

New Testament Greek Syntax

Participles

A verbal adjective possessing some of the characteristics of a verb as well as an adjective
Once the function of participle (and infinitives?) in the NT is mastered, the rest is child's play

1. Substantival Participle

A participle functioning as a substantive, or substantival phrase or clause

i] Independent substantive

A participle, not accompanied by a noun, that functions as a substantive, especially as a noun.

The participle may function as a subject nominative, an accusative direct object, or a dative indirect object of a finite verb

Most times with an article, but sometimes without, eg.

BELIEVERS (ONES BELIEVING) were added to the Lord

προσπειθεντο πιστευοντας τω κυριω

In Mark, an article + δε + a participle is often adverbial rather than substantival

but some, WHILE FOLLOWING, were afraid

the ones and FOLLOWING were afraid

οι δε ακολουθουντες εφοβουντο

ii] Nominative Absolute (Hanging nominative)

A substantival participle functioning as a nominative pendens (Note iii)

A nominative article + a genitive participle, without a verb

the ONE WHO CONQUERS

ο νικων

iii] Dependent statement of perception

A participle forming an object clause, sometimes with it's own subject (accusative), after verbs of feeling, seeing, or knowing (rarely saying)

This construction is usually formed by an accusative infinitive construction, or a clause introduced by **οτι** + ind. verb, or by **ινα** + subj.

Accusative anarthrous participle with acc. noun

For I see THAT YOU ARE full of bitterness and captive to sin

εις γαρ χολην πικριας και συνδεσμον αδικιας ορω σε οντα

iv] Object Complement

A Participle (more commonly an acc. adj., noun, pro., rarely an inf.) may be used to complement the direct object of a verb.

It usually predicates / states / asserts a fact about the accusative object.

Similar to an appositional function, except that it asserts a fact about the substantive.

Most often translated as a simple participle.

With the direct object it forms an object complement double accusative construction.

Some grammarians will tend to classify participles asserting a fact about a substantive as adjectival, predicative. The issue is somewhat technical and doesn't affect our understanding of the text, but can be an issue for exam purposes. See Goodell *Attic Greek Grammar*, Predicative Adjectival Participles. Note the distinction drawn below for adjectival participles, predicative, as used in these notes, remembering that such classifications can be somewhat arbitrary.

2. Adjectival Participle

A participle that functions like an adjective (a verbal adjective)

Usually with an article, but if the noun it modifies is without an article then the participle is usually without an article (anarthrus)

i] Attributive

A participle that describes, modifies, or limits a substantive which may be the subject or object of a sentence.

Can be translated as a relative clause "who/which", or as a simple participle.

article, participle, substantive - *common*
article, substantive, article participle - *emphasizes participle*
substantive, article, participle.
substantive, participle - *anarthrous*.

The peace of God WHICH SURPASSES

ἡ εἰρηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ὑπερῆχουσα

The LIVING water

τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς ζωῆς

ii] Predicative

An adjectival participle that predicates / states / asserts something about a substantive.

participle, substantive (anarthrous)... *Participle emphatic*

substantive, participle (anarthrous) ... *Substantive emphatic*

For technical classification purposes it is differentiated from an object complement by the following elements:

Always anarthrous

Tends to be in the nominative case.

Usually requiring a translation with the verb to-be.

the word of God **IS** LIVING

ζῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ

Not to be confused with a participle serving as a predicate nominative. Such will usually take an article and function as the nominative object of a linking verb.

3. Verbal Participle

A participle where the verbal aspect is prominent

i] Adverbial (Circumstantial)

A participle that modifies a verb in the sentence usually introduces an adverbial clause

Adverbial participles take the case of the subject of its associate verb, for this reason most are nominative

Adverbial participles simply indicate the circumstances under which the action of a verb takes place

The following labels are not conveyed by the participle itself, but are suggested by the context

See [Infinitives](#) for an outline of all Adverbial clauses

a) Time (Temporal)

Identifying the time when the action of the main verb is accomplished

Translate: "when", "after", "while"

b) Manner (Modal)

Identifying the manner / method in which the action of the main verb is accomplished.

Answers the question, how? Adds extra color. Sometimes with ὡς.

she came TREMBLING

τρεμουσα ἦλθεν

c) Means (Instrumental)

Identifying the means or agent by which an action of the main verb is accomplished = "by means of"

An instrumental participle will usually follow the main verb

d) Reason (Causal)

Identifying the ground by which the action of the main verb is accomplished.

Why? (part. precedes verb) = since, because

e) Condition (Conditional)

Identifying a condition on which the fulfillment of the main verb depends

Forming the protasis of a conditional clause, 3rd class (some uncertainty) = "if"

f) Concession (Concessive)

Identifying a concession which implies that the action of the main verb is true in spite of the action of the participle.

The participle precedes the verb = "although" [in spite of main verb].

Often with a concessive particle: **καὶπερ**, **καὶτοιγε**

ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW God, they did not honor him as God

γινόντες τον θεον ουχ ὡς θεον εδοξασαν

g) Purpose (final, telic)

Expressing purpose = English infinitive.

h) Result (consecutive)

Identifying the result (outcome) of the action of the main verb

a) Logical result: = "with the result of"

b) Temporal result: = "with the result that"

ii] Attendant Circumstance (Paralle)

Identifying an action that accompanies the action of the main verb

In this construction the main verb has independent force rather than being modified by the participle

Best translated as a finite verb, joined to the main verb by "and"

Sometimes Redundant (pleonastic), eg "Jesus, ANSWERING (ANSWERED AND) said", so "answering" left untranslated.

Now GO AND learn

πορευθέντες δε μαθετε

iii] Periphrastic

A round-about way of expressing a simple verbal idea

Possibly used to emphasize aspect, but probably just an Aramaism, cf. Zerwick #361.

The verb to-be + an anarthrous (without the article) participle

The Periphrastic Present

present verb to-be + present participle

The Periphrastic Imperfect

imperfect verb to-be + present participle

The Periphrastic Future

future verb to-be + present participle

The Periphrastic Perfect

present verb to-be + perfect participle

The Periphrastic Pluperfect

imperfect verb to-be + perfect participle

iv] Supplementary (Sometimes classified Complementary in Koine Gk.)

A participle that supplements the thought of the main verb. *Rare*

An infinitive would usually perform this task.

Normally translated as a simple participle or infinitive

They continued TO QUESTION him

They continued QUESTIONING him

επεμονον ερωτωντες αυτον

v] Imperativ

Functions as if a finite verb in the imperative mood. *Rare*

It must be independent of the main verb to be an imperatival participle. *Rare.*

HATE the evil

αποστουγωντες τον πονηρον

vi] Indicative Finite Verb

An independent proper / absolute participle . *Very rare*

HE HAD a name

εχων ονομα

vii] Future Participle

A verb in the future tense with a participle ending. *Very rare*

Expressing either purpose, translated as an infinitive, or referring to a future event.

The verb to-be in Luke 22:49

εσομενον [ειμι, εσομαι]

4. Genitive Absolute

An independent genitive noun or pronoun + anarthrous gen. part. at the beginning of a sentence
Usually translated as a temporal clause but sometimes other adverbial options will suit
Dative and accusative forms. *Rare*
[While] THEY WERE SPEAKING these things
τουτα δε αυτων λαλουντων

Notes

i] Verbal Adjectives

-τος -τεος endings.

Not to be confused with participles.

They are adjectives formed from a verbal stem

αγαπητος - beloved

εκλεκτος - elect

αδυνατος - impossible.

ii] Participles and tense

The tense of a participle to a degree expresses aspect, but more importantly time in relation to the main verb and its context:

Antecedent action relative to the main verb = aorist participle

Simultaneous action relative to the main verb = present participle

Subsequent action relative to the main verb = future participle

Sometimes an aorist participle when the participle is placed after the main verb.

iii] A Pendent Nominative

A nominative pendens "consists in the enunciation of the logical (not grammatical) subject at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a sentence in which that subject is taken up by a pronoun in the case required by the syntax", Zerwick.

A less than common usage

iv] Participial phrase

It is common in Greek for a participial construction to present as a *sandwich*

οι ενωπιον του θεου καθημενοι

the ones before the throne sitting

those who were sitting before the throne

The articular participle is separated by the prepositional phrase "before the throne"

For Greek font requirements see [Syntax Notes](#)
A Commentary on the Greek New Testament [Exegetical Notes](#)