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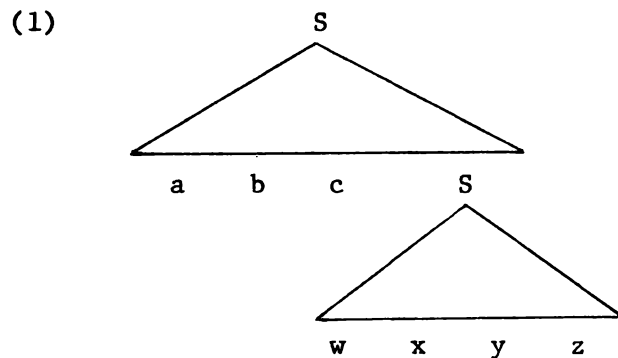
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EXTRACTION FROM COMPLEMENT CLAUSES IN KOINE GREEK*

Stephen A. Marlett

It is evident that, despite a certain amount of word order freedom in Ancient Greek, there are also severe constraints on where words may occur. In this brief paper I present one such constraint and show how it affects the understanding of two verses which seem to be counterexamples to it (1 Cor 14:12 and 1 John 5:16).¹

Dependents of a clause in Greek may not be freely interspersed with dependents of another clause, just as they cannot be in English. Therefore, a sentence with the structure shown in (1) (in which a sentence (S) is embedded inside of another sentence) cannot have the surface form shown in (2) (among others).



(2) a b w x c y z

There are, however, three ways in which this intuitively correct constraint can be superficially violated. The first is when an interrogative word of an embedded clause occurs sentence-initially, as in (3-4). This is referred to as WH-Movement in the transformational linguistic literature.² (Clause boundaries are indicated by square brackets; the (probable) source position of a displaced constituent is indicated and the displaced constituent is in boldface.)

(3) **What** do you think [he will do ___ for you] ?

(4) **ti** thelete [poiēso ___ hymin]
 what you.want I.may.do to.you
 'What do you want me to do for you?' Matt 20:32 (NIV)

The second is when a constituent of an embedded clause is allowed to become a constituent syntactically of the matrix clause; this is not a matter of simple movement. In English this 'raising' (as it is known in the earlier transformational linguistic literature) requires an infini-

tive in the embedded clause, as it could in Greek. See examples (5-6). But in Koine Greek (as in Modern Greek, certain North American Indian languages, and apparently even Hebrew) raising can also occur with finite complement clauses and a pronominal 'copy', as in examples (7-8).³ In both kinds of raising, the case of the raised nominal is determined by its function in the higher clause. (Raising is not obligatory, and it is not clear what functional significance it might have had in Greek. Very possibly the relationship between form and function was just as slippery as in English.) According to this analysis, the pronoun **se** in (6) occurs in the accusative case since it is the direct object of the preceding verb at the surface level. Likewise, the noun phrase **to euaggelion** 'the gospel' in (7) is the superficial direct object of **gnōrizō** 'I make known' by this analysis, and the first pronoun **heautos** 'yourselves' in (8), a reflexive copy of the second one, is in the accusative case because it is the direct object of the preceding verb.

- (5) a. I expect **John** [___ to leave soon].
 b. **John** is expected [___ to leave soon].
- (6) euchomai **se** [___ euodousthai kai hygiainein]
 I.pray you ___ to.prosper and to.be.in.health
 'I pray that you may prosper and be in good health'
 3 John 2
- (7) gnōrizō gar hymin adelphoi **to euaggelion** ...
 I.make.known for to.you brothers the gospel
 [hoti ___ ouk estin kata anthropōn]
 that ___ not it.is according.to man
 'I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel ...
 is not of human origin' Gal 1:11
- (8) he ouk epiginōskete **heautos** [hoti Iēsous
 or not you.know yourselves that Jesus
 Christos en hymin]
 Christ in you
 'Or do you not understand that Christ Jesus is in
 you...?' 2 Cor 13:5

Other clear examples of raising include Matt 25:24, Mark 1:24, Mark 7:2, Mark 11:32, Mark 12:34, to name a few. In my opinion, the construction in Matt 6:28 and Luke 12:24 should also be taken as raising, but a serious discussion of raising would take us far afield now.

Since raising involves a grammatical change which is not simply a change of word order, it is quite different from both WH-Movement and the construction which is the topic of this article: extraction from various kinds of finite subordinate clauses.⁴

Extraction in Greek is different from each of the constructions mentioned above. It simply involves the placement of a constituent in the position immediately preceding the complementizer, presumably for some kind of highlighting effect. In this position it looks like it could be part of the preceding clause, but I assume here that the moved element is adjoined to the complementizer. This is shown diagrammatically in (9).

(9) [w x [COMP y a z]] ==> [w x [[a COMP] y z]]

In other words, except for cases of WH-Movement, the only place in which an element that is uniquely the constituent of a finite subordinate clause may appear outside of that clause is immediately preceding the complementizer. In the absence of native speakers of Koine Greek, the validity of this constraint can only be extrapolated from the texts we have and corroborated by the examination of additional textual material. It may be that there are less than eighteen examples of extraction from finite clauses in the NT. I present the better examples below.⁵

Subordinate Clause Extracted

(10) **kathōs ēgapēsa hymas** hina kai hymeis agapate
as I.loved you that also you you.may.love

allelōus —
one.another

'that you love each other as I have loved you' John 13:34

Prepositional Phrase Extracted

(11) **legōn eis ton erchomenon met auton** hina pisteusōsin —
saying in the coming(one) after him that they.may.believe

'telling [them] that they should believe in the one coming after him' Acts 19:4

Noun Phrase Extracted

(12) **egō de hoti** — **tēn alētheian legō**
I but because the truth I.say

'but because I tell the truth' John 8:45

- (13) **tois ptōchois** hina ti dō
to.the poor that something he.may.give —
'that he should give something to the poor' John 13:29
- (14) houtōs kai houtoi nyn ēpeithēsan tō hymeterō
so also these now they.disobeyed by.the your
eleei hina kai autoi nyn eleethosin —
mercy so.that also they now they.may.receive.mercy —
'so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too
may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you'
Rom 11:31 (NIV)
- (15) **biōtika** men oun **kritēria** ean echēte —
of.this.life indeed therefore lawsuits if you.have —
'therefore, if you have lawsuits about everyday matters'
1 Cor 6:4
- (16) **tini logō euēggelisamēn hymin** ei katechete —
to.what word I.preached to.you if you.hold.fast —
'if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you' 1 Cor 15:2
(NIV)
- (17) alla tēn agapēn hina gnōte hēn echō ...
but the love so.that you.may.know — which I.have
'but so that you would know the love that I have ...' 2 Cor 2:4
- (18) monon tōn ptōchōn hina mnēmoneuōmen —
only the poor that we.may.remember —
'only that we should remember the poor' Gal 2:10
- (19) kai tēn ek Laodikeias hina kai hymeis anagnōte —
and the.(one) from Laodicea that also you you.may.read —
'and that you read the one from Laodicea' Col 4:16

Once we have a clear understanding of this restriction on extracted constituents in Greek we are able to look at verses such as 1 Cor 14:12 and 1 John 5:16 from a better vantage point. These are the only cases in the New Testament (to my knowledge) which might be taken as counter-examples to the proposed constraint on extraction. I discuss 1 Cor 14:12 first. The phrase in question is in boldface.

- (20) epei zēlōtai este pneumatōn **pros tēn oikodomēn**
 since zealots you. are of. spiritual. (things) to the edification
tēs ekklēσίας zēteite hina perisseuēte
 of. the church seek (so?). that you. may. abound

A common understanding of this verse takes the prepositional phrase **pros tēn oikodomēn tēs ekklēσίας** 'to the edification of the church' as a constituent (directly or indirectly) of the **hina** clause. The NIV is representative: "Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church". Under this analysis, however, the extracted phrase occurs in a position which is not licensed by the grammar of Greek.⁶ As a constituent of the embedded clause, it should appear after **zēteite** 'seek', not before it.

There is an alternative analysis which is consistent with the observed constraint on extraction and the context. This is for the **pros** 'to' phrase to be taken as a modifier of the **zēteite** 'seek' clause. If the **hina** clause is then taken as the complement of **zēteite**, a possible rendering is: "Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, for the building up of the church try to have more (of them)."⁷ If the **hina** clause is taken as a purpose clause, a possible rendering is: "Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, seek them [or: strive] for the building up of the church, in order that you may have more (of them)".⁸

Since these alternative renderings are as viable contextually as the position adopted by the NIV (*inter alia*), there is no warrant from this verse to abandon the proposed constraint on extraction.

The next possible counterexample is more difficult since the common rendering is without much dispute. In fact most commentators do not mention any difficulty with the syntax.

- (21) estin hamartia pros thanaton
 (there).is sin to death
ou peri ekeinēs legō hina erōtēsē
 not concerning that I. say that he. may. ask

'There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.' 1 John 5:16 (NIV)

One question is whether the negative **ou** is to be construed as negating the verb **legō** 'I say' (as many translations render it) or as negating the phrase **peri ekeinēs** 'concerning that'. Under the first view, there is little room for doubt that the prepositional phrase has been extracted from the complement clause and placed in an unusual position--between the negative word and the higher verb. This would be a strong counterexample to the proposed constraint on extraction. Under the second view, it is possible to take the construction as a kind of cleft construction, rendered as follows in the Louis Segond French translation:

- (22) Il y a un péché qui mène à la mort;
ce n'est pas pour ce péché-là que je dis de prier.

'There is a sin that leads to death; it is not for that sin that I say to pray'

This understanding certainly fits well with the context. If this is indeed correct, then this verse does not involve extraction, but rather clefting. Cleft constructions have long been recognized as having much in common with WH-Movement; therefore it is not surprising to find the prepositional phrase where it is.

In conclusion, we have seen that there appears to be a significant restriction on the extraction of elements from a finite embedded clause. Given this constraint we are forced to pay more attention to less commonly suggested renderings of verses which appear to counterexemplify it.

Notes

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1. Robertson 1934:423 indicates that he is not unaware of the facts discussed here. But he lumps various phenomena under the rubric "prolepsis," including extraction and raising (see below). The same is true of Turner 1963:325. Robertson also limits prolepsis to "substantives," which is not correct for extraction, as can be seen from the examples presented below. Winer 1881:625-9 discusses the subject very clearly under the name 'attraction', but also includes other constructions with it.

2. See, for example, Radford 1981.

3. See Marlett 1976, Joseph 1978, and Marlett 1984. Actually, word order facts suggest that infinitival complements in Greek result not from raising, but from clause union.

4. See Marlett 1976 and Willson 1985. Marlett 1976 discusses this construction under the name left dislocation, while Willson uses the name extraposition; these names are perhaps best reserved for other constructions. The term 'extraction' is a bit too general in that various kinds of movements, including WH-Movement, are also generally considered extractions. Nevertheless, for lack of a better name I will use the name extraction in this paper.

5. I do not discuss what happens when the subordinate clause is non-

finite except to note that the constraints are different, as Willson 1985 points out. (See note 3.) Also, it should be noted that the TEV does not take Rom 11:31 as a case of extraction; and various commentaries, including Robertson 1934:425, Blass and Debrunner 1961:291, and Morris 1958, do not take 1 Cor 15:2 as a case of extraction. The argument by Morris against the extraction analysis is without force, however, since one cannot simply dismiss an extraction analysis as "not a very natural Greek construction" (204). Other possible examples of extraction in the NT include Luke 7:39, Gal 5:11, 1 Cor 14:10, and Acts 19:2.

6. Godet 1977:704 cites 1 Cor 3:5, 7:17, and 9:15 as being other examples of the "inversion" of word order seen in 15:2. His argument is flawed, however, since in these other cases clause boundaries are not involved.

7. Three commentaries which take a position along these lines are Robertson and Plummer 1914, Meyer 1884, and Barrett 1968. I am not taking a position here on the proper translation of the verb *perisseuete*.

8. Alford 1968:593, Findlay 1974:905, and Conzelmann 1975:237 view the construction in this way.

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