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The spread of participial clauses in Biblical Greek: The importance of being multilingual

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Abstract

In this study, a construction marginally found in Ancient Greek is addressed, the participial clause, i.e. a clause whose main verb is a participle. This construction displays a considerable increase in usage frequency in Biblical Greek (II cent. BCE-II CE), which is the language found in the Judaeo-Christian literature and which variously undergoes the influence of Semitic languages. In these tongues, the participial clause is a very common construction, and it even exhibits an increase in productivity and, thus, usage frequency at the time at issue. These parallel Greek-Semitic developments, and the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data suggest that a crucial role in the frequency increase observed in Biblical Greek should be attributed to multilingualism. The issue is also addressed from the perspective of language contact, which provides the theoretical and terminological frame by which the phenomenon is individuated and defined.

Keywords: Participial clause, Participle, Biblical Greek, Semitic languages, Language contact, Spoken dimension, Multilingualism.

1
Introduction

This contribution addresses the participial clause in Biblical Greek, with a focus on texts dating from between the II cent. BCE and the II CE.

By 'Biblical Greek', I refer to the variety used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (henceforth, OT), i.e. the LXX, in the New Testament (henceforth, NT) and in the non-canonical Judaeo-Christian literature, which is linguistically and stylistically dependent on the canonical literature (on Biblical Greek, see Joosten, 2013); the label 'non-Biblical Greek' will be used to refer to any Ancient Greek variety that is different, to some extent, from Biblical Greek (e.g. Classical Greek, Hellenistic Greek, etc.). Strictly speaking, the LXX language is not exactly the same as the NT language (on LXX Greek, see Janse, 2002, 338ff.; Horrocks, 2010, 106ff.): for example, besides other differences, the former is about three centuries older than the latter and related to a different geographical area (Egyptian Alexandria, as for the LXX; Palestine and the Near East, as for the NT), while NT Greek is commonly acknowledged to have a more

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vernacular character than LXX Greek (Horrocks, 2010, 147ff.), robust evidence for which is provided by the comparison with the documentary papyri. However, the languages of the LXX, the NT and the non-canonical literature share a number of syntactic and lexical-stylistic traits, in addition to an overall common cultural background (see §2), such that we can jointly refer to them, by and large, as to a homogeneous variety (cf. Conybeare & Stock, 1995, p. 22).

Essentially, Biblical Greek is made up of two components, and can be defined as a form of *Koinè* imbued with a Semitic coloring due to the interference of Hebrew and Aramaic (Moulton, 1906, 2ff.; Robertson, 1923, 76ff.; Dorival *et al.*, 1994, 223ff.; Joosten & Kister, 2009; Coulter, 2010, pp. 268-72; Horrocks, 2010, 106ff., 147ff.; Spolsky, 2014, 47ff.). Among the most representative and pervasive Semitic elements we can enumerate:

– the presence of lexical borrowings (e.g. *πάσχα* 'Passover'), semantically-specialized words (e.g. *ἄγγελος* 'messenger' > 'angel') and, particularly in the NT, transliterated Aramaic or Hebrew sentences or expressions, usually followed by a Greek translation (e.g. *Mk*. 5:41)[1];

– the occurrence of calques of Semitic formulaic expressions, such as (*καὶ*) *ἰδού* '(and) behold' + VERB or *καὶ ἐγένετο / ἐγένετο δέ* 'and it came to pass', which respectively reproduce the Biblical Hebrew formulae (*wə*)*hinnêh* (Moulton, 1906, p. 11; Coulter, 2010, p. 275) and *wayəhî* (Coulter, 2010, p. 274; Tronci, 2020);

– the marked preference for parataxis and related abundant use of *καί* 'and', which mostly result from the literal translation of the Semitic OT and are later echoed in the NT (De Lange, 2001, pp. 641-2; Coulter, 2010, 268ff.).

Actually, some elements of apparently Semitic origin occurring in Biblical Greek are also found in the contemporary Greek papyri (e.g. the extended parataxis) and it is often hard to establish whether their presence in Biblical Greek, especially in the NT, should be ascribed to the *Koinè* (spoken) usage or the Semitic influence. For a long time, scholars were inclined to attribute to the Semitic interference any trait that was somehow odd from a Greek perspective, as most of these traits actually find equivalents in Semitic tongues. But in the years between the XIX and XX centuries, on the basis of systematic investigations into the Greek papyri, Gustav A. Deissmann adopted an innovative approach: albeit acknowledging the presence of Semitisms in the NT language, he argued that their role should be greatly reconsidered and downsized. Throughout the years, scholars held various positions, more or less extreme, in this debate (for a historical overview, see Silva, 1980, pp. 198-204; Ong, 2016, pp. 21-31), but the moderate approach recently adopted by Coulter (2010), and expressed in slightly different but equally agreeable terms by Wifstrand (1947, pp. 181-2) and Silva (1980), seems to be the most reasonable and convincing:

> the truth, as so often, is likely to lie somewhere in the middle. [...] as one would expect of writings produced in Hellenistic Alexandria and Roman Palestine, it [sc. the Biblical language] reflects both the broader evolution of the Greek language as a whole and the more specific influence of the Semitic milieu in which it arose (Coulter, 2010, p. 279).

Disagreement among scholars, therefore, does not really concern the general presence of Semitic influence in Biblical Greek, which is, by and large, universally acknowledged; rather, the thorny issue is whether, and/or to what extent, a specific trait in Biblical Greek depends on the Semitic interference.

The trait that is addressed in this study is the participial clause (henceforth, PC), by which I refer to a nominal clause whose main predicate is constituted by a participle, for example[2]:

(1) *Καὶ πάντες οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτῶν* ***παίζοντες,***
and all.NOM.PL ART.NOM.PL brother.NOM.PL 3PL.GEN play.PTCP.PRS.NOM.PL
καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτοὺς συναναβῆναι μετ' ἐκείνων.
and make.AOR.ACT.3SG 3PL.ACC go.up.together.INF with DEM.GEN.PL
'And all their kindred **were making merry**, and he made them go up along with them' (*1 Esdras* 5:3; trans. NETS)

The peculiar characteristic of participles in PCs is that they represent the predicative core of the clause and function exactly as finite verb forms: if *παίζοντες* in example (1) were substituted with the finite form *ἔπαιζον*, the sentence meaning would undergo no crucial change at all. The analyzed data provide evidence for participles equivalent to indicative and imperative forms (henceforth, indicative-participle and imperative-participle, respectively), which are also found, to some extent, in non-Biblical Greek (see §1.1), and PCs with precative value (a sort of desiderative, typical of the OT language: see example (9)), which are absent in non-Biblical Greek.

The PC in Biblical Greek exhibits a considerable increase in usage frequency as compared with the earlier, non-Biblical usage: the present contribution represents an attempt to account for this enhancement, which has never been either explicitly noted or addressed in details.

1.1. Previous studies and research object

The PC with indicative-participle in Ancient Greek is an extremely marginal construction, which usually goes unnoticed in grammars (Smyth, 1920; Chantraine, 1953; Crespo *et al.*, 2003); an exception is constituted by Schwyzer (1950, p. 408), who observes that a participle can be found without copula in a nominal clause, but no specific attention is put on the matter. The construction is addressed in some details in the study on nominal clauses by Guiraud (1962, pp. 145-55). On the basis of this study, around 20/25 PCs are counted in a fairly large corpus consisting of Homer (including the *Hymns*), Hesiod, Pindar, Theognis, Herodotus and the tragedians, and a few specific characteristics of non-Biblical Greek PCs (which turn out to be relevant to this investigation: see §4) can be extrapolated and synthesized in four points:

– PCs seem to occur almost exclusively in poetry and, in tragedy, they are frequent in stichomythia contexts: these facts may indicate that the usage of this construction is related to a specific literary genre (poetry) or an expressive technique;
– most PCs select perfect participles, especially passive (these roughly correspond to nominal clauses with an adjective as predicate), a few of them select aorist participles, while an insignificant minority select present participles (only four cases);
– most frequently, nominal clauses (of which PCs are a sub-category) express present temporal reference, i.e. contemporaneity with reference time;
– nominal clauses (and, thus, PCs) with unexpressed subject, which has to be inferred from the context, are «*extrêmement rares*» (Guiraud, 1962, p. 154) and mostly limited to the 3rd person. Cases of subject omission different from the 3rd person are even less frequent and generally attributable to the will of achieving determined stylistic effects: normally, the subject is expressed by either a noun or a pronoun (Guiraud, 1962, 291ff.; in agreement, see Rodríguez Monescillo, 1972, pp. 378-9, 384; Thompson, 1985, p. 87).

In Biblical Greek grammars, the PC draws wider attention, and the occurrence of imperative-participles is first noted. Several scholars regard the indicative-participle as a Semitism: Viteau (1893, p. 200) considers this construction a Hebraism, while Thompson (1985, pp. 67-9) admits that its usage may be attributed to the influence of both Hebrew and Aramaic. In the same vein, the imperative-participle is regarded by Turner (1976, pp. 89, 128) as a Semitism, and Daube (1956, pp. 90-7) and Davies (1980, pp. 130-2, 329) argue that it reflects an analogous usage found in Mishnaic Hebrew (see §2.1).

By contrast, Moulton (1906, 180ff., 222ff.) and Robertson (1923, 944ff., 1132ff.), albeit accepting the presence of Semitisms in NT Greek (Moulton, 1906, pp. 2-3; Robertson, 1923, 93ff.), deny any Semitic influence on PCs, since the same values are also found in the papyri and, limited to the indicative-participle, in non-Biblical Greek in general. Similarly, McKay (1994, pp. 82-3) considers the imperative-participle as a usage that does not go «beyond the natural limits of Greek».

As for what concerns the papyri, Mandilaras (1973, pp. 372-3) confirms that participles with indicative and imperative function can be found in these documents. Here, the imperative-participles exhibit an imperative value *tout-court*, as they are used to express specific commands on specific occasions, exactly as true imperatives (example (6); cf. Moulton, 1906, p. 223; Robertson, 1923, 1133). In disagreement with Daube and Davies, Williams (2007, 14ff., 47ff.) argues that there is no difference in the pragmatic usage of imperative-participles in the NT and in the papyri: as a consequence, the influence of Mishnaic Hebrew does not need to be invoked for this function (for a discussion, see §4). It is also opportune to observe – as it will turn out useful for the present purposes (see §5) – that the participle in Hellenistic Greek, albeit still widely productive, was undergoing a process of crystallization that caused it to survive in only two forms in Modern Greek (the indeclinable gerund in *-ντας* and the passive participle in *-μενος*, *-η*, *-ο*): «the beginning of this development

is seen in the papyri, where the participle shows a tendency towards an indeclinable form» (Mandilaras, 1973, p. 352).

However, both previous positions – PC as mere Semitism and total denial of Semitic influence – turn out to be inadequate to account for the registered frequency increase of PCs: on the one hand, the usage of the pattern, in general, cannot be regarded as a mere Semitism, as this construction is also found, albeit sporadically, in non-Biblical Greek; on the other hand, the Semitic influence "deniers" do not take into account the enhancement of PCs, which has to be somehow explained.

In this study, I argue that the frequency increase of PCs in Biblical Greek should be primarily attributed to the direct influence of the Semitic languages that were spoken by the authors of the examined texts: as seen above, the influence of Semitic tongues has been taken into account in general terms, but the role of the oral dimension and the direct influence of the spoken language(s) have never been investigated. Also, given the non-secondary role of the *Koinè* language in Biblical Greek (see §1), it is possible that the spread of PCs may depend on an internal Greek development, as Moulton and Robertson argue; specifically, since this construction is also found in the non-literary papyri, its frequency increase may represent the diffusion of a Greek vernacular trait of that time: I also mean to evaluate the "Greekness" of the Biblical PC and assess whether its enhancement could represent the spread of a Greek colloquialism. In order to do so, I have based this study on a corpus consisting not only of Judaeo-Christian literature, both canonical and non-canonical, but also texts written in more or less literary *Koinè* Greek (see §3).

With reference to the recent literature on linguistic contact (among others, Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Field, 2002; Aikhenvald, 2007; Matras, 2009), which has hardly ever been taken into account in relation to the Semitic interference in Biblical Greek, I intend to show that the Biblical Greek PC exhibits the typical outcomes of the contact-induced phenomenon of a minor use pattern developing into a major use pattern (Heine & Kuteva, 2005, 44ff.): by means of a contact language influence, this process causes an infrequent and contextually-restricted construction in the replica language (minor use pattern) to develop into a more frequent and more widely-employed construction (major use pattern). The outcomes of this phenomenon are that 1) an existing pattern is used more frequently, 2) it is used in new contexts, and 3) it may develop a new grammatical function (Heine & Kuteva, 2005, p. 45). More specifically, the borrowing strategy that governs the frequency increase of PCs is that of pattern replication (Matras & Sakel, 2007, pp. 829-30), which consists in the reproduction, in a replica language, of a pattern found in the model language by employing linguistic material that is available in the replica language itself: a number of Semitic tongues (see §2) represent the model language(s), while the replica language, of course, is Greek.

2
Biblical Greek sociolinguistics: Palestine, Semitic languages and influence modalities

As pointed out in §1, Biblical Greek is associated with the Judaeo-Christian literature. As is well-known, Christianity was born within Hebraism (Young, 2008, pp. 7-8), and these do not become neatly separated religions until roughly the half of the II century (Spolsky, 2014, p. 64; Behr, 2008): therefore, by and large, the Judaeo-Christian production earlier than the II CE can be considered as belonging to a more or less unitary cultural and religious *milieu* (Judaism seems to exert a cultural influence even on a few later Christian apocrypha: cf. Reed, 2015). Between the II BCE and the II CE, most Jewish and, since the half of the I century, Christian people resided in Palestine and the surrounding areas: thus, even though we do not have absolute certainty about the composition place(s) of the Judaeo-Christian texts of that time, it is usually assumed that it gravitated around Palestine.

The Palestinian sociolinguistic environment of that time is complex and variegated, but it is widely acknowledged that it was characterized by extended multilingualism (Mancini, 2008, pp. 284-5; Joosten, 2010; Smelik, 2010; Spolsky, 2014, 46ff., 52ff.; Porter, 2016; Ong, 2016). The major role in this linguistic context was covered by Aramaic, which had been the Achaemenian Empire *lingua franca* before Alexander's conquest (Lipiński, 1997, p. 63; Coulter, 2010, p. 272; Ong, 2016, pp. 143-4) and was the native language of the indigenous population (Sevenster, 1968, 61ff., 177ff.; Campanile, 1989, pp. 687-8; Smelik, 2010; Ong, 2016, 44ff.; Porter, 2016). Since the Macedonian conquest, Greek became the language of administration and culture, and in general the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean East (Campanile, 1989, pp. 686-9; Dorival *et al.*, 1994, pp. 225-6; Mancini, 2008, p. 291; Joosten, 2010; Smelik, 2010; Ong, 2016, 53ff., 145ff.)[3]; this situation persisted after the Roman conquest, when, obviously, also Latin was introduced as administrative and military language, although it never supplanted Greek totally. Also, Greek became the official liturgical and religious language in the Christian communities, and the early Christians used the LXX as sacred text (Robertson, 1923, 93ff.; Spolsky, 2014, p. 47). A widely-disputed issue is that concerning Hebrew: it was used in the Jewish liturgy, to which the devotees were regularly exposed, and in the religious and rabbinical environments in general (Hengel, 1989, p. 8; Joosten & Kister, 2009; Smelik, 2010, p. 133; Ong, 2016, p. 35). Scholars have also suggested that some Hebrew varieties were spoken (namely Mishanic and Qumran Hebrew), but the relation of these varieties to the oral dimension is not universally accepted: it is discussed whether these were mere literary languages or represented the literary reproduction of a vernacular spoken idiom (on Mishnaic Hebrew, see Dorival *et al.*, 1994, p. 225; Durand, 2001, p. 127; Smelik, 2010, pp. 124-6; Spolsky, 2014, 53ff.; on Qumran Hebrew, see Smith, 2000, pp. 38-9; Joosten, 2010, pp. 355-7; Muraoka, 2020, XXIIff.). Be that as it may, the sources provide abundant evidence for the usage of these

varieties and, independently of their nature, it appears to be generally embraceable that some forms of Hebrew were actually spoken in Palestine (Sevenster, 1968, 34ff.; Joosten & Kister, 2009; Coulter, 2010, pp. 272-3; Joosten, 2010, pp. 361-2; Ong, 2016, 35ff.).

To be more precise, the Semitic varieties that concern us – because they were in use in Palestine and the surrounding areas in the period at issue (II BCE-II CE) – and their chronological distribution are the following:

– *Late Biblical Hebrew* (VI-II/I BCE; Joosten, 2012, pp. 8, 377);
– *Qumran Hebrew*: III BCE-I CE (Durand, 2001, pp. 36-7);
– *Mishnaic Hebrew*: V/IV BCE-V CE (Segal, 1980, p. 1). The nature and the chronology of this variety are discussed: Lipiński (1997, p. 57) claims that it had been spoken for hundreds of years when it became a literary language in the I cent. CE; it ceased to be spoken in the II CE, but it persisted as a literary idiom. Durand (2001, p. 37) argues that it was elaborated since the II cent. BCE and employed up to the XI CE in the Mishnaic literature, which developed not earlier than the I CE;
– *Middle Aramaic*: III/II BCE-III/IV CE; the variety that interests us most is *Palestinian Aramaic* (Lipiński, 1997, pp. 63-6; Magnanini & Nava, 2005, p. 13);
– *Syriac*: I-III CE (Lipiński, 1997, pp. 65-6); the role covered by Syriac is mainly limited to the fact that one, perhaps two examined texts are Greek translations of Syriac originals (see §3).

Henceforth, unless otherwise specified, the term 'Semitic' will refer in general to the influence exerted on Greek by one or more of these varieties, in a direct or indirect manner.

Two further points need to be observed. First, after the separation of Christianity from the Jewish matrix and after Greek had been established as official language of the Christian religion, Aramaic kept being spoken in Palestine: evidence in this respect is provided by Eusebius (Cureton, 1861, p. 4), who attests that the liturgy and the sermons in the church of the Hellenized town of Scythopolis were translated from Greek into Aramaic still in the late III century (Procopius was the interpreter around 286), in order to be fully understandable to the people. Second, evidence in support of the usage of Hebrew and Aramaic in Jewish environments can be found also outside Palestine: some fragmentary papyri from Oxyrhynchus (Cowley, 1915) attest that, around 400 CE, «the leaders of two Jewish communities in a rural district of Egypt corresponded in Hebrew» (Sevenster, 1968, p. 82). In his commentaries on *Isaiah* 19:18, Jerome remarks that, at his time (second half of the IV cent. CE - first half of the V CE), there were five cities in Egypt in which the language of Canaan was spoken: Jerome assumes that it was Syriac, but Dalman (1902, p. 79) seems to point at Aramaic. Also, Aramaic inscriptions found in Rome show that this language was used in Jewish communities outside Palestine in the Roman Empire (Campanile, 1989, p. 687).

In sum, it appears that most Palestinian Jewish and Christian population and, albeit certainly to a lesser extent, even the members of some non-Palestinian Jewish communities were multilingual and spoke or at least knew Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew, in different degrees and plausibly for different purposes.

2.1. The PC in Semitic languages

First of all, two important observations should be made: 1) on the synchronic level, the PC in the above-mentioned Semitic languages is a much more frequent construction than in Ancient Greek[4], and 2) from a diachronic perspective, although the Semitic participle originally encoded both nominal and verbal functions, a clear tendency towards verbalization is observable since the earlier, Biblical phases (on Biblical Hebrew, see Cohen, 1984, 299ff.; Joüon & Muraoka, 2011, pp. 380-3, 529; Joosten, 2012, 229ff., 390ff.; 2021; on Biblical Aramaic, see Rosenthal, 1961, pp. 55-6; Cohen, 1984, 382ff.; Magnanini & Nava, 2005, pp. 53-5). This process gave one of its major outcomes around the III/II cent. BCE, when the participle became integrated into the verbal paradigms of the Semitic varieties at issue, in function of a durative/imperfective verbal form with standard present temporal reference (but it could also express past or future reference)[5]. This development entailed a rearrangement of the verbal systems of those languages, by which the participle extended its usages and took on functions that had been characteristic of other verbal forms (mainly, but not exclusively, the imperfect), although the exact ways in which the participle replaced them slightly change from a Semitic language to another[6]. These developments, which provided the participle with a pivotal role in those verbal systems, brought about an increase in its productivity and, thus, usage frequency (cf. Cohen, 1984, 455ff.): this outcome may have played a crucial role in boosting the productivity/frequency of PCs in Greek.

Furthermore, two specific characteristics of the Semitic PC deserve particular attention, as these are also commonly featured in Biblical Greek (see §4), but are either different or extremely unusual (not to say absent) in non-Biblical Greek.

Firstly, and differently from the earlier stages, in which the subject of a PC was overtly expressed, in Late Biblical Hebrew a mere participle can incorporate «a reference to a third-person subject» (Joosten, 2021, p. 72; see example (2)), or, in plainer words, a participle *alone* can imply a third-person unexpressed subject (in this respect, the participle takes a step forward in being equated to a finite form: this is another outcome of the above-mentioned verbalization process; see Joosten, 2012, 391ff.; 2021, pp. 71-2).

(2) *leḥem lō-ʾāḵal ūmayim lō-šāṯāh kî*
bread NEG-eat.PFV.3SG and.water.PL NEG-drink.PFV.3SG that
miṯʾabbêl *ʿal-maʿal haggōlāh.*
mourn.PTCP.ACT.(3)SG on-guilt.SG DET.captivity.SG
'He did eat no bread, nor drink water; for **he mourned** because of the faithlessness of them of the captivity.' (*Esdras* 10:6; trans. JPS)

Notably, this feature is also found in Mishnaic Hebrew, in which the subject incorporation does not seem to be restricted to the 3rd person (Mussies, 1971, p. 324; Segal, 1980, p. 198), Palestinian Aramaic (Stevenson, 1962, p. 57) and Syriac (Nöldeke, 1904, p. 199; Goldenberg, 2013, p. 154).

Secondly, the participle can convey an imperative value in Mishnaic Hebrew (example (3)), wherein the participle denoting customary actions often assumes a jussive nuance: «the transition from this usage to a real jussive or imperative is easy» (Segal, 1980, pp. 158-9).

(3) *kāl ʾāḏām **qōrêʾ** kəḏarkō.*
every man.SG read.PTCP.ACT.SG like.way.his.SG
'One **may read** in one's own way.' (*Bərakhot* 1:3; trans. Segal 1927: 159)

In this variety, as shown in example (3), the imperative-participle is usually employed in contexts in which the correct practice or behavior expected of the devotees are prescribed: in plainer words, the imperative-participle in Mishnaic Hebrew expresses codes of conduct and general precepts (Daube, 1956, pp. 90-7; Davies, 1980, pp. 130-2, 329).

2.2. Modalities of influence

Having clarified what Semitic languages are pertinent, it should be addressed how they may have exerted their influence on Biblical Greek. First of all, as briefly observed in §1, the imitation of the model represented by the OT, the LXX in particular, is a pervasive element in the Judaeo-Christian literature (Dorival *et al.*, 1994, p. 270, 280ff., 316ff.), with some variability internal to single texts, and plays a non-secondary role in the spread of PCs in Biblical Greek (Nardi forthcoming); however, this influence modality is manifested on the written level, as it chiefly consists in reproducing (i.e. calquing) expressions or usages that are found in the OT: as such, it does not concern the purposes of this study.

Then, leaving aside the imitation of the OT, I suggest that two influence modalities can be individuated, which are correlated to some extent:
A) a book is a Greek translation of an original written in a Semitic language, as most of the LXX: in this case, the occurrence of a PC in Greek may represent the literal translation of a Semitic PC; unfortunately, with only one possible exception (see §3), none of the Semitic originals which were supposed to be the models for the Greek versions have survived and, thus, no sound evidence can be provided in this respect. It is clear that this influence modality primarily concerns the written dimension, but it will be pointed out in a moment how tightly connected with the oral dimension and multilingualism it is;
B) the authors of the examined books spoke or knew, besides Greek, a Semitic language: in plainer words, the author was multilingual, condition that linguistic interference notoriously presupposes (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988, 35ff.; Field, 2002, pp. 2, 8-11; Aikhenvald, 2007, pp. 28, 36-9, 42-5; Matras, 2009, 41ff., 61ff.); in this case, the high (and increasingly higher) use frequency of PCs in Semitic languages may have stimulated the usage of an equivalent construction when the author was writing, and

perhaps speaking, in Greek (on the role of frequency in language contact, see Field, 2002, pp. 5-7; Aikhenvald, 2007, 22ff.).

Crucially, these modalities of influence exhibit a close correlation: if a Greek text is a translation of a Semitic original, it is obvious that the translator knows that Semitic language, at least with a written competence; in this sense, we may say that modality (A) necessarily entails modality (B), to some extent. It is also necessary to observe that these influence modalities are in general difficult to evaluate, for different reasons: we hardly ever have the Semitic texts whence the Greek versions may originate, and assessing the existence of an underlying Semitic original on the basis of a Greek text is a difficult issue (what is more, scholars often disagree); as for modality (B), the authors and the places of composition of the Judaeo-Christian texts are seldom known and, thus, we are often ignorant about the language(s) that these writers spoke. However, as shown in the following section, the analysis of the corpus in relation to these influence modalities allows us to make several relevant points.

3
The corpus (and the Semitic influence on it)

The corpus comprises both prose and poetry (the former is preponderant, though) and consists of the whole NT, few books of the LXX[7], a conspicuous number (about 75) of non-canonical Judaeo-Christian texts[8], the historiographical works by Titus Flavius Josephus (*Bellum Iudaicum* and *Antiquitates Iudaicae*) and assorted non-literary papyri; the papyri will be referred to as 'non-literary' texts, while all other documents as 'literary' texts. Josephus' works and the papyri, in which more or less literary *Koinè* Greek is found, rather than Biblical Greek, are included in the corpus because they cover a crucial role in the assessment of the "Semiticity" of PCs (see §5 for a discussion).

A rough quantification of the corpus: with approximation, the literary texts cover 60/65% of the whole examined material, while the papyri cover 35/40%. Josephus' works consist of 27 books in total; the size of the NT is well-known, and the rest of the examined Judaeo-Christian literature (including the addressed LXX books) comprises about 80 books of variable length (some are as long as *Acts* or *Luke*, others as a NT letter). The papyri approximately consist of 2,000 documents, with variability in their length (from fragments of tens of words to texts of hundreds of lines).

As for the chronological distribution of the corpus, the papyri are fairly evenly-distributed, while the literary texts show a certain variability (a few books are excluded from the estimate because their dating is uncertain)[9]; Table 1 illustrates the chronological distribution of the literary texts (the percentages refer to the number of single works):

TAB. 1
Chronological distribution of literary texts

II BCE-II CE	I CE-II CE	I-IV CE	III-VIII CE
12%	50%	9%	29%

As observed above, the texts exhibit variable length and, thus, the value of the percentages is inevitably relative; also, the temporal sections overlap because the composition periods are not always certain (a similar overlap, for the same reason, is also found in Table 2). Nevertheless, the general chronological distribution is quite clear. It is also opportune to point out that the corpus extends beyond the temporal focus of this study (II BCE-II CE), because this permits a more accurate and exhaustive evaluation of the data (see §5).

Even though it is impossible to demonstrate the presence of a direct Semitic influence in all the texts included in the corpus, evidence for this can be found in several cases. A number of texts are considered, with a reasonable degree of agreement among scholars, Greek translations of Semitic originals (influence modality (A)). In this respect, an unequivocal case is constituted by *Bellum Iudaicum*, which, as Josephus himself admits (*Bel. Iud.* I:3), was originally written in Aramaic and later translated into Greek by the author (*Contra Apionem* 1:50). Also, *Acta Thomae* is widely regarded as a translation from Syriac, as we also have the Syriac manuscripts that are considered to be the original source of the Greek version (but a few doubts persist even in this case: see James, 1983, p. 364). Besides *Acta Thomae*, also *Psalmi Salomonis* (Hebrew; Sparks, 1981, p. 650; Charlesworth, 1985, 639ff.), *Apocalypsis Mosis* (Hebrew; Sparks, 1981, pp. 141-2; Charlesworth, 1985, 249ff.) and a section of *Ascensio Isaiae* (Hebrew or Aramaic; Sparks, 1981, pp. 779-81; Charlesworth, 1985, 143ff.) are commonly considered Greek translations.

For other texts[10], the existence of original Semitic versions, albeit suggested, is disputed and there is less wide agreement. The hypothesis that original Semitic material, either Aramaic or Hebrew, variously underlay the NT has long been debated. As for the synoptic gospels, this hypothesis finds a particularly conspicuous number of supporters (for a historical overview, see Carmignac, 2009, 80ff.). Garbini (2017, 261ff.) argues that the authors of the synoptics used an Aramaic source to write their gospels (the unattested *Aramaic Gospel of Matthew*, homonymous with the evangelist), as suggested by various linguistic hints, which Garbini thoroughly examines. On the other hand, Carmignac (2009) claims that *Mark* and *Matthew* were out-and-out translations of a Hebrew original, while Luke worked on the Hebrew source, which he translated and included in his Greek redaction: according to the French scholar, many Semitisms found in the synoptics can be reasonably accounted for only by positing a Hebrew text underlying the Greek version. Also, several scholars argued that the canonical *Apocalypse* was originally composed in Aramaic or Hebrew

and later translated into Greek (Scott, 1928; Torrey, 1958), but the Semitic coloring exhibited by this book may as well be due to a spoken influence (Mussies, 1971; see *infra*). So, there seems to be serious possibility that some parts of the synoptic gospels, or a couple of gospels in their entirety, and *Apocalypse* are based on or even translated from Semitic originals[11].

To conclude with influence modality (A), it is worth observing that nearly all the texts that are suspected to be Greek translations of Semitic originals are not later than the II cent. CE; by contrast, the Judaeo-Christian texts dating from the III century onwards are never claimed to be translations from Semitic sources, but are always assumed to be Greek original compositions. This fact may indicate that the presence of the Semitic element was somewhat more intense in the centuries before the III CE (see §5 for a discussion).

In several other cases, the texts are not direct translations, but we know that the authors were multilingual (influence modality (B)). Josephus was an native Aramaic speaker (Sevenster, 1968, 61ff.; Hengel, 1989, pp. 23-4; Mancini, 2008, p. 289; Smelik, 2010, p. 124), but he also spoke Greek, which he learnt with some difficulties (*Ant. Iud.* XX:263; see Mancini, 2010, pp. 25-6). Another case about which scholars agree is that of Paul of Tarsus (Mancini, 2008, p. 291; Joosten & Kister, 2009, p. 344; Spolsky, 2014, p. 52): the apostle was a native Greek speaker, but he was probably fluent in Aramaic as well (*Acts* 21:40-22:2)[12]. Since both Josephus and Paul were Jews, it is reasonable to assume that they were also acquainted with some Hebrew through the exposition to the liturgy. The other plain cases are those of Ignatius, author of an *Epistula ad Ephesios*, who was the bishop of Antioch in Syria and probably spoke some forms of Aramaic (Syriac, perhaps; cf. Lipiński, 1997, p. 66), and the scribe Germanos, son of Judas (*Γερμανὸς Ἰούδου*), who wrote some papyri of the Yadin collection (on the papyri, see *infra*).

Further considerations – less sound, but probable – on the authors' linguistic competence can be made for other texts. As for the NT, Garbini (2017, p. 299) explicitly claims that Matthew knew Aramaic. The analysis of an expression in *Luke* (discussed in Nardi forthcoming) may indicate that he knew some Hebrew[13]. Although the Semitic origin of the *Apocalypse* is debated, its author is commonly regarded as a native Semitic speaker (Mussies, 1971, 311ff.; Ehrman, 2018, 501ff.). *Oracula Sibyllina* were composed in Jewish environments, where Semitic languages were most likely spoken or, at least, employed (on *Oraculum 3*, the only that concerns us, see Charlesworth, 1983, 354ff.), and *1 Esdras* seems to have been written in Palestine (see footnote 10), where most population was Aramaic LI.

Moreover, three papyri in which PCs occur are related in different ways, to Jewish environments. The paradigmatic example is constituted by the *Papyri Yadin*, which were written in southern Judaea in the first half of the II cent. CE (Hartman, 2016, 7ff.): it is almost unequivocal that Aramaic was spoken by those people (there are even signatures in Aramaic at the bottom of the texts)[14]. However, the only PC found there (*P.Yadin* 25:24; edition by Hartman, 2016) occurs in a formulaic expression

typical of the OT (see Nardi forthcoming): as such, it points to the imitation of the Biblical model, rather than a direct spoken influence. The other papyri with a Jewish background belong to the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (*P.G.M.* 22b and *P.G.M.* 4; edition by Preisendanz, 1928; 1931), both dating from the IV CE. Many factors in these documents, mostly consisting in biblical references and the usage of formulaic expressions, indicate that the writers were familiar with the language and the cultural background of the OT and the NT, but the improper use of Hebrew epithets suggests that they did not really know that language (instead, their Aramaic competence is impossible to be assessed, but nothing seems to point to it)[15].

In sum, nearly half (ca. 45%) of the literary texts in which PCs occur are, with fluctuating degree of certainty, Greek translations of Semitic originals and/or written by Greek-Semitic bilingual authors (further observations in this regard are pointed out in §4); furthermore, a few papyri denote the presence of the influence of the OT language and style.

To conclude this section, an observation on the relation between the oral and written dimension in Paul should be pointed out. Regard (1919, p. 187) observes that Paul generally dictated his letters and quotes about ten passages from the Epistles, in which this custom should be either suggested or confirmed. Actually, although writing by his own hand appears to be an extraordinary event for Paul[16], no explicit reference to a dictating practice is made in his letters. However, it is widely agreed that the custom of dictating letters to professional scribes was diffused in the entire Graeco-Roman world (Harris, 1989, pp. 36, 231; Norris, 2008, p. 12; Bakhos, 2010, p. 490); eventually, the senders would place their signatures by their own hand (Bakhos, 2010, p. 490), if they could write (as Paul did in *1 Cor.*). Therefore, albeit not certain, it is plausible that Paul used to dictate his letters to a scribe (see §5 for a discussion).

4
Biblical Greek PCs: occurrences distribution and characteristic features

In this section, the quantitative and chronological distribution of the data, both in absolute terms and in relation to the influence modalities described in §2.2, and a number of usages and features characteristic of Biblical Greek PCs are addressed.

The corpus totals 172 instances; even though the PC remains an uncommon construction even in Biblical Greek (172 occurrences are not many in a corpus of the size as the one at issue), the construction is definitely more frequent than in non-Biblical Greek: Guiraud's (1962) non-Biblical Greek corpus totals 25 PCs at most, while the number is nearly seven times higher in my corpus (note that the two corpora are roughly the same size).

The vast majority of instances occur in literary texts (163: about 95%), while only 9 in the papyri; this mismatch deserves attention: the quantity of the examined literary material is larger than the non-literary (60/65% vs. 35/40%), but not so much larger

to reasonably account for such a noteworthy discrepancy (for an interpretation of this discrepancy, see §5).

The corpus extends over a span of several centuries (see Table 1), but the chronological distribution of the occurrences is remarkably concentrated[17]:

TAB. 2
Occurrences chronological distribution

	II BCE-I CE	I-II CE	III-VI CE	I-IX CE (?)
Literary	15	134	6	8
Non-literary	3	2	4	– – –

The temporal collocation of three books, which total 8 occurrences, is problematic (*Apocalypsis Esdrae*, *Apocalypsis Sedrach* and *Apocalypsis Mosis*: see footnote 9), and these are set in the extreme right column of Table 2; also, the temporal sections between the II century BCE and the II CE overlap because the dating of the texts is not always certain (see Table 1): nonetheless, the general trend is clear.

Most instances (154: 89.5%) occur in texts dating from between the II cent. BCE and the II CE, while only 10 instances (about 6.5%) are found in texts dating from the III cent. up to the VI. The token-frequency peak, which is significant (136 occurrences: about 80%), is registered between the I and the II cent. CE: since half of the texts included in the corpus date from that lapse of time (see Table 1), it was expected that a larger amount of PCs occurred in I-II century books; however, the amount of constructions found in those texts widely surpasses 50%. The texts at issue are mostly Christian writings, in addition to the *Apocalypsis Henoch* (probably, a translation from a Semitic language: see §3) and *1 Esdras*. Josephus' works also date from the I century and exhibit II PC occurrences, which is an unusually high number for the non-Biblical average: if we compare the 7 instances found in the 7 books of *Bellum Iudaicum* with the single instance – according to Guiraud's (1962) estimate – occurring in the 9 books of *Histories* by Herodotus (the only historiographer addressed by Guiraud), the proportion difference clearly stands out.

Significant results are obtained if the quantitative and chronological distribution of the occurrences is analyzed in relation to the influence modalities described in §2.2 (modality (A), underlying Semitic original, and modality (B), multilingual author). These results can be synthesized in two points:

– 116 PCs (67.4%) appear in texts that, with variable degree of certainty, are Greek translations of Semitic originals or written by Semitic-Greek multilingual authors, or even both[18];

– more than 40% of the occurrences (73 = 42.4%) are found in texts written by multilingual authors (with variable degree of certainty: see footnote 18); the absolute

majority of these occurrences (66 out of 73 = 90.4%) appear in texts dating from the I-II cent. CE, i.e. when the token-frequency peak is registered.

Furthermore, the Biblical Greek PC displays a number of features and usages that are considerably different from those of its non-Biblical counterpart (see §1.1). On the contrary, these characteristics and uses closely resemble those exhibited by the Semitic equivalent construction; specifically:

– a small number of PCs are found in poetic texts (5 in *Psalmi Salomonis* and 2 in *Oraculum Sibyllinum 3*), while the vast majority of them occurs in prose, in any kind of contexts (narrative, descriptive or dialogical passages); the same variability is met in Semitic languages, in which PCs are restricted to neither poetry nor prose;

– the neat majority of Biblical PCs select present tense participles (116 instances: 67.4%), decreasingly followed by perfect participles, especially passive (39: 22.7%), aorist (16: 9.3%) and future (1: 0.6%)[19]. A crucial role in this gradient may be represented by the analogy between, on the one hand, the Semitic active and the Greek present participles, which both encode a durative event, and on the other, between the Semitic passive and the Greek passive perfect participles, which both denote a resulting state: the most frequently employed participles in Biblical Greek are those that find a functional equivalent in Semitic languages;

– any temporal reference is expressed by the Biblical indicative-participles, with predominance of past reference (83 instances: 48.2%), decreasingly followed by present (33: 19.2%) and future reference (25: 14.5%); the remaining 31 occurrences (18%) encode either imperative or precative function (see below). This trait shows affinity with the Semitic PCs: albeit primarily encoding present reference, they frequently express past or future reference;

– the subject in any person can be found in Biblical PCs, either explicitly expressed or not (see *infra*); although the 3rd person is the most common, the selection of 1st and 2nd person subjects is not infrequent at all (Table 3). Again, these characteristics are paralleled in Semitic languages, in which the subject person that can be left unexpressed is mostly, but not exclusively, the 3rd.

TAB. 3
Subject persons of PCs

	1st Person	2nd Person	3rd Person
Singular	5	4	57
Plural	14	28	64

The phenomenon of subject omission is particularly anomalous in non-Biblical PCs and, thus, deserves specific exemplification:

(4) *Οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ* ***καυχώμενοι*** *ἐν τῷ*
NEG alone.ACC.SG PTCL but and boast.PTCP.PRS.NOM.(1)PL in ART.DAT.SG
θεῷ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
god.DAT.SG through ART.GEN.SG lord.GEN.SG IPL.GEN Jesus.GEN Christ.GEN
δι' οὗ νῦν τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν.
through REL.GEN.SG now ART.ACC.SG exchange.ACC.SG take.AOR.ACT.IPL
'More than that, **we** also **rejoice** in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.'[20] (*Rom*. 5:11)

(5) *Καὶ ταῦτα τὸν ἀδελφόν, ὦ τολμηρά, τὸν*
and DEM.ACC.PL ART.ACC.SG brother.ACC.SG VOC brave.VOC.SG ART.ACC.SG
ἐμὸν ***ἥρημένη.***
my.ACC.SG seize.PTCP.PRF.NOM.(2)SG
'And what is more, impudent woman, **you have chosen** my brother.'[21] (*Bel. Iud.* II:116)

The examined data show several occurrences (50: 29.2%) like those in examples (4) and (5), in which the subject is not explicitly expressed and has to be inferred from the context; this phenomenon is not limited to the 3rd person, but it also occurs in the 1st plural, and 2nd singular and plural (imperative-participles usually have no overtly expressed subject; see immediately below).

A further issue deserving special attention is the imperative-participle, which is sporadically found in the papyri, in which it expresses specific commands (example (6)). In the corpus, imperative-participles are found in 23 instances (example (7)), 19 of which occur in Paul's letters; the remaining 4 occur in the Pauline epistolary, but were not written directly by Paul (1 in *Hebrews* and 3 in *1 Peter*; Norris, 2008, pp. 12-3).

(6) *Ἔτι οὖν καὶ νῦν ἐπιμελές σοι ἔστω ἀπολύειν*
yet therefore and now keen.NOM.SG 2SG.DAT be.IMP.PRS.3SG relase.INF
αὐτοὺς τῆς νῦν εἰς Ἀλαβάστρων πόλιν λειτουργίας
3PL.ACC ART.GEN.SG now to Alabastros.GEN city.ACC.SG service.GEN.SG
διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐκπεσεῖν αὐτοῖς τὸ νῦν λειτουργῆσαι,
through ART.ACC.SG NEG fall.INF 3PL.DAT ART.ACC.SG now serve.INF
καὶ ἐὰν ἐκ τοῦ Ὀξυρυγχίτου ἐπιλέγωνται
and if from ART.GEN.SG Oxyrhynchites.GEN.SG choose.PRS.SBJV.3PL
Ζωίλον ***ἀπολύσας.***
Zoilos.ACC release.PTCP.AOR.NOM.(2)SG
'So now at last be careful to release them from their present service at Alabastropolis because it is not at present their turn to serve; and if people are being chosen from the Oxyrhynchite nome **release** Zoilus.' (*P.Hib.* 78:6-13; trans. Grenfell & Hunt, 1906, p. 234)

(7) *Μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ.* ***ἀποδιδόντες·***
none.DAT.SG evil.ACC.SG instead evil.GEN.SG return.PTCP.PRS.NOM.(2)PL
προνοούμενοι *καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·*
ponder.PTCP.PRS.NOM.(2)PL good.ACC.PL in.front.of all.GEN.PL human.GEN.PL
εἰ δυνατόν, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων
if possible.NOM.SG ART.ACC.SG from 2PL.GEN with all.GEN.PL human.GEN.PL
εἰρηνεύοντες· *μὴ ἑαυτοὺς* ***ἐκδικοῦντες,*** […]
be.peaceable.PTCP.PRS.NOM.(2)PL NEG REFL.ACC.PL avenge.PTCP.PRS.NOM.(2)PL
'**Repay** no one evil for evil, but **give thought** to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, **live peaceably** with all. Beloved, never **avenge** yourselves, but […]' (*Rom*. 12:17-19)

A peculiar characteristic of these participles, which is also crucial for our purposes, is that, rather than denoting specific commands, they express general precepts or codes of conduct that are expected of the devotees: they exhibit, on the one hand, a substantially different pragmatic function from the imperative-participles in the papyri and, on the other, the same pragmatic usage as the Mishnaic Hebrew imperative-participle (see example (3))[22]. Moreover, it seems unlikely that a category on the path of crystallization, such as the Hellenistic Greek participle (see §1.1), may spontaneously develop an innovative pragmatic function; rather, the new usage is more likely to be developed by linguistic interference (see §5 for further observations).

A few words should be also spent on the PCs with precative function (example (8)). This usage, which totals 8 occurrences in the data, is a sort of desiderative, typical of the Biblical style, and is used to express blessings (example (9)) or curses (e.g. *Gen*. 9:25; see Waltke & O'Connor, 1990, p. 134; Joüon & Muraoka, 2011, p. 530; cf. also Goldenberg, 2013, p. 153).

(8) ***Εὐλογημένη*** *ἡ δόξα κυρίου, ὅτι*
bless.PTCP.PRF.PASS.NOM.SG ART.NOM.SG glory.NOM.SG lord.GEN.SG that
αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν.
3SG.NOM king.NOM.SG 1PL.GEN
'**Blessed is** the glory of the Lord, for he is our king.' (*Psalmi Salomonis* 5:19; trans. NETS)

(9) ***bārūḵ*** *haggeḇer 'ăšer yiḇṭaḥ baYahweh.*
bless.PTCP.PASS.SG DET.man REL trust.IPFV.3SG in.DET.Yahweh
'**Blessed is** the man that trusteth in the Lord.' (*Jer.* 17:7; trans. JPS)

The precative PC in Biblical Greek is clearly a calque of the OT formula, with unequivocal Semitic origin (Nardi forthcoming). However, this function belongs to the Biblical heritage of the Judaeo-Christian literature, rather than to a spoken usage characteristic of the Semitic varieties at issue: as such, it is related to the domain of

the written language, rather than the spoken, and, thus, does not directly concern our purposes.

5
Conclusion

This study represents a contribution to the debate on the "Greekness" vs. "Semiticity" of participial clauses in Biblical Greek. On the whole, it is far from implausible that the spread of the construction should be attributed *not* to one of the two factors *exclusively*, the Semitic interference and the expansion of a Greek colloquial trait, but, rather, to the interplay of these factors, which may have enhanced the usage of participial clauses with a reciprocal support. However, the analysis of the data suggests that the primary responsibility for the phenomenon under investigation should be ascribed to the direct influence of the Semitic languages that the authors of the scrutinized texts spoke, or, in other words, to Semitic-Greek multilingualism: the motivations that point to this interpretation are the following.

In general terms, a considerable amount of analyzed texts are in various ways related to Semitic *milieux*, in which Greek-Semitic interference phenomena were particularly plausible. Approximately half of the literary texts may be translations of Semitic originals (Hebrew, Aramaic or Syriac), or written by multilingual authors, who spoke or at least knew Greek, Aramaic and some varieties of Hebrew (in some cases, this is certain, such as Josephus and Paul): in this respect, it is significant that nearly 70% of participial construction instances are found in texts that are either Greek translations of Semitic originals or written by multilingual authors.

Furthermore, the discrepancy in the quantitative distribution of occurrences between literary and non-literary texts (more than 90% of total occurrences are found in literary texts) may be attributed to the different degree of Semitic interference found in the two groups: while the Judaeo-Christian literature is influenced by Semitic languages (the same holds for Josephus: see below), this type of influence is really extraordinary in the papyri. The few non-literary documents that display some relation with Semitic environments point to the cultural and stylistic influence of the Old Testament, but do not clearly exhibit a direct influence of the spoken usage.

These points suggest that a higher number of participial clause occurrences is associated with a more extended Semitic influence; by contrast, in the documents that most closely mirror the vernacular Greek usage of that time, i.e. the papyri, the participial clause seems to be an extremely marginal construction, not far more diffused than it was in Classical Greek. This discrepancy appears fairly significant to the debate on the "Greek vs. Semitic" character of participial clauses in Biblical Greek, in favor of the alloglot influence.

As for what concerns the oral dimension and multilingualism, the following observations can be made. In general, it has been assumed that the texts under examination were mostly composed in Palestine and the neighboring areas, where

Aramaic-Greek bilingualism was diffused and some Hebrew varieties were probably spoken. But even if some texts had a different provenance, for instance Egypt, as is plausible, the authors were still likely to speak or know Aramaic or Hebrew, inasmuch as the sources provide various evidence for the common usage of those languages among Jewish people even in non-Palestinian communities. More specifically, the importance of multilingualism is primarily suggested by the fact that a significant amount of occurrences (more than 40%) appear in texts written by multilingual authors, but this claim is supported by at least three other points.

In the first place, the processes of participle verbalization and verbal system rearrangement undergone by the Semitic languages at issue entailed a noteworthy increase in the productivity and, thus, usage frequency of participles (and participial clauses) in those tongues. This increase can have had a collateral promoting effect on the spread of participial clauses in Greek: in a multilingual environment, the increase in use frequency of a given construction in a language X is likely to stimulate the use frequency of an equivalent construction in the contact language Y (see below). In this regard – and crucially – the fact that the Biblical Greek participial clause displays characteristics and usages that resemble more closely the Semitic equivalent than its earlier, non-Biblical counterpart points to a close relation between the Biblical Greek construction and the Semitic pattern: among the other features addressed in §4, the participle with imperative value is the most blatant representative of this relation. The Biblical Greek imperative-participle shows, on the one hand, a remarkable pragmatic affinity with its Mishnaic Hebrew equivalent (in both varieties it expresses codes of conduct and precepts that the devotees were expected to follow) and, on the other, a different usage from the Greek counterpart that sporadically occurs in the papyri, wherein it conveys specific commands. Such Hebrew-Greek pragmatic affinity, alongside observations of linguistic contact character (see below), suggests that the Biblical Greek imperative-participle may have been borrowed from Mishnaic Hebrew.

In the second place, the token-frequency peak registered in the I-II century CE and the subsequent frequency collapse observed since the III CE may be related to multilingualism. The prominence of this dimension in the I-II century is primarily suggested by the fact that the absolute majority of occurrences (90%) found in texts written by multilingual authors is concentrated in those two centuries, but the kernel role of multilingualism and the spoken dimension in that period is also suggested by other observations. In this respect, the case of Josephus seems to be the most representative: the Jewish historiographer spoke Aramaic as L1, Greek as L2 and wrote his works in literary *Koinè* Greek, rather than imitating the Biblical language; however, his prose shows an unusually conspicuous number of participial clauses in comparison with the non-Biblical average. Then, it is plausible that the frequency of the construction in *Antiquitates* and *Bellum* should be attributed to the influence of the author's native language.

Bar Josephus' works, the vast majority of texts dating from the I-II centuries are Christian books. In origin, Christianity was rooted in Palestine and the surrounding

areas and, thus, it is plausible that the authors of those texts spoke Aramaic and, possibly, Hebrew varieties. Later, Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire and reached provinces where Semitic languages were not spoken. The Greek-writing Christian authors of those regions were certainly accustomed with the language of the Scriptures, but had no direct experience of Semitic tongues: the loss of contact with Semitic languages may be associated with the dramatic decrease of participial construction usage. In other words, the token-frequency peak registered in the I-II centuries may be motivated by the direct influence of Semitic languages, especially Aramaic (i.e., the authors *spoke* those languages), and, conversely, the end of the direct influence may have contributed to determine the token-frequency collapse registered since the III century.

In the third place, almost all the texts that are suspected to be Greek translations of older Semitic originals are earlier than the II century CE (included); by contrast, the Judaeo-Christian texts that date from the III century onwards, which are almost exclusively Christian works, are always assumed to be originally composed in Greek. The fact that the Semitic books were translated into Greek within the II century CE presupposes a fairly vast diffusion of Greek-Semitic multilingualism before that century, at least in the environments in which those texts were used and read (of course, the translator has to know both the source and the target language in order to translate).

From the language contact standpoint, in general terms, the frequency increase of participial clauses can be considered as a case of "enhancement of an already existing feature" (Aikhenvald, 2007, p. 22): «if languages in contact share a category or a construction, language contact may increase its frequency or its productivity». The strategy at work is that of pattern replication (Matras & Sakel, 2007, pp. 829-30): in the case at issue, the Semitic participial clause represents the model construction that is replicated in Biblical Greek. Moreover, the addressed construction exhibits the three typical outcomes of a minor use pattern developing into a major use pattern under the influence of a contact language (Heine & Kuteva, 2005, 44ff.): 1) the pattern is used more frequently (which is the focal point of this study); 2) its occurrence is not mainly limited to poetry or tragedy, as it was in non-Biblical Greek, but it also commonly occurs in prose (most commonly, indeed); 3) the participle develops the imperative function, which is not – strictly speaking – an innovation, but exhibits the above-mentioned new pragmatic usage. Also, as briefly observed in §4, it is unlikely that a rigidifying category, such as the participle in *Koinè* Greek, spontaneously developed a new function: instead, it is more plausible that such development took place by alloglot interference. Therefore, this observation, along with the presence of the above-mentioned outcomes, suggest that we may be dealing with a contact-induced phenomenon, rather than an inner-Greek development.

Finally, a conclusive remark is worth being made on the relation between oral and written dimensions, with specific reference to Paul. Albeit not certain, it is plausible that the apostle used to dictate his letters. In general, linguistic interference due to

multilingualism primarily acts at the level of spoken language, and it is then mirrored in the written usage. If Paul really dictated his letters, this custom would represent the joining link between the oral and written levels: in historical sociolinguistics, which almost exclusively deals with written data, the attestation of a concrete point of contact, though presumptive, between these dimensions is quite extraordinary.

Notes

1. *Καὶ κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ παιδίου λέγει αὐτῇ· ταλιθα κουμ, ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον· τὸ κοράσιον, σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε* 'taking her by the hand he said to her "*talitha cumi*" which means "little girl, I say to you, arise"'.

2. The passages from the NT are translated according to the English Standard version; for the other texts, the source translation is specified each time.

3. The actual diastratic and diaphasic distribution of Greek in Palestine of that time is object of much debate: some scholars (Smelik, 2010; Mancini, 2008, pp. 288-9; 2013, among others) argue that it was far less entrenched than others claim (Hengel, 1989; Porter, 2016), although Greek certainly covered a pivotal role as prestige language.

4. In Hebrew *Genesis* only, Joosten (2012, p. 231, footnote 8) counts 113 occurrences; according to Cohen (1984, pp. 299-300), the whole Pentateuch features about 400 occurrences, differently distributed.

5. It is difficult to say exactly when this process took place. However, the grammars of the above-mentioned Semitic languages that were in use in the II cent. BCE make reference to a similar participle development in each language, with alike functional outcomes (see the following footnote) and different, extended usages in comparison with their earlier linguistic stages (Stevenson, 1962, p. 56; Cohen, 1984, p. 334). Therefore, this Semitic "mass" process can be assumed to be either ongoing or just-concluded in the II cent. BCE.

6. In Mishnaic Hebrew, for example, the participle acquires the old values of the imperfect, whose usage becomes restricted to modal nuances (optative, desiderative, etc.; see Segal, 1980, 155ff.; Cohen, 1984, 328ff.; Durand, 2001, pp. 140-1; Holst, 2008, pp. 40-2). Also in Palestinian Aramaic, the participle takes over «much of the early usage of imperfect tenses» and it is even characteristically used «in place of perfect tenses in narratives of past events» (Stevenson, 1962, p. 56; see also Cohen, 1984, 432ff.). On the participle use in Qumran Hebrew, see Holst (2008, pp. 118-9); Muraoka (2020, 90ff.); in Syriac, see Nöldeke (1904, 211ff., 247); Wertheimer (2002); Muraoka (2005, pp. 66-7).

7. Namely: *1 Esdras*, *3-4 Machabaeorum* and *Psalmi Salomonis.*

8. Namely (those marked by an asterisk contain PCS): **Acta Andreae - *Acta Andreae et Matthiae - Acta Barnabae - Acta Iohannis - Acta Matthaei - Acta Pauli et Theclae - Acta Petri - *Acta Petri et Andreae - Acta Petri et Pauli - *Acta Philippi* (and *Hypomnemata Philippi*) *- Acta Pilati A* & *B - Acta Thaddaei - *Acta Thomae - Acta Xanthippae et Polyxenae - Anaphora Pilati A* & *B* (and *Paradosis Pilati*) *- *Apocalypsis Baruch - *Apocalypsis Esdrae - *Apocalypsis Henoch - Apocalypsis pseudo-Iohannis - *Apocalypsis Mosis - Apocalypsis Pauli - *Apocalypsis Petri - *Apocalypsis Sedrach - *Ascensio Isaiae - Epistulae Abgari et Iesu Christi - Epistula Barnabae - *Epistula Polycarpi ad Philippenses - Epistulae Ignatii* (**Epistula ad Ephesios*) *- Evangelium Nicodemi - Evangelium Petri - Evangelium Thomae A - *Evangelium Thomae B - *Iohannis Liber de Dormitione Mariae - *Iosephus et Aseneth - Martyrium Andreae A - *Martyrium Andreae B - Narratio Iosephi - Oracula Sibyllina* (**Oraculum 3*) *- Passio Bartholomaei - Passio Petri et Pauli - Passio Pauli - *Protevangelium Iacobi - Quaestiones Bartholomaei - *Testamentum Abrami A* & *B - Testamenta Duodecim Patriarcharum - *Testamentum Iob - *Testamentum Salomonis - Vitae Prophetarum*.

9. Namely: *Apocalypsis Esdrae*, *Apocalypsis pseudo-Iohannis*, *Apocalypsis Sedrach*, *Anaphora Pilati A* & *B*, *Narratio Iosephi* and assorted short fragments of *Oracula Sibyllina*.

10. As for the non-canonical literature: *Apocalypsis Baruch* (generally Semitic language; Sparks, 1981, 897ff.; Charlesworth, 1983, p. 655); *Apocalypsis Henoch* (Aramaic or Hebrew; Sparks 1981, 169ff.; Charlesworth, 1983, p. 6); *Evangelium Thomae B* (Syriac; James, 1983, p. 49, footnote 1); *Testamentum Abrami A* & *B* (Hebrew; Sparks, 1981, p. 394; Charlesworth, 1983, pp. 873-4); *Testamentum Iob* (Aramaic or Hebrew; Charlesworth, 1983, p. 830). Previously, *1 Esdras* was considered a translation from a Semitic language, with an uncertain place of composition (probably, Egypt; less likely, Palestine; Charles, 1913, 1ff.), while nowadays most scholars agree that it was originally written in Greek and composed in Palestine (Porter, 2016, p. 216).

11. As for whether Hebrew or Aramaic, these cases are perfectly representative of Joosten & Kister's (2009, p. 336) observation that «in the period of the NT, Hebrew and Aramaic are like two sisters who delight in borrowing one another's clothes. Telling them apart through the medium of a Greek text is often impossible. Usually, it is also of little importance». In the same vein, Carmignac (2009, p. 81) remarks the unimportance of establishing whether it was Hebrew or Aramaic.

12. Many times, as in this case, the sources refer to the *Ἑβραϊδι διαλέκτῳ* literally 'Hebrew dialect'. It is widely accepted that the expression refers to Aramaic, rather than Hebrew (among others, see Dalman, 1902, 6ff.; Mancini, 2010, p. 26; Garbini, 2017, p. 263), but agreement on this point is not absolute (for example, 'Hebrew' is understood by Carmignac, 2009, 61ff.; Spolsky, 2014, p. 52).

13. A brief note on Luke: according to an ancient and established tradition dating from the late II cent. CE, Luke is considered the author of both the gospel and *Acts* (Bianchi, 2003; Ehrman, 2018, 254ff.), and the two books are commonly considered related from the linguistic-stylistic viewpoint (Robertson, 1923, 120ff.; Turner, 1976, 45ff.).

14. Mancini (2008, p. 292) observes that some *Papyri Yadin* were originally written in Aramaic (or Latin) and then translated into Greek.

15. In *P.G.M* 4:1580, the Jewish god is referred to as *Ἐλωαί*, which is the transliteration of the Hebrew construct state form *'ĕlōhê* (absolute state *'ĕlōhîm*; on the construct state in Biblical Hebrew, see Joüon & Muraoka, 2011, 434ff.; on the phonetic rendering of the diphthong <*αι*> as <*ε*> in the spoken usage, see Gignac, 1975, 191ff.), but the construct state is used improperly here, as *Ἐλωαί* is not followed by any other elements syntactically related to it. Other relevant expressions are *ὑμᾶς ἐξορκίζω κατὰ τοῦ Ἰάω καὶ τοῦ Σαβαὼθ καὶ Ἀδωναί* 'I beseech you by Iao and Sabaoth and Adonai' (*P.G.M* 4:1485) and *θεὸς θεῶν, ὁ ἔχων τὸ κρυπτὸν ὄνομα Σαβαώθ* 'god of gods, who has the hidden name Sabaoth' (*P.G.M.* 22b:20). *Ἀδωναί* and *Ἰάω* are the standard epithets of God in the OT, which are, respectively, the transliteration of *'ăḏōnāy* (*1 Kings* 1:11 in the LXX) and the Tetragram YHWH (the Tetragram is most often rendered with *κύριος* in the LXX, but it is transliterated as *Ἰάω* in at least one LXX manuscript, fairly ancient; see Wevers, 2001). *Σαβαώθ* is the transliteration of the Hebrew word *ṣəḇā'ōṯ* 'hosts', which is part of the formulaic epithet *YHWH ṣəḇā'ōṯ* 'Lord of hosts', referred to God in the OT (*Isa*. 25:6; *1 Sam*. 1:11; *2 Sam*. 6:2; etc.); the expression is rendered in the LXX in various ways, one of which is *κύριος σαβαωθ* (*Isa*. 21:10; *1 Sam*. 1:3; etc.), that is, by translating the Tetragram but merely transliterating *ṣəḇā'ōṯ*. *Σαβαώθ*, then, is not a name, but part of a wider epithet. This analysis indicates that the writers employ the epithets in an improper way: *Ἰάω* and *Ἀδωναί* are used as if they referred to different entities (*κατὰ τοῦ Ἰάω καὶ τοῦ Σαβαὼθ καὶ Ἀδωναί*), and *Σαβαώθ* as if it were an epithet by itself. Therefore, the writers had to be aware of the (co-)reference of the epithets, thanks to their knowledge of the LXX perhaps, but did not really understand what they meant; also, the improper use of the construct form *Ἐλωαί* suggests that the writer knew the term, but had no Hebrew competence.

16. In *1 Cor*. 16:21, *2 Thess*. 3:17 and *Col*. 4:18 (*2 Thess*. and *Col*. are generally considered deutero-Pauline: see Norris, 2008, pp. 12-3), Paul admits that he wrote the *ἀσπασμός* 'greeting' by his own hand (*ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου* 'I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand'). In *Rom*. 16:22 reference is explicitly made to a scribe, Tertius (*ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ* 'I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord'). In *Gal*. 6:11 and *Philem*. 1:19, Paul remarks that he wrote by his own hand (*ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί*; cf. Regard, 1919, p. 187).

17. The dating of *Testamentum Salomonis* (1 occurrence), of probable Christian authorship, fluctuates between the I and the III ce (Sparks, 1981, 733ff.; Charlesworth, 1983, 935ff.): in Table 2, this book is included in the section 'I-II ce' because of statistical probability (however, a single occurrence does not change the results substantially). On the chronology of the Judaeo-Christian literature, see Roberts & Donaldson (1903); Charles (1913); Sparks (1981); Charlesworth (1983; 1985); James (1983); Craveri (2014).

18. Modality (B) is probable in 1 Esdras (5 occurrences), Oraculum Sibyllinum 3 (2 occurrences), Matthew (2 occurrences), Luke (5 occurrences, plus 1 occurrence in Acts; see footnote 13) and Apocalypse (11 occurrences); it is certain in all other cases. The co-occurrence of modalities (A) and (B) is probable in Matthew, Luke and Apocalypse, and certain in Josephus' *Bellum Iudaicum*.

19. The same frequency hierarchy (present > perfect, mostly passive > aorist) can be extrapolated from the data collected by Regard (1919, pp. 203-6).

20. A few manuscripts show the variant καυχώμεθα 'we rejoice' (present indicative, 1st plural) in the place of καυχώμενοι (Nestle *et al.*, 2012), which provides evidence for the interpretation of the participle as incorporating a first-person-plural subject.

21. Cf. trans. by Whiston: 'and him, thou impudent woman, hast thou chosen for thine husband, who is my brother'.

22. I disagree with Williams (2007, 14ff., 47ff.), who argues that there is no pragmatic difference between the imperative-participles in the NT and those in the papyri. Although a few of the NT forms might be, to a limited extent, analogous to their papyri counterparts, the vast majority of the NT imperative-participles clearly express codes of conduct and general precepts, rather than specific, rigorous commands (many more examples can be added to example (7): Rom. 12:9ff.; 1 Pe. 3:1, 3:7; 2 Cor. 6:3; etc.).

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Part II
Multilingual, Translation, and Translanguaging Practices