

Continuative relative clauses in Greek documentary papyri

Although relativization and its connected phenomena have received great scholarly attention in Ancient Greek, the most extensive examinations of Greek relative clauses concern the Archaic (Probert 2015), and the Classical period (Perna 2013, Faure 2021). Within the Post-Classical period, some consideration has been paid to New Testament Greek (Du Toit 2016, Hayes 2018): in particular, a recent contribution by Du Toit (2022) investigates the characteristics and function of continuative relative clauses in the New Testament.

However, this type of clauses has not yet been studied in the Post-Classical Greek papyri, where relative constructions are still largely unexplored (Kriki 2013; Bentein and Bağrıaçık 2018; Bentein and Cattafi forthcoming), despite the sociolinguistic potential of these documents in the investigation of morphosyntactic variation (Bentein 2019; Bentein, Cattafi and La Roi forthcoming).

The aim of this paper is therefore to analyse the behavior of continuative relative clauses in Greek documentary papyri from Egypt, by taking into account letters, petitions and contracts from the first to the eight century AD.

First, I will discuss how the papyrological examples relate to the general concept of continuative relative clauses as pointed out in linguistic studies (cfr. Lehmann 1984, *inter alia*) and in the other periods of Greek. For instance, in these texts, very different constructions such as (1) from a petition and (2) from a contract can be broadly ascribed to the “continuative” category.

- (1) Συρίων γενόμενος δεκάπρωτος [ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆ]ς κώμης Θρασὼ ἀναπίσας μου τὸν ἄν[δρα Καῖτ ὀνό]ματι ποιμένιν αὐτοῦ τὰ πρόβατα — ὅστις [ἀδίκως τὰς τοῦ] προκειμένου ἀνδρὸς αἴγας καὶ πρόβατα τὸν [ἀριθμὸν ἐξήκο]ντα συναπέσπασεν αὐτῷ

“Syrion having become decaprotus of the aforesaid village, persuaded my husband Ganis to pasture his flock—it was he who wrongfully removed into his own keeping my husband's goats and sheep 60 in number” (P. Sakaon 36, ll. 8-11 – III AD)

- (2) εἰς σπορὰν καὶ κατάθεσιν ὧν ἐὰν αἰρῶμαι φόρου ἀποτάκτου πυροῦ ἀρταβῶν τριάκοντα ὄνπερ φόρον μετρήσω τῷ Ἐπειφ μηνὶ τῆς (αὐτῆς) ζ᾽ ἰνδικ(τίωνος) ἄνυπερθέτως

“to sow and plant with whatever I choose, at a total rent of thirty artabas of wheat, which rent I shall measure out in the month of Epeiph of the same 7th indiction without delay” (P. Charite 7, ll. 11-15 – IV AD)

Second, I will highlight some linguistic aspects of continuative relative clauses in papyri, in particular their syntactic type and their relationship with the antecedent (Bentein and Bağrıaçık 2018), and the relative markers that introduce the clauses.

Finally, I will explore their communicative and stylistic meanings, such as the role of linking different textual units (cfr. Tabachovitz 1943: 11 on the possibility of using relative clauses as discourse connectives), by looking at the type of documents where continuative clauses tend to appear and at the function they perform within the text.

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