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**Postclassical Greek: an overview**

## 1 Postclassical Greek

Greek is one of the few languages in the world with a continuous written (including literary) tradition spanning more than three millennia: virtually all periods of this language are well-documented by large numbers of texts. While the archaic and classical periods have received most of the scholarly attention for centuries (for a synoptic overview see Giannakis, ed., 2014; Bakker, ed., 2010), much less attention has been paid to the Greek of later periods, that is to Postclassical Greek (cf., *inter alia*, Browning 1983; Horrocks 2010; Palmer 1980: 174-200). We refer to the entire set of spoken and written varieties of the period from 323 BC up to 1453 AD as *Postclassical Greek*.<sup>1</sup>

This period starts with the rise of the Koiné during the spread of Hellenism in the period of Macedonian imperialism and subsumes the later Roman and Byzantine periods. Unfortunately, we do not have a well-defined set of linguistic criteria for chronological periodization (e.g. Browning 1983: 12) and there are no commonly accepted periodization metrics. Periodization that relies on extra-linguistic criteria such as historically significant events is not unproblematic, but it is the solution standardly used so far. Table 1 contrasts the three periodizations that are most widely adopted in the literature, and that differ from each other only in minor ways.

Table 1: Periodization of Postclassical Greek: an overview

	<b>Browning 1983</b>	<b>Horrocks 2010</b>	<b>Holton &amp; Manolassou 2010</b>
<i>323 BC – 31 BC</i>	Hellenistic and Roman period (4th c. BC – 6th c. AD)	Hellenistic period	-
<i>31 BC – 330 AD</i>		Roman period	
<i>330 AD – 527 AD</i>			
<i>527 AD – 1100 AD</i>	Early Middle Ages (6th c. - 1100)	Byzantium (Early, Middle and Late Byzantine periods)	Early Medieval Greek (500-1100)
<i>1100 AD – 1453 AD</i>	Later Middle Ages (1100-1453)		Late Medieval Greek (1100-1500)

During the Hellenistic period, the Koiné (*hē koinē diálektos* ‘the common speech’) developed on the basis of the spoken and written variety of Attic Greek of that time and became the *lingua franca* – this is sometimes referred to as “international Attic” (Eideneier 1999: 53-5) or “expanded Attic” – especially in the western parts of the large territory of Alexander the Great’s conquests (Browning 1983: 21; cf. García Ramón, this volume).

This new common language, the Koiné, started developing different registers, most prominently its official variant at the Hellenistic chancelleries. Moreover, the literary Koiné started emerging during the late Hellenistic and Roman periods as an “artistically ‘developed’ version of the Koiné employed by the Hellenistic/Roman bureaucracies” (Horrocks 2010: 97). From the end of the 1st c. BC, authors were increasingly influenced by the “ideals” of Classical

<sup>1</sup> Other divisions are possible, cf. Bentein (2016: 6) who distinguishes between the Post-Classical and the Byzantine periods.

Attic, which they sought to imitate by reviving a number of grammatical and lexical properties of the classical language – a movement often referred to as Atticism (Schmid 1887-1897, Swain 1996, Schmitz 1997). At the same time, lower registers of Koiné could be considered as a “product of ignorance, debasement and vulgarity” (Browning 1983: 44). The systematic penetration of properties of the classical language into the Koiné (at least in its higher registers) was facilitated by a number of lexica and grammatical works and the norms described there, such as in the works by Apollonius Dyscolus (2nd ct. AD), Aelius Herodianus (2nd ct. AD) or Theodosius of Alexandria (≈4th ct. AD) (cf. Browning 1983: 45; Benedetti, this volume). This leads to the phenomenon of *imperfect learning*. For example, a number of allegedly Attic phenomena are introduced hypercorrectly: middle voice, the old perfect forms, the subjunctive and optative forms are often used in a way that violates the original Attic patterns (Browning 1983: 47; Benedetti, this volume), etc. Generally, the form itself has become more representative of the high register than the grammatically correct usage thereof.

The Atticist movement was so pervasive that it exercised an impact not only on the literary language of prose writers but also on colloquial registers. Some Atticistic features penetrated into the language of less educated speakers. Traces of Atticism are even found in the language of New Testament which – despite some internal diastratic variation – represents an excellent example of contemporary Koiné (*inter alia*, Tronci, this volume; Rafiyenko & Seržant 2018+). For example, Tronci (this volume) finds traces of Atticism in the use of the future tense forms. Finally, Byzantine Greek still preserves a number of properties (re-)introduced into the literary language by Atticism (cf. Lavidas & Haug, this volume) because the Greek elite continued to use Atticised Greek to indicate their class membership and only sometimes wrote in less elevated registers for practical purposes. It is also during this period that we observe the spread of vernacular literature (cf. Horrocks 2010: 325-369).

Thus, despite being the common language, the Koiné underwent considerable diastratic differentiation very early on. Moreover, in addition to the diastratic variation, diatopic variation reveals itself as another important dimension of diversification. The diatopic variation was caused by two distinct types of substrata: the ancient Greek dialects in the Greek homeland and Asia Minor as well as by genealogically unrelated substrata. While the ancient dialects disappeared from the written record with the rise of the Attic-based Koiné, the latter becomes again subject to dialectal diversification, where some features of the ancient dialects survive (Browning 1983: 51; García Ramón, this volume).

Above we discussed the variation motivated by internal factors such as diversification into dialects or language change that affects different registers to different degrees and leads to hypercorrect forms in the language of the conservative elite. In addition, as a result of the immense expansion of Greek-speaking territory by Alexander the Great, Postclassical Greek was subjected to many more external influences. Certainly, the Greek-Coptic language contact is the best attested instance of language contact in antiquity (Grossman et al., eds., 2017). While Coptic not only borrowed lexical elements including verbs and adjectives but also grammatical items from Greek (see various papers in Grossman et al., eds., 2017), there is also evidence for the reverse direction: the emergence of Egyptian or Papyri Greek as a local variety with its own characteristics originally due to imperfect learning. As Dahlgren & Leiwo (this volume) show, the so-called misspellings in the Greek papyri and ostraca from Egypt represent a language that is less influenced by the literary tradition and thus more straightforwardly mirrors the colloquial language of the area. A number of spellings that deviate from the literary norm appear systematically and some of them are never found outside Egypt. These, as the authors argue, are due to different degrees of imperfect learning of Greek by the local scribes who were native speakers of Coptic. Among the typical Coptic features they list vowel reduction in unstressed syllables and, subsequently, the failure to differentiate between the different phonemes /a/, /e/, /o/ in these positions or the confusion of the dentals and gutturals with regard to voicedness.

These misspellings are primarily motivated by the phonological system as well as by the orthography of the native language.

A very different instance of an external influence on Postclassical Greek is Semitic, foremost in the language of Septuagint but also the New Testament, where Aramaic must have played a role. The language of the Septuagint closely matches the Hebrew Bible (George 2010). For example, the use of clause-introducing *kai* ‘and’ renders the *wə-* ‘and’ Hebrew in most cases (Horrocks 2010: 107; George 2010: 268-269). The impact of Semitic in general and Hebrew in particular becomes obvious in the non-integrational strategy of adopting Hebrew proper names in Greek as Crellin (this volume) illustrates. The rule of thumb here, he claims, is that full integration (*Hellenization*) is found predominantly in texts of a colloquial style, suggesting that this strategy was typical of day-to-day practice, while non-adaptation (*transliteration* only) is found in the more literary writings of Jewish authors who tried to locate themselves in a special non-Greek, Semitic, cultural world. That said, Flavius Josephus represents an exception in adhering to the full-integration strategy. The reason for this – as Crellin suggests – was his wish to be part of the Greek world.

Even from this very coarse survey of Postclassical Greek it is clear that the language of the texts we have is by no means dialectally, chronologically or sociolinguistically homogeneous (cf. Bruno, this volume). Different chronological stages of Greek are interwoven in complex ways due to the continuous and uninterrupted literary tradition available to native and non-native speakers of Greek and the coexistence of old and new in living speech and in literary production.<sup>2</sup>

## 2 Grammar of Postclassical Greek

In this section, we provide a brief overview of the major changes that occurred in Postclassical Greek of the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods as compared to classical Attic.

### 2.1. *Phonetic and phonological changes*

We begin our overview with phonetics. As is well known, the process of vowel raising that made the sounds [y], [i], [e:], [oi] turn into [i] by Byzantine times (around 330 AD) started already during the Hellenistic period (cf. Horrocks 2010: 167; Dahlgren & Leiwo, this volume). A non-Attic feature of the Koiné is the replacement of *-tt-* cluster by the panhellenic *-ss-*, Attic *-rr-* by the older *-rs-*, cf. *glōssa* ‘tongue’ (cf. Attic *glōtta*) or *thársos* ‘courage’ (Browning 1983: 24).

While short vowels did not undergo any changes, long vowels disappeared or merged:  $\bar{e}$  and  $\bar{i}$  started to converge by the 3<sup>rd</sup> ct. AD,  $\bar{o}$  turned into *u*. Diphthongs were monophthongized:  $ai > e: > e$ ,  $ei > e: > \bar{i}$  (possibly already during the Classical period)  $> \bar{i} > i$ ,  $oi > \bar{u}: > \bar{i} > i$ , while *au*, *eu* became *av*, *ev*, etc. (Browning 1983: 25). Aspirated voiceless consonants and voiced consonants became the corresponding voiceless and voiced fricatives.

### 2.2. *Restructuring of morphological patterns*

When it comes to morphology, a number of restructurings took place that led towards greater regularization of inflectional patterns. For example, the Attic forms *neōs* ‘temple’, *leōs*

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<sup>2</sup> To capture various layers of linguistic variation in Postclassical Greek as attested in different sorts of documents one may adopt the terminology in Cysouw & Good (2013: 347). On this terminology, Postclassical Greek would be a *languid*, referring “to an entity used to designate any (possibly hierarchical) grouping of *doculects*, in principle running from a set of idiolects to a high-level language family”. In turn, a *doculect* (i.e. a documented *lect*) represents “a linguistic variety as it is documented in a given resource” (term coined by M. Haspelmath *apud* Cysouw & Good 2013: 342).

‘people’ were replaced by *naós* and *laós*, respectively, which were more common elsewhere (e.g. in the tragedy). Irregular comparative and superlative adjectival forms were replaced by the productive suffixes *-ter-os* (comparative) and *-tat-os* (superlative). The unproductive class of athematic verbs lost a number of verbs in favour of the productive, thematic class, cf. Attic *deíkny-mi* ‘show-1SG.ATHEM’ turned into Koiné *dekný-ō* ‘show-1SG.THEM’; the inflection of the weak aorist gradually expanded into the morphologically untransparent strong-aorist forms (Browning 1983: 28-29, 31). Many of these phenomena are typical for the Ionic dialect of the Classical period and were transmitted into Koiné by the speakers of the Ionic dialect through the incorporation of their territories into the Athenian empire. Productive derivational suffixes yielded a number of new words (cf. the list in Browning 1983: 39).

While productivity and transparency were important factors shaping the morphological development of grammatical categories, functional convergence was another one. Thus, the aorist and perfect – originally distinct tense-aspect categories – came increasingly to be used interchangeably. The process started already in the Classical period and later Koiné Greek can thus be said to have one perfective past category with largely stylistically conditioned allomorphy. Notably, the functional merger of these two categories is found in most other ancient Indo-European languages too, for example in Latin.

Other processes take place at the morphology-syntax interface. Thus, the distinction between the middle and the passive voices – which never succeeded in being fully grammaticalized in Ancient Greek (a number of forms never distinguished between the two) – is gradually abandoned in Postclassical Greek altogether (Browning 1983: 30). Another example is the loss of the subjunctive (Browning 1983: 31), which was important in different kinds of subordination structures. Loss of some phonological distinctions between the long and short vowels must have been an important trigger for the development of new syntactic patterns. Thus, the phonetically driven merger of the subjunctive and indicative verb forms that might have facilitated the rise of new subordinating patterns. The partial phonetic conflation of the dative and accusative forms is another example (see below).

### 2.3. Grammaticalization of new categories

New, periphrastically formed categories emerge. For example, the progressive present and past was created on the basis of the verb *eimí* ‘to be’ and the present active participle, occasionally the aorist active participle, of the lexical verb (Browning 1983: 32-33; see Bentein 2016: 205-292 for a thorough study). A new perfect construction emerges. It is again formed on the same verb *eimí* ‘to be’ or, more rarely, the verb *ékhō* ‘to have’ with the perfect or aorist active participle (Browning 1983: 33; Horrocks 2010: 131; Bentein 2014, 2016). The latter two distinguished between the resultative proper (as defined in the typological literature, cf. Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988, Nedjalkov 2001) and the perfect in the narrow sense (as defined in MacCoard 1978, Lindstedt 2000, Dahl & Hedin 2000, often referred to as “anterior perfect”) (Bentein 2016: 202).

A plethora of periphrases for encoding future reference emerge in the Postclassical language. By the time of the chronographer Malalas (6 c. AD), the old suffixal future forms have gone out of use and a number of competing strategies that rely on modal verbs – both those encoding necessity (*op<sup>h</sup>éilō* ‘have to’) and wish or intention (*méllō* ‘to be going to, to be ready to’ – are used here in addition to the pure *praesens pro futuro* strategy. Kölligan (this volume) shows that the old suffixal future forms found in Malalas are largely due to the tradition: they are copied from oracles (e.g. from Herodotus) or from the New Testament. Moreover, according to this author, there is an aspectual split as regards *praesens pro futuro*: only telic verbs are used in this way, while atelic verbs can only have present time reference.

Typically for less grammaticalized future patterns, the former modal or even lexical verbs may still retain to some extent their original meaning (cf. *op<sup>h</sup>éilō* ‘have to’). In turn, *t<sup>h</sup>élō*

(< *et<sup>h</sup>elō* ‘to want, to wish’) – which in reduced form will become the dedicated future-tense marker of Modern Greek – is only sporadically found (primarily in papyri) in the function of a future marker without the modal meaning in the Early Byzantine period (5<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c.) (Browning 1983: 34; Joseph 1990; Joseph & Pappas 2002; Markopoulos 2009: 105; Lee 2010). It is more frequent than other periphrases in the Old Testament (Evans 2001: 227–229). Analogically, *boúlomai* ‘to want’ and *méllō* ‘to be going to, to be ready to’ seem to largely retain the modal component in Malalas (cf. Kölligan, this volume) and in the language of the Old and the New Testaments (Tronci, this volume). Analogously, the periphrasis based on *ékhō* ‘to have, to possess’ with the aorist, most often present, infinitive of the lexical verb do not attest to an unequivocal future meaning in Malalas while only necessity meanings are found (Kölligan, this volume), although this periphrasis has been claimed to be the dominant future-tense construction (cf. Browning 1983: 33; Markopoulos 2009: 94). Finally, *ésomai* ‘be.FUT.1SG.MID’ may sometimes also pattern as a future auxiliary with the present participle of the lexical verb (Browning 1983: 33).

The process of loss of the synthetic future was not abrupt, as is pointed out in Tronci (this volume). While new periphrastic forms emerge, the old synthetic forms are still widely used in the more colloquial register of the New Testament and even in papyri. Tronci (this volume) describes the relative chronology of how different morphological classes of the old synthetic future – such as the so-called Attic future, the sigmatic future, the *media-tantum* future, etc. – are consolidated to increase morphological transparency in derivation and form-function mapping in Postclassical Greek. Frequency of particular lexical verbs plays an important role here in the retention of the earlier patterns.

The ancient perfect no longer attested its original ‘perfect’ functions but rather changed into a past tense – a development frequently observed cross-linguistically (*inter alia*, Breu 1987; 1998:90-1; Kuryłowicz 1964:141ff; Serebrennikov 1974:234-6). This aspectual change makes the old perfect a category that denotes events and no longer states or after-effects from past events. Consequently, transitive verbs retain now their transitivity in the perfect – something that is already found in the classical language – and can therefore become subject to voice alternations in the same way as the aorist (Benedetti, this volume). By the Early Byzantine period, the perfect is no longer used in everyday language except for a few perfect forms which were reinterpreted as aorists because the inherited aorist forms were anomalous in some way. It remains a feature of the literary style in writing. For the purpose of the literary style, new forms for perfect for the active and perfect passive voice are artificially created on the analogy to some ancient forms (Benedetti, this volume).

### 2.3. Cases and prepositions

The phonetically driven loss of length distinctions made the dative case ending *-o* very similar and sometimes even indistinguishable from the accusative *-o(n)* or genitive *-u* in one of the most frequent declensions (cf. Humbert 1930; Horrocks 2010: 116; Cooper & Georgala 2012). This phonetic merger might be one of the triggering factors – along with the functional overlap – for the dative case to gradually disappear from various domains: argument marking and form marking of non-arguments (such as *free datives*, datives encoding location, etc.).

The dative case is recessive. The non-prepositional dative case becomes increasingly replaced by a prepositional phrase (PP). The marking of recipients and addressees is taken over by prepositions such as *pròs* ‘to, at’ or *eis* ‘into’, instrumentals by means of *dià* ‘through’, *en* ‘in’ or later *metà* ‘with’ and its locative meaning by prepositions like *en* ‘in’ (Luraghi 2005, 2010; Stolk 2017a, 2017b; cf. also George 2010: 271 on possible Semitic influence in the choice of the preposition). The evidence from papyri shows that *eis* originally was used only with animate recipients with a very specific meaning of “on account of whom a payment is made” as opposed to semantically less restricted *pròs* (Stolk 2017b: 235). The latter is more

frequently used with full NPs (cf. Horrocks 2010: 284-285), while the old dative – sometimes replaced by the accusative – is reserved for pronouns when it comes to verbs of communication, while it is used with animate recipients only with transfer verbs (Danove 2015: 211-221; Stolk 2017b: 228). The replacement of the dative by accusative is found primarily with personal pronouns where there were phonetic preconditions for merging these two cases into one (cf. Browning 1983: 37; Stolk 2017b).

Interestingly, the frequencies of non-prepositional cases align with the tendencies found in prepositional phrases. Here too the dative gradually decreases in terms of type frequency in the prepositional government. Thus, the dative case becomes infrequent with alternating prepositions that originally selected for several cases including the dative (cf. recently Seržant & Rafiyenko 2018+). Moreover, the choice of cases that can be used with a particular preposition, highlighting distinct meaning facets, decreases. A number of prepositions cease to assign it already by the Hellenistic period (cf. Browning 1983; Humbert 1930; Bortone 2010; Gignac 2013: 416-417; Stolk 2017a, 2017b; Seržant & Rafiyenko 2018+).

This said, the dative case is still widely used to mark (mainly indirect) objects of a verb. Thus, Lavidas & Haug (this volume) show that the relative frequency of dative objects in New Testament is the same as in the Classical language instantiated by Herodotus. The decrease of dative objects becomes clearly visible in writing only in the later Byzantine period. Thus, Sphrantzes (15c.) uses only half as many dative objects as are found in the New Testament (Lavidas & Haug, this volume).

By contrast, we observe an increase in the type frequency of the non-prepositional genitive case. When it comes to non-arguments such as the ‘ficiary’ (comprising both beneficiary and maleficiary), the dative is often replaced by the genitive stemming from the free genitive. The latter is a typologically infrequent development of Postclassical Greek (cf. Seržant 2016): *free genitives* came to replace the old *free datives* originally to denote participants of an event that are not part of the semantic and syntactic valence of the verb. This development is observed primarily in the New Testament and in papyri (Horrocks 1990: 48; Gianollo 2010, this volume; Stolk 2015). The genitive develops further from ficiary arguments during the Ptolemaic period to recipients and addresses in the Roman and Byzantine periods (Stolk 2015). At the same time, Stolk (2015) observes that the word order gradually becomes fixed to Verb-Gen-Noun in 97% of all instances of possessor genitives.

At the same time, the genitive case gradually expands its original possessive meaning with pronouns. Pronominal possessive adjectives such as *emós* ‘1SG.NOM.SG.M’, standard in Classical Greek, become obsolete in the Greek of New Testament, while the genitive forms such as *emoû/mou* ‘1SG.GEN’ (cf. Blass-Debrunner 1961: 146; Gianollo 2010: 105, this volume; García Ramón, this volume) or the semantically synonymous prepositional phrase reinforced by *parà* ‘at’ as, for example, in *pâr’ emoû* ‘[lit.] at me’ are used attributively instead (Horrocks 2010: 92).

When it comes to the prepositional genitive case, the picture is not so clear. Luraghi (2003: 330) finds that the prepositional genitive is generalized with most of the prepositions that allowed for alternations in earlier periods except for *prós* ‘to, at’. Similarly, Regard (1918) claims that the Genitive becomes the most frequent case in New Testament. A recent corpus-based study concludes that the trend is much more variational than this, with different prepositions developing along different lines. The following table illustrates the trends on the basis of the token frequency with each particular preposition that allowed for case alternations in the classical language (Seržant & Rafiyenko 2018+):

	Classical period	New Testament

Preferring Accusative	5	5+1 <sup>3</sup>
Preferring Genitive	3	4
Accusative & Genitive equally frequent ( <i>pará</i> and <i>perí</i> )	2	-

Table 2: The number of prepositions that either prefer accusative or genitive in the Classical period compared to the New Testament (only 60% or more counts as a preference; from Seržant & Rafiyenko 2019+)<sup>4</sup>

To conclude, despite some local expansion of the genitive case mentioned above, the overall token and type frequency of non-prepositional cases diminishes, in both argumental and non-argumental positions.

Furthermore, as in many languages, Koiné Greek no longer distinguishes between the illative and inessive meanings both coded by the same preposition *eis* ‘to’, the presence or absence of directionality being sufficiently disambiguated by the verb.

#### 2.4. Other phenomena

Already by the classical period we observe the presence of negative concord, cf. Xen. Anab. 4.4.8 (cf., *inter alia*, Schwyzer & Debrunner 1966: 597-8; Smyth 1984: 622-629; Horrocks 2014), cf. (1). Negative concord gives rise in Koiné Greek to double negation of the type *ouk* (οὐκ) ... *oudén* (οὐδέν) and *mē* (μή) ... *mēdén* (μηδέν) (Horrocks 2014: 60-1; Chatzopolou 2012):

- (1) *οὐδενὶ*                      *οὐδὲν*                      *εἶπαν*  
*oudenì*                          *ouden*                          *eîpan*  
 NEG.INDEF.DAT.SG    NEG.INDEF.ACC.SG    say.AOR.3PL  
 ‘They didn’t say anything to anyone.’ (NT, Mark 16.8.3; Chatzopolou 2012: 219)

A very clear diachronic trend in Postclassical Greek rooted already in the classical language is the shift from non-finite subordination with no or rare conjunctions towards finite subordination in combination with conjunctions. First of all, the infinitive becomes increasingly replaced by the finite verb and a conjunction; consequently infinitives as a morphological category steadily disappear from the language (cf. Burguière 1960; Joseph 1983, this volume). This is a gradual process that lasts over centuries. Certain grammatical contexts are more prone to retain infinitives than others. For example, different lexical verb classes lose the ability to take an infinitival complement clause in different periods (Blass 1961: 199ff; Joseph, this volume). It does not come as a surprise that those verbs that generally tend to develop into auxiliaries, i.e. undergo a closely tied syntactic and semantic coalescence with the dependent lexical verb – for example, modal verbs such as *dýnamai* ‘to be able to’, or phasal verbs such as *arkházō* ‘to begin’ –, retain the infinitival complementation longest (Joseph, this volume).

While non-finite subordinate clauses headed by a non-finite verb (such as accusative-with-infinitive or genitive-absolute) or control infinitives gradually decrease in favor of subordinated clauses introduced by conjunctions with finite verbs such as *hōs* for temporal, causal as well as purpose relations (alongside the old *hōste*) but also for marking indirect speech, *hína* and *hópōs* marking future-referring complement or purpose clauses or *hóti*

<sup>3</sup> Since *amphí* is only marginally attested in the Byzantine period and, expectedly, not attested in the New Testament at all, Seržant & Rafiyenko (2018+) compare its usage in the Classical language with the Roman period more generally. The general trend of one preposition taking predominantly just one case is confirmed also for this preposition even though it is borrowed from the classical language.

<sup>4</sup> Seržant & Rafiyenko (2018+) consider the following prepositions here: *hypó*, *prós*, *perí*, *pará*, *metá*, *epí*, *amphí*, *hypér*, *katá*, *diá*. Note that *amphí* is only marginally attested in Postclassical Greek.

marking declarative complement clauses. An exception to this might be the strategy to nominalize the infinitival clauses by means of the definite article that became typical for the official Koiné in the Hellenistic period (Horrocks 2010: 94). Having said this, it remains to be explored whether this particular construction made it into more colloquial registers of Koiné. It is found primarily only in official documents such as business papyri (G. Horrocks, p.c.).

We observe a number of changes in syntax such as a gradual trend in the major properties concerning word order, which nonetheless remains subject to information-structural considerations as in the classical language. Thus, the basic, most frequent word order changes from predominantly object-verb (OV, i.e. head-final) in the Classical period to VO in the Koiné (Horrocks 1990) as well as from both Genitive-Noun and Noun-Genitive orders to predominantly Noun-Genitive order.

Thus, Gianollo (this volume) presents comparative counts for the order of head nouns and the genitive nouns modifying them in the Egyptian papyri (based on Stolk 2015: 101): noun-genitive (NGen) is found in 65% of all adnominal genitives in the Hellenistic period and 77% in the Roman period; 44% in the Classical period (Plato) and 90%–95% in the New Testament (Gianollo, this volume). Analogously, already the earliest layers of Ancient Greek were on the way to develop from a language with inflectional case (i.e. head-final) to a language in which many semantic relations, both between nouns and between nouns and verbs, are coded by prepositions (i.e. head-initial) (cf. Seržant & Rafiyenko 2018+).

### 3. Concluding remarks

In place of a conventional conclusion, we would like to emphasize here our conviction that ‘pure’ linguistic research will not be as fruitful as it should be if significant variational factors – such as translational and substrate effects (cf. Gianollo 2011), or the impact of standardization, typically leading to skewing effects from Atticism and the classical literary tradition or from the “official” Koiné of the chancelleries (García Ramón, this volume) – are not taken into account. Thus, the separation of Historical Linguistics from the so-called philological approach has been repeatedly called into question in recent years (*inter alia*, Dollinger 2016; Adamson & Ayres-Bennett 2011). The *rephilologization* of historical linguistics in its various forms has been found beneficial in various respects (Adamson & Ayres-Bennett 2011; Morpurgo Davies 2011). With this volume we endorse this important trend.

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