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LAT. *PROELIĀRĪ*, *PROELIVM/-A FACERE*  
AND *PROELIA/-VM GERERE*:  
SYNTHETIC OVERVIEW OF THE USE CONTEXTS.

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**Summary.**

This paper is a synthetic overview in English of an anterior work in French (2017). In this paper we propose an analysis of the use contexts of three verbal units whose morpho-semantic structures present some similar features: the denominal verb *proeliārī* and two support verb constructions (*proelium/-a facere* and *proelia/-um gerere*). According to us, the three verbal units do not really have the same semantic value: the support verb constructions would not only be paraphrases of the denominal verb. Our corpus, compound from early Latin texts to late Latin texts (*Vulgate* and the first Church Fathers), has been chosen in order to propose a large view of these configurations.

**Résumé.**

Cet article est une synthèse en anglais d'un travail antérieur rédigé en langue française (2017). Nous proposons une confrontation des contextes d'emploi de trois lexies, morphologiquement et sémantiquement proches : le dénominatif *proeliārī* et les deux constructions à verbe support *proelium/-a facere* et *proelia/-um gerere*. À partir d'un corpus de textes s'échelonnant de l'Antiquité aux premiers Pères de l'Église, cette analyse tente de mettre au jour le fonctionnement de chacune de ces trois unités lexicales en travaillant les nuances sémantiques, mais également les configurations morphosyntaxiques privilégiant l'utilisation de l'une des trois lexies au détriment des deux autres.

**1. Introduction.**

A locutor can sometimes use two different linguistic units to denote the same verbal action. In this paper, we would like to consider a specific configuration wherein the speaker may choose either a verb phrase containing a light (or “support”) verb and a verbal noun, or a simple verb, semantically full. Our aim is to dispute the idea that there is a semantic equivalence between support verb constructions (SVC) and denominal verbs, morphologically derived from the verbal noun of the SVC. The fact that the SVC and denominal verb coexist in language indicates that the locutors do not randomly select these linguistic units. Thus, an SVC is not only a “good paraphrase” of the denominal verb (Marini 2010: 6; 12).

According to Sanromán Vilas (2009: 291), linguists have rarely studied the semantic distinctions between SVC and denominal verbs: they have very often made typologies of light verbs and verbal nouns but have not thoroughly considered the aforementioned distinctions, even if Baños Baños (2013) has opened up the way in Latin studies. Establishing semantic distinctions in Latin is very difficult work because it is impossible to use Latin consultants in order to help us grasp shades of meaning, as Marini (2000a: 366) reminds us. Indeed our research depends on documentation which is often incomplete and random in its conservation.

Nevertheless, Hofmann (1958), Fugier (1994), Marini (2000a: 366-367) – despite the indicated reserve – and Baños Baños (2015) proposed some methodological parameters, agreeing to make frequency, chronology, context (large and strict) and cotext (syntactic government and syntagmatic chain of the components of the SVC) essential in their research.

In our study of the semantic distinctions between SCV and denominal verbs, we have decided to consider the denominal verb *proeliārī* and two SVC in *proelium*: *pr. facere* and *pr. gerere*<sup>1</sup>. We have chosen a diachronic perspective and have thus analyzed texts dated from the Antiquity (namely the periods 1 to 7 in Flobert's periodization (1975))<sup>2</sup> to the first Church Fathers (Flobert's periods 8 and 9). The data have been collected from the *Brepols* website and the items *proelia\** / *proelium\** / *proelie\** and their allomorphs have been interrogated.

## **2. Data of the documentation: chronology, frequency, context.**

### **2. 1. *The verb proeliārī.***

*Proeliārī* is used on 259 occasions in our corpus and appears in the oldest texts (see Period 1: 2 instances). We only have 68 recorded instances from the Antiquity (Roman Republic and Early Empire = Period 1 to Period 6), whereas 191 instances have been listed for the Late Imperial Period. So the Antiquity constitutes around 26% of the instances of *proeliārī*; the Late Imperial Period, around 74%.

If we examine the data more closely, we can see that the distribution of these instances is heterogeneous. In fact, some periods reveal a rise in the attestations, but this rise is diffuse throughout the time. This observation is true for Periods 3 (*Classical Period*) and 5 (*Julio-Claudian Dynasty*) of the Antiquity; but above all, for Period 9 (*After Constantine*) which comprises texts of the first Church Fathers and epitomes or Latin translations of Greek historians, containing around 68% of the instances of *proeliārī*.

Finally, we would like to stress the 13 instances which have been recorded for Period 6 (*Flavian Age*). This number is surprising, because it indicates that *proeliārī* is a relatively common word for this period, despite the revelation that the epic poets of this same period never used this verb in their poetry: must we consider *proeliārī* a prosaic word?

### **2. 2. *Numeric comparison: proeliārī and the two selected SVC.***

In the following figure, we have indicated the number of instances for each lexical unit and have integrated the 383 instances of our corpus in three cycles: Cycle I (*Early Antiquity: Republican Period* = Flobert's periods 1 to 3); Cycle II (*Antiquity: Early Imperial Period* = Periods 4 to 7) and Cycle III (*Late Antiquity: Late Imperial Period* = Periods 8 and 9).

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<sup>1</sup> For a justification of this limitation, see Taous (2017: 70-71).

<sup>2</sup> Flobert's periodization of Latin literature is the following: Period 1 = *Archaic period I*, Period 2 = *Archaic Period II*, Period 3 = *Classical Period*, Period 4 = *Augustan Age*, Period 5 = *Julio-Claudian Dynasty*, Period 6 = *Flavian Age*, Period 7 = *Late Imperial Period*, Period 8 = *From Severus' Dynasty to Constantine* and Period 9 = *After Constantine*.

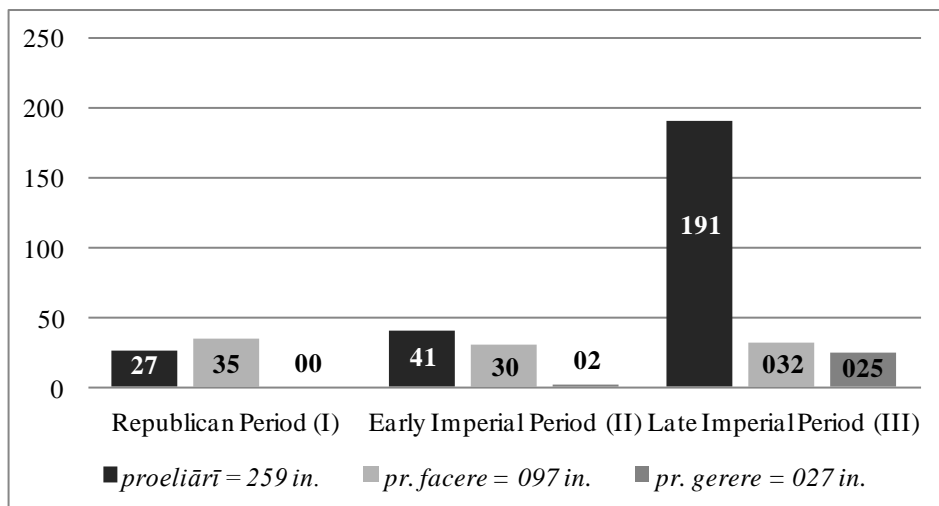


FIGURE 1: Repartition of the instances of *proeliārī* and the SVC *pr. facere* and *pr. Gerere* according to Cycles I-III

With 259 instances, the denominal verb is very common and constitutes 67.6% of our corpus, whereas the SVC constitute 32.4% of the corpus: *pr. facere* at approximately 25.4% (with only 097 instances) and *pr. gerere* at only 7% (with only 027 instances). Nevertheless, throughout the first two cycles, *proeliārī* and *pr. facere* are used with similar frequency (68 vs 65 instances, respectively), which makes the comparison of the two lexical items especially relevant.

In addition, Figure 1 indicates that the SVC *pr. facere* is used with regular frequency throughout the Latinity (35 instances for Cycle I, 30 instances for Cycle II and 32 instances for Cycle III), in contrast to *proeliārī* and *pr. gerere*, whose instances continue to increase throughout the Latinity, peaking during the late period totalling around 74% of the instances of the denominal (with 191 instances out of 259) and more than 92.5% of the instances of *pr. gerere* (with 25 instances out of 27). Thus the SVC *pr. gerere* can be considered as a late variation of *pr. facere*, probably due to the analogical influence of *bellum/-a gerere*. In epic poetry the SVC *pr. facere* is never used, perhaps because it is considered too prosaic (Taous 2012: 259-260), unlike the SVC *proelia gerere*, utilized on three occasions by Lucan, whose poetic style is closer to historical prose (see Taous 2013: 22; 314-337; 341; 388; 408). In our corpus, we have recorded two instances from poets of the Early Roman Empire (Horatius and Ovidius). Thus, in the beginning, the SVC *proelia gerere* was probably secondary to *proelium facere* and poetic (from there, the selection of the plural of the verbal noun), but could be transposable in prose.

Concerning the accusative of the verbal noun, the texts indicate that the singular is first for *facere* (*proelium facere*, Cato), but the plural for *gerere* (*proelia gerere*, Hor.). That is why, we have decided to present the SVC in this way: *proelium/-a facere* and *proelia/-um gerere*, with a number order relevant.

In order to determine whether the differences between synthetic structure and analytic structure are due to levels of language, we must examine the context of the writers and their works (large and strict context) more carefully.

### 2. 3. Overview of the use contexts.

We have decided to classify the examples and to consider the literary genres to which they belong. Two literary genres are significant for this study: historical prose and the

Christian and Biblical literature. Indeed, these two genres contain almost all of the instances of the three lexical units selected, with 338 instances out of 383 (see Figure 2).

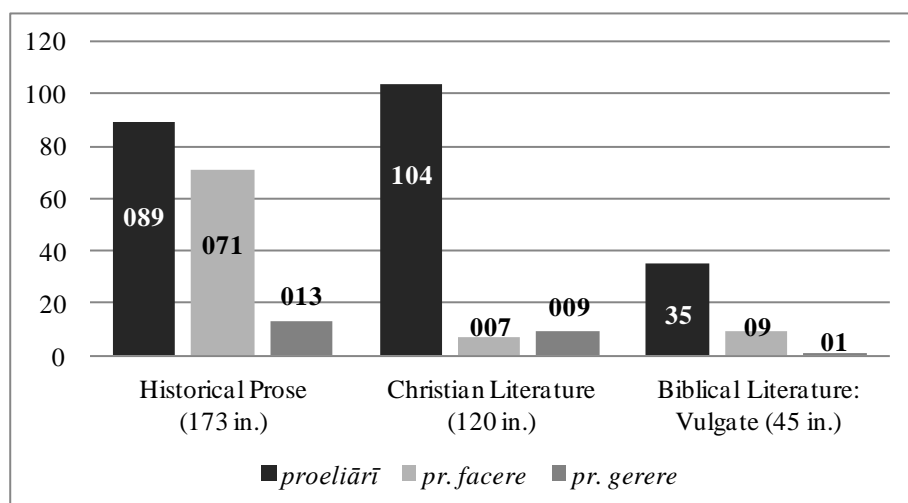


FIGURE 2: Repartition of the instances of *proeliārī* and the SVC *pr. facere* and *pr. gerere* according to literary genre

Of the texts of the corpus, the historical prose contains 173 instances out of 383 (approximately 45.2%); each of the three verbs is used there, the denominal with a frequency of 51.5% (89 instances out of 173) and the SVC with a frequency of 48.5% (84 instances out of 173). However, the proportion is a little different if we change the perspective and consider the part of the historical genre for each of these verbal units: the historical genre contains 73.2% of the instances of *proelium/-a facere* (with 71 instances out of 97), 48.1% of the instances of *proelia/-um gerere* (with 13 instances out of 27) and only 34.3% of the instances of *proeliārī* (with 89 instances out of 259). According to these data, the writers would use the SVC more willingly in the historical prose, while still using the denominal. Of importance is the question of whether the late SVC *proelia/-um gerere* replaced the SVC in *facere* in the historical prose and whether *proeliārī* is less and less used in the historical speech as it is more frequent in the Christian literature. Could these linguistic units be distributed according to the literary genres?

The 120 instances recorded from the Christian literature constitute 31.3% of the corpus: *proeliārī* appears there in more than 86.6% of the instances (104 instances out of 120). This verb is thus specific to the Christian literature. The SVC *proelia/-um gerere* is relatively frequent in this literature but is used without real generic preference (13 instances for the historical prose vs 09 instances for the Christian literature). Finally, the use of SVC in *facere* decreases considerably (71 instances for the historical prose vs 07 instances for the Christian literature) and the late SVC in *gerere* replaces it.

### 3. *Proeliārī*, *pr. facere* and *pr. gerere* in historical prose: comparative analysis.

Of the 173 instances in the historical prose, 76 appear during the period of the Late Roman Empire (Periods 8 and 9), 52 during the Republican Period (Period 3) and 45 during the period of the Early Roman Empire (Periods 4, 5, 6 and 7), with 44% in Cycle III, 30% in Cycle I and 26% in Cycle II.

### 3. 1. Republican Period (Cycle I).

Period 3 (*Classical Period*) is the only period represented in Cycle I. The denominal and the SVC in *facere* are used in comparable proportions: the SVC has been listed 30 times; the denominal, 22.

More interesting for our work are the historians who use the two linguistic items simultaneously because it is thus possible to describe the linguistic configurations which might favour the use of the one of the two lexical units. In the following figure, we have selected the four writers who utilize both the denominal and the SVC in *facere*:

	Caes., see (1)	Hirt., see (2)	Sall.	<i>Bell. Alex.</i> , see (3)
<i>proeliārī</i>	<b>09</b>	<b>10</b>	01	02
<i>pr. facere</i>	<b>08</b>	03	04	04

FIGURE 3: Number of instances of *proeliārī* and *proelium/-a facere* in works by classical historians who use the two lexical units simultaneously

Hirtius is the only historian to favour the denominal, whereas the other writers utilize the two possibilities without real preference. These choices are thus specific to the writers and not connected with the historical prose: the two linguistic structures have the same degree of acceptability in the historical speech. The consultation document from *Brepols* website (see, for example, (1) – (2) – (3)) makes evaluation via the three criteria, generally given to justify the selection of the denominal or the SVC, possible. The three usual criteria are semantico-syntactic, aspectual and diaphasic (see, for example, Pinkster 2015: 74-75). Below, the complements encoding the opponent have been indicated in block letters; the expansions (adjectival, adverbial, propositional) in capital letters; and the verbal units, objects of this study, in bold:

- (1a) *Caesar equitatu praemisso, qui nouissimum agmen carperet atque impediret, ipse cum legionibus subsequitur. Nullum intercedebat tempus, quin extremi cum equitibus **proeliarentur**. Genus erat hoc pugnae.* (Caes. Civ. I 78, 4)  
 “Caesar, after sending forward his cavalry to annoy and hinder their rear, himself follows with the legions. No moment passed without their rearguard having to **fight with the horsemen**. Their method of fighting was as follows.” (Loeb 39; 1914)
- (1b) *Namque etiam per eos dies **proelium** SECVNDVM EQVESTRE fecit atque unum Allobrogem ex duobus, quos per fugisse ad Pompeium supra docuimus, cum quibusdam interfecit.* (Caes. Civ. III 84, 5)  
 “For even on those days **he fought a SUCCESSFUL CAVALRY skirmish** and killed among some others one of the two Allobrogians who, as we explained above, had deserted to Pompeius.” (Loeb 39; 1914)
- (2a) *Namque nostri contemptis pridie superatis hostibus, cum subsequi legiones meminissent, et pudore cedendi et cupiditate per se conficiendi proeli FORTISSIME contra pedites **proeliantur**...* (Hirt. Gall. VIII 28, 4-5)  
 “Our cavalry despised an enemy they had beaten the day before, and, remembering that the legions were following up, were ashamed to yield and eager to finish the combat by themselves, so that **they fought MOST GALLANTLY against the footmen**...” (Loeb 72; 1919)
- (2b) *Volusenus ad eam uirtutem, quae singularis erat in eo, magnum odium Commii adiungebat, quo libentius id faceret, quod imperabatur. Itaque dispositis insidiis saepius equites eius adgressus SECVNDA **proelia faciebat**.* (Hirt. Gall. VIII 48, 2)  
 “With the unique courage which he possessed Volusenus combined great hatred of Commius, so that he was the more willing to carry out this order. So he set ambushes about, attacked the other’s horsemen frequently, and **WON his actions**.” (Loeb 72; 1919)

(3a) *Itaque eo cursu quo refugientes Alexandrinos ex castello in castra sunt milites insecuti munitionibus successerunt ACERRIMEque EMINVS proeliari coeperunt. (Bell. Alex. XXX 4)*

“And so, having chased the retreating Alexandrians from the fort into their camp, our troops carried on their charge right up to the fortifications, where they proceeded to **fight** AT LONG RANGE VERY BRISKLY.” (Loeb 402; 1955)

(3b) *Nam XXXVI legio cum extra fossam in equites regis impetum fecisset, adeo SECVNDVM proelium fecit ut moenibus oppidi succederet fossamque transiret auersosque hostes adgrederetur. (Bell. Alex. XL 1)*

“Thus the Thirty-Sixth legion launched an attack on the king’s cavalry outside the trench and **fought** so SUCCESSFUL **an action** that it advanced up to the walls of the town, crossed the trench, and attacked the enemy in rear.” (Loeb 402; 1955)

After reading these excerpts, we can see that the first criterion, semantico-syntactic, is not really validated. In fact, for this cycle, the SVC in *facere* is very frequent when there are one or more adjectival expansions incidental-to the verbal noun on the syntagmatic axis; however, four exceptions to this adjectival expansion contingency were found<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the examples (2a) and (3a) prove that this information is not necessarily indicated by an adjective: it can be indicated by an adverb, thus incidental-to the denominal (see *fortissime* in (2a) and *acerrime, eminus* in (3a)). For this reason, the selection of the SVC cannot be justified only by this semantic-syntactic argument, i.-e. by the presence of an adjectival expansion incidental-to the verbal noun (see Pinkster 2015: 75). Finally, in some instances, the writers use two adjectives or two adverbs which are not coordinated, indicating that the two hetero-incidental items are not on the same semantic and syntactic level. In (1b) and (3a), for example, *secundum* and *acerrime* would be incidental-to the process of /fight/ and thus, to the whole verbal predicate. Both *secundum* and *acerrime* offer information about the positive outcome of the fight (*secundum* would be comparable to the preverb *ex-* in *expugnāre*) or about the intensity of the fight (with *acerrime*, aspectual). By contrast, in these same examples, *equestre* and *comminus* induce a typology of the fights: these lexical units are incidental-to the verbal noun (for the adjective) or the stem *proeli-* of the denominal (for the adverb).

The aspectual criterion appears to be operational: when it is used alone, the denominal denotes a global and unmarked process, “en su totalidad” (according to Sanromán Vilas 2009: 300); whereas the SVC denotes a more specific fight, “en concreto” (Sanromán Vilas 2009: 300). Using *proeliārī*, the writer expresses a continuous and atelic process (see (1a)). By contrast, the SVC is used to express a semelfactive (in relation to the accusative singular of the verbal noun, see (1b) – (3b)) or repetitive process (in relation to the accusative plural of the verbal noun, see (2b))<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, evaluation via the diaphasic criterion is difficult. Indeed, according to Seneca (Sen. *Epist.* XIX 114, 17-18), an SVC is neither more nor less formal than a denominal verb if it does not break language use. According to us, the verb phrase *proelium facere*, because it is quite frequently used in our documentation, is at the same diaphasic level as the denominal<sup>5</sup>.

### 3. 2. *Imperial Period I (Cycle II).*

In the era of the Early Roman Empire, the four periods are represented (Periods 4, 5, 6, 7), but Livy (Period 4) includes approximately half the instances in the entirety of Cycle II, with 22 instances out of 45.

<sup>3</sup> See Caes. *Civ.* III 100 and *Gall.* I 31; *Bell. Hisp.* XIV 4 and XXVII 2. Concerning these counterexamples, see Taous (2017: 80-81 and n. 38).

<sup>4</sup> Concerning the importance of the number of the verbal noun in the verb phrases, see Taous 2015a.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see Taous (2017: 82-84).

The same trends occurring in the former cycle have been observed in Cycle II: comparable frequency of the two linguistic units (25 in. of the SVC vs 20 in. of the denominal), showing slight preference for the SVC. Livy only uses the SVC which is always connected to an adjectival expansion, incidental-to the verbal noun. In contrast, Valerius Maximus, Florus and Suetonius only utilize the denominal. Valerius Maximus excludes the SVC deliberately, using often the denominal with an adverb whereas the structure *adjective + SVC* would be more expected (see *acerrime*, in (4b), in comparison with *acerrima proelia*). In the same idea, it is surprising that Florus, whose text is generally considered to be an epitome of Livy's work<sup>6</sup>, uses a linguistic form completely unused in the prose of the historian. Could the denominal, a sort of "morphological synthesis", especially conform to the laconic style of the epitome?

Curtius and Tacitus use *proeliārī* and *pr. facere* simultaneously. Tacitus is clearer than Curtius in his uses. Indeed, Tacitus always uses the SVC with an adjectival expansion, whereas the denominal is used without adverb, rendering a more generic and global meaning<sup>7</sup>.

Tacitus' example (4a) should be compared with Valerius Maximus' example (4b): each of them uses a specific structure (*acre proelium fecere; acerrime proeliari coepit*), but it is difficult to affirm that there is diaphasic variation here. However, in Tacitus, perhaps the use of the SVC is justified by the relative clause (introduced by *cuius*) which requires a nominal antecedent, explaining the utilization of the SVC.

(4a) *Quod nobis praevisum, et missae auxilio cohortes ACRE proelium fecere, cuius initio ambiguo finis laetior fuit.* (Tac. Ann. XII 40, 3)

"That event had been foreseen by us, and the cohorts sent to the rescue fought a SHARP engagement, with dubious results at the outset but a more cheerful conclusion." (Loeb 312; 1937)

(4b) ... *cum innumerabili multitudine et feroci impetu Nerviorum inclinari aciem suam uideret, timidius pugnanti militi scutum detraxit eoque tectus ACERRIME proeliari coepit.* (Val. Max. III 2, 19)

"When he saw his battle line giving way before the countless numbers and fierce onrush of the Nervii, he seized a shield from a soldier who was fighting rather timidly and covering himself with it started to battle MOST VIGOROUSLY." (Loeb 492; 2000)

### 3. 3. Imperial Period 2 (Cycle III).

The Late Roman Empire is a unique period in comparison to the two former periods, both because it contains the highest rate of examples for the historical prose genre and because it introduces a new SVC in the historical prose: *proelia/-um gerere*, used by the imperial poets of the former cycle.

The difference in frequency between the denominal and the SVC becomes relevant: with 47 instances, *proeliārī* is approximately three times more frequent than each of the SVC (16 in. of *pr. facere*; 13 in. of *pr. gerere*). Nevertheless, the difference in frequency between the denominal and the SVC is less relevant in Justinus, who uses the two lexical items with a comparable frequency. Shorting Pompeius Trogus' work, he is perhaps influenced by the style of the historians of the former periods who used *proeliārī* and *pr. facere* with comparable frequency. *Proelium/-a facere* appears to be excluded in favour of *proelia/-um gerere*, as indicated by Period 9 (3 in. vs 12 in.).

The comparison of writers using *proeliārī*, *pr. facere* and *pr. gerere* simultaneously reveals that Flavius Josephus' translator does not use the same linguistic practices as Orosius

<sup>6</sup> Today, this opinion, due to Giovanni Malala (VI<sup>e</sup> s.), is questioned by the researchers, see Bessone (1996: 15-17).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Tac. Agr. XII 1.



or Vegetius, given that Flavius Josephus' translator uses the denominal (approximately 95% of the time), Orosius and Vegetius, the SVC in *gerere*. Is there here an influence of the Greek text?

(5) *Quibus rebus destitutis Lacedaemoniis Alcibiades cum classe uictrici Asiam uastat, multis locis proelia facit, ubique uictor recipit ciuitates, quae defecerant, nonnullas capit et imperio Atheniensium adicit...* (Just. V 4, 6)

"... and the Lacedaemonians, in consequence, being wholly unsupported, Alcibiades ravaged the coast of Asia with his victorious fleet, fought several battles, and being everywhere victorious, recovered the cities which had revolted, took some others, and added them to the dominion of the Athenians." (CSL, a digital library of Latin literature, 2009. Website maintained by D. Camden)

From the examples of *Brepols* website, some remarks can be made. The status of the SVC in *facere* has changed: *pr. facere* denotes a stative process rather than an active process. This meaning change coincides with three features: selection of the passive suppletive *fiert̄*, permutation of the components of the verb phrase (*fit... proelium*), and localization of the verb in first position<sup>8</sup>. Secondly, we would like to examine the excerpts where the ordering of constituents of the verb phrase in *facere* is preserved: adjectival expansions are not necessary, even in works by a writer such as Justinus, influenced by the style of the former historians. However, in (5), the non-use of adjectival expansions with the SVC can be justified by hypallage: the epithet *multis*, syntactically incidental-to the ablative *locis*, is semantically transferred to *proelia*. *Multis* supposes the multiplicity of the fights; this aspectual nuance is too contained in the plural *proelia* of the SVC.

These changes would justify the fact that *pr. gerere* replaces *pr. facere*. The SVC in *gerere* is quite frequently used with an adjectival expansion and is localized on the same paradigmatic axis as the denominal with which it is in distribution:

(6a) *Fit magnus ilico concursus ex oppido. Quibus sine periculo proeliantibus Romani quamuis pertinaciter obsisterent crebriusque succederent, conplures tamen trucidantur.* (Oros. Hist. VI 11, 24)

"Immediately a big crowd is gathered outside the town. They fight without danger, but the Romans resist with obstinacy and go into the attack en masse, yet lots of them are killed." (personal translation)

(6b) *Namque Mancinus consul, postquam a Popilio apud Numantiam suscepit exercitum, adeo INFELICITER proelia CVNCTA gessit atque in id suprema desperatione perductus est ut turpissimum foedus cum Numantinis facere cogeretur.* (Oros. Hist. V 4, 20)

"The consul Mancinus, after receiving the army from Popilius around Numantia, fought ALL the battles so UNSUCCESSFULLY and was led to the depths of despair so that he was compelled to assent to the most libellous treaty with the Numantines." (personal translation)

In summary, Cycle III presents two new tendencies in the historians' writing: the denominal becomes a frequently used unmarked word, whereas *pr. facere* seems to be frozen in a stative use in most cases.

#### 4. *Proeliārī, pr. facere* and *pr. gerere* in Christian and Biblical literature.

##### 4. 1. *Some numbers.*

Christian and Biblical literature corroborates what the historical prose of the Late Period indicated: with only 16 instances, *proelium/-a facere* is much less frequent than *proeliārī*,

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *Bell. Iud.* V 29, 11; *Oros. Hist.* VII, vol. 1, III 1, 17.

whose frequency becomes very important, with 139 examples (i.e., more than 84% of the instances for this literary genre). With 10 instances collected, the SVC *proelia/-um gerere* competes in frequency with the SVC in *facere* (16 instances).

The word family of *proelium* is very often used in Christian and Biblical literature. Each of the three linguistic units appears to be linked with a specific sub-genre – *Vulgate*, apologetic treaties, and Biblical exegesis –, even if the denominal stays the most usual word in the three specific sub-genres. Thus, the reader will more often find the SVC in *facere* – less and less used – in the *Vulgate* (with 9 instances out of 16) and the SVC in *gerere*, in the apologetic treaties (with 7 instances out of 10). *Proeliārī* will more often be found in Biblical exegesis (with 67 occurrences out of 139); this result is consistent with our expectations, given that these texts quote the *Bible*, wherein *proeliārī* is the most frequent word of this morphological family. The SVC in *facere* is perhaps used in the *Vulgate* because of the original text: did Hieronymus translate an analytic structure in the Hebraic text (SVC) into the one of the most frequent SVC of the Antiquity? A comparative study is necessary to determine if the Latin examples with the SVC correspond to the SVC in the Hebraic version. Finally, the SVC in *gerere* is rarely used in the *Vulgate* perhaps because of its non-conformism, or even its “artificiality” (poetic word in the beginning), in comparison to the common practice of that time. By contrast, in the epideictic genre, the writers use this SVC because it is atypical and thus impresses the reader by its evocative power.

The instances in the corpus indicate that the writers have become more exclusive in their use, as 61% of them choose one of the three possible linguistic expressions. Nevertheless, seven of them are non-exclusive: Hieronymus (61 – 11 – 01 in.) and Augustine (11 – 01 – 01 in.), given that they use all three possible units (respectively, *proeliārī*, *pr. facere*, and *pr. gerere*); Ambrosius (23 – 02 in.), Cyprianus (04 – 02 in.), Lucifer Calaritanus (02 – 01 in.) and Rufinus (06 – 01 in.), given that they utilize *proeliārī* and *proelia/-um gerere*, respectively, which is innovative according to what this diachronic study has indicated; and finally Lactantius, who uses (phenomenon become exceptional) the denominal and the SVC in *facere* (02 – 01 in.).

#### 4. 2. Evolution of the SVC.

Cycle III systematizes a phenomenon, introduced (see (7)) but undeveloped in the former cycles: the SVC are selected because they introduce diathetic and aspectual nuances (see the passive and perfective process in (8a) and the personal passive in (8b)):

(7a) ***proelium non siui fieri.*** (Aem. Scaur. *De uit.*, *Frag.* 3)

“I never let the battle be fought.” (personal translation)

(7b) *De litteris L. Corneli, quas scripserat SECVNDVM proelium cum Boiis factum, disceptatio in senatu fuit, quia...* (Liv. XXXV 6, 8)

“Regarding the despatches of Lucius Cornelius, which he had written **after he had FOUGHT the battle with the Boii**, a controversy broke out in the senate because...” (Loeb 301; 1935)

(7c) ***DVRA ibi proelia aliquot facta, multi Romani milites et uolnerati et interfecti sunt.*** (Liv. XL 16, 8)

“A number of **HARD battles were fought** there, and many Roman soldiers suffered wounds and death.” (Loeb 332; 1938)

(8a) ***Proelium hoc factum tempore patrum nostrorum...*** (Aug. *Psalm.* CXLIII 1)

“**This battle has been fought** by the time of our fathers...” (personal translation)

(8b) *Non coquinam, sed carnificinam putes, proelium geri, non prandium curari: ita sanguine omnia natant.* (Ambr. *Hel.* VIII 25)

“You could care not about cooking, but about suffering; about **fighting a battle**, not about preparing lunch: so all is dripping with blood.” (personal translation)

Another phenomenon, a bit contrary to the trends of the preceding cycles, can be observed: of the 8 listed examples, only 3 are connected with an adjectival expansion incidental-to the verbal noun, whereas the phenomenon was more systematic in the historical prose. In some examples, the use of the SCV can be explained by the utilization of a relative clause, which needs a nominal antecedent (the verbal noun of the SVC), justifying the use of the SVC. However, in these configurations with relative clauses, another solution is possible (with the denominal), as shown by Cyprianus and Lucifer (see 4.3).

Finally, we have noticed that the SVC in *gerere* is semantically related to the denominal, whereas *proelium/-a facere* is considered more as a verb phrase denoting a stative process.

#### 4.3. Focus on the denominal verb.

In the following three examples, the denominal is used in a surprising way, governing an accusative object:

(9a) *Si ea, quae per Moysen de tabernaculo uel sacrificiis et omni illo cultu adumbrabantur, “typus et umbra” dicuntur esse “coelestium”, sine dubio et bella, quae per Iesum geruntur, et regum atque hostium strages “coelestium rerum umbra et typus” esse dicenda sunt, eorum dumtaxat bellorum, quae noster Dominus Iesus cum suo exercitu et magistratibus, id est credentium populis atque eorum ducibus, contra diabolum et eius angelos proeliatur.* (Rufin. [Orig.] *Ies. Nau., hom. XII 1*)

“If what Moses sheltered inside the tabernacle for ritual sacrifice or other celebration is said ‘aspect and shade of the heavenly things’, thus probably must be said ‘shade and aspect of the heavenly things’ both Jesus’ wars and massacres of kings and enemies, but among these *wars*, only *these which are waged* by our Lord Jesus with his army of soldiers – religious peoples and their leaders – *against the devil and his angels.*” (personal translation)

(9b) *Talia namque sunt proelia Domini, quae proeliatu est Dauid et ceteri patriarchae.* (Rufin. [Orig.] *Gen., hom. IV 6*)

“Such are *the fights of the Lord which* David and the other patriarchs *have fought.*” (personal translation)

(10) *Fenerabis gentes multas, tu autem non feneraberis, et proeliabis gentes multas, te autem non expugnabunt.* (Lucif. *Non conv. II l. 31*)

“You will organize many funerals for many people, but you will not have any, and **you will fight** *against many people*, but they will not reduce you.” (personal translation)

In Rufinus’ examples, the accusative case encodes a cognate object (see (9a)), with possibility of *figura etymologica* (see (9b))<sup>9</sup>. Usually, in these configurations wherein the verbal noun is “expanded” by a relative clause, the writers do not use the denominal, but the SVC (see, in (9a), *bella, quae per Iesum geruntur*). Why has not Rufinus used an SVC in these two examples? Two different explanations can be given: one, syntagmatic and communicative and the other, rhetorical. In (9a), the complement (the relative pronoun *quae* whose antecedent is *bellorum*) is disconnected from the verb by many elements (*noster... angelos*)<sup>10</sup>. The verbal syntagmatic chain is broken by these different units, so that it seems to

<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to evaluate the influence of the original Greek text, given that this text has been largely lost (see Masai 1979: 152, 2 and Guillaumont 1980: 224). However, if Rufinus has effectively reinterpreted Origen’s thought (see Masai (1979: 152, 2), who uses the French expression “belle infidèle”), perhaps he has also reinterpreted Origen’s linguistic words. This is our hypothesis.

<sup>10</sup> The nominative subject (entity X); the “annexe to the subject” (encoded by *cum + ablative*); a comment clause, developing the referent of the annexe to the subject; the opponent Y (encoded by *contra + accusative*).

be difficult to use a support verb, semantically light, because this verb would not be explicit enough for its audience. Indeed, these homilies were, above all, speeches intended for an audience; the recipient of the message content is very important. With a denominal verb (semantically full), the understanding of message content becomes more instantaneous. In (9b), by contrast, the utterance is brief and conclusive; in order to impress the reader/listener in his aural memory, the writer appears to use two alliterative concords (*proelia Domini, quae proeliatu est David et ceteri patriarchae*), which is very common in the religious and ritual psalmodies.

In Lucifer's example, the accusative case is not a cognate object, but rather encodes the opponent Y (*gentes multas*). This transitivity is connected to an activation (*proeliabis*)<sup>11</sup>. The denominal no longer governs a prepositional phrase – as is expected with verbs of fight –, but an accusative<sup>12</sup>. This morphosyntactic change thus has some semantic consequences which are corroborated by the text: *proeliabis*, influenced by the meaning of the verbs of fight governing an accusative, is affected by an analogical change: it signifies “win in a fight,” what *expugnabunt* with which it occurs suggests. The denominal is here used because it allows the writer to create an elaborated utterance from a semantic game with antonymic units.

#### 4. 4. *Translations and accommodations: influence of the original texts?*

The Biblical and exegetical texts of our corpus entail consideration of the source languages. Indeed, perhaps the expressions, selected by Latin, correspond to expressions whose morphological structure is similar in the source languages. Thus is a verb, semantically full in the original languages, translated into the Latin denominal? By contrast, is the selection of an SVC in Latin comparable to an SVC in Hebrew or Greek? These two questions do not have the same answers.

Indeed, after studying Hebraic and Greek verses<sup>13</sup>, we can say that the three examples with Latin denominals coincide with denominals in the source languages. Hieronymus (Hier. *Zach.* III 14) uses the denominal *proeliārī* twice to translate the Hebraic verb *niLḥaM*, “fight” (*Zach.* XIV 3). In the same way, Cyprianus quotes the *Apo.* XIX 11 of the *New Testament* and translates the verb *πολεμεῖ* of the *Byzantine Bible* into the lexeme *proeliatur*:

- (11a) *Item in Apocalypsi: et uidi caelum apertum, et ecce equus albus, et qui sedebat super eum uocabatur fidelis et uerus, aequum iustumque iudicans et proeliatur...* (Cyp. *Testim.* II 3)
- (11b) καὶ εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεφωγμένον καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκὸς καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ’ αὐτὸν καλούμενος πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινὸς καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει καὶ **πολεμεῖ**... (Byz. *Bibl. Apo.* XIX 11)
- (11c) Then I saw a door open in Heaven, and a white horse appeared. Its rider was named Faithful and True being One who in righteousness acts as Judge, and **makes war**... (Weymouth *New Testament Apo.* XIX 11)

On the other hand, it is uncertain whether an SCV in Latin is comparable to an SVC in Hebrew. In fact, a complex verbal structure in Hebrew is translated into a complex morphosyntactic structure in Latin: in the two Hebraic verses, the verbal nucleus is ‘*aSaH* “do, make”; and Hieronymus translates this Hebrew verb into both *facere* and *gerere*. In

<sup>11</sup> Regarding these morphological consequences of this transitivity, see Taous 2015b and the bibliography.

<sup>12</sup> For a similar phenomenon, see *debellāre* (Brachet 2000: 121) and *decertāre* (Taous 2013: 388).

<sup>13</sup> Here we would very much like to thank our Hebrew consultant, Ph. Chemouilli.

Hebrew, this verb governs a complement; but, according to us, this complement does not constitute a lexical item with the verb (see Taous 2017: 98-99):

(12a) *Hoc autem quod sequitur: et non in exercitu grandi neque in populo multo **faciet** contra eum Pharao **proelium** in iactu aggeris et in exstructione uallorum, ut interficiat animas multas, dupliciter intellegitur...* (Hier. *Ezech.* V 17)

“The following verse ‘neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company **make for him in the war**, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons’ should be understood in two ways...” (from *King James Version*)

(12b) *reliqua autem sermonum Amri et **proelia** eius quae **gessit** nonne haec scripta sunt in libro uerborum dierum regum Israhel?* (Vulg. *Reg. I XVI* 27)

“now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his **might** that **he shewed**, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?” (*King James Version*)

Even in Latin, the examples are difficult to analyze, especially Example (12a). Indeed, perhaps the verb phrase *faciet... contra eum... proelium* should not be considered an SVC. In this biblical verse, Hieronymus does not literally translate the Hebrew structure. In the Hebraic verse, the verb ‘*aSaH* “do, make” constitutes the verbal nucleus; and the word meaning “the fight” is used in a locative phrase and does not constitute the complement governed by the verb. The modern Latin translation of the *Vulgate* used the same structure as the Hebrew (see *in proelio* in (13)) and thus is more faithful to the original text than Hieronymus’ translation:

(13) *et non in exercitu grandi neque in populo multo **adiuuabit** eum Pharao **in proelio**, in iactu aggeris et in exstructione munitioinum, ut interficiat animas multas.* (Nov. Vulg. *Ezech.* XVII 17)

“neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company **make for him in the war**, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons.” (*King James Version*)

In addition, there is another reason that the verb phrase *faciet... proelium* is no longer an SVC: the preposition *contra* should not be interpreted as encoding the opponent – as is common with the verbs of fight –, but the helper, what the Greek translation (with *πρὸς αὐτὸν...*) and the *Nova Vulgata* (see (13) and *adiuuabit eum*) corroborate. The preposition *contra* thus has a locative meaning and a denotative semantic value, corroborated by the English translation “for him” in the *King James Version* and the *Derby Version*. Finally, the verb phrase with *facere* signifies the opposite of what it signified in the beginning (see “fight” vs “help”<sup>14</sup>). According to us, in Example (12a), the verb phrase with *facere* is no longer the analytic equivalent of *proeliārī*.

## 5. Some conclusions.

According to this study, there are no crucial distinctions between the SVC and the denominal verb, derived from the verbal noun of the SVC. Yet, the two morphosyntactic units are not exactly equivalent, and the choice of the locutor indicates some varying shades of meaning in the way the verbal action, especially in its outcome (see *secundum*) or intensity (see *acrius*), is considered. The aspectual distinction between progressive aspect and (non)semelfactivity seems thus to be relevant.

During the Antiquity, *proeliārī* and *proelium/-a facere* have a comparable frequency and appear to belong to the same level of language. Perhaps the SVC, because it quite often

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<sup>14</sup> The *Basic English Bible* and the (*New*) *American Standard Version* translate *facere* into “(be) help”.

coincides with the use of stereotyped adjectival expansions, belongs to a level of speech more informal than the denominal verb modalized by an adverb. In addition, the denominal, used without adverbial units, would be semantically less marked than the SVC and it is the expected verb to encode the verbal action of /fight/: its utilization is relevant in comparison to the other possible verbs of similar meaning, like *pugnāre*, *dimicāre*, *luctārī*, *certāre*, *bellāre*.

In the Late Period, the linguistic configuration changes: *proeliārī* becomes the most common verb and the SVC *proelia/-um gerere* which appears in the literary documentation becomes a serious threat to *proelium/-a facere* which survives, but is no longer really an SVC encoding an activity process (see its passive morphology, its localization on the syntagmatic axis, and the permutation of the components of the verb phrase...).

These first conclusions would be confirmed by the study of other similar structures, that means offering a denominal verb and one (or more) SVC, in order to evaluate the degree of relevance of the remarks in this paper. Pinkster underlined the trend of linguists towards thinking that the denominal appeared first and then disappeared gradually, while the SVC – traditionally connected with the common or familiar speech – appeared later and increased gradually. This study proves that the linguistic facts are not so systematic, given that we have shown the contrary: the large and increasing utilization of the denominal and the weak emergence of a SVC whose first use was poetic.

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*For the different versions of the Bible, we consulted the website Lexilogos, which proposes a synopsis of the different versions of the Bible throughout the world. See [http://www.lexilogos.com/bible\\_multilingue.htm](http://www.lexilogos.com/bible_multilingue.htm).*