CLASSICAL AND VULGAR LATIN AND GREEK: SOME PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

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Introduction

There is a number of parallels between the system of the Ancient Greek and the Latin syntax. Some of these parallels are of Indoeuropean origin, e.g. the general system of the parts of speech as well as of their main syntactic functions. Nevertheless, there are also some important syntactic differences between Greek and Latin. Several of them are due to different lines of development on both sides since the common Indoeuropean period, e.g. the different system of nominal case-forms in Greek and Latin as well as the different functions of some of them, or a simpler system of verbal moods in Latin –as compared with Greek.

There are, however, also some specific features on both sides (partly rather analogous, partly, however, more or less diverse that need a somewhat deeper analysis). They may concern various fields of Greek and Latin grammar, but I will concentrate on the syntactic area today, especially on some problems connected with several typical nominal forms of the Latin or Greek (or in general the IE.) verb. I mean, above all, two specific syntactical constructions: first the infinitival constructions of Acc. (or Nom.) with Infin. after the verbs of discourse (*verba dicendi*) in Latin and Greek (or the infinitival constructions partly in Latin and the participial constructions consistently in Greek) after the verbs of physical and mental perception (*verba sentiendi*), and second the absolute participial constructions, prevailing in a specific case-form in a specific language (*Genitivus absolutus* in Greek, *Ablativus absolutus* in Latin –and let us add, *Locativus Absolutus* in Old Indian, Dativus absolutus in Gothic, Old English and Old High German as well as in Old Church Slavonic, Old Czech and in Lithuanian and Old Czech, and probably in Oscan). Both the Acc. (or Nom.) with Infin. and the Abl. or Gen. Abs., were very practical for their brevity, but they could also be expressed, in the principle, through the mediation of a subordinate clause.

The main aim of this paper is, however, not only to follow briefly the fortunes of the said constructions at various stages of Late Latin (a number of papers concerning separate problems within this field had been read or written on many previous occasions) –what really I should like to stress here

is the fact that both the said constructions, after a period of rather high frequency, were gradually abandoned in the spoken Late Latin and had practically no direct continuation in the Romance languages (with the exception of some participial, syntactically incongruous phrases, with either a high literary, especially in French, or a purely idiomatic shade).

I. Acc./Nom. + Inf.:

I maintain, first that –and this is what the IE. linguists are mostly convinced of– both the above-mentioned syntactical peculiarities, i.e. both the infinitival and participial constructions after the *verba dicendi* and *sentiendi*, as well as the absolute participial constructions with specific case-forms, were inherited from the common Indo-European epoch.

The said nominal constructions, however, were apparently not the only possible constructions for the linguistic speciality in question. After the verbs of *dicendi* and *sentiendi*, e.g. a subordinate complement-clause with *quod* was undoubtedly an equally appropriate means of expression.

In any case, one can see quite clearly that in the Classical Latin era the nominal infinitival constructions after the *verba dicendi* (and also *sentiendi*) experienced a period of extremely broad expansion, even a monopolization, with a quite strict prevalence of the Accusative or Nominative with Infinitive over the subordinate *quod*-clauses, in the written Latin texts at least.

In fact, an early subordinate clause with *quod* appears in Plautus already, Asinaria 52-53 *scio iam filius quod amet meus istanc meretricem* (let us add that József Herman[1] expressed on this occasion a quite acceptable opinion that such subordinate *quod*-clauses "were never fully absent from the colloquial Latin speech"). In the Latin works of the Classical period, however, the construction of Acc. with Infin. offered a very strong resistance to the above-said *quod*-clauses, in general, having not only a monopoly after the said *verba dicendi* and *sentiendi*, but prevailing strongly, for example, also after the *verba affectuum*, as Pierluigi Cuzzolin showed in an article published in 1991[2].

The subordinate *quod-*, *quia-*, *quoniam-*, *quomodo-* etc. constructions, however, appeared in some written post-Classical Latin texts rather early (very sporadically e.g. in Petron, more frequently in the early biblical texts,

[1] HERMAN, J., *El latín vulgar*, Barcelona 1997, 105.

[2] CUZZOLIN, P., "On Sentencial Complementation after *verba affectuum*", HERMAN, J. (ed.), *Linguistic Studies on Latin. Selected Papers from the 6th International Colloquium on Latin Linguistics (Budapest, 23-27 March 1991)*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1991, 201-210.

especially in the *Vetus Latina* (acc. to Veikko Väänänen[3] 1963, A. de Prisco,[4] 1991, 31 etc.), and subsequently also in other works of Christian authors.

On the other hand, however, the position of the Acc. (or Nom.) with Infin. remained strong in the written Late Latin texts, e.g. still in Tertullian and also in the early works of St. Augustine (except his sermons, however), while the proportion of the *quod-*, *quia*-constructions exceeded the value of 10% only exceptionally, e.g. in the *Peregrinatio* of *Egeria* with the value of ca. 20%, according to József Herman 1989.[5] An absolutely strict line of division between the two constructions cannot be drawn, since both of them can appear in passages by the same author and also in the same work without a clear distinction. Cf., for example, in St. Augustine's Sermo 292 the passage *diceret, quod ex deo nascuntur* with another *si se dignum diceret*, J. Herman 1989.[6]

In any case, it is true that the subordinate *quod*-constructions are more explicit and more in conformity with the form of discourse and were also much clearer and suitable to avoid the possible ambiguity of an Acc. with Infin. construction. These subordinate *quod*-constructions follow usually the introducing finite verb *dicendi* or *sentiendi*, whereas the infinitival construction may eiher follow or also precede the governing finite verbal form. The linguistic circumstances determining the development of the interrelations between the two constructions were masterfully treated by József Herman in 1989[7] as well as by Robert Coleman 1985[8] or Pierluigi Cuzzolin 1991.[9]

Possibly an influence on the part of Greek syntax may also have been present here. In Greek, the choice between a nominal construction, i.e. an infinitival one after *verba dicendi* or participial one after *verba sentiendi*, and a subordinate clause with ὅτι, is nearly always possible; there are only several exceptions, e.g. the verb φημί, and mostly also the *verba putandi*, which give preference to the construction of Acc. with Infin., too.

The proportion between the infinitival construction and the subordinate *quod*-clause after the verb λέγω, established in the works of 13 Greek

[3] VÄÄNÄNEN, V., *Introduction au latin vulgaire*, Paris 1963.

[4] De PRISCO, A., *Il latino tardoantico e tardomedievale*, Roma 1991.

[5] HERMAN, J., "Accusativus cum infinitivo et subordonée à *quod, quia* en latin tardif - nouvelles remarques sur un vieux problème", CALBOLI, G. (ed.), *Subordination and Other Topics in Latin. Proceedings of the Third Colloquium on Latin Linguistics (Bologna, 1-5 April 1985)*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1989.

[6] HERMAN, J. (1989), *l.c.*, 135.

[7] HERMAN, J. (1989), *l.c.*

[8] COLEMAN, R., "The Indo-european Origins and Latin Development of the Accusative with Infinitive Construction", TOURATIER, CH. (ed.), *Syntaxe et latin*, Aix-en-Provence 1985, 307-341.

[9] CUZZOLIN, P., *l.c.*

authors from Aischylos to Hypereides, may be found in Y. Duhoux' monograph[10] –with the sinking values of Acc. with Infin. (from Pindar with 100% to Aischines with 10%) and with the ascending values of the *quod*-constructions (from Pindar with 0% to Aischines with 90%, Thucydides showing 60% of infinitival constructions and 40% of *quod*-constructions).

The Greek influence on Latin seems to be obvious especially in the early biblical literature; nevertheless, even a fully Latin-proper syntactical development towards a much less formal *quod*-construction may be easily acceptable here, owing to the above-indicated tendency to better observe both syntactical regards and semantical clarity by the mediation of a subordinate clause.

In this way, the formal Acc. or Nom. with Inf. constructions were gradually pushed out from the Late Latin syntactical line of development that led to the Romance languages –although the employment of the Acc./Nom. with Infin. constructions still remained for some time as the prevailing option beside the subordinate *quod*-clause in Late Latin. According to Peter Stotz[11] this is also true of many later works, such as those of Gregory of Tours, who used the Acc. with Infin. four times as often as a subordinate *quod*-clause, or Fredegar, who did so even twelve times as often. This is true, in principle, also about many of the Medieval Latin texts in the period after the definite separation of the Romance languages.

II. Abl. Absol.:

On the other hand, the absolute participial constructions, too, were most probably inherited from the Indoeuropean period (cf., more recently, especially Robert Coleman 1989[12]). The basic starting points were some specific, semantically legitimate and syntactically rather "well-connected" constructions (not "absolute", at first). According to various scholars, the point of departure may be found in the area of a *Locativus temporis* (let us bear in mind the existence of the Locative Absolute in Old Indian).

In Archaic Latin, the Ablative Absolute is –as far as the works completely preserved are concerned– sufficiently documented in Plautus already, though quite often in conjugate constructions not very distant from a syntactically well-connected *Ablativus modi, instrumenti* etc., e.g., Pl., *Amphitruo* 257 *velatis manibus orant*; the occurrence of the present participle in the

construction of Abl. Abs., however, was restricted, for the most part, to fixed ablatives such as *praesente, absente, sciente* (see A. Scherer 1975[13]). In Classical Latin, the use of Abl. Abs. was more frequent and semantically much less restricted, reaching often a rather high proportion of occurrence in the works of different authors, but even here its frequency was partly dependent on the literary genre in question, on its stylistic background, as well as on the specificity of its narrative expression.

New lines of development of the Latin (and also the Greek) constructions of absolute case-forms with participles were treated by the said Robert Coleman 1989.[14] esp. with regard to the results of a further elaboration of the participial system and, in particular, as to the realization and exploitation of its distinctly verbal potentialities (see, e.g., a syntactic complementation *urbe capta per dolum* already in Plautus, *Bacchides* 1070, or *orante ut ne id faceret Thaide* in Terence, *Eunuchus* 95, as well as, later, even much more elaborated examples, such as *duabus legionibus, quas proxime conscripserat, in castris relictis* Caes., *Bell. Gall.* 2, 8, 5, or *nec Etruscis nisi cogerentur pugnam ituris* Liv. 4, 16, 6, quoted after Coleman again).

A useful statistic survey may be found in the article by Johannes Müller-Lancé[15] with the following data of occurrence, each time on ten pages of standardized text of a selected work: Plautus, two or three examples on ten pages; Cicero, *In Catilinam*, 6.3 examples; *Tusc. disputationes*, 7 examples; Sallust, *Bell. Iug.* 14,9; Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* 36,5; Vergil, *Aeneis*, 12,3; Tacitus, *Agricola*, 31,1; *Peregrinatio Egeriae* 20,5; *Historia Apollonii regis Tyrii*, 34,5; Gregory of Tours, *Vita* 87,8; *Vita S. Alexii*, from the 12th cent., 25 examples on each set of 10 pages. The proportion, thus, strongly increases in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* already und is rather high in Late Latin, on the average.

The construction of the Abl. Abs. was very practical for its conciseness, but after the disappearance of Ablative from the Late Latin case-system it is the Abl. Abs., too, that was abandoned in the colloquial speech or merged practically with the somewhat analogous Nom. or Acc. Absolute, occurring rather occasionally in the works of some Late Latin authors (Johannes Müller-Lancé 1998 again,[16] and Piera Molinelli 2001,[17] who also treated vari-

[10] DUHOUX, Y., *Le verbe grec ancien*, Louvain 2000, fig. 220.2.

[11] STOTZ, P., *Handbuch zur lateinischen Sprache des Mittelalters IV*, München 1998, 393ff.

[12] COLEMAN, R., "The Rise and Fall of the Absolute Constructions: a Latin Case History", CALBOLI, G. (ed.), (1989), *l.c.*, 353-374.

[13] SCHERER, A., *Handbuch der lateinischen Syntax*, Heidelberg 1975, 194.

[14] COLEMAN, R. (1989), *l.c.*

[15] MÜLLER-LANCÉ, J., "L'emploi des constructions absolues en latin tardif", CALLEBAT, L. (ed.), *Latin vulgaire - latin tardif IV. Actes du 4ᵉ colloque international sur le latin vulgaire et tardif (Caen, 2-5 septembre 1994)*, Hildesheim - Zürich - New York 1998, 413-423.

[16] MÜLLER-LANCÉ, J., *l.c.*

[17] MOLINELLI, P., "Absolute Structures in Late Latin", MOUSSY, C.; DANGEL, J.; FRUYT,

ous mixed constructions, deviating from the standard classical constructions of the Abl. Abs.). All such constructions gave rise later to some analogous more or less fossilized absolute phrases, which appeared (and still occur) in modern Romance languages. In the Medieval Latin proper, however, the construction of Abl. Abs. seems to have continued its previous development without apparent interruption.

Among the most recent studies and articles about the Abl. Abs., see especially the study by A. Moreno Hernández[18] as well as that of R. Coleman.[19]

The Greek Gen. Abs. was known in Homer already, even if with some restrictions. In the Classical period, this absolute construction was very frequent: according to Y. Duhoux 2000,[20] no fewer than ca. 10% of the participles occurring in the first two books of Thucydides are in Gen. Abs., while in the work of Isocrates, the occurrence of the Gen. Abs. reached only the figure of 5,7%. The proportion of the occurrence of the so-called Acc. Abs. in Greek is much smaller (about 0,4% in the works of the above two authors).

In 1982 and 1983, my student A. Dohnalová[21] made a comparison of the absolute participle constructions found in a) *Monumentum Ancyranum* and b) the selected passages of New Testament (St. Matthew's Gospel, The Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and to the Corinthians I-II) partly in Old Greek (Gen. Abs.), partly in Latin (Abl. Abs.) and partly also in Old Church Slavonic (Dat. Abs.). Even if the morphological range of the participial forms was much richer in Greek than in Latin, the proportion of the occurrence in the selected passages was much higher on the Latin side: 251 Latin examples of Abl. Abs. against 186 Greek examples of Gen. Abs. and about the same number of Dat. Abs. in Old Church Slavonic. Whereas the Old Slavonic participial constructions –representing a text written in a language in statu nascendi– showed a great degree of dependence upon their Greek counterparts, the parallel constructions in Latin are much more independent: Latin actually often creates an ablative absolute of its own, in full

conformity with its contemporary Late Latin predilection for the absolute participial constructions.

In 1996, Antonio Moreno Hernández[22] revised an older hypothesis of Veikko Väänänen,[23] according to whom the constructions of Abl. Abs. seem to be practically absent in the biblical text of the so-called *Afra Vetus* from the 2nd cent. A.D., while the said constructions are fully alive in the Vulgate of Hieronymus from the 4th cent. –the conclusion of Väänänen being that the *Afra Vetus*, or the *Vetus Latina* in general, might be considered an exponent of the popular and spoken Late Latin, while the Vulgate would reflect a literary level. The result of the revision by Moreno Hernández was a refusal of such a strict division within the Biblical Latin and he proposed a new, less contrasting characterization of both *Vulgata* and *Vetus Latina*, stressing –on both sides– the existence of a certain number of deviations in creating the AA-constructions, as well as an increasing exploitation of the verbal properties of participles, and also a tendency to a greater variegation in transforming the Greek absolute constructions –all of this being syntactical features typical of the majority of the Late Latin texts.

In this matter, Moreno Hernández seems to have been less sceptical about the future prospects of the AA-constructions in the Late Latin development than Robert Coleman[24] was, who entitled his article from 1989 with the words: "The Rise and Fall of the Absolute Constructions". As to the further development in the Romance languages, on the one hand, Coleman's title was quite correct –in spite of some more or less fixed absolute phrases, well-known even from non-Romance languages. In the literary texts of Medieval Latin, on the other hand, the construction of the Abl. Abs. remained still in use, as Müller-Lancé[25] has shown in the above-quoted article from 1998.

Let me only add that the construction of the Greek Gen. Abs. remained preserved even in modern kathareousa; I remember that I saw a splendid example of Gen. Abs., not remembering it exactly today, in a trolley-bus in Athens several years ago.

We have dealt here with two complexes of nominal constructions having remarkably similar features of development, i.e. the Accusative (or Nominative) with Infinitive and the so-called *Ablativus* or *Genitivus Absolutus*:

Both of them originated as early as the Indo-European period. In the early stages of both the Greek and Latin development, they were in common use as nominal constructions, but at the same time, the construction of Acc.

M.; NADJO, L.; SZNAJDER, L. (edd.), *De lingua Latina novae quaestiones. Actes du Xe Colloque International de Linguistique Latine (Paris - Sèvres, 19-23 avril 1999)*, Louvain - Paris - Sterling, Virginia 2001.

[18] MORENO HERNÁNDEZ, A., "The Ablative Absolute in Late Latin", ROSÉN, H. (ed.), *Aspects of Latin. Papers from the 7th International Colloquium on Latin Linguistics*, Innsbruck 1996, 471-482.

[19] COLEMAN, R. (1989), *l.c.*, 353-374.

[20] DUHOUX, Y., *l.c.*

[21] DOHNALOVÁ, A., "The Greek Genitive Absolute and the Latin Ablative Absolute in the Chosen Works of the Greek-Latin Translation Literature", OLIVA, P.; FROLÍKOVÁ, A. (edd.), *Concilium Eirene XVI. Proceedings of the 16th International Eirene Conference (Prague 1982)*, vol. 2, Praha 1983, 263-267.

[22] MORENO HERNÁNDEZ, A., *l.c.*

[23] VÄÄNÄNEN, V., *l.c.*

[24] COLEMAN, R. (1989), *l.c.*

[25] MÜLLER-LANCÉ, J., *l.c.*

(or Nom.) with Infin. as well as the Abl. or Gen. Absolutus could also be expressed in the form of a subordinate clause, either a *quod-*, *quia-* complement clause, in the former case, or the respective adverbial clause, in the latter case. Whereas in Greek the two options, one nominal and the other non-nominal, were rather well-balanced, in Classical Latin the Acc. or Nomin. with Infin. became in the written language the only possible construction after the *verba dicendi, putandi* and *sentiendi* for one or two centuries at least –with even the Abl. Absolute becoming a very favourite means of linguistic expresion in the written form of Classical and Late Latin for quite a number of centuries.

On the other hand, in colloquial Latin, which was getting close to the initial stage of separate Romance languages, both the above nominal constructions were gradually abandoned, without direct remnants (or productive examples) in the Romance languages of an Acc. (or Nom.) with Infin. construction after the verba dicendi proper and only with a limited number of some participial, syntactically "absolute" constructions with either a high literary or a purely idiomatic shade –whose linguistically more general and genetically rather indifferent character seems to follow from the fact that the Romance constructions such as the Spanish "terminada la guerra, el rey murió" or "una vez abierta la puerta, entraron en casa" have their counterparts also in non-Romance languages, e.g. in English (e.g., "all things considered, ...", in German, or even in Old Czech etc.

Such examples of Classical Latin –so to say– syntactical excessiveness, which were later abandoned and are in the area of Romance languages practically non-existent or maybe somewhat marginal, seem to have been even more common in Classical Latin. Let us mention, for example, the frequent use of gerundive in Classical Latin, another old Latin nominal construction with a semantic shade of necessity, which, however, was soon gradually replaced by the new modal verb *debere,* or the obligatorily used conjunctive mood in indirect questions, later abandoned as well, or the intricate complex of the so-called "second" dependence system in Latin, not surviving the formation of the Romance languages.

This Romance outcome seems to be due to the pragmatism of the Late Latin colloquial speech, but what remains remarkable is the fact that the Classical Latin apparently struck, at the time of its greatest flowering, a syntactically quite pretentious path, which could not be later kept up, for practical reasons, under the changed conditions. I may be wrong to say this, but I think that there was something in Coleman's title "The Rise and Fall of Absolute Constructions in Latin", I would like only to change it a little, for the purpose of my paper, into "The Rise and Fall of some Latin Nominal, i.e. Infinitival and Participial Constructions".

MENAECHMVS QVIDAM. INDEFINITES AND PROPER NOUNS IN CLASSICAL AND LATE LATIN

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The purpose of this paper is to give an analysis of the relation between a proper noun and the use of an indefinite connected to it. Our suggestion is that the use of the indefinite is different depending on the particular use in which the proper noun occurs. To this aim, different uses of proper nouns can be described which are classifiable according to two main groups, the referential and the metaphorical use. We will show that *quidam* is prevailingly found with proper nouns in the referential use, while *aliquis* is found prevailingly with proper nouns in the metaphorical use.

1. The referential use

The referential use of the proper noun is the most common and usually found. Its function is that of referring to the individual who bears the relevant name, as in (1):

(1) *si ciuis Romanus Archias legibus non esset* (Cic.Arch.25)

2. The metaphorical use

Proper nouns are used metaphorically when their function is not (or not exclusively) that of referring. While a proper noun refers to a single individual, the main property of its metaphorical use is that of involving a double reference[1]. See for example:

(2) *nam M. Luculli uxorem Memmius suis sacris initiauit. Menelaus aegre id passus diuortium fecit. Quamquam ille pastor Idaeus Menelaum solum contempserat, hic noster Paris tam Menelaum quam Agamemnonem liberum non putauit (Cic.Att.*1,18,3)

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[1] Cf. VALLAT, D., "Les noms propres métaphoriques: aspects référentiels et sémantiques", BOLKESTEIN, M. *et al.* (edd.), *Theory and Description in Latin Linguistics,* Amsterdam 2002, 405-419.