Jerneja Kavčič. *The Syntax of the Infinitive and the Participle in Early Byzantine Greek. An Interpretation in Terms of Naturalness Theory*. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Philosophy, 2005. 248 pages. ISBN 9788672071719

This monograph, which constitutes the revised version of Kavčič's doctoral dissertation, is an important contribution to the study of the history of Greek and the field of syntax in particular. As is well-known, historical investigations on the syntax of Greek of almost any period are clearly lacking, especially those that touch upon this 'misty' period of the early Medieval / Byzantine times, as this book does. So, it is certain that the whole community of historical linguists working on Greek welcomes this book, which obviously attempts, and succeeds, to fill in some important gaps in the syntactic evolution of the language.

In the very first lines of the Introduction, Kavčič (hereafter K) states the aims of her investigation: to study the syntactic properties of the non-finite forms when used as verbal complements in three works that characterize this early Byzantine period (6th–7th centuries AD): the *Chronicle* of John Malalas, the *Pratum Spirituale* (*Leimonarion*) of John Moschos, and the *Vita Theodori Syceotae*. Although, as the author herself acknowledges, the non-finite forms have been studied before (cf. e.g. Joseph, 1983 on the history of the Infinitive), such specialized and detailed examinations of their properties in specific works can undoubtedly add much to our knowledge concerning their development. But K does more than that: she basically investigates the whole syntactic domain of verbal complementation, comparing the distribution of non-finite and finite forms and, in this respect, the title of the book does her an injustice.

The author starts by presenting the theoretical framework of her investigation, i.e. Naturalness Theory, as it has been developed in the last few years. This introductory section is much needed, given that, presumably, most historical linguists are not familiar with the principles of this theory. According to Naturalness Theory, two basic principles operate in linguistic communication: the interest of the speaker and the interest of the listener. Constructions that derive from the former are called "*sem* natural" and those that derive from the latter are called "*sym* natural". These two categories are considered to be opposites: the more *sem* natural a category is, the less *sym* natural it is by definition. The type of each element or each syntactic variant (i.e., *sem/sym* natural) is determined by a series of criteria, not altogether clear, which the author discusses in some detail.

Subsequently, the author presents the works that are investigated, after a brief discussion of the relevant bibliography and the publications used. The discussion illustrates her good knowledge of the philological issues related to

the texts examined, an issue quite important for historical linguistic investigations, and yet sometimes neglected by linguists. Finally, K presents the structure of her book, which is divided into three parts: the first discusses the “declarative” Infinitive (used after verbs of speaking etc.), the second examines the syntax of verbs of perception, and the third investigates the “dynamic” Infinitive (used after verbs of ordering and modal verbs). This rather ‘traditional’ division of syntactic contexts fits her purposes well, since she attempts a primary investigation into data not so well-known and, therefore, a traditional organization of the material allows her to place the emphasis on the data itself, without any lengthy argumentations concerning possible linguistic categorizations of the same material.

K sets out in her investigation with the properties of the declarative Infinitive and, for this purpose, she discusses six different issues related with this complementation category. First, she compares the distribution of non-finite and finite complements after verbs of speaking and thinking in terms of frequency of use; as everywhere in the book, the author provides us with very detailed tables, which help us create a very good picture of the phenomena involved. Furthermore, since she follows the framework of Naturalness Theory, K attempts to explain the various patterns (not only in this case, but also in each issue that she deals with) in terms of this theory. This pattern in the analysis of the material is followed throughout the book.

The second issue discussed in relation to the declarative Infinitive is the subject of the Infinitive, where two patterns occur: the Accusativus-cum-Infinitivo (AcI) and subject omission. Two of the most interesting results of the investigation lie arguably here, namely the fact that AcI could be used even in the case of subject co-reference (without any emphatic nuance), and that subject omission could be found even in the case of disjoint subjects. Again, the argumentation is based in detailed tables containing all the relevant data.

The remaining issues examined are the complementation patterns of passive governing verbs, the properties of negative Infinitive clauses, some elliptical constructions mainly involving the verb “to be” and, finally, pleonastic constructions of the type “διηγῆσατο λέγων...” (“he narrated by saying...”). In all these cases, the familiar and quite useful pattern of presentation is followed: first the data is presented in tables, then examples are given, and then an analysis is attempted based on Naturalness Theory, together with some observations on the data. On the whole, the first long chapter of the book provides us with highly interesting data and observations on a variety of phenomena related to this complementation context, while the usefulness of the details included in the tables cannot be overestimated.

The following chapter deals with the syntax of the verbs of perception. K argues, and probably rightly so, that verbs of this category require a separate investigation, since they could be complemented both by an Infinitive (which could be replaced by a finite clause) and a participle. This is perhaps the best chapter of the book, because of its compactness, the clear presentation of the material and the straightforward conclusions. K divides the verbs of perception into three basic categories: a) visual and audible perception, b) physical perception and c) mental perception. This categorization is partly justified by the analysis of the material, since only the verbs of mental perception differ significantly from the other two categories in terms of their complementation patterns, while categories (a)-(b) can be grouped together.

The third chapter, just as long as the first, examines the properties of the dynamic Infinitive. It is further divided into two sections: the first deals with the Infinitive as a complement of verbs of ordering, wishing, etc., while the second deals with the complementation of modal verbs. In the first section, K examines not only the distribution of the complementation variants of these verbs, which is her main objective, but also other issues that have either been already presented in relation to the declarative Infinitive (e.g., the Acl construction and the issue of the subject of the complement in general) or are completely new (e.g., the *τοῦ*-Infinitive or dependent prohibitive clauses). Again, her conclusions are more often than not clear and well-grounded, always followed by an account on the basis of Naturalness Theory. The second, rather shorter section on modal verbs focuses almost exclusively on the finite vs. non-finite distinction of the complement of these verbs and their distribution across the various sub-categories of the group. The examination illustrates quite convincingly the fact that the Infinitive was retained in the complementation of modal verbs longer than in any other similar syntactic context, with fluctuations on a lexical basis.

The final section of the book summarizes the basic conclusions of the investigation. It also discusses some further issues, such as the use of the Infinitive in post-classical Greek in general and in relation to the texts examined, and it attempts a further comparison between the syntactic properties of the non-finite complementation as observed in the three texts of the Early Byzantine period with the texts of the New Testament. The conclusions of the book are followed by four indices containing all the references to the instances of verbal complementation that are to be found in those three texts: the first index refers to the declarative Infinitive, the second to the dynamic Infinitive after verbs of ordering, the third to the modal verbs and the fourth to the verbs of perception. Another index, this time containing the passages referred to in the study, closes the book. These indices are extremely useful, not only for the

completeness and the evaluation of this analysis, but also for future research; therefore, their inclusion is very welcome indeed.

On the whole, the book is an important contribution to the diachronic study of Greek syntax. K pays very close attention to the primary material, presenting the data in its totality, providing us in this manner with a wealth of information about the syntactic properties of verbal complements in the 6th–7th century. The numerous tables of the analysis are quite helpful in this respect. She acknowledges the problem of the lack of reliable investigations of this period, more acute at the time of publication of the book than now (there are some new studies published after K, cf. e.g., Manolissou, 2005 and Markopoulos, 2008). Despite this, she attempts stylistic evaluations of the works investigated based on the available secondary sources, usually quite successfully. This is rather important, as the classification of the various textual sources into registers can be of great help for the evaluation of the developments found in all linguistic levels. Moreover, the breadth of the issues discussed opens new paths for further research in a variety of phenomena, such as the expression of the subject in the complement or the syntactic properties of passive governing verbs. For these basic reasons, among others, this book advances considerably our knowledge of Early Byzantine Greek and facilitates to a great extent future research on post-classical syntax.

On the other hand, the theoretical framework chosen for this analysis does not seem to add any further insights to the observations made on the material. On the contrary, it arguably places a heavy burden on the author, who tries to explain every single pattern with the tools provided by Naturalness Theory. The problem arises because of the inconsistent nature of the criteria of the theory, since, in order to decide which variant is *sem* and which *sym* natural, one can use various criteria, such as: least effort, prototypicality, typological considerations, frequency of use, class membership etc., in other words, criteria of different nature, which are quite often contradictory, or inadequate. Although this is a problem of the theory itself, it affects the reliability and strength of some of the arguments and conclusions of the author: for example, on p. 122–25 K discusses which verb, λέγω or κελεύω, is the more *sem* natural, with no obvious reason and inconclusive results, because of the inconclusiveness of the criteria used. Furthermore, the “least effort” criterion is used very often by the author (cf. e.g. p. 53–55, among many more), but it is a notoriously debatable criterion, since we cannot know for sure which patterns are more economical for the speaker. The arbitrariness of some decisions is made evident in one example (p. 173), where K argues that “Can+Infinitive is more *sem* natural than must+Infinitive from the perspective of Naturalness theory, because in some languages “can” is the only verb that allows an infinitive

complement”. Obviously, this typological fact cannot be of such a value as to determine the naturalness scale of these two constructions. Because of these problems of the theory, the explanations attempted by K on the basis of Naturalness theory seem rather to be re-statements of the patterns in different terms; it has to be admitted, though, that this is not particular to Naturalness theory, since various theoretical explanations of different frameworks are quite theory-internal, with restricted explanatory value (generative explanations come readily to mind).

With the exception of these theoretical inadequacies (not particular to the analysis by K, *per se*, but presumably to be found in studies undertaken with this framework), the book has no serious drawbacks. The following points of criticism should be taken only as suggestions for further amelioration in case of a second edition or of re-working of the material:

First, regarding the Introduction, the lack of numbering in its sections might be confusing for the reader. Furthermore, some introductory remarks were needed with regard to the Early Byzantine Greek in general, as they would help the reader create a historical linguistic frame for the analysis that follows.

Sometimes, in the examination of the material, the tables given are hard to interpret (cf. e.g., tables IIa-c, p. 44-45). Moreover, the investigation of various issues related to the Infinitives creates some confusion concerning the main points of interest of the study, which are not spelled out in a very clear manner. Every chapter should contain a final section recapitulating the main observations and arguments, and emphasizing the common thread behind the investigation of various, somewhat disparate phenomena (e.g., the *τοῦ*-Infinitive and the *AcI* construction in the chapter discussing the dynamic Infinitive). There are also some terminological issues: K defines modal verbs (p. 165) as “all verbs that govern dynamic infinitive clauses and allow co-reference of subjects of the governing and the infinitive clause”. She acknowledges herself that, by this definition, a lot of verbs that are not normally considered as modal would now belong to this category (such as *φοβέομαι* “fear”). Therefore, it would be preferable to avoid using the term ‘modal’ for this category, to prevent it from creating confusion for the reader. Finally, as stated, some conclusions given in the final, concluding chapter could be placed earlier, in the relevant chapters, which would help the reader keep in track of the major observations and arguments given in each section. Regarding the Bibliography, it is quite extensive, containing all major secondary sources, even though one has the impression that it has not been fully taken advantage of: for instance, although Gignac (1976) is included in the Bibliography, it is not featured anywhere in the discussion of the language of the papyri.

A last point should be made concerning the title of the book: It has been already mentioned that K does more than what the title says, since she compares the non-finite complements with the finite ones, effectively investigating the whole system of verbal complementation in Early Byzantine Greek. On the other hand, she does not examine the variety of syntactic properties of participles used outside a verbal complementation context. Therefore, a more appropriate title would be “Verbal complementation in Early Byzantine Greek”, a title which would give full justice to the investigation presented in the book.

On the whole, and despite those few points of criticism, this is a very interesting and important book, based on a thorough examination of a large amount of material from a period almost unexplored from a linguistic point of view. The data is presented in the most detailed way, leaving nothing in footnotes or altogether unaddressed, while various observations strengthen our knowledge of the Greek of these centuries to a great extent. All linguists working on Greek historical linguistics are very much looking forward to the publication of similar studies, which really fill in gaps and give the motivation for further research on these, previously all but forgotten times in the history of Greek.

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