

Finiteness in Greek and Latin, then and now

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The concept of finiteness

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Syntax: overt subject, independent clausehood

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- correlation of the features
- important heritage of classical grammar in modern linguistics
- Greek and Latin data contribute to general linguistic theory

- 1 Finiteness – a very brief history of the idea
- 2 Finite-like semantics in participles
- 3 Finite-like syntax in participles: Overt subjects
- 4 “Finite” infinitives
- 5 Finiteness in Greek and Latin

Plan

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- So, there’s no unified notion of (what we call) nonfiniteness
- The discussion centers on what sets infinitives apart from finite forms, and whether infinitives are verbs at all
- We will be looking at what Apollonius Dyscolus (2nd cent. AD) says in his book *On syntax*

What are the 'secondary meanings'?

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 - 'Disposition of the mind' (*psuk^hik^hē diathesis*)
- Number and person are not properties of the act (*to pragma hen estin*)

What is 'disposition of the mind'?

On Syntax, 44Uhlig

If someone declares *peripatei Trup^hōn*, one could transform that into indirect speech by adding the meaning of the indicative mood, I mean *hōrisato* ('X indicated'), one would say *hōrisato peripatein Trup^hōna*. And in the optative, *peripatoiē Trup^hōn*, again adding the meaning of a wish one would say *ēuxato peripatein Trup^hōna* ('X wished that ...'). And in the imperative, *peripateitō Trup^hōn*, one would say *prosetaxe peripatein Trup^hōna*. ('X ordered that...').

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- 'indicate', 'wish', 'order' are ways of making explicit the 'disposition of the mind'
- Generalized to the subjunctive
- Something like 'propositional attitude'?

Connection morphology–semantics

- ‘Disposition of the mind’ not crucial to verbs
- Forms lacking it are still verbs, but crucially non-finite
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- No comparable paraphrase
- He connects ‘disposition of the mind’ to number and person
- The argument for this seems to rely on a confusion of event participant and speech act participant
- There may be other ways of construing the argument, but for our purposes the crucial point is that he connects the features

Tense is not a finiteness feature

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- Crucially, tense is not a finiteness property for Apollonius
- It could not really be, as it is clearly a property of the event described
- The distinction *grap^hein/grapsai* is temporal
- Participles have tense although they are not even verbs
- The imperfective participle is both a present and past participle

Subjects?

- Apollonius also argues against infinitives taking subjects
- The accusative in Acls goes with the governing verb

On Syntax, 342 Uhlig

dei eme akoueïn
 must me.ACC listen.INF

'I must listen'

Subjects?

On Syntax, 344 Uhlig

periekhei *ho ouranos* *tēn gēn*
 surround.PRES the.heaven.NOM the.earth.ACC

‘The heaven surrounds the earth’

⇒

legousi *ton ouranon* *periekhein* *tēn gēn*
 they.say the.heaven.ACC surround.INF the.earth.ACC

‘They say the heaven surrounds the earth’

- Not entirely clear how this would generalize

Summing up

- We find the idea that certain inflections are crucial to finiteness
 - Person
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- We find the idea that certain inflections are crucial to finiteness
 - Person
 - Number
 - Voice (not discussed)
- The presence of these inflections is tied to the semantic notion of 'disposition of the mind'

Philosophical grammar: James Harris

Finiteness = assertion (or command, or ...)

Take away therefore the Assertion, the Command or whatever else gives a Character to any of these modes, and there remains nothing more than the mere infinitive which (as Priscian says) significat ipsam rem, quam continet Verbum. (Harris, 1773, p. 166)

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- Ideas from Apollonius (via Priscian)
- Time (tense) still not a finiteness property
- An important influence on early modern classical philology and the grammars of Greek and Latin through Wolf and Hermann (Haug, 2005)

Modern linguistics

Morphology person, number, mood *and tense* (Klein, 2006, p. 245)

Semantics assertion (Klein, 1998)

Syntax overt subject, often qualified as agreeing/nominative subject) (Ledgeway, 2007, p. 336)

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- Problems: nonfinite-like forms with person/number
 - Portuguese inflected infinitives (Raposo, 1987; Ledgeway, 1998)
 - Modern Greek infinitive-like subjunctives (Terzi, 1997)

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 - Modern Greek infinitive-like subjunctives (Terzi, 1997)
- And finite-like forms without person/number (Kalinina & Sumbatova, 2007)

The “Greek and Latin straightjacket” topos

(Klein, 2006, p. 246)

“This strategy [viz. looking for translation equivalents in Latin] has guided a great deal of our description of languages other than those for which traditional grammatical categories were originally proposed, that is, for Greek and Latin.”

The “Greek and Latin straightjacket” topos

(Koptjevskaja-Tamm, 2009, 213)

“Like many other traditional notions, finiteness and its related concepts have been “borrowed” from the Greco-Latin tradition for the purpose of describing certain grammatical phenomena in other languages. And, as the case often is with such traditional notions, this has resulted in various inconsistencies in the application of the finiteness label for different languages.”

The “Greek and Latin straightjacket” topos

The implication

The grammatical investigation of Greek and Latin has yielded a fixed concept of finiteness which is cross-linguistically inadequate, so we must now look to other languages to improve our concept.

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- Although the traditional notion of finiteness comes from the study of Greek and Latin, we can still learn a lot more about finiteness from these languages.
- Three cases:
 - Finite-like meaning in participles (Bary & Haug, 2011; Haug, 2012)
 - Finite-like syntax in participles (Haug, 2017)
 - Finite-like syntax and semantics in infinitives (ongoing work)
- I will illustrate participles with Greek and infinitives with Latin

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The Greek participle system

	active	medio-passive	passive
aorist	<i>lusas</i>	<i>lusamenos</i>	<i>lut^heis</i>
imperfective	<i>luōn</i>	<i>luomenos</i>	—
resultative	<i>lelukōs</i>	<i>lelumenos</i>	—
future	<i>lusōn</i>	<i>lusomenos</i>	<i>lut^hēsomenos</i>

Table: Participles from the Greek verb *luō* 'to untie'

Basic participle syntax

- Many usages:

Attributes *the running boy*

Heads *the running (ones)*

Complements *stop running*

Free adjuncts *he arrived running*

Absolutes *his English deserting him*

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- Invariant agreement between participle and subject in case, number and gender
- The free adjunct use (aka “conjunct”) is the interesting one for us

Participle meaning

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 - manner and means participles elaborate on the main event
 - cause, concession etc. imply that we have two distinct events
- *Ambiguity* between classes, *vagueness* inside classes
- Ambiguity not necessarily easier to resolve than vagueness!

Types of participles

Elaborative participle

grammata graphousi Hellēnes men apo tōn aristerōn epi ta dexia
pherontes tēn kheira, Aiguptioi de apo tōn dexiōn epi ta aristera

The Greeks write letters and calculate with stones by **moving** the hand from left to right, whereas the Egyptians (do so) from right to left (Hdt. 2.36.4)

- One event, extra information
- The participle typically expresses manner or means

Types of participles

Framing participle

tēn men dē turannida houtō eskhon hoi Mermnadai tous Hērakleidas apelomenoi Gugēs de **turanneusas** apepempse anathēmata es Delphous ouk oliga

‘Thus the Mermnadae got the sovereignty, taking it from the Heraclidae. **When he had become king**, Gyges sent numerous offerings to Delphi. . . ’

- Two events, one typically anaphoric/predictable; no independent assertion
- Typically we get relations of causality, concession, purpose, condition or pure temporal anchoring

Main-clause like participles

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- Ancient Greek participles can also be main-clause like
- In such cases, they take on the modal force of the finite verb they attach to (modal solidarity, Oguse 1962)

Imperative participle (Mt. 2:13)

egertheis *paralabe* *to paidion*
 waking-up.AP take.AOR.IMP.2SG the.child.ACC

Wake up and take the child with you (Mt. 2:13)

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Declarative participle (Mt. 2:14)

egertheis *parelabe* *to paidion*
 waking-up.AP take.AOR.PST.2SG the.child.ACC

And he woke up and took the child with him

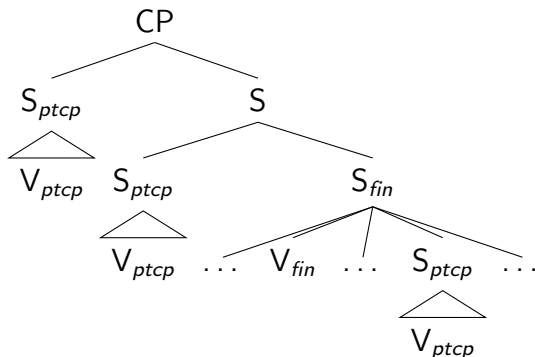
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- The analysis in (Bary & Haug, 2011):
 - Elaboration participles combine with an event description (i.e. a verb phrase)
 - Frames are topicalized and therefore presuppositional
 - Modal solidarity constructions involve serialization of tensed clauses (i.e. inflection phrases) under a single mood operator

The c-structural realization



Participles interacting with discourse context

Hdt. 1.79.2

hōs de hoi tauta edokse kai epoiee kata takhos **elasas** gar ton straton
es tēn Ludiēn autos aggelos Kroisōi elēluthee

'So he decided and he acted immediately: He **drove** his army to Lydia
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- We don't want to say that the event of driving the army simply comes before the event of going as a messenger
- Instead, it connects naturally with the preceding discourse: independent temporal reference, not background

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 - X ordered that he should wake up (and take the child)
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- This is *never* possible for elaborative or framing participles
- More analysis in Bary & Haug 2011

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Overt subjects

- Overt nominative subjects are hallmarks of finiteness
- But Greek participles can in fact host nominative subjects
- Moreover, the ones that do are exactly the participles we looked at in the previous section
- We need to venture into Greek word order to identify these

Separating participle and main clause

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apot^hōmasas de Kroisos to lekhten eireto epistrepheōs (Hdt. 1.30.4)
 'Croesus **was amazed at what had been said** and said sharply.'

And Latin?

Caes. Gal. 5.1.1

discedens *ab* *hibernis* **Caesar** *in*
 depart.PP.NOM from winter quarters.ABL Caesar.NOM in
Italiam ... *imperat* ...
 Italy.ACC command.3.SG.PRES

'Departing from his winter quarters to Italy ... Caesar commands ...'

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- Most theories assume three kinds of discontinuity
 - relativization/topicalization
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 - 'scrambling'
- Relativization and extraposition can be cross-clausal
- But these examples would involve cross-clausal scrambling

Two analyses

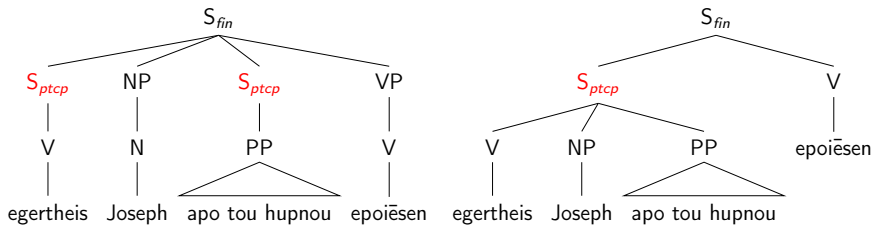
Matthew 1:24

egertheis *de* **lōsēph** *apo tou upnou*
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 ‘When he woke up from the dream, Joseph did ...’

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- We will count discontinuities using both possible analyses

Projectivity of clausal categories

	GNT			Herodotus		
	op	nonproj	proj	op	nonproj	proj
Finite verb	33	0	9861	11	0	1185

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- Complement participles behave like infinitives
- Absolutes are like finite clauses
- Conjunct participles seem to work like complements
- But almost all discontinuities disappear on the internal subject analysis

Summing up participles

- Finite-like semantics: assertion and discourse connection
- Finite-like syntax: subjects

Summing up participles

- Finite-like semantics: assertion and discourse connection
- Finite-like syntax: subjects
- Careful examination of the material shows that there is correlation:
 - One class has finite-like semantics *and* can host subjects.
 - Another class does not have finite-like semantics and *cannot* host subjects.

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"Finite" infinitives

- Participles can have finite-like syntax and semantics
- But they lack the ability to be independent root clauses
- A finite verb is always necessary (in the standard varieties)
- Now we'll see that infinitives *can* be independent root clauses

Infinitives are (morphologically) non-finite

Tense only relative to the matrix verb

Marcum bonum esse/fuisse/futurum esse dico.

Mark.ACC good.ACC be.INF.PRS/PRF/FUT say.PRS.1S

'I say that Mark is/has been/will be good.'

Marcum bonum esse/fuisse/futurum esse dixi.

Mark.ACC good.ACC be.INF.PRS/PRF/FUT say.PRS.1S

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No aspect in infinitives

Marcus cenabat.

Mark.NOM eat.IPFV.PST.3S

'Mark was eating.'

Marcus cenavit.

Mark.NOM eat.PFV.PST.3S

'Mark ate.'

Marcum cenavisse dico.

Mark.NOM eat.INF.PRF say.PRS.1S

'I say that Mark ate/was eating.'

Infinitives are (morphologically) non-finite

No mood in infinitives

Si hoc dicis, erras.

If this.ACC say.PRS.IND.2S be wrong.PRS.IND.2S

'If you say this, you are wrong.'

Si hoc dicas, erres.

If this.ACC say.PRS.SBJV.2S be wrong.PRS.SBJV.2S

'If you should say this, you would be wrong.'

Puto te, si hoc dicas, errare.

think.PRS.1S you.ACC if this.ACC say.PRS.SBJV.2S be wrong.INF.PRS

'I think that if you say this, you are wrong/if you should say this, you would be wrong.'

Standard Acls

Terence, Andria 898

ego [me amare hanc] fateor.

I.NOM me.ACC love.INF.PRS her.ACC confess.PRS.1S

'I confess that I love her.' (Ter. An. 898)

Unembedded indirect speech

[reddi captivos]₁ negavit esse utile; [illos enim adulescentes esse et bonos duces]₂, [se iam confectum senectute]₃.

'He denied that [it would be expedient to return the prisoners]₁; [for (he said) they were young men and good officers]₂, [while he was already consumed with age]₃.' (Cic. Off. 3.100)

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- Can we postulate an implicit speech verb?

Null verbs for root infinitives

(*On syntax* 333Uhlig)

ou gar hē eks aparemp^hatou suntaxis katakleiei logon, ei mē anaplērōt^heiē di' hōn aparemp^hatos esti. To dē oun T^heōn Apollōniōi k^hairein ouk an eiē autoteles, ei mē, hōs eipomen, to sunupark^hon egkeoito rhēma

'The construction with an infinitive cannot be a complete sentence unless those things are supplied whose lack makes it non-finite. Thus the phrase *T^heōn Apollōniōi k^hairein* would not be complete, unless (as we said) the governing verb is implicit.' (trans. Householder)

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- Two reasons why an implicit verb gives the wrong predictions:
 - We get the discourse cohesions wrong
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- Two reasons why an implicit verb gives the wrong predictions:
 - We get the discourse cohesions wrong
 - The syntax of rhetorical questions goes wrong
- We will look at the first argument using the discourse particle *enim* although the point is more general

enim with an overt verb of saying

Cic. Att. 4.4.1 (trans. Shackleton Bailey)

periuendus mihi Cincius venit ante diem iii Kal Febr ante lucem; dixit enim mihi te esse in Italia seseque ad te pueros mittere.

'Cincius was a very welcome arrival (before daybreak, 28 January), for he tells me that you are in Italy and that he is sending you boys.'

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- *enim* scopes over all the material in its sentence

enim with an unembedded Acl

Cic. ad Att. 1.16.13

dixi [hanc legem Publium Clodium iam ante servasse]₁; [pronuntiare **enim** solitum esse et non dare]₂.

'I said that Publius Clodius had already complied with this law. For, I said, he had been in the habit of promising and then not paying.'

- The causal relation holds *inside* the report

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- Examples can be multiplied
- Again *enim* scopes over all the syntactic material in its sentence
- This makes a null verb very unlikely

Questions in indirect speech

Caed. Gal. 1.20.5

quid *sui* *consilii* *sit* *ostendit*
 what.NOM his.own.GEN plan.GEN is.PRES.SBJV explains.PRES

'He explains what his plan is.' (Caes. Gal. 1.21.2)

Questions in indirect speech

Caes. Gal. 1.44.7-8

(Ariovistus argues that this is the first time a Roman army has left the province of Gaul.)

quid *sibi* *vellet?* *cur* *in suas*
 what.ACC refl.DAT want.IPFV.SBJV why in own.ACC
possessiones *veniret?*
 possessions.ACC come.IPFV.SBJV

'What did he (=Caesar) want? Why had he come to his (=Ariovistus') domains?'

Rhetorical questions in indirect speech

Cic. Sen. 22

(Sophocles' sons try to get control of his property on the ground of imbecility. In court, he points to his latest work, *Oedipus at Colonus*.)

tum senex dicitur ... recitasse iudicibus

Then old.man.NOM say.PRS.PASS recite.INF.PRF and

quaesisseque num illud carmen desipientis

ask.INF.PRF whether that.NOM poem.NOM imbecile.GEN

videretur,

seem.IPFV.PST.SBJV.3S

'The old man is said to have read [his poem] to the judges and to have asked whether that poem seemed like the work of an imbecile.'

Rhetorical questions in indirect speech

Caes. Gal. 5.28

(The Romans hear of an impending attack by the Germans. Aurun-
culeius argues that they should not leave their camp without Caesar's
orders.)

postremo quid esse levius aut
lastl what.ACC be.INF.PRS more.undetermined.ACC or
turpius, quam auctore hoste de
more.undignified.ACC than authority.ABL enemy.ABL about
summis rebus capere consilium?
most.important.ABL things.ABL take plan.ACC

'What could be more undetermined and more undignified than to de-
cide on the most important issues on the authority of an enemy?'

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- NB A presupposition that it is someone else's assertion
- Similar to German Konjunktiv I
- Unique construction allowing the report of *structured* discourse

Plan

- 1 Finiteness – a very brief history of the idea
- 2 Finite-like semantics in participles
- 3 Finite-like syntax in participles: Overt subjects
- 4 “Finite” infinitives
- 5 Finiteness in Greek and Latin

Greek and Latin finiteness

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- The picture in the tradition from Apollonius is too simplified
- There is no simple connection between the lack of certain morphological features, syntax (absence of subjects) and semantics ('disposition of the mind')

Conclusions

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- Both constructions allow discourse connections outside the sentence boundary
- Graded finiteness: different degrees in freedom of e.g. discourse connections
- Constructional finiteness, not form-based

Methodological points

- Still a lot to learn about Greek and Latin syntax
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 - Constructions that we encounter regularly in texts can turn out to be interesting if we examine them more deeply
- Still a lot to learn from Greek and Latin syntax
 - This requires active involvement with general linguistic theory!

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