

# The Use and Development of *Habere* + Infinitive in Latin

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## 1 The Data

My investigations are based on approximately 330 examples of *habere* + infinitive<sup>1</sup> found in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (TLL). More examples than these do exist, but covering the period stretching from Cicero, who is the first author to use such a construction, and up until the 6th century A.D., a time by which all the different uses of *habere* + infinitive are well established, they seem to give a realistic picture of the developments.

## 2 The Earliest Examples - *Habere* as Lexical Verb

*Habere* + infinitive is found for the first time in the works of Cicero. He uses *habere* + infinitive in a rather restrictive way.

Examples typical for Cicero's use:

- (1) ...*nihil habeo ad te scribere nisi summum odium omnium hominum in eos qui tenent omnia.*  
"I have nothing to write to you but everybody's hatred for those who rule everything"  
(Cic. Att. 2,22,6)

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<sup>1</sup>The infinitive is not always a complement of *habere*. Nevertheless, for the sake of simplicity, I refer to all examples in which *habere* occurs juxtaposed with an infinitive as "*habere* + infinitive".

- (2) *Quid habes igitur dicere de Gaditano foedere eiusmodi?*  
"What, then, of this sort do you have to say with respect to the treaty with Gades?"  
(Cic. Balb. 33)

The infinitive is always a verb of saying, and it is never passive.

I take *habere* to be a lexical verb in the earliest examples. In such an analysis, the infinitive is not a complement of *habere*, but an adjunct on the direct object. It is equivalent to a restrictive relative clause. In fact, the following sentences express the same:

- (3) a. *Habeo [aliquid [dicere]]*  
b. *Habeo [aliquid [quod dicam]]*

They may both be rendered in English by "I have something that I can say", and, as indicated by the brackets, they also have the same syntactic structure.

## 2.1 Functional or Anaphoric Control?

Constructions in which there is a non-finite verb form with no overtly expressed subject can be either one of anaphoric control<sup>2</sup> or one of functional control.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of *habere* + infinitive we seem to be dealing with functional control. Some arguments in favour of this analysis:

- Functional control requires a controller to be present and to be a core function (Falk 2001, Lødrup forthcoming). This is the case in all the examples of *habere* + infinitive.
- Anaphoric control should allow for split controllers, i.e. more than one possible controller in one sentence, whereas functional control only allows for one controller (Falk 2001:142). There is no example of *habere* + infinitive in which there is more than one possible controller.
- In anaphoric control the infinitive may have an overt subject. This is impossible in functional control (Falk 2001:143). There is no example of *habere* + infinitive with an overt subject of the infinitive.

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<sup>2</sup>Anaphoric control is the LFG counterpart to control in GB theory.

<sup>3</sup>Functional control corresponds to either control or raising in the GB tradition, depending on whether or not the main verb assigns a thematic role to the subject.



## 2.3 Sentence Types (Apparently) Problematic for the Lexical Analysis

Apparently problematic for the analysis of *habere* as a lexical verb are sentences in which there is no NP available for filling the direct object function, like the following:

- (6) *de divis neque ut sint neque ut non sint habeo dicere.*  
"As to the gods I can say neither how they are nor how they are not."  
(Cic. Nat. Deor. 1,63)
- (7) *nullum modum esse hominis occidendi quo ille non aliquot occiderit, multos ferro, multos veneno; habeo etiam dicere quem contra morem maiorum minorem annis LX de ponte in Tiberim deiecerit.*  
"There is no manner of committing murder in which he has not murdered many men; many by the sword, many by poison. I can even tell you of one whom, contrary to the custom of our ancestors, he threw from the bridge into the Tiber, when he was not sixty years of age." (Cic. S. Rosc. 100)

In (7), for instance, the only candidates for being the second argument of *habere* is the subordinate clause *quem ... deiecerit*, or the infinitive. But lexical *habere* can take neither clausal nor infinitival complements.

This problem is solved by regarding *dicere quem ... deiecerit* as a headless relative clause, equivalent to *hoc dicere, quem ... deiecerit*. In this way, it is possible to draw the same f-structure for (7) as for the other classical examples:



Such Praedicativum-constructions may also be found with *habere*, as in (11):

- (11) *habere [aliquid [dicendum]]*  
"To have something to say"

According to Pinkster, then, since the gerundive could be replaced by an infinitive in sentences with *dare*, the infinitive started to be used as an alternative to the gerundive also in sentences with *habere*. In other words, we get sentences consisting of *habere* + infinitive:

- (12) *habere [aliquid [dicere]]*  
"To have something to say"

### 3 Further Development - *Habere* as Auxiliary

#### 3.1 A Case of Reanalysis

After the classical period, *habere* eventually becomes an auxiliary. How did this change happen?

Harris & Campbell (1995) and Campbell (2004) recognize three mechanisms of syntactic change: Reanalysis, extension and borrowing. Reanalysis changes the underlying structure of a construction without changing the surface structure. The possibility of more than one analysis of a construction is a prerequisite for reanalysis to take place (Campbell 2004: 284). There are some examples in which we can readily imagine a reanalysis to have taken place, so reanalysis appears to be the mechanism relevant in our case. See e.g. the following example:

- (13) *Venit ad me pater: quid habui facere? Perducere illum ad patruum?*  
*Non feci.*  
"My father came to me. What did I have to do? Bring him to my uncle? I did not do it."  
(Sen. Contr. 1,1,19)

Both an interpretation of *habere* as a lexical verb and an interpretation of *habere* as an auxiliary are possible here. In other words, the two following readings are possible:

- (14) a. *I had what to do?* (Lexical)  
b. *I had to do what?* (Auxiliary)

The analysis depends on what we take to be the referent of *quid*; the thought of the act he has to perform, or the act itself.

### 3.2 Auxiliary *Habere* as PRED or as Functional Head?

There is no general agreement within the LFG literature as to whether auxiliaries should be treated as PREDs or as functional heads that simply contribute tense, aspect or modality features to the f-structure (Lødrup forthcoming).

Some considerations:

- Elements contributing nothing more than tense and/or aspect features to the f-structure are probably functional heads.
- Modal verbs: Difference between agent-oriented modality on the one hand and other types of modality on the other.
  - Agent-oriented modality: PRED
  - Other types of modality: Functional head

The earliest examples of *habere* as auxiliary are examples of agent-oriented modality. More precisely, *habere* expresses obligation or permission, as in (15) and (16):

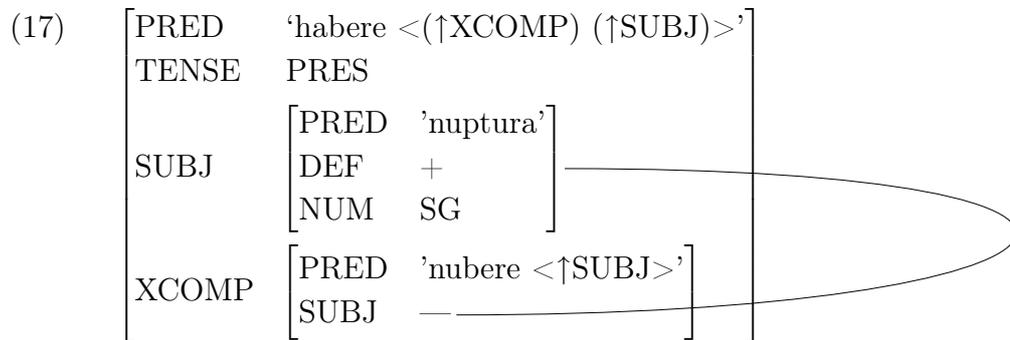
(15) *Et illa nuptura in domino habet nubere, id est non ethnico, sed fratri, quia et vetus lex adimit coniugium allophylorum.*

”The woman, if intending to marry, has to marry in the Lord; that is, not to an heathen, but to a brother, inasmuch as even the ancient law forbids marriage with members of another tribe.” (Tert. Monog. 7, p. 771,240)

(16) *Si inimicos ... iubemur diligere, quem habemus odisse?*

”If we are ordered to love our enemies, whom are we allowed to hate?” (Tert. Apol. 37,1)

Therefore, *habere* is probably best taken as a PRED in the early auxiliary examples. The following f-structure may be drawn for e.g. (15):



Illa nuptura habet nubere

## 4 Conclusions

- In the first examples of *habere* + infinitive, *habere* is a lexical verb. There is functional control. This construction arises in analogy with the so-called Praedicativum constructions *dare aliquid bibendum* / *dare aliquid bibere*.
- Later, *habere* becomes an auxiliary through reanalysis of ambiguous examples. In the early auxiliary examples *habere* expresses agent-oriented modality, and is therefore best taken as a PRED. Also in these examples there is functional control.

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