

***Morphology of the Georgian perfect tense series and
the Western European BE/HAVE auxiliary split***

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Abstract

Verbs in the Georgian resultative-evidential perfect tense series (series III) have what is known as “inverted” marking, both on the arguments (subjects are in the dative; direct objects in the nominative) and on the verb (indirect object person markers for the subject; subject person markers for the direct object) in verb classes 1 (transitive) and 3 (unergative intransitive). Class 4 (experiential) verbs have “inverted” marking in all tense series, whereas class 2 (unaccusative intransitive; passive) verbs have “direct” marking in all tense series, including perfect tense series III, both on the argument(s) (subjects are nominative; any indirect objects dative) and on the verb (in perfect tense series III: subject person markers plus passive participle plus forms of the verb *BE*). While such “inversion” is seen as natural for class 4 (experiential) verbs, which have dative subjects in many languages (cf. *il me plait; es gefällt mir; mne nravitsä; mujhē pasand hai*), it is generally taken to be idiosyncratic in Georgian in the case of the perfect tenses of verb classes 1 (transitive) and 3 (unergative). However, if *I have* is seen as TO.ME-THERE.IS (and this is etymologically the case in, for instance, Breton), the dichotomy in the marking of the Georgian perfect tenses closely parallels the *BE/HAVE* perfect auxiliary split found in a number of Western European languages, where, roughly speaking, *BE* is used with unaccusative intransitives (and passives) ≈ Georgian class 2, and *HAVE* with transitive verbs and with unergative intransitives ≈ Georgian classes 1 and 3.