BENNETT, reacting to both FAY and LEASE, pays separate attention to compounds because he finds that ‘the bulk’ of the verbs he lists (BENNETT 1914: I.124-32) do not admit a semantic explanation. Therefore, he implies, it remains useful to know that a number of compounds govern the dative unlike their simple correlates. HOFMANN and SZANTYR (1965: 87-91), in their diachronic approach, make a distinction between verbs with which the dative is ‘inherited’ (from Indo-European), verbs with which it developed secondarily (through analogy), and compounds. With these the resulting complex meaning opened the way to analogical extension of the dative.

It is interesting to see that this special attention, in various forms, to compounds is entirely absent from the grammars of ERNOUT-THOMAS, LAVENCY, and TOURATIER. The only explanation I can think of is that French latinists either ignored this German invention or never became acquainted with it.

3. The dative and its alternatives

There are very few compound verbs that are only found with the dative case as marker of the second or third argument. The range of alternative patterns of verbs governing the dative can be illustrated with examples (10) – (14) of the bivalent verb accedo ‘to go or come (to)’. The examples (10) and (11) demonstrate the use of accedo with an abstract subject and a human ‘destination’. In (10) the destination is in the dative, in (11) it is a prepositional phrase with the preposition ad that corresponds to the preverb ad of accesserit. In examples (12) and (13), on the other hand, real motion of human beings is involved. Here too, both the dative iis in (12) and the prepositional phrase ad urbem in (13) are allowed. (Other directional prepositions are possible as well.) In (14), finally, Iugurtham is a bare accusative, resembling the use of the accusative in passiviable clauses, like eum in (15). In this example eum is the subject with the passive infinitive adiri. However, according to SERVUS, the verb accedo is not passivizable: ‘Accedor’ enim non dicimus. (Serv. ad Verg. A. 8.195). Maybe in this case the accusative has to be explained as due to the fact that the preposi-
tion corresponding with the preverb *ad-* governs the accusative. As the translation ‘join’, ‘attach oneself’ shows motion need not be involved. *Accedo* in this sense is found with a prepositional expression (*ad*) as well (*Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. § 7).

(10) *Num tibi aut stultitia accessit aut superat superbia?*  
    ‘Has either foolishness taken hold of you or is your pride overflowing?’ (Pl. *Am.* 709)

(11) *… voluntas vostra si ad poetam accesserit.*  
    ‘… if the playwright has the benefit of your good will.’ (Ter. *Ph.* 29)

(12) *Itaque iis (scil. apibus) unctus qui accessit, pungunt, non, ut muscae, ligurriunt ...*  
    ‘So one who approaches them (viz. the bees) smelling of perfume they sting, and do not, as flies do, lick him ...’ (Var. *R.* 3.16.6)

(13) *Formam … ex qua me fingere possim et praemeditari quo animo accedam ad urbem.*  
    ‘A sketch in the light of which I can adjust myself and work out beforehand the attitude of mind in which I ought to approach the capital.’ (Cic. *Att.* 6.3.4)

(14) *Eo praemio inlectus Bocchus cum magna multitudine Iugurtham accedit.*  
    ‘Tempted by this prize, Bocchus joined Jugurtha with great throng.’ (Sal. *Jug.* 97.3)

(15) *Per epistulam aut per nuntium quasi regem adiri eum aient.*  
    ‘They say he is addressed only by dispatch or envoy, just like a king.’ (Pl. *Mil.* 1225)

As for the variation between the dative and the prepositional expression, the common understanding is that the dative is more frequent when the verb is used in a figurative sense and that when real, physical (literal) motion is involved the prepositional expression is preferred, and is even the rule in the classical authors CICERO and CAESAR. From the Augustan period onwards poets and poetizing prose use, and some prefer, the dative
also when real motion is involved (KÜHNER and STEGMANN 1912: I.326). However, SERBAT (1996), who has the most extensive discussion of the dative in general and of compounds governing the dative in particular, rejects the existence of the ‘figurative : literal’ dichotomy that most scholars assume (which is undoubtedly correct from the statistical point of view). Instead he assumes ‘une suffisante synonymie sémantique’ between the dative and the prepositional expressions (SERBAT 1996: 518-9). The degree to which the two expressions are used varies from one verb to the other.

The examples (10) – (13) suggest that KÜHNER- STEGMANN’s generalisation does not cover the actual variation found. As the translations show, the distinction between ‘abstract’ or ‘figurative’ motion and ‘real’ or literal motion is too simple. Accedo in (10) is found under the heading ‘to come to appertain (to a person or thing)’, ‘be given (to)’ in the Oxford Latin Dictionary (s.v. § 15.c). It resembles the verbs ‘accido ‘to befall’ and contingo ‘to fall to one’s lot’ (see Thesaurus Linguae Latinae s.v. accedo § VII, p. 270.41ff.), with which the dative is regular. It can also be understood as the non-causative counterpart of trivalent inicio ‘to instil’, which governs the dative for its third argument. The verbal noun accessio is common in medical authors with the meaning ‘paroxysm’, ‘attack’, which is clearly related to the meaning of accedo in our example.

The Loeb translation of (11) might suggest that the prepositional expression is synonymous with the bare dative one. However, it is clear that the speaker of the prologue of Terence’s play wants the active involvement of the audience in ‘taking sides with’ the poet. Although what is expressed by the dative and the prepositional phrase amounts to the same thing, the two expressions need not be synonymous. That the two expressions are not, or need not always be, entirely equivalent is also suggested by the following example, see (16). Note that in the immediate context Cicero uses the directional adverb eo with transire and the prepositional phrase ab eo with accedo’s antonym discedere.

(16) Quare ... patimini ... eo transire illius turpitudinis infamiam ubi cetera maleficia consistunt, ab eo invidiam discedere aliquando ad quem numquam accessisse culpam videtis.

‘Then suffer the taint of that dishonour to be transferred to him at whose door lie those other crimes; suffer it to depart at last from him on whom you see that no guilt has ever fastened.’ (Cic. Cluent. 83)
It is likely that at some time before the period of our written records the dative came into use with *accedo* as an alternative of the *ad*-expression to mark the destination of the involuntary, or: uncontrolled (Dik 1997: 112), arrival of an abstract (*stultitia* in (10)) or material (*e.g.* *pecunia* ‘money’) entity, on the model of verbs with which the dative was regular. The more literal expression with *ad* remained available, as (16) shows. (There was also a reverse development of an entirely different type, as a result of which the dative was replaced by prepositional *ad*-expressions in most environments in which the dative was regular. It is therefore not surprising that in Late Latin instances can be found of *contingo* ‘to fall to one’s lot’ with an *ad*-expression.)

As for the examples of real motion, (12) and (13), the translations of both contain the word ‘approach’, which might be taken as support for considering the combination of *accedo* with the dative in (12) and with the *ad*-phrase in (13) synonymous. However, in spite of the English translations that suggest synonymy, the two expressions need not be really synonymous. The most common Latin verbs denoting approach are *appropinquo* and – preferred in metrical texts – *propinquo*, both governing the dative, like the adjective *propinquus* ‘near’ from which they are derived. With *appropinquo*, which is unlike *accedo* not attested before the Classical period, the dative is the most common case for the second argument (as it is with the adjective), but *ad*-phrases are attested for *appropinquo* from more or less the same period (notably in the pseudo-Caesarian texts). That Varro exceptionally uses the dative in (12) with *accedo* need not surprise too much since it is regular with *appropinquo*. However, why do we find *ad urbem* in (13) and not the dative *urbi*, although there are several instances of dative *urbi* + *appropinquo* ‘to approach the city’?

In order to answer this question it is useful to examine in more detail the meanings of the two verbs. Although they both denote motion, they do so in different ways. *Appropinquo* is regularly found in military contexts with generals or soldiers as subject, but it is also found with subjects like *ver* ‘spring’ (see (17) below), *bellum civile* ‘civil war’, *metus* ‘fear’, *nex* ‘murder’, and *partus* ‘the action of giving birth’. Subjects like these, which do not exercise control over the approach, do not occur with *accedo*. Whereas *accedere* is easily found as prolative infinitive with the verbs *iubeo* ‘to order’ (see (18)) and *veto* ‘to forbid’ (see (19)), *appropinquo* is not so found. *Iubeo* and *veto* require a high degree of control of their object constituents over the action denoted by the prolative infinitive.
Ver appropinquabat.
‘Spring drew near.’ (Nep. Eum. 5.7)

... lictores ad eum accedere consul iussit ...
... the consul ordered the lictors to go up to him …’ (Liv. 24.9.1)

Nam me ad famosas vetuit mater accedere.
‘For mother told me never to go near women of ill fame.’ (Cic. de Orat. 2.277)

We might therefore describe the difference between *accedo* and *appropinquuo* as ‘controlled movement towards an entity’ and ‘not necessarily controlled coming near an entity’, respectively.

In the case of *apibus accedit* in (12), the subject does not necessarily approach the bees with determination. Also when he comes near them by accident he will be stung, if he smells. The type of event Varro is referring to could be described with *appropinquuo* just as well, and this opens the way for the use of the dative. Nothing similar in (13).

It seems then that both in the case of non-literal (see (10) and (11)) and in the case of literal motion (see (12) and (13)) the dative became a suitable alternative for the prepositional *ad*-phrase with *accedo* when the degree of involvement of the subject was low. The dative was taken by analogy from two different classes of verbs with which the dative was regular. For one and the same compound there may therefore be various semantic motivations for adopting the dative. As far as *accedo* is involved, I do not subscribe to Serbat’s assumption of synonymy.

At this point it would be attractive to see whether the notion of low involvement of the subject is also useful for explaining the use of the dative with the verbs from which *accedo* draws its dative by analogy (a re-examination of DIVER (1964) would then be interesting), but this would require more space than is available. So let me turn to a few other issues regarding the use of the dative with compounds.

The compound *excido* ‘to fall, drop off or out’ resembles *accedo* in that it is formed by the preverb *ex-* that denotes ‘movement away from’ and the simple verb *cado* ‘to fall’ that denotes movement as well (in this case uncontrolled movement). The second argument of *excido* (the source) is expressed as a prepositional phrase (with several separative prepositions),
rarely and after the classical period as a bare ablative noun phrase (20), but regularly as a dative noun phrase (21).

(20) (Palinurus) ... exciderat puppi mediis effusus in undis.  
‘Palinurus had fallen from the ship, flung forth in mid-ocean.’  
(Verg. A. 6.339)

(21) (cistella) ... loca haec circiter excidit mihi.  
‘I dropped it somewhere about here.’ (Pl. Cis. 677)

In (20) (puppi is morphologically ambiguous, but certainly an ablative) excido is used in its literal meaning. The bare ablative is also found with the simple verb in Livy and other authors, so there are two good reasons for the use of the bare ablative. The dative is used for entities that ‘fall unobserved’ or ‘are lost’ (Oxford Latin Dictionary § 2). In this sense excido can be regarded as an antonym of accedo above. The dative is then understandable. Alternatively excido can be regarded as the non-causative counterpart of a verb like adimo ‘to take away from’, with which the dative is regular. Note that with excido in this sense the subjects are inanimate and have no control over what happens.

For compounds like accedo and excido, which in their literal meaning denote motion of an entity A towards or away from another entity B, it is not difficult to explain the dative when the entity A is not a typical mover. More difficult are cases in which no movement is involved at. I start with the verb dependeo ‘to hang down (from)’. The simple verb pendeo does not denote motion as such, but rather a ‘downward orientation’. As may be expected on the basis of this meaning and of that of the preverb de- ‘downwards’ the compound is found with various adverbial expressions indicating the source. It is (like the simple verb) found with the bare ablative as well, as in (22). However, it is also found with the dative from the Augustan poets onwards, as in (23). How to explain the dative in this case?

(22) Dependent lychni laquearibus aureis / incensi ...  
‘Lighted lamps hang down from the fretted roof of gold ...’ (Verg. A. 1.726-7)

(23) ... lateri cervina sinistro / vellera dependent ...  
‘... a deer-skin hung from her left side ...’ (Ovid. Met. 6.592-3)
Whereas in (22) lamps are literally hanging down from the roof, the skin in (23) is not really hanging down from the side, it is ‘hanging down along’. The dative is used as with the verb haereo ‘to stick to’. The simple verb pendeo is also rarely found in this way (Thesaurus Linguae Latinae s.v. 1042.17f.). The reason that poets use the dative with a compound like dependeo is not because they mechanically or ‘metri causa’ extend the use of the dative for compounds, but because they want to evoke an image that resembles a situation that can be described by another verb governing the dative. Dependent can be taken as describing the way the vellera lateri haerent.

A similar reasoning can be applied to (24), in which HORACE hyperbolically characterizes the devotion of a person to his studies. The typical verb for denoting devotion is studeo, which governs the dative. The verb incumbo ‘to bend or lean over to’ is likewise found with the dative when used in the sense ‘to devote one’s energies to’. But the same explanation is not available for (25), which means ‘to die (in a certain place or position)’. Prepositional alternatives are rare (the verb is infrequent anyhow), but they all indicate position and not motion. The only explanation I can think of is that OVID uses the dative for the stative situation immorior on the analogy of the motion compound incumbo, with which the poet used the dative 18 lines before in the same Niobe episode in a similar situation (see (26)).

(24)  … praeparat ulmos, / immoritur studii et amore senescit habendi.
‘… makes ready his elms, nearly kills himself over his hobbies, and grows old with his passion for getting.’ (Hor. Ep. 1.7.84-5)

(25)  Haec frustra fugiens collabitur, illa sorori / immoritur.  
‘One fell when trying in vain to flee. Another died upon her sister.’  (Ovid. Met. 6.295-6)

(26)  Corporibus gelidis incumbit et ordine nullo / oscula dispensat natos suprema per omnes.
‘She threw herself upon the cold bodies and wildly gave the last kisses to them all.’ (Ovid. Met. 6.277-8)

As in the case of accedo we see that the use of the dative with one and the same verb may be explained in various ways. The last compound governing a dative I will deal with is the not very frequent verb indormio. It is found a couple of times in Cicero’s works.
and in later authors. In its literal sense ‘to sleep in or on top of’ it is used with the dative by Horace (see (28)), to be compared with the verb *incubo* ‘to lie or recline on’, with which the dative is regular. In a figurative sense ‘doze over’ it is used by Cicero (see (27)). The normal thing one expects of a leading person in the state is to be alert and pay attention to important developments. What Cicero says in (27) is that Antony does not. Verbs of caring for and paying attention to often govern the dative, so for example the verb *consulo* ‘to look after’ in (29). So should we explain the dative in (27) as due to the antonymy relation between *indormio* and these verbs?

(27) *Constitue hoc, consul, aliquando … Edormi crapulam, inquam, et exhala. An faces admovendae sunt quae \(v.l(t)e\) excitent tantae causae indormientem?*

‘Determine this some time or other, consul … Sleep off, I say, and exhale the fume of debauch. Must torches be brought to rouse you as over such an issue you lie asleep?’ (Cic. Phil. 2.30)

(28) *Congestis undique saccis / indormis inhians …*

‘You sleep with open mouth on money-bags piled up from all sides …’ (Hor. S. 1.1.70-1)

(29) *… ut Carbo: “si consul est qui consult patriae, quid aliud fecit Opimius?”*

‘… remember Carbo’s: “If a consul’s duty is to consult the interests of his native land, what else has Opimius done?”’ (Cic. de Orat. 2.165)

4. Conclusion

What I have tried to suggest is that, apart from those compounds that can be seen as modifications of simple verbs that govern the dative already, the dative with most compounds can be explained by referring to one or more (classes of) verbs with a similar meaning, or – especially in creative texts – by assuming a more complicated bridge, which is nonetheless semantic. I find the *indormio* case the most difficult. In difficult cases like this, one might still avoid the idea that compounding as such is responsible for the dative. One might ask what would be the alternative within the Latin case system. One of the functions of preverbalisation is the transforma-
tion of one-place verbs to two-place verbs and of two-place verbs to three-place verbs. The new argument has to be assigned a case. Nominative and genitive are excluded for obvious reasons. The accusative is especially productive for verbs that require an affected or an effected second argument. The ablative is especially productive for separative arguments and for arguments that indicate the entity another entity is provided with (or antonyms). The semantic function of most dative arguments with compounds is different.

At this point it would be attractive to explore once more the semantic relation of dative arguments with their governing verbs, but that would require another article.8
Notes

1. It was at the first colloquium of Latin linguistics in Amsterdam (1981) that Christian LEHMANN gave an important paper on preverbs and cases in Latin (published as LEHMANN 1983) and it was also the first time the two of us met. I look back with gratitude and pleasure to a long period of intellectual and personal interaction and I am glad to contribute to this volume in honour of Christian’s brilliant academic career.

2. On the use of a non-accusative case with these verbs see PINKSTER (1988).

3. García HERNÁNDEZ (e.g. 2001) has the most systematic account of causative and non-causative counterparts.

4. The simple verb cedo is found in a related sense and governing the dative. See Thesaurus Linguae Latinae s.v. § IV, p. 730.57ff. The first instance is Cic. Ver. 2.170: Eam autem faeneratio erat eiusmodi iudices, ut etiam quae est huic cederet. ‘And this system of loans was so managed, gentlemen, that the profits even from this source came to our friend here.’ Among the nouns functioning as subject of cedo in the Thesaurus there is only one abstract noun (victoria).

5. The Budé translation is comparable: ‘… pour peu que votre bon vouloir soit acquis au poète.’ The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (s.v. 270.45) wrongly includes the following instance of voluntas functioning as the subject of accedo as governing a dative (nobis). Nobis goes with opus est, as becomes clear from Shackleton BAILEY’S Loeb translation. … vehementer opus est nobis et voluntatem et auctoritatem et imperium tuum accedere. ‘… we urgently need your good-will, influence, and official authority in addition (my italics).’ (Cic. Fam. 13.42.1).

6. Thesaurus Linguae Latinae s.v. accedo 271.9 also cites the following fragment of Cicero Rep. 4.9, as quoted by by Aug. Civ. 2, 14 ext.: … frustra hoc exclamante Cicerone, qui cum de poetis ageret: ad quos cum accessit clamar et adprobatio populi quasi culusdam magni et sapientis magistri, quas il-li obducunt tenebras, quos invehunt metus, quas inf lammant cupiditates! ‘… Cicero raising his voice all in vain against this, who says in his discussion of the poets: “When the cheers and approval of the people, as if it were some great and good teacher, uphold the poets, what deep shadows they cast, what fears they inspire, what lusts they enkindle!”’. Here, as in the passage discussed in note 5, the ‘element ‘in addition’ is present. It is not an instance of = contingo.

7. There is also a remarquable instance of the use of ad in CICERO: Quis enim ignorat, si plures ex alto emergere velit, propius fore eos quidem ad respirandum, qui ad summam iam aquam adpropinquent, sed nihilo magis respi-
rare posse quam eos, qui sint in profundo? 'For who does not know that if there are several people plunged in deep water and trying to get out, those already approaching the surface, though nearer to breathing, will be no more able actually to breathe than those at the bottom?' (Cic. Fin. 4.64). Here the directional value of *ad summam aquam* is in contrast with *in profundo*.

8. I thank Jessica Seidman for her assistance with the translations (which are in principle based upon Loeb translations) and both her and the reviewer of the first draft for their comments.
References


