

## Prolepsis in Greek as a Discourse Strategy

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Prolepsis occurs for pragmatic reasons. The proleptic constituent is thematic and therefore occurs outside and to the left of the subordinate clause, which as a whole is rhematic. The ordering of the proleptic constituent and the main verb depends on their respective degrees of communicative dynamism in the theme-rheme structure. Initial proleptic constituents are new themes in the discourse. In cases of partial prolepsis the thematic element of the disjoined noun phrase occurs in the main clause, the rhematic one in the rhematic subordinate clause. Critique of terms like “emphasis”, “vividness”, “prominence”, etc.

### 1. *The problem*

Prolepsis or anticipation is a well known phenomenon in Greek.<sup>1)</sup> It is usually described in syntactic terms as a construction whereby the subject of a subordinate clause occurs by anticipation as an object in the main clause. An example is passage (1), taken from Medea’s bitter complaint about the unfair attitude of men toward women (Eur. Med. 248f.):

(1) *Λέγουσι δ’ ἡμᾶς ὡς ἀκίνδονον βίον | ζῶμεν κατ’ οἴκουσ . . .*

Here, the understood subject (*ἡμεῖς*) of *ζῶμεν* occurs already in the main clause as an object (*ἡμᾶς*) of *λέγουσι*.

Most grammars then go on by stating that not only subjects are “raised” to objects (to use the transformational term), but that also other constituents in the subordinate clause such as objects and determiners can occur by anticipation in the main clause as objects in other cases than the accusative, as determiners of a noun, etc.

The variety of syntactic functions involved and the fact that these functions are merely listed in the grammars point to a crucial problem: what is the reason for this phenomenon? What do these various constructions have in common beside the “transference” of a constituent from the subordinate clause to the main clause? (The notions “transference” and “raising” will be criticized below.)

Only a few grammars give a vague and not necessarily correct answer. The reason is that “this transference . . . gives a more prominent place to the subject of the subordinate clause” (Smyth 1956:

<sup>1)</sup> See Kühner-Gerth (1904, II, 2: 577–580); Smyth (1956: 488), as well as many smaller grammars of Greek. Schwyzer (1950) is silent on this phenomenon.

488), or that the subordinate clause and main clause are more intimately connected and to a certain extent united, and that through prolepsis the subject of the subordinate clause is presented more vividly (Kühner-Gerth 1904, II, 2: 577). These explanations will be taken up below.

Gonda (1958) has made some good observations on the “stylistic” (his term) relevance of prolepsis and the place of the proleptic constituent. But he too speaks about “dominant ideas,” “emphasis,” “mise en relief,” etc. without putting these terms in a coherent framework.

Whereas prolepsis is fairly well described from a syntactic angle,<sup>2)</sup> the phenomenon should now be studied in the context of the speech act with a speaker/writer and an addressee, whereby the latter (the pragmatics) should determine the former. More precisely, prolepsis has to be seen in relation to the communicative organization of the sentence. One of the major questions which has not yet been raised is the position of the proleptic constituent with respect to the other constituents, particularly the verb of the main clause. In this article prolepsis is thus studied not as a (syntactic) sentence phenomenon, but rather as a (pragmatic) discourse phenomenon.

## 2. *The theory of Functional Sentence Perspective*

Following the pioneering work of Weil (1844) and Von der Gabelentz (1869, 1875), Mathesius and his students like Firbas developed the theory of Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP) with particular attention to English and Czech. An application to Latin can be found in Panhuis (1982). Apparently without knowing the linguists of the Prague School, Loepfe (1940) applied Weil's ideas to Greek, using the theme—rheme (T—R) terminology like the Praguians. Since the T—R structure in the clause is considered as a universal (Von der Gabelentz 1875: 129; Hockett 1963: 23) and since the normal or non-emotive order is almost always T—R,<sup>3)</sup> the theory of FSP and Loepfe's work constitute a trustworthy framework to investigate the particular phenomenon of prolepsis in Greek.

In the act of communication, a dynamic process, the sentence starts from the thematic elements. These elements connect the second segment

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<sup>2)</sup> This does not mean that the discussion is closed. See Van Groningen (1941: 277), Gonda (1958), Lecarme (1978, not seen), Milner (1980), Touratier (1980). In the present article no further attention will be paid to the various syntactic functions of the proleptic constituent (object, determiner, . . .) in the main clause and its understood function in the subordinate clause.

<sup>3)</sup> Only in Ojibwa and Mazatec, as far as I know, is the R—T order the normal order. See Tomlin and Rhodes (1979) and Panhuis (1982: 14).

of the sentence with the preceding context, with the participants in the conversation, or with something in the speech situation: they are the elements about which something is said. In the second segment of the sentence, some comment, *ἐῆμα*, is made about the thematic elements. The rheme or rhemes (R) add sense, predicate something about the theme(s) (T), “push the communication forward” (Firbas 1971: 136), have a greater degree of Communicative Dynamism (henceforth: CD) than the thematic element(s). In a normal, non-emotive sentence, the various constituents are thus organized in a T—R perspective. In an emotive sentence, the opposite order R—T occurs (cf. Weil 1844: 46–52: “l’ordre pathétique”).

In languages with very few syntactic constraints on word order, like Greek and Latin, the constituents (whether a single word, a noun phrase, or a clause) are thus distributed over the sentence according to their degree of increasing rhematicity (from low to high). But within a constituent which comprises more than one element a communicative field exists as well. Whereas most studies of FSP deal with the sentence level,<sup>4</sup> prolepsis forces us to study the sentence and the subordinate clause levels at the same time.

### 3. *The proleptic constituent as a theme*

The thematic elements tend to cluster in the first segment of the sentence, the rhematic ones in the second. Very often object clauses (purpose, indirect speech, . . .) have a higher degree of CD than the verb they depend on, as can be seen in example (1). If the subordinate clause contains a thematic constituent (subject, object, . . .), this constituent disturbs the gradual increase of rhematicity throughout the sentence as a whole. Therefore it is likely to occur earlier in the sentence as an object (or something else) in the main clause.

An illustration of this phenomenon is example (1), above, where the 1st p. pl. subject “we (women)” of the subordinate clause is already the theme of Medea’s complaint from v. 230 on. Since the subordinate clause (*ὡς . . . κατ’ οἴκου*) is the rheme proper of the entire sentence, its thematic subject occurs outside the clause before the subordinating conjunction *ὡς* and becomes an object of the main verb *λέγουσι*. Its more leftward (proleptic) position is thus in conformity with its low degree of CD.

Another example is found in (2). In Herodotus 3, 67 and in the first and second sentences of 3, 68, the magus Smerdis, the usurper, is the theme of the narrative. In the third sentence Otanes is intro-

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<sup>4</sup> A study of various levels is found in Svoboda (1968). A few cases of interaction of two levels are found in Panhuis (1982: 72–80, on disjunctions; 85–89, on a dominating verb inside a subordinate clause). See also my critique of De Jong (Panhuis 1983: 142–143).

duced. This person continues to be the theme proper of the narrative in the fourth sentence, which goes as follows. (Hdt. 3, 68, 2):

- (2) *Οὗτος ὁ Ὀτάνης πρῶτος ὑπόπτευσε τὸν μάγον ὡς οὐκ εἶη ὁ Κύρου Σμέρδις ἀλλ' ὅς περ ἦν, τῆδε συμβαλόμενος, ὅτι τε οὐκ ἐξεφοίτα ἐκ τῆς ἀκροπόλιος καί . . .*

In this sentence, *οὗτος ὁ Ὀτάνης πρῶτος* is the theme proper (*πρῶτος* being the rhematic constituent within this NP). The verb *ὑπόπτευσε* contributes relatively little to push the communication forward, because in the second sentence of 3, 68 Herodotus has already said that Smerdis “was unmasked in the following way.” The verb *ὑπόπτευσε* is somehow connected to this sentence and has a relatively low degree of CD. The proleptic constituent *τὸν μάγον* is again thematic. The subordinate clause *ὡς . . . ἦν*, the formulation of the suspicion, pushes the narrative forward: it is rhematic, as can also be seen from the fact that arguments for the suspicion are given in the following words *τῆδε συμβαλόμενος ὅτι . . .* The thematic subject of the rhematic *ὡς*-clause occurs thus as a proleptic object in the main clause in order to avoid a possible erroneous reading such as: “This Otanes was the first to suspect that the MAGUS was not Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, but the one who he really was” (where capitals indicate major sentence stress in English). The correct interpretation is: “. . . that the magus was not SMERDIS, . . .” The prolepsis thus brings a thematic constituent more to the left, just as the participium “coniunctum”<sup>5</sup>) *συμβαλόμενος* is disjoined from its head noun *Ὀτάνης* to the right because the reasons for the suspicion are very rhematic in this narrative. The communicative organization of this sentence is thus: Tp – T(?) – T – R (*ὡς . . .*) – Rp (*συμβαλόμενος . . .* on a lower syntactic level).

The subject of the subordinate clause occurs thus as an object in the main clause because of its thematic character. If it were rhematic, it would occur in the subordinate clause. An example of a rhematic subject and a thematic one are found in the two successive sentences of (3), taken from the account of the battle of Cunaxa. The Greeks are victorious over the Persian divisions opposite them and pursue them. But Cyrus is carefull and does not join the pursuit. (Xen. an. 1, 8, 21):

- (3) *. . . ἐπεμελεῖτο ὅ τι ποιήσει βασιλεύς. καὶ γὰρ ἤδει αὐτὸν ὅτι μέσον ἔχοι τοῦ Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος.*

<sup>5</sup>) “Coniunctum” is thus a purely syntactic notion, not a pragmatic one.

In the first sentence, *βασιλεύς* (contrasted to the Persian divisions) is the rheme proper of the subordinate clause and occurs thus in final position in this clause. The correct interpretation of this sentence is thus: 'Cyrus was concerned about what the KING would do', not: '... about what the King would DO.' In the second sentence, however, the King is a theme and hence occurs more to the left as an object (*αὐτόν*) of the main verb.

A total of eighty-eight passages, mainly taken from Kühner-Gerth (1904, II, 2: 577–580) have all been checked in their context. Of these, some thirty instances follow the pattern described in connection with examples (1), (2), and (3): the proleptic constituent is thematic and occurs in the main clause after the main verb.<sup>6)</sup>

Some ten other passages also adhere to this pattern, but the thematic proleptic constituent is not actually mentioned in the preceding sentence(s). It is just taken for granted that the reader will easily infer from the verbal or situational context that there is such an element.<sup>7)</sup> An example of such a short-cut is seen in a passage from Herodotus about an inspection of bulls before a sacrifice. A priest examines the skin for possible black hairs, checks the bull standing upright and lying on its back, and searches the tongue for certain symptoms. Then follows passage (4), Hdt. 2, 38, 2:

(4) *Κατορᾷ δὲ καὶ τὰς τρίχας τῆς οὐρῆς εἰ κατὰ φύσιν ἔχει πεφυκνίας.*

The proleptic constituent *τὰς τρίχας τῆς οὐρῆς* is taken for granted as a thematic element: a bull normally has a tail with hairs. The

<sup>6)</sup> These passages are: Arist., *Ach.* 536 (*τὸ ψήφισμα*); *Av.* 651–653 (*τὴν ἀλώπεχ'*); Dem 27, 57 (*ἦν*); Eur., *Med.* 37 (*αὐτήν*); Herod. 1, 95 (*τόν τε Κύρον*); 1, 95 (*τοὺς Πέρσας*); Hom., *Il.* 2, 409 (*ἀδελφεον*); 13, 275 (*ἀρετήν*, although strictly speaking not *ἀρετή* but its owner is subject of *ἔσσι*); Plato, *Resp.* 472c (*αὐτό τε δικαιοσύνην*); 472c (*ἄνδρα τὸν τελέως δίκαιον*); *Theaet.* 146e (*ἐπιστήμην αὐτό*); Soph., *Ai.* 1141 (*τοῦτον*); Thuc. 1, 88 (*τοὺς Ἀθηναίους*); 2, 21 (*Πλειστοάνακτα . . . βασιλέα*); 3, 53, 2 (*ὑμᾶς*); Xen., *Oec.* 4, 13 (*τούτων*); *Cyr.* 8, 1, 44 (*αὐτῶν*). In some instances the proleptic constituent has a trace in the subordinate clause: Hom., *Il.* 3, 192 (*καὶ τόνδε*, with trace *ᾧδ'*); 20, 311 (*Αἰνείαν*, with trace *μιν*, see also footnote 11). More examples of prolepsis involving other syntactic functions than subject in the subordinate clause and object in the main clause are the following: Arist., *Av.* 1269–1270 (*τὸν κήρυκα . . . οἰχόμενον*); Herod. 3, 130 (*τὴν τέχνην*); Lysias, *Contra Phil.* 29, 1 (*τῆς ἀπογραφῆς*); Plato, *Laches* 190d (*ἀνδρεία*); Soph., *O. R.* 767–8 (*ἐμαντόν*, with trace *μοι*); Thuc. 1, 26, 2 (*τῶν Κερκυραίων*, with trace *ὑπ' αὐτῶν*); 1, 61, 1 (*τῶν πόλεων*); Xen., *Oec.* 4, 21 (*αὐτόν*).

<sup>7)</sup> Cf. Weil (1844: 21–22), Firbas (1957: 72). Also Loepfe (1940: 28–29) refers to concepts that can be derived from another concept by association.

point to be made here (the rheme proper) is whether they have grown according to nature.<sup>8)</sup>

In all instances referred to so far, including the ones in footnotes 6 and 8, the thematic proleptic constituent occurs after the main verb and before the rhematic subordinate clause. In these instances the main verb has a relatively low degree of CD. However, in some twelve cases the main verb is rather strongly rhematic and occurs more toward the right in the sentence after the thematic proleptic constituent as in (5), sometimes even after the rhematic subordinate clause as in (6).

Example (5) is taken from the legend of the Golden Fleece. When Jason has accomplished the task of ploughing a field with fire-breathing oxen to everyone's amazement, Aeêtês cannot refuse any longer to indicate the place of the Golden Fleece (Pind. P. 4, 241 f.):

(5) *Αὐτίκα δ' Ἀελίου θανμαστός υἱὸς δέρμα λαμπρὸν  
ἔννεπεν, ἔνθα νιν ἐκτάνυσαν Φοῖξον μάχαιραι.*

In this text Aeêtês and the fleece are thematic: they occur in the first segment of the sentence (v. 241). The verb, the long-expected word of Aeêtês, is rhematic, hence a translation like 'did speak.' The subordinate clause—as in all the earlier examples—is the rheme proper: it indicates the place of the fleece—which is precisely what Jason wants to know. The rhematic verb occurs thus after the thematic proleptic constituent.

Sentence (6) is taken from the speech by the Athenian ambassadors to the Spartans just before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. They warn the Spartans not to take hasty decisions nor to listen to opinions of other cities, for it could lead to their own trouble (Thuc. 1, 78, 1):

(6) *Τοῦ δὲ πολέμου τὸν παράλογον ὄσος ἐστὶ, πρὶν ἐν αὐτῷ γενέσθαι,  
προδιάγνωτε.*

The proleptic object (τοῦ . . . παράλογον) is thematic: it picks up the "own trouble" (οἰκειὸν πόνον) of the preceding sentence. The subordinate clause (ὄσος ἐστὶ) is more rhematic: the seize of the in-

<sup>8)</sup> More examples of this kind are: Herod. 3, 80 (τὴν Καμβύσειω ὕβριν inferred from μούναρχον . . . οὔτε . . . ἡδὺ οὔτε ἀγαθόν); 4, 44 (Ἰνδὸν . . . τὸν ποταμόν, taken for granted); 6, 48 (τῶν Ἑλλήνων, idem); 9, 117 (τῶν στατηγῶν, idem); Isocr. IV, 1 (τῶν . . . καταστησάντων, idem); Plato, *Phaedo* 89c (τι πάθος, idem); *Resp.* 372e (τὴν τε δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀδικίαν: theme of the entire work); Thuc. 3, 51, 2 (τούς τε Πελοποννησίους, taken for granted); Xen., *Cyr.* 8, 1, 1 (τῶν παίδων, inferred from πατέρες, with trace αὐτούς).

culculable element is added. The time of the thinking (*πρίν . . .*) is even more rhematic. The rheme proper of this sentence clearly is the final main verb *προδιάγνωτε* ‘DO THINK!’<sup>9</sup>)

The thematic constituents discussed here occur before the main verb, and in some cases like (6) even in the very beginning of the sentence. Still, the theme in (6) is a link to the preceding sentence—like all other themes encountered so far—and is thus different from the sentence-initial thematic constituents to be discussed in Section Four.

#### 4. *The proleptic constituent as a new theme*

The proleptic constituents to be discussed now are thematic as well, but they all occur in initial position in the sentence (twenty-three instances). Unlike the thematic constituents encountered so far, these initial themes have not been introduced in a preceding sentence, nor are they participants or objects in the speech situation. They are all new. At most are they “related” to the preceding context by way of contrast. The thematic character and the newness of these proleptic constituents could in translation be rendered by the introducing formula ‘with regard to;’ the contrast (if any) by ‘but,’ ‘however,’ ‘on the other hand,’ . . .

In a conversation with Socrates, Euthydemus posits that wisdom is something good: “Indeed, which kind of thing would not be done better by a wise man than by an ignorant man?” (Xen. mem. 4, 2, 33):

(7) So.: *Τί δέ; τὸν Δαίδαλον, ἔφη, οὐκ ἀκήκοας ὅτι ληφθεὶς ὑπὸ Μίνω διὰ τὴν σοφίαν ἠναγκάζετο ἐκεῖνω δουλεύειν . . .*;

In this conversation Daedalus is newly introduced as an example (theme proper) about which some comment is going to be made. It is neatly separated from the rhematic verb *οὐκ ἀκήκοας* and the rheme proper (*ὅτι . . .*) by the interjected *ἔφη*. Although the new

<sup>9</sup>) Other examples of thematic proleptic constituents occurring before a verb with a relatively high degree of CD are the following: Dem. 9, 61 (*τὸν Εὐφραῖον . . . μεμνημένοι*); 28, 7 (*ταύτην*; the rhematic subordinate clause is followed by the rhematic verb *ἐπιδειξαί* and three other constituents which are even more rhematic); Hom., *Il.* 1, 536–7 (*μὴν . . . ἠγνοίησεν*, with trace *οἱ*); 8, 535–6 (*ἦν ἀρετὴν διαείσεται*); Isocr. IV, 78 (*τοὺς νόμους ἐσκόπουν*); Soph., *Phil.* 544 (*σε . . . φράσαι*); Xen., *Mem.* 1, 4, 13 (*θεῶν . . . ἤσθηται*); 4, 2, 33 (*τοῦτον . . . ὑμνοῦσιν*); *Cyr.* 5, 1, 20 (*ὕμᾶς οἶδα σαφῶς*); 5, 3, 40 (*αὐτῶν ἐπιμελείσθων*).

theme is very clearly presented to the listener, there seems to be no reason to talk about “the vividness of a passage,” as Gonda (1958: 121) does with respect to this sentence.

The new theme often appears in contrast to the theme(s) of preceding sentences or in an enumeration. Very typical is then the occurrence of the particle *δέ*. In the beginning of the *Anabasis* Cyrus plans to become king in his brother’s place. He secures support from four sides: his mother (*Παρόσατις μὲν . . .*), whoever comes from the King’s court (*δοσις δέ . . .*), the barbarians of his own province (text below), and the Greek force (*τὴν δὲ Ἑλληνικὴν δύναμιν*). All four forms of support are initial themes proper of the four respective sentences. The third form of support is seen in (8), Xen. an. 1, 1, 5:

(8) *καὶ τῶν παρ’ ἑαυτῶ δὲ βαρβάρων ἐπεμελεῖτο ὡς πολεμεῖν τε ἱκανοὶ εἶησαν καὶ εὐνοϊκῶς ἔχοιεν αὐτῶ.*

The proleptic constituent *τῶν . . . βαρβάρων* is a new theme proper and occurs initially before the main verb. Gonda (1958: 120) writes about this passage that “the construction may facilitate the transition to a complementary thought and add to a well-balanced structure of a passage.” This passage surely is well-balanced because the four themes proper all occur in initial position, connected by *μὲν . . . δέ . . . δέ . . . δέ*. (Brownson, Loeb edition, translates these particles by: ‘in the first place . . ., again . . ., also . . ., lastly,’ respectively.) But Gonda’s statement is superficial and ad hoc for lack of a coherent view of word order in the sentence on the basis of a communicative perspective. The phenomenon of prolepsis is not merely a means to “facilitate the transition to a complementary thought” or to achieve “a well-balanced” parallelism, but to give a sentence constituent its appropriate place in the communicative organization of the sentence.<sup>10)</sup>

<sup>10)</sup> Other examples of proleptic new themes in initial position are the following: Hom., *Il.* 5, 85 (*Τυδείδην δ’*); *Od.* 17, 373 (*αὐτὸν δ’*); Plato, *Hipp. Minor* 364e (*τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα*; the highly rhematic predicate appositive *πολυτροπώτατον* occurs at the end of the subordinate clause); *Resp.* 327a (*τὴν ἐορτήν* in contrast to the praying); 407 (*Φωκυλίδου*); Thuc. 1, 72, 1 (*τὴν σφετέραν πόλιν*, in contrast to the attitude of the Lacedaemonians); 1, 97, 2 (*τῆς ἀρχῆς* beside the general history between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War); 2, 42, 4 (*πενίας* in contrast to *πλούτων*); 4, 8, 7 (*τὴν δὲ νῆσον* in contrast to *τοὺς μὲν . . . ἔσπλους*, with trace); Xen., *Mem.* 1, 1, 6 (*τὰ μὲν ἀναγκαῖα* [cf. Milner 1980: 43–44, on prolepsis with infinitive clauses]); *Mem.* 1, 1, 6 (*περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀθλήων*); *Oec.* 7, 34 (*ἐπὶ τοῖς . . . κηρίοις*); 7, 34 (*τοῦ . . . τόκου*); 7, 36 (*ὁ . . . σίτος*); 7, 37 (*ὄς . . . τούτων*, with disjoined rhe-



### 5. *Partial prolepsis and disjunction*

In some five cases, only part of a thematic constituent occurs proleptically in the main clause, the remainder occurs in the subordinate clause. Such a disjunction is also motivated by the communicative organization of the sentence. While the constituent as a whole is thematic on the clause level, its elements on the level of the noun phrase have different degrees of CD. The thematic element therefore may occur to the left (in the main clause), the rhematic one to the right (in the subordinate clause). Either the head noun can be thematic and the attributive adjective or genitive rhematic (as in 9), or vice-versa.

In Sophocles' play *Philoctetes*, a merchant, accompanied by a sailor from Neoptolemus' crew approaches Neoptolemus and explains what has happened (549–552):

- (9) . . . . . ὡς ἤκουσα τοὺς ναῦτας ὅτι  
 σοὶ πάντες εἶεν συννεναυστοληκότες,  
 ἔδοξέ μοι μὴ σίγα, πρὶν φράσαιμί σοι,  
 τὸν πλοῦν ποιῆσθαι.

The merchant has told in v. 543 how he encountered Neoptolemus' sailors. In (9) he tells how he heard that all of them are Neoptolemus' fellow-voyagers. The rheme proper in v. 549–550 is the subordinate clause as a whole. Within this clause the verb (*εἶεν συννεναυστοληκότες*) is the rheme proper, the object *σοι* (participant in the speech event) is thematic, while the subject is thematic as well. But within the subject, the head noun *ναῦται* is thematic, the adjective *πάντες* rhematic. In order to preserve as much as possible the rhematic character of the subordinate clause, the thematic part of the subject already occurs in the main clause, while the rhematic attributive adjective occurs in the rhematic subordinate clause. Here, the prolepsis is a partial one in combination with a disjunction.<sup>11)</sup>

matic attributive adjective *πάντων*; on disjunction, see Section Five); 20, 8 (*φυλακάς*, "raised" two levels above the subordinate clause); 20, 8 (*τούτου*); *Cyr.* 2, 1, 4 (*τὴν δύναμιν*); 2, 1, 5 (*τοὺς . . . Ἕλληνας . . . οἰκοῦντας*); 2, 1, 11 (*τῶν ἀρχομένων*); *Hipp.* 1, 14 (*τοὺς βιαίους δὲ ἵππους*, "raised" three times). A problem constitutes Hom., *Od.* 4, 832–4, where Penelope (re-)introduces her husband as a new theme (*καὶ κείνον διΰζυρόν*), which, however, is not sentence-initial.

<sup>11)</sup> More examples of a partial prolepsis with disjunction are: Eur., *H.F.* 840–841 (*τὸν Ἥραος . . . γόλος*); Plato, *Gorg.* 460a (*τῆς ῥητορικῆς . . . ἡ δύναμις*). A complete prolepsis but with a disjunction in the main clause is found

6. *Emotive word order*

In a normal, non-emotive sentence the degree of CD increases from the beginning to the end: Tp – T – . . . – R – Rp. All the sentences encountered so far adhere rather strictly to this communicative pattern. In the emotive order the major point of the communication is uttered at the very beginning, followed by less rhematic and thematic constituents. Seven instances of prolepsis have to be understood in such an organization of the sentence.

In Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, the protagonist asks about a worthless but clever talker what has become of him (*τί νυν κυρεῖ*). Neoptolemus supposes that this question is about Odysseus. But Philoctetes reacts as in (10), 442. 444:

(10) *Οὐ τοῦτον εἶπον, ἀλλὰ Θερσίτης τις ἦν,  
 . . . . . τοῦτον οἶσθ' εἰ ζῶν κυρεῖ;*

In this conversation the thematic elements are the participants in the speech event (I – you), the verbs of saying (*ἐρεῖς* in v. 441 and *εἶπον* in v. 442), and the question what has become of someone (*τί . . . κυρεῖ*). When Neoptolemus refers to Odysseus, Philoctetes immediately denies that the question is about HIM: *οὐ τοῦτον* is thus the rheme proper in v. 442. (The negation is a strong rhematizer.<sup>12</sup>) The verb and the 1st p. sg. are thematic. The order is thus: Rp – T – Tp. In v. 444 Philoctetes then asks emphatically about Thersites: “Do you know whether HE is alive?” The order is: Rp (*τοῦτον*) – R (*οἶσθ'*) – T (*εἰ ζῶν κυρεῖ*). Another possible translation, closer to the original constituent order, is: ‘OF HIM, do you know if he is alive?’, but not: ‘Do you know if he is ALIVE?’<sup>13</sup>)

in Eur., *Hipp.* 1250–1251 (*τὸν σόν*, emphatic rheme, . . . *παῖδ'*, theme). See also Eur., *Hipp.* 1395: *ἄρα μὲ, δέσποινα, ὡς ἔχω, τὸν ἄθλιον*: the thematic *μὲ* is proleptic, the appositive *τὸν ἄθλιον* is a disjoined rhematic afterthought occurring to the right of the subordinate clause. The same phenomenon occurs in Hom., *Il.* 20, 310–312 (*Αἰνείαν . . . μιν . . . ἐσθλὸν ἐόντα*), if v. 312 is authentic. Also Xen., *Oec.* 7, 37 in fn. 10.

<sup>12</sup> The term “rhematizer” is from Contreras (1976: 114–119, 56). Rhematizers are intensifying words which increase the degree of CD of a constituent that otherwise would be less rhematic or even thematic. See Firbas (1959: 53) and Panhuis (1982: 52, 89–91, 137).

<sup>13</sup> Similarly: Eur., *Io* 1307 (*τὴν σὴν . . . μητέρα* ‘admonish YOUR OWN mother’); Hom., *Od.* 19, 245 (*καὶ τόν*: Rp); Plato, *Euthyphro* 2d (*τῶν νέων*: Rp); *Resp.* 372e (*οὐ πόλιν*: Rp. with rhematizer *οὐ* and contrast with *τροφῶσαν πόλιν*); Thuc. 6, 76, 1 (*οὐ τὴν παρούσαν δύναμιν τῶν Ἀ.*: an emphatic proleptic rheme proper in the beginning of a speech, followed by a parallel proleptic rheme proper *τοὺς . . . λόγους*).

### 7. *Conclusions and remarks*

7.1 The phenomenon of prolepsis has to be understood in the first place as a discourse phenomenon, i.e., it has to be understood as a communicative strategy used by the speaker/writer with the purpose of assigning a sentence constituent to such a position in the linear arrangement that the communicative organization of the sentence as a whole adheres as much as possible to a consistent T – R perspective (or R – T perspective in the emotive order). As a discourse phenomenon all eighty-eight instances of prolepsis have been studied in their context, which is not the case in many works on prolepsis (e.g., Milner 1980: 39), with the exception of Gonda (1958).

An adequate analysis of such a phenomenon cannot be done on the sentence level. The analysis has to start at the highest level: the entire text in the speech event. It should then tackle the sentence level and lastly the noun phrase with its case endings. At the same time, one should notice that the highest level of analysis is mostly concerned with the pragmatic layer in language (in casu, the communicative perspective), the sentence level deals primarily with syntactic functions and semantic roles, and the lowest level with morphology (object in accusative or genitive, etc.).

Although prolepsis involves case-forms (morphology), it is very insufficient to describe the phenomenon under the title “proleptic accusative,” as is done by Gonda (1958) and Touratier (1980). Such a term is a reminiscence of the “morphological age” in linguistics, when “grammar” equaled “morphology.” Evidently, prolepsis is not limited to, and thus not correctly described by, “accusative.”

Similarly, the prevailing syntactic approach is inadequate for a correct understanding of prolepsis. The multitude of functions listed (e.g., Smyth 1956: 488) shows that the unifying principle of the various forms of prolepsis (subj. to obj., obj. to obj., determiner to obj., etc.) is not syntactic but of a higher order, as shown in this article.

Just as (case-)forms receive their full sense in connection with the functions revealed in the syntactic layer, so the syntactic phenomena owe their sense to the pragmatic layer (cf. Loepfe 1940: v, with “Stilistik” instead of “pragmatics”).

7.2 The transformational raising approach, which is implicit in the traditional grammars, is rejected on syntactic grounds by Van Groningen (1941: 277, 280) and Gonda (1958) on one hand, and by Lecarme (1978) and Milner (1980: 45) on the other. From this

article it should be clear that the raising approach should also be rejected for pragmatic reasons. Indeed, the transformational approach implies that the non-raised construction is basic, the other derived. From a pragmatic point of view such an approach is untenable. A non-proleptic construction, as in the first sentence of (3) with a highly rhematic subject in the subordinate clause, is not more basic than a proleptic construction. Both constructions are syntactically possible. The choice between the two is of a pragmatic order. The notions “basic” and “derived” have to do with the syntactic machinery of a particular theory, but nothing with an understanding of a sentence in context.

7.3 The proleptic constituent occurs earlier in the sentence in order to create a regular distribution of the elements throughout the sentence according to their degree of CD, more particularly, in order to secure that the subordinate clause, which as a whole is very rhematic, is disturbed as little as possible by thematic elements. Prolepsis, therefore, does NOT give a more prominent place to the subject of the subordinate clause, as Smyth (1956: 488) says, NOR does it present that subject more lively (pace Kühner-Gerth 1904, II, 2: 577), NOR is it “utilized as a means of emphasizing or throwing into relief the main idea or ideas of the utterance: Arist., *Av.* 651ff. *δρα νυν . . . τὴν ἀλώπεχ’, ὡς φλαύρωσ ἐκοινώνησεν ἀετῶ ποτε*” (Gonda 1958: 120–121). If anything, thanks to prolepsis it is the rhematic subordinate clause which is “thrown into relief” more clearly as the most dynamic element in the communication.

Gonda is closer to the communicative perspective, invoked here, when he writes that prolepsis “allowed the speaker to pronounce a dominant idea in the first clause of the sentence postponing particulars or explications to a following unit” (Gonda 1958: 121). A difficult term is “dominant idea”: it is taken, consciously or not, from the tradition of Wundt (1900, I, 2: 262–263) and the young Bloomfield (1914: 114), where it seems to indicate the “psychological subject” of Von der Gabelentz (according to Loepfe 1940: 16). If by “dominant idea” Gonda means “psychological subject” or “theme” and by “particulars or explication” he means “rhemes”, then he is close to a T – R scheme. But “dominant idea” could also refer to “emphasis,” “vividness,” etc., in which case I must disagree with him.

7.4 The impression of Smyth, Kühner-Gerth, and Gonda that the proleptic constituent is an element which is more vivid, emphasized,

thrown into relief, etc. must be a result of the sometimes stilted translation to which prolepsis can lead. Because of the unusual construction in the target language such translations definitely throw such a proleptic constituent into relief, but in Greek, with much less syntactic constraints on the constituent order, there is nothing emphatic or vivid, etc. in a sentence containing a prolepsis. The place of the proleptic constituent is simply more in accordance with its low degree of CD.

In Greek a constituent with a particular syntactic function can occur in many positions in the sentence, the ordering principle being of a communicative nature. In a translation the pragmatics should also determine syntax. If, therefore, a literal translation turns a thematic proleptic constituent into a marked, vivid, or emphatic constituent in the target language, then such a translation betrays the original. In such cases it is better not to try to render the prolepsis. As a matter of fact, Smyth (1956: 488), who claims that prolepsis "gives a more prominent place to the subject of the subordinate clause," translates all eight examples without prolepsis in English and—correctly—obtains a translation WITHOUT prominence.

7.5 Prolepsis is often described in connection with the personal passive construction (Kühner-Gerth 1904, II, 2: 579; Planque et al. 1977: 173–174; Milner 1980: 41). The pragmatic reasons for the occurrence of both phenomena are the same, as can be seen from a study by Bolkestein (1983).

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