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SUPPORT-VERB CONSTRUCTIONS WITH OBJECTS: GREEK-COPTIC INTERFERENCE IN THE DOCUMENTARY PAPYRI?[1]

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Abstract

Support-verb constructions are combinations of a verb and a noun that fill the predicate slot, for example, *to make a suggestion* in *I made the suggestion yesterday*. The article examines direct-object structures with support-verb constructions in Greek documentary papyri from fourth- to mid-seventh-century Egypt. By the fourth century, Greek and Egyptian (at this stage called Coptic) had co-existed in Egypt for about a millennium and the latter was gaining ground. The article focusses on the support-verb-construction families surrounding ἐξουσίαν *exousian* 'power' and ἐγγύην *egguēn* 'surety' as well as on a selection of structures with ποιέομαι *poieomai* 'to do'. The article finds that direct-object structures in the data sample have differing explanations. Direct-object patterns are a marginal pattern in classical Greek already, such that some patterns can be explained by inheritance or the extension of a pattern to new contexts. However, some writers either idiolectally or sociolectally applied object patterns more widely based on the Coptic parallel. The syntax of support-verb constructions in Greek does not run counter to the verbal syntax otherwise, which may aid the fact that they do not introduce systemic changes.

1. SUPPORT-VERB CONSTRUCTIONS

Support-verb constructions are combinations of a verb and a noun that fill the predicate slot of a sentence, for example, *to make a suggestion* in *I made the suggestion yesterday* or *to take heart* in *he took heart and jumped*. While support-verb constructions fill two slots in the c-structure, they fit into one slot in the f-structure.[2] However, support verbs are not auxiliaries, such as *have* and *be* (Bentein 2016), but retain an argument grid (Butt 1997; Cinque 2004; Butt & Lahiri 2013) and are form-identical with the lexical form of a verb, if a lexical and an auxiliary form co-exist (Vincent & Wheeler 2022). The support verb and the predicative noun participate in argument sharing of the subject component (Tovena 2017; Butt 2010: 61); the indirect object is usually assigned by the argument grid of the support verb. Our interest here lies with the direct object.

[1]My thanks go to John Lowe (Oxford) for the provision of his handout on transitive nouns and adjectives in Greek and María Dolores Jiménez López and José Miguel Baños for the manuscript of their forthcoming article. Dataset: DOI: 10.5287/ora-dqmbwrvj6.

[2]In Lexical-Functional Grammar, the f[unctional]-structure is the internal structure, which describes universal grammatical relations (Bresnan et al. 2015: 56) and the c[onstituent]-structure is the external structure (Bresnan et al. 2015: 56), which is language-specific (cf. the principle of variability).

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Support-verb constructions are syntagms, which can be discontinuous. Compare *I made an interesting suggestion* with *#he took a great heart*, where the former allows for a certain range of intervening items, whereas the latter constrains the intervening space similarly to phrasal verbs (Padín Pardal 2020) or tmetic constructions (Bertrand 2014). Degrees of variability vary, for example, regarding the addition of attributive and/or determiner phrases or the substitution of the support verb and/or the predicative noun by means of a semantically similar item. Compare *I put forward an interesting suggestion* and *#he grabbed a great heart*. While the former allows for the addition of determiner and attributive phrases and for the substitution of the support verb by a verb of realisation,[3] the latter does not. Finally, support-verb constructions involve degrees of ambiguity in meaning between literal and support-verb-construction meanings. For example, *he took a picture* does not involve a physical picture frame or *he took heart* barbaric behaviour. Misunderstandings could be critical, that is, inferring theft in the former case and mutilation in the latter (cf. Savary et al. 2018). Here, we are interested in how especially the degrees of discontiguity and variability of components relate to the availability of direct objects.

The range of support verbs is language-specific due to component compatibility being regulated by lexical collocations, compare, for example, the different sets of support-verb constructions in the PARSEME shared task for 18 modern languages. The range of support verbs is significantly wider than that of auxiliaries. For classical Greek, we accept the following as common support verbs based on an inductive study of a corpus of classical literary Attic: ἄγω *agō* 'to pass / spend', δέχομαι *dek^{h}omai* 'to receive', δίδωμι *didōmi* 'to give', ἔχω *ek^{h}ō* 'to have', κομίζω *komizō* 'to give / receive', κτάομαι *ktaomai* 'to gain', λαμβάνω *lambanō* 'to take / receive', παρέχω *parek^{h}ō* 'to give', πάσχω *pask^{h}ō* 'to suffer', ποιέομαι *poieomai* 'to do', τίθημι *tit^{h}ēmi* 'to put', τυγχάνω *tugk^{h}anō* 'to get', φέρω *p^{h}erō* 'to bring', χράομαι *k^{h}raomai* 'to use'.[4] The range of support verbs is disputed mainly from the perspective of where to draw the line to verbs of realisation; the debate about the range of predicative nouns focusses on their deverbal form and eventive semantics. Narrow definitions of support-verb constructions only accept deverbal formations in the predicative-noun slot, most prominently nouns in -σις *-sis* in Greek. Wider definitions will include any eventive noun (e.g., Meinschaefer 2016: 393; Huyghe et al. 2017: 11; Grimshaw 1990; Bel et al. 2010: 46). Here, we accept any noun that can be reconceptualised as eventive, for example, *picture* in *to take a picture* refers to the process resulting in the physical object (Radimský 2011) and *heart* in *to take heart* is metaphorically extended (Sheinfux et al. 2019).

Support-verb constructions in which the predicative noun must be reconceptualised as eventive have reduced semantic compositionality but retain full analysability of form (Ledgeway & Vincent 2022: 51). Support-verb constructions, such as ἐξέτασιν ποιέομαι *exetazin poieomai* 'to inspect' in Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.7.1 are fully analysable and compositional. Conversely, structures such as δίκην δίδωμι *dikēn didōmi* 'to pay the price for one's actions' are analysable but no longer fully compositional. Once univerbated (Creissels 2016; Lehmann 2020; Rosén 2020), support-verb constructions lose analysability but can retain compositionality, for example, German *gewährleisten* 'to grant', or lose it, for example, Latin *animadvertere* 'to consider'. We are interested in how degrees of compositionality and analysability relate to the availability of direct objects.

Terminologically, support-verb constructions are a minefield. The term 'light-verb construction', coined by Jespersen (1954: esp. 117–118), has widely been used in language-

[3] These are 'des verbes collocationnels qui ont le comportement syntaxique des V_{supp}, mais qui, à la différence de ceux-ci, sont sémantiquement pleins' (Mel'čuk 2004: 208), for example, French *infliger* (official) or *filer* (colloquial) *une amende* instead of *donner une amende* 'to give a fine'.

[4] This range may need modification in the postclassical period (e.g., Baños & Jiménez López forthcoming).

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contact studies and primarily with reference to the verb 'to do' (Bakker 2003: 132; Myers-Scotton 2002: 134–139; Reintges 2001; Ronan 2012a: 148; Rutherford 2010: 203). Conversely, the term 'Funktionsverbgefüge' (function-verb construction) refers primarily to combinations of a verb and a prepositional phrase, for example, French *mettre en relief* 'to emphasise', but has secondarily been applied to verb-object structures (Kamber 2008; von Polenz 1987; Storrer 2009). Finally, the term 'construction à verbe support' (support-verb construction) has been used to refer primarily to verb-object structures (Gross 1984; Giry-Schneider 1987). The latter term is chosen here.

This article examines direct-object structures with support-verb constructions in Greek documentary papyri. The sources of interest come from fourth- to mid-seventh-century Egypt. By the fourth century, Greek and Egyptian (at this stage called Coptic) had co-existed in Egypt for about a millennium and the latter was gaining ground with, for example, the expansion into nonprivate contexts of use (e.g., Garel & Nowak 2017), the establishment of an alphabetic writing system (e.g., Fendel 2021a), and the use by the increasingly prominent group of Christians (e.g., Houston et al. 2003). Language contact had left traces in the Greek of Egypt by this point. For example, Dahlgren (2017) finds that a distinctive Egyptian accent existed at least from the Roman period[5] onwards and lexical borrowing is widespread (Torallas Tovar 2004).

The article finds that direct-object structures in the data sample have differing explanations. Direct-object patterns are a marginal pattern in classical Greek already, such that some patterns can be explained by inheritance or the extension of a pattern to new contexts. On the contrary, it seems that some writers either idiolectally or sociolectally applied object patterns more widely based on the Coptic parallel. Direct objects, marked by a differential object marker, are a regular pattern with Coptic support-verb constructions (Reintges 2001).

The article falls into four sections after this introductory section. Section 2 reviews the characteristics of object structures in Greek. Section 3 presents three cases studies of direct-object structures with support-verb constructions in the papyri. Section 4 considers the fit of support-verb constructions into Greek lexicon-grammar and their diachronic potential for effecting systemic change. Section 5 summarises the findings and provides conclusions.

2. OBJECT STRUCTURES

Support-verb constructions can have one, two, or three argument slots, i.e. a subject component, an indirect-object component, and a direct-object component. The subject-component appears in the nominative case, the indirect-object component in the dative case, and the semantically speaking direct-object component usually in the form of an objective genitive or a prepositional phrase, yet the latter at times appears in the accusative case.[6] This is relatively rare since the object slot in the c-structure is usually filled by the predicative noun.[7]

Four explanations for accusative objects with support-verb constructions seem possible. First, the support-verb-construction syntagm has lexicalised and lost first internal and

[5] Other traces of a regional variety, in the sense of Adams 'indigenised link language' (Adams 2003: 426), appear (e.g., Worp 2011; Fendel 2019; Fendel 2021b).

[6] We are here only interested in nominal direct objects. Infinitival and clausal objects pose their own problems.

[7] Markantonatou and Samaridi (2017: 210), however, argue with regard to the predicative noun in the object slot of the support verb that 'the syntactic apparatus that has been developed in LFG [sc. Lexical-Functional Grammar] to represent the notion of 'objecthood' in compositional structures has to be expanded to accommodate a new GF [sc. Grammatical Function] that we called FIX' (see also Benedetti 2013a: 22).

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eventually external analysability (and compositionality), such that the object slot became available, for example, Latin *animadvertere* (Rosén 2020) and German *gewährleisten*.[8] Second, the support verb grammaticalized and was reanalysed as a productive auxiliary. This option is contested (Butt 1997; Cinque 2004; Butt & Lahiri 2013), not least because support verbs initially retain part of their argument grid unlike auxiliaries, which do regularly grammaticalize, and their full phonological shape (Vincent & Wheeler 2022), unlike auxiliaries which often show short forms.

Third, the direct-object pattern may be an interference pattern, that is, a pattern current in the contact language Coptic and transferred onto Greek. Coptic does not have case marking in the form of endings, but operates a system of prepositions and particles (Grossman 2018) for this purpose:[9] ⲛⲑⲓ- *nkʲi-* marks postponed subject components, ⲛ-/ⲛⲁ= *n-/na=* indirect objects, and ⲙ-/ⲙⲙⲟ= *m-/mmo=* direct objects (Engsheden 2006; Engsheden 2008; Engsheden 2018).[10] Both for the indirect object in the sense of a goal or beneficiary and for the direct object with verbs of perception, ⲉ-/ⲉⲣⲟ= *e-/ero=* can appear instead. Support-verb constructions seem integrated in this system, in that direct objects with ⲙ-/ⲙⲙⲟ= *m-/mmo=* are available (Reintges 2001; Zakrzewska 2017). With the so-called possessed nouns, object integration by means of suffixation if the object is pronominal is also possible, for example, ⲕ-ϯ-ⲣⲏⲧ-ϥ *k-ti-rēt-f* 2sg-give-name-POSS.3sg 'you are calling him', as it is for simplex verbs outside the imperfective system. Coptic extensively relies on the 'to do' support-verb construction when integrating Greek loan verbs into its syntax. Greek loan verbs when used in support-verb constructions do not differ from native nouns, structurally speaking (Reintges 2001).[11] If the Coptic pattern served as a model, Greek accusative objects would be explicable as pattern replication in the sense of Matras' (2009) pivot-matching.

Fourth, a classical minor use pattern became a major use pattern under the influence of language contact (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 44–62). The marginal classical predecessors are the following (Kühner & Gerth 1894: 322):[12]

(1) Classical direct objects

Dialect	Genre	Passage	Support-verb construction	Meaning	Object in the accusative case
Ionic	Historiography	Herodotus, *Histories* 1.68	θῶμα ποιέομαι *tʰōma poieomai*	'to admire'	τὴν ἐργασίην τοῦ σιδήρου *tēn ergasiēn tou sidērou* 'the manufacture of iron'
Ionic	Historiography	Herodotus, *Histories* 8.74	θῶμα ποιέομαι *tʰōma poieomai*	'to admire'	τὴν Εὐρυβιάδεω ἀβουλίην *tēn Eurubiadeō abouliēn* 'Eurybiades' thoughtlessness'

[8] *Gewährleisten* is not separable (e.g., *#ich leiste Gewähr* but *ich gewährleiste dies*) as opposed to Asraf's (2021: 43) compounds.

[9] Forms are given in the Sahidic dialect for illustration.

[10] Stern-Jernstedt rule: 'the n-marked form is obligatory with the imperfective tenses (present and imperfect) when the object is grammatically definite, and optional, it seems, with all other tenses' (Engsheden 2018: 156).

[11] The form in which the Greek loan verb is adopted is widely debated.

[12] Verbs of realisation behave differently. From Kühner and Gerth's list Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 614 f. is omitted as newer readings of the passage erase the structure in question.

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(continued)

(1) Classical direct objects

Dialect	Genre	Passage	Support-verb construction	Meaning	Object in the accusative case
Ionic	Historiography	Herodotus, *Histories* 1.160	πρόχυσιν ποιέομαι *prok^{h}usin poieomai*	'to sacrifice'	οὐλὰς κριθέων *oulas krit^{h}eōn* 'the barley-corn(s)'
Attic	Historiography	Thucydides, *Histories* 8.41	λείαν ποιέομαι *leian poieomai*	'to plunder'	τὴν χώραν *tēn k^{h}ōran* 'the country'
Attic	Historiography	Thucydides, *Histories* 8.62	ἁρπάγην ποιέομαι *harpagēn poieomai*	'to steal'	καὶ σκεύη μὲν καὶ ἀνδράποδα *kai skeuē men kai andrapoda* 'both resources and slaves'
Attic	Historiography	Thucydides, *Histories* 4.15	σπονδὰς ποιέομαι *spondas poieomai*	'to make a deal'	τὰ περὶ Πύλον *ta peri Pulon* 'the matters regarding Pylos'
Attic	Tragedy	Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 813–817	ψῆφους τίθημι *psēp^{h}ous tit^{h}ēmi*	'to vote (for)'	ἀνδροθνῆτας Ἰλιοφθόρους *androt^{h}nētas Iliop^{h}t^{h}orous* 'the manslaying destroyers of Troy'
Attic	Tragedy	Sophocles, *Oedipus Colonus* 583	λῆστιν ἔχω *lēstin ek^{h}ō*	'to forget'	τὰ δ' ἐν μέσῳ *ta d' en mesō* 'those in the middle'
Attic	Tragedy	Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 996	λώβαν τίθημι *lōban tit^{h}ēmi*	'to dishonour'	μ' *m'* 'me'
Attic	Tragedy	Euripides, *Heracles* 709 f.	σπουδήν ἔχω *spoudēn ek^{h}ō*	'to care (about)'	ἃ *ha* 'that which'
Attic	Tragedy	Euripides, *Orestes* 1069	μόμφην ἔχω *momp^{h}ēn ek^{h}ō*	'to blame'	ἓν *hen* 'one'

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Three aspects emerge from (1): First, the object component mostly refers to an inanimate entity, except in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 813–817 and Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 996.[13] In both, the object component refers to an experiencer or beneficiary rather than a patient. Thus, the support-verb constructions are not prototypically transitive (Lavidas 2009: 6). Out of the 10 patterns in (1), only four have a patient component in the object slot. The others pattern with accusative verbs (Lavidas 2009: 76), many of which show case alternation with the object. Secondly, the object component appears in pronominal form, at the top of the definiteness hierarchy (cf. Farkas 2002), only outside of prose contexts. Thirdly, only support-verb constructions with highly productive support verbs appear and primarily with the verb 'to do' (cf. Marini 2010; Schutzeichel 2014).[14]

3. CASE STUDIES

The three case studies below are selected to illustrate the synchronic and diachronic variability of support-verb constructions (Section 3.1), along with the reinforcing influence of language contact (Section 3.2), and the second-degree impact of bilingualism (Section 3.3). Support-verb constructions can also appear with direct objects due to internal lexicalisation, for example, χρείαν ἔχω *k^{h}reian ek^{h}ō* 'to have need' (Fendel 2024), which is independent of language contact. A comprehensive study of support-verb constructions in postclassical Greek is a desideratum.

3.1. ποιέομαι poieomai-*structures*

Structures with 'to do' are usually variable and do not constrain discontiguity (cf. analysability). They are productive (Finkbeiner 2008) and semantically compositional, such that lexicalisation and subsequent formal changes seem unlikely. Thus, the question arises whether the direct object in these cases is shared between the support verb and the predicative noun, as in the case of the subject (argument sharing), or whether the direct object is part of the argument grid of the noun, as the indirect object is part of the argument grid of the verb.

Lowe (2017: 35), for Vedic, finds that situation-oriented nouns (e.g., *desire for*) and adjectives at times accept a direct object in the accusative, but are not necessarily derived from a verb. Functionally speaking, these nouns pattern with infinitives, including 'the situation noun in *-ti-* in the Rigveda' (Lowe 2017: 297), related to the Greek deverbal derivational suffix -σι *-si*. A logical subject is not expressed, but pragmatically, the subject must be the same as the subject of the clause (Lowe 2017: 298). From there, '[o]nce the noun is interpreted as selecting for a subject, it is a small step to transfer the full argument structure of the corresponding verb to the noun, reinterpreting the POSS[essive] dependent as an OBJ[ect], meaning that it should have accusative case' (Lowe 2017: 298).[15] Lowe (2013: 2) suggests interpreting λείαν ποιέομαι *leian poieomai* in this way, yet notes that 'many of the examples provided in the grammars appear to be closer to compound or phrasal verbal expressions than plain transitive nominals' and that 'a comprehensive analysis of Ancient Greek transitive nominals remains to be undertaken'.

[13] Indirect objects in the dative case appear in Herodotus, *Histories* 1.160 θεῶν οὐδενὶ *t^{h}eōn oudeni* 'to none of the gods' and Euripides, *Orestes* 1069 σοι *soi* 'onto you'; a prepositional phrase appears instead in Thucydides, *Histories* 4.15 πρὸς τοὺς στρατηγοὺς τῶν Ἀθηναίων *pros tous stratēgous tōn At^{h}ēnaiōn* 'with the generals of the Athenians'.

[14] The same preference seems to exist in Latin and Sanskrit, see Sanskrit ***vedam*** *adhyayanaṃ karoti* 'he studies the Veda' (Ittzés 2007: 11) and Latin *ludos facis* ***me*** 'you are deriding me' (Hoffmann 2018: 80).

[15] Bruening (2016) advances a similar analysis for English. He argues against a complex-predicate approach and for the predicative noun as controlling direct objects.

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Of the examples in (1) above, five come from tragedy, all with the verbs ἔχω *ek^{h}ō* 'to have' and τίθημι *tit^{h}ēmi* 'to put'. The former is a productive stative pattern in support-verb constructions into the classical period and beyond; the latter seems an older pattern (Bakker 2020: 73; Schutzeichel 2014: 136–138)[16], which was supplanted by ποιέομαι *poieomai* in classical times.[17] We focus on the five passages from non-poetic contexts (historiography). If the accusative is limited to the support-verb construction, this would point to a shared object; if it appears also outside of it, this would point to a transitive noun. Table (2) puts the five nouns of interest to the test:

(2) Contexts of predicative nouns

Lemma	Total of attestations in the relevant corpus[18]	Genitive outside of support-verb construction	Accusative outside of support-verb construction	Genitive in support-verb construction (support verb provided in brackets)	Accusative in support-verb construction (except listed in (1))
λεία *leia*	26	Dem. 18.72		Thuc. 6.95.1 (λαμβάνω *lambanō*)	
ἁρπαγή *harpagē*	18	Isoc. 4.114.3;			
σπονδαί *spondai* (plural only)[19]	226	Thuc. 3.68.1; Thuc. 5.30.3; Thuc. 5.40.2; Thuc. 8.43.3; Thuc. 8.52.1		Thuc. 1.35.1 (λύω *luō*); Thuc. 5.30.1 (δέχομαι *dek^{h}omai*); Thuc. 5.40.3 (δέχομαι *dek^{h}omai*); Xen. Hell. 4.7.2 (δέχομαι *dek^{h}omai*)	
θαῦμα *t^{h}auma*	37	Hdt 1.194.1;		Hdt 2.155.1 (παρέχω *parek^{h}ō*); Hdt. 7.99.3 (ποιέομαι *poieomai*); Hdt. 9.58.14 (ποιέομαι *poieomai*)	Hdt. 9.58.14 (ποιέομαι *poieomai*)
πρόχυσις *prok^{h}usis*	3	Hdt 2.51.11			

Table (2) shows that the accusative case is linked to the support-verb-construction context, whereas the objective genitive is preferred outside of it. Thus, the accusative seems to constitute a direct object of the support-verb construction rather than the predicative noun.

[16] Schutzeichel (2014: 137) concludes: '[i]n Anbetracht der kumulativen Evidenz sind die griechischen Wörter auf -θετέω synchron nur auf der Basis einer Annahme ehemaliger F[unktions]V[erb]G[efüge] erklärbar' and '[d]ie Textstellen deuten wiederum in eine fachlich spezialisierte Bedeutungssphäre, nämlich das Opfer'.

[17] Note Hesychius, *Lexicon*, 640 νομοθετεῖ *nomot^{h}etei*· νομοποιεῖ *nomopoiei*.

[18] For Attic, the corpus searched was: Thucydides, *Histories* (Thuc.); Xenophon, *Anabasis*, *Memorabilia*, *Hellenica* (Xen.); Antiphon, Speeches 1–6; Isocrates, Speeches 1–6 and 13 (Isoc.); Isaeus, Speeches 1–8; Lysias, Speeches 1, 3, 7, 12, 14, 19, 22, 30–32; Demosthenes, Speeches 1–4, 6, 9, 18 (Dem.); Plato, *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic* (Pl.); Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, *Politics* (Arist.). For Ionic, the corpus searched was: Herodotus, *Histories* (Hdt.).

[19] Participial, adjectival, and attributive modifications in the form of determiner phrases and prepositional phrases seem numerically prevalent.

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Given the classical predecessors of the pattern, we cannot pin its appearance on the parallel Coptic pattern with the verb 'to do'.

Lexicalisation of an established collocate seems synchronically difficult to uphold since ποιέομαι *poieomai* 'to do' support-verb constructions productively enter into a wide range of structures (high component compatibility) and show high degrees of variability (e.g., modification by means of determiner phrases, pluralisation, and attributive phrases) and discontiguity of components (without constraints placed onto the permissible items) (Fendel 2024). Univerbation patterns, including classical λογοποιέομαι *logopoieomai* and later μαρτυροποιέομαι *marturopoieomai*, may thus be surprising. Nominalisation patterns, such as Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.7.1–2 ἐξέτασιν ποιέομαι *exetasin poieomai* 'to inspect' followed by μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐξέτασιν *meta de tēn exetasin* 'after the inspection', show that the predicative noun is the semantic head of the structure, unlike in noun incorporation patterns (Asraf 2021 with further references): 'Cross-linguistically, the incorporated noun can stand in various semantic relations to its verbal head: it can constitute the semantic instrument, location, or goal of the verb—syntactic adjuncts—but most commonly it functions as the semantic patient —the syntactic object, an argument of the verb' (Asraf 2021: 53). Conversely, predicative nouns are never patients, but always themes (Næss 2007: chap. 5).

Alternatively, we could assume that ποιέομαι *poieomai* univerbated in some common support-verb constructions (e.g., λογοποιέομαι *logopoieomai* 'to speak') and over time the former support verb was reanalysed as a suffix. The process might be similar to the one described for Latin *mente* 'mind' becoming the modern Romance adverb ending (Booij 2014). The 'to do' support-verb construction seems to undergo this development in Latin (Marini 2018) and Romance (Rainer & Buridant 2015: 1980; Rosén 2020: 266–267), however, without ever ousting the analytic pattern (e.g., Giry-Schneider 1987; Galdi 2018). This hypothesis, given the intermediate step of univerbation and reanalysis in the univerbate, would take away the difficulty that support verbs usually do not partake in prototypical grammaticalisation processes, unlike auxiliaries. The hypothesis would also explain the situation of what seem like synchronically variable and discontinuous structures lending themselves to a pattern that frees up the object slot (Asraf 2021: 56ff.).[20] Finally, the hypothesis would explain the spread of the pattern in later centuries (e.g., μαρτυροποιέομαι *marturopoieomai* 'to witness' (papyri), δυναμοποιέομαι *dunamopoieomai* 'to be able' (from 5th c. AD onwards), πραγματοποιέομαι *pragmatopoieomai* 'to realise' (from 12th c. AD), ἐργοποιέω *ergopoieō* 'to work' (hapax, Joannes Cyparissiotes, 14th c. AD), τροποποιέω *tropopoieō* 'to modify' (from 16th c. AD)). By this point, the newly created suffix moves closer to the derivational morphology.[21]

3.2. ἐξουσίαν ἔχω exousian ek^{h}ō *(290 passages)*

ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ek^{h}ō* 'to have power' appears twice with a direct object in the papyri. Both instances date from the early Byzantine period. Both come from the lower registers:[22]

[20] Asraf explains direct objects with univerbated support-verb constructions, such as νομοθετέω *nomot^{h}etēō*, as near adverbial due to their being neuter. Structures such as Isocrates, Speech 11.26 ἃ σέβεσθαι καὶ τιμᾶν ἐνομοθέτησεν *ha sebest^{h}ai kai timan enomot^{h}etēsen* 'what he degreed by law to order and honour' (with an infinitival object) and Isocrates, Speech 7.16 ἐκείνην τὴν δημοκρατίαν … ἣν Σόλων μὲν … ἐνομοθέτησε *ekeinēn tēn dēmokratian … hēn Solōn men … enomot^{h}etēse* 'this democracy which Solon decreed by law' contradict this analysis. Rather, the univerbate is transitive.

[21] Compounding is a productive process of the derivational morphology, unlike the univerbation of support-verb constructions (Lehmann 2020).

[22] Debt statements might rather be a medium register but for the sake of a clear dividing line, we include it into the lower registers here. Stud.Pal.3(2).1.59 is written in letter form which supports this decision (see also Palme 2009: 361–363).

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(3) P.Cair.Masp.1.67066, l. 6 (Aphrodites Kome, AD 501–600, letter)

εἰ ο(ὖ)ν οι̣ . . . .[23] οὐκ̣ **ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν τὰ γῆδια αὐτῶν**, μανθάνετε πλέον
ei o(u)n oi…. ouk exousian ek^{h}ousin
if thus not power.ACC.SG have.PR.IND.ACT.3pl
ta gēdia autōn mant^{h}anete pleon
the.ACC.PL field.ACC.PL they.GEN.PL know.PR.IMP.ACT.2pl very
'Be well aware that the … do not have power over their fields.'

(4) Stud.Pal.3(2)0.1.59, l. 6 (Herakleopolis, AD 601–700, debt)

εἰ δὲ μὴ καὶ [νῦν ἀποδώσω] τὰ αὐτὰ ἑπτὰ ὁλοκότινα ἀρσατικὰ[24] ἐν τῇ αὐτ(ῇ)
προθεσμίᾳ, **ἐξουσίαν ἔχεις τὰ ἐνέχυρα** ἀπὸ τ̣ο̣ῦ̣ [νῦν ἐπὶ τὸ]ν ἑξῆς ἅπαντα χρόνον καὶ
οὐδένα λόγ(ον) ἔχω πρὸς <σ > σ́.
ei de mē kai [nun apodōsō ta
if yet not also now pay.FUT.IND.ACT.1sg the.ACC.PL
auta hepta holokotina arsatika en
same.ACC.PL seven olokottinoi.ACC.PL arsatikos.ACC.PL on
tē autē prot^{h}esmia exousian
the.DAT.SG same.DAT.SG date.DAT.SG power.ACC.SG
ek^{h}eis ta enek^{h}ura apo
have.PR.IND.ACT.2sg the.ACC.PL pledge.ACC.PL from
tou [nun [epi to]n exēs apanta k^{h}ronon
the.GEN.SG [now to the].ACC.SG next all.ACC.SG time.ACC.SG
kai oudena logon ek^{h}ō pros
and no.ACC.SG word.ACC.SG have.PR.IND.ACT.1sg towards
<s> e
<y >ou.ACC.SG
'If not and if I transfer now the same 7 *olokotinoi arsatika* on the agreed date, you will have power over the pledge from now on for the foreseeable future and I do not object to you'.

In contracts, ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ek^{h}ō* is regularly coordinated with κυριεύω *kurieuō*, which in classical times takes a genitive but in postclassical times appears with the accusative in literary and documentary texts (LSJ s.v. κυριεύω *kurieuō*), κρατέω *krateō*, which allows for an accusative already in classical times, and δεσπόζω *despozō*, which occasionally allows for an accusative already in classical literature (LSJ s.v. δεσπόζω *despozō* 3).[25] However, in (3) and (4), no co-ordinated transitive verb appears, such that the accusative object is to be taken with the support-verb construction.

[23] An editorial suggestion for the gap is ο[ι]κ[ονομεῖν] *o[i]k[onomein]*. While there seems to be enough space, no traces of letters are visible: http://bipab.aphrodito.info/images/grandes_images/P_Cair_Masp_I_67066_r_.jpg (last accessed 06 Mar 2023). The parallel with (4) makes the reconstruction unnecessary.

[24] *Arsatikos* is a numismatic measure (Tost 2014). It also appears in, for example, BGU.1.314 (Herakleopolis, AD 630, contract).

[25] E.g. SB 1.4370 (contract). Outliers are δεσποτεύω *despoteuō* in CPR 7.47 (contract) and ἐπικρατέω *epikrateō* in P. Kell. 1.38dupl (contract).

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ἐξουσίαν *exousian* was searched in the *Duke Database of Documentary Papyri* (February 2023) and returned 272 hits. This is the number of documents showing the item. The token count is 290. Table (5) lays out the contexts of use of ἐξουσίαν *exousian* by period of time:

(5) ἐξουσίαν *exousian* (290 instances in total)

	ἔχω *ekʰō*	δίδωμι *didōmi*	κτάομαι *ktaomai*	λαμβάνω *lambanō*	VRel	Not SVC	Lost
PG	10 (L = 1)	1	ø	ø	1	4	2
RG	127 (L = 9)	13 (L = 3, GEN, GEN / DAT, lost)	1	1	2 (L = 2)	17	18
RG / EBG	5	ø	ø	ø	ø	1	1
EBG[26]	48 (L = 7)	3	ø	ø	3	22	10
Total	190	17	1	1	6	44	31

*PG = 300–0 BC; RG = AD 0–400; EBG = AD 400–650; L = lower register (letters); H = higher register (contracts, sales, etc.); VRel = Verb of realisation; SVC = support-verb construction.

Table (5) shows that ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ekʰō* appears primarily in higher-register contracts, agreements, sales, and wills; the number of lower-register instances is provided in brackets. Furthermore, table (5) shows that ἔχω *ekʰō* is the preferred support verb in the papyri. However, the number of instances is boosted by its appearance in two fixed expressions. (6a) appears in agreements, sales, and contracts; (6b) appears in wills:

(6a) ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν διοικεῖν / χρᾶσθαι καὶ οἰκονομεῖν
exousian ekʰein dioikein / kʰrastʰai kai oikonomein
'to have the power to farm/use and to manage'

(6b) ἐφ' ὃν μὲν περίειμι χρόνον ἔχειν με τὴν τῶν ἰδίων ἐξουσίαν ὃ ἐὰν βούλωμαι ἐπιτελεῖν καὶ μεταδιατίθεσθαι
epʰ' hon men perieimi kʰronon ekʰein me tēn tōn idiōn exousian ho ean boulōmai epitelein kai metadiatitʰestʰai
'for whom I am around now, such that I have the power over the personal belongings, whatever I want, to enforce and arrange'

Thus, (3) and (4) above feature the preferred support verb with ἐξουσίαν *exousian*, yet appear in an uncommon context, the more informal register. Table (7) lays out differences in object patterns with ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ekʰō* by register and period of time:

(7) Object patterns

	Register	ἔχω *ekʰō*	Object patterns
PG	H	9	INF 7, GEN 1, Lost 1
	L	1	none 1
RG	H	118 + 5	INF 105, ArtINF 1, GEN 4, PP 3, ø 2, Lost 3
	L	9	GEN 6, INF 2, ø 1

[26] The date range spans the Roman and early Byzantine periods.

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(continued)

(7) Object patterns

	Register	ἔχω *ek^{h}ō*	Object patterns
RG / EBG	H	5	INF 4, Lost 1
EBG	H	41	INF 30, GEN 4, PP 1, clause 1, Lost 5
	L	7	ACC 2, GEN 1, clause 1, INF 1, Lost 2
Total		190	

*PG = 300–0 BC; RG = AD 0–400; EBG = AD 400–650; L = lower register (letters); H = higher register (contracts, sales, etc.).
*INF = infinitive, ArtINF = articular infinitive, GEN = genitive, PP = prepositional phrase, ACC = accusative.

Table (7) shows that infinitival objects, while outnumbering other patterns, possibly not least due to their appearance in the aforementioned fixed expressions, are largely confined to the higher registers. While a Coptic parallel exists, (8), the pattern also appears once in classical literature already, (9):

(8) Mk 1:45 ⲛ-ϥ-ⲧⲙ-ⲃⲙ-ⲃⲟⲙ ⲉ-ⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉ-ⲧ-ⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲛ-ⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ
n-f-tm-k^{j}m-k^{j}om *e-bōk* *ehoun* *e-t-polis* *n-ouōnh*
CONJ-3sg-not-find-power to-go into to-the-city openly
'and he could no longer go into the city openly' (Layton 2011: 314)

(9) Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.6.24 ἵνα ἐξουσίαν ἔχωσι χρήματά τε κλέπτειν καὶ ἀνθρώπους βιάζεσθαι καὶ ἡδυπαθεῖν
hina *exousian* *ek^{h}ōsi* *k^{h}rēmata*
such.that power.ACC.SG have.PR.SBJ.ACT.3pl goods.ACC.PL
te *kleptein* *kai* *ant^{h}rōpous* *biazest^{h}ai* *kai*
and steal.PR.INF.ACT and people.ACC.PL force.PR.INF.ACT and
hēdupat^{h}ein
enjoy.oneself.PR.INF.ACT
'such that they have power to steal the goods, force the population, and enjoy themselves'

Genitival objects appear across registers. Accusative objects do not appear before the early Byzantine period and then only with ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ek^{h}ō* rather than any other member of the support-verb-construction family around ἐξουσίαν *exousian*.

Three aspects indicate that the direct objects with ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ek^{h}ō* are a diachronic development rather than a contact-induced pattern. (1) The support-verb construction is largely continuous and invariable (with regard to attributive and determiner phrases with the predicative noun). It seems to tend towards a word rather than a syntagm. (2) Infinitival objects are permissible in classical times already alongside genitive objects. The extension to the accusative may mirror the changes to the internal structure of the support-verb construction in its formal pattern. (3) Nominal objects seem to prevail in the lower registers, such that the change from a genitive to an accusative starting in the lower register would constitute a regular bottom-up change. However, note that this is a marginal pattern throughout.

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3.3. ἐγγύην λαμβάνω egguēn lambanō *(41 passages)*

ἐγγύην λαμβάνω *egguēn lambanō* 'to give a surety (for)' appears twice in the papyri, once with an accusative object and once without an object (i.e. intransitively):

(10) P. Lond. 6.1916, ll. 39–43 (Herakleopolites, AD 330–340, letter/surety)
εἴ τι ἐ[ὰν δυνήσατε συνλέξαι(?)] παρὰ τοῖς γιτονοις ἀδελφοῖς [ ]ρ ᾳ̣[ἀσφ]αλὴν καὶ σφράγιζον αὐτὴν [ ]ν̣ǫσ̣τ̣ λ̣ [ ][27] αὐτοῦ ἐγ'γύην **αὐτὸν** ἔλαβα παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν **πε̣ντ̣ακοσίω(ν) ταλάντων κεφάλεον καὶ τόκον**, (ταλάντων) ϙ.
ei ti e[an dunēsate sunlexai]
if somewhat PRT can.AOR.SBJ.ACT.2pl collect.AOR.INF.ACT
para tois gitonois adelp^{h}ois [] r. a [… asp^{h}]alēn
with the.DAT.PL neighbour.DAT.PL brother.DAT.PL receipt.ACC.SG
kai sp^{h}ragizon autēn [] nost. l.. [] autou
and seal.AOR.IMP.ACT.2sg it.ACC.SG he.GEN.SG
eg'guēn auton elaba para
surety.ACC.SG he.ACC.SG take.AOR.IND.ACT.1sg with
tōn stratiōtōn pentkosiō(n) talantōn
the.GEN.PL soldier.GEN.PL 500.GEN.PL talent.GEN.PL
kep^{h}aleon kai tokon, (talantōn) ō.
sum.ACC.SG and interest.ACC.SG talent.GEN.PL 800
'If you can collect (money) among the neighbouring brothers in any way, … (write?) a receipt (?) and seal it … (for?) I have taken out a surety for him with the soldiers, an amount of 500 talents plus interest, 800 talents (in total).'

(11) P. Flor. 1.8, ll. 3–9 (Hermopolites, AD 136–139, surety)
ὁμολογῶ ἑκουσίως παρειληφ[έ]ναι καὶ **[ἐγγεγ]υῆσθαι Μένανδρον** (…) **τὰ κατ' ᾳ̣[ὐ]τ̣ὸν** ἐμοῦ σε παριστάντ[ος] **ὡς [editorial suggestion: σοι] λήμψομαι τὴν ἐνγύην**.
homologō hekousiōs pareilēp^{h}[e]nai kai
agree.PR.IND.ACT.1sg voluntarily take.PRF.INF.A and
[eggeg]uēst^{h}ai Menandron (…) ta kat'
give.surety.AOR.INF.ACT Menandros.ACC.SG the.ACC.PL regarding
a[u]ton emou se paristant[os]
he.ACC.SG I.GEN.SG you.ACC.SG stand.by.PR.PTC.ACT.GEN.SG
hōs [editorial suggestion: soi] lēpsomai
such.that you.DAT.SG take.FUT.IND.ACT.1sg
tēn egguēn

[27] An anonymous reviewer queried whether the seeming genitive singular αὐτοῦ *autou* appears for an intended genitive plural (αὐτῶν *autōn)* referring to what is covered by the surety, that is, syntactically a subjective genitive cataphorically referring to 'an amount of 500 talents plus interest, 800 talents (in total)', or for an intended dative *(αὐτῳ autō)*. While interchange between *o o* and *ω ō* appears, for example, in ll. 8 and 10, of the letter, the writer seems to distinguish the dative and genitive cases of the pronoun *αὐτός autos* consciously, for example, l. 17. While in the edition accentuated as a genitive singular, αὐτοῦ *autou* is left untranslated here as due to the preceding gap, it is unclear whether it is either (i) part of a longer word the first half of which is lost in the gap, or (ii) a pronoun dependent on a preposition lost in the preceding gap. Even if we read αὐτοῦ *autou* (or αὐτῶν *autōn*) as a subjective genitive, this does not impact the interpretation of *αὐτόν auton:* to take out a surety [(in the amount) of X]$^{\text{subjective genitive}}$ [for Y]$^{\text{accusative}}$. A second anonymous reviewer queried whether it would be preferable to retain the original editor's translation 'I have taken him on bail from the soldiers', which would syntactically translate to λαμβάνω *lambanō* as a full lexical verb, αὐτόν *auton* as its direct object, and ἐγγύην *eg'guēn* as a predicative element, thus equating 'him' with 'bail / surety'. This reading would refocus attention away from the event of 'surety-ing' and onto the event of 'taking (away)'. Yet, especially the specification of the amount of the surety at the end of the sentence seems to indicate otherwise, namely that the focus is on the event of 'surety-ing' rather than 'taking (away)'. If we assume that αὐτοῦ *autou* is the rest of the preceding clause, then *ἐγγύην eg'guēn* would even appear in focus position (Dik 1995: 241) further underscoring the interpretation as a support-verb construction suggested.

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the.ACC.SG surety.ACC.SG
'I agree voluntarily to take and give a surety for Menandros (…) for his things – while I stand by you – I will take out a surety with you (?)'.

In (11), the etymologically related simplex verb ἐγγυάομαι *egguaomai* is used with an accusative object and the support-verb construction intransitively.

ἐγγύην *egguēn* was searched in the *Duke Database of Documentary Papyri* (February 2023) and returned 34 hits. This is the number of documents containing the item. The token count is 41. Table (12) lays out the contexts of use with ἐγγύην *egguēn* by period of time:

(12) ἐγγύην *egguēn* (41 instances in total)

	ποιέομαι *poieomai*	δέχομαι *dek^{h}omai*	λαμβάνω *lambanō*	ἔχω *ek^{h}ō*	παρέχω *parek^{h}ō*	δίδωμι *didōmi*	φέρω *p^{h}erō*	VRel	fig ety	Not / lost
PG	ø	ø	ø	1 (L)	ø	ø	1 (H)	2 (L)	5 (H)	5
RG	ø	ø	2 (H, L)	ø	2 (L)	1 (L)	ø	ø	ø	4
EBG	10 (all H)	1 (L)	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	1 (H)	ø	6
Total	10	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	5	15

*PG = 300–0 BC; RG = AD 0–400; EBG = AD 400–650; L = lower register (letters); H = higher register (contracts, sales, etc.); VRel = Verb of realisation; fig ety = figura etymologica.

Table (12) shows that while the range of support verbs with ἐγγύην *egguēn* is wider than that with ἐξουσίαν *exousian* (Section 3.1), most types appear only once or twice. The only clusters are ἐγγύην ποιέομαι *egguēn poieomai*, in the early Byzantine period, and the *figura etymologica* ἐγγύην ἐγγυάομαι *egguēn egguaomai*, in the Ptolemaic period. ἐγγύην λαμβάνω *egguēn lambanō* does not seem to be an established type.

Unlike the support-verb construction, the etymologically related simplex verb ἐγγυάομαι *egguaomai* appears with an accusative object referring to the beneficiary of someone giving a surety in classical literature and in the papyri, see (13) to (15):

(13) Demosthenes, *Contra Apatourium*, 28
ἠγγυησάμην ἐγὼ τούτῳ τὸν Παρμένοντα (…) *ēgguēsamēn egō toutō ton Parmenonta*
'I gave a surety for Parmeno to this man (…)'

(14) Apf.61.338_10, ll. 3–4 (unknown, 301–500, deed of surety)
ἐγγυώμεθα τοὺς προκιμένους στολάρχας *egguōmet^{h}a tous prokimenous stolark^{h}as*
'we give a surety for these aforementioned fleet-commanders'

(15) P.Cair.Masp. 1.67094, ll. 19–21 (Aphrodites Kome, AD 553–554, deed)
ἐγ̣γ̣[υῶμαι] τ̣[ὸ]ν [προκ(είμενον) Ἐνὼχ *egg[uōmai] t[o]n [prok(eimenon) Enōk^h*
'I am giving a surety for the aforementioned Enoch'

Thus, confusion between the patterns of the simplex verb and the support-verb construction would be a feasible explanation for (10) above. Furthermore, P.Lond.6.1916 is a desperate plea addressed to the abbot Apa Paieous. The writer asks for help on behalf of Pamounthios (l. 10) whose children were enslaved due to financial difficulties (ll. 17–18). The letter shows several instances of deviation from the expected standard in syntax and phraseology (Fendel 2022: chap. 10). The editors (Bell & Crum 1924: 72–80) suspect the letter to be written by Herieous, who also wrote P. Lond.6.1915, which shows a switch into Coptic on the verso

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(ll. 38–39). Given these contextual factors together with the fact that the accusative object in (10) is a one-off in the papyri in an unestablished type of the support-verb-construction family surrounding ἐγγύην *egguēn*, it seems that a bilingual writer confused the simplex-verb and support-verb-construction patterns, something that happens between two simplex verbs of similar semantics too (Fendel 2022: chap. 5).

4. A MIXED BAG

Support-verb constructions can have a systemic influence diachronically due to their univerbating (cf. Section 3.1), their often unaccusative f-structure (cf. Section 3.2), and their co-existence with simplex verbs (cf. Section 3.3). Below, three scenarios are discussed and compared with the situation in classical and postclassical Greek. It appears that support-verb constructions in Greek are an inherited, established pattern in the language system (e.g., Jiménez López 2016; Schutzeichel 2014) rather than a mechanism to integrate loans in a contact situation (Reintges 2001; Ronan 2012b; Montaut 2016). This explains their alignment with nonsupport-verb-construction verb phrases.

Support-verb constructions, diachronically, show a 'tendency toward fusion of the two elements' (Creissels 2016: 51–52), such that patient-marked components are eliminated from the structure, e.g. *I suggested a meeting* vs *I have made the suggestion of a meeting* where the former patient-marked object is relegated to a prepositional phrase.[28] While '[i]n languages with obligatory A[gent] coding, the constructions resulting from this evolution are perfectly canonical', for example, in Greek (an accusative language), 'in languages with obligatory P [atient] coding, the same process results in a violation of the Obligatory Coding Principle', primarily in ergative aligned languages, unlike Greek (Creissels 2016: 51–52). Furthermore, coding the object of a support-verb construction in the genitive case in Greek is not an outlier in the system since nonaccusative direct objects exist (Riaño Rufilanchas 2014). The genitive case appears, for example, with verbs of ruling over or participating in; a dative case appears with verbs of utilising (Luraghi 2010: 63–67; Asraf 2022: 15). These case requirements are encoded in the valency of the verb except if an alternation is productive (cf. ἀκούω *akouō* + accusative 'to hear' vs + genitive 'to listen to'). Only in the latter case, they align with symmetric differential object marking, as shown in (16):

(16) Symmetric object marking, Finnish (Bekins 2014: 60)
  a. *ost-in omen-**at*** buy-IMPF.ACT.1sg apple-ACC.PL 'I bought (the) apples.'
  b. *ost-in omen-**oita*** buy-IMPF.ACT.1sg apple–PART.PL 'I bought (some) apples.'

In (16.a), an accusative case appears, in (16.b), a partitive. Some productive alternations in Greek are levelled in the postclassical period (Fendel 2022: chap. 4 §33 with further references).[29]

Support-verb constructions with *hai* 'to be' (present), and *hu-* 'to be' (perfective) in ergative-aligned Hindi reflect a shift from syntactically driven to semantically driven alignment (Montaut 2016: 165).[30] In the stative support-verb construction, a dative-marked experiencer replaces a nominative-marked agent, which would appear in the subject slot of the active support-verb construction with *kar* 'to do' (Montaut 2016: 162). However, this experiencer-

[28] Basque and the Andic languages Creissels investigates are SOV languages.

[29] The 'accusative case can be the result of a change in the syntax of the verb (which in earlier periods took D [eterminer]P[hrase]s in the genitive or dative case as direct objects)' (Lavidas 2009: 76).

[30] Opinions differ about whether copular 'to be' as a support verb (e.g., Gross 1998: esp. 27–30; Kamber 2008). See also Jiménez López (2021) who considers γίγνομαι *gignomai* + nominative the passive alternant of ποιέομαι *poieomai* + accusative. The copular verb differs syntactically from transitive and intransitive verbs, in that it requires a predicative element in the same case as its subject.

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subject in the dative case is limited to support-verb constructions and does not extend beyond this clearly defined context (Montaut 2016: 163). Greek does not reflect this situation with support-verb constructions, in that the subject is always marked in the nominative case notwithstanding whether it refers to an agent or experiencer.[31]

The inherited pattern of vowel/consonant alternation to form the causative, active, and middle/passive is no longer productive in Hindi (Montaut 2016: 154–155), such that support-verb constructions fill 'the "empty" slots existing in the defective morphology of simple verbs' (Montaut 2016: 156). This would suggest them functioning as suppletive periphrases (Haspelmath 2000: 655).[32] Conversely, Greek has an intact and productive middle voice (Inglese et al. 2021). Furthermore, verbs can be labile, that is, there can be 'morphologically unmarked transitivity alternations' (Gianollo 2014: 946 with further references), for example, σιωπάω *siōpaō* 'to be silent/not to reveal' (Lavidas 2009: 68–69). While the middle voice seems to be retreating in the postclassical period (Fendel 2022: chap. 4 §25 with further references), lability seems to expand (Lavidas 2009: 95 and 113). The hypothesis of support-verb constructions (with ποιέομαι *poieomai* 'to do') supplying an antipassive, that is, the deletion of the patient without demotion of the agent, to the paradigm has been advanced by Marini (2010).[33] Unlike in Hindi, this would qualify as categorial periphrasis, that is, 'a multi-word combination expresses some additional semantic distinction' (Haspelmath 2000: 655).

Support-verb constructions in Coptic largely rely on one of two subsystems of transitivity. One 'is based on aspect (telicity) and referential properties of the arguments (head marking vs. *n-*/*mmo=*), the other one on their agentivity vis-à-vis affectedness (*n-*/*mmo=* vs. *e-*/*ero=* vs. *n-na=* etc.)' (Zakrzewska 2017: 165).[34] The first subsystem reflects the Stern-Jernstedt rule[35] with all verbs in Coptic. This is a system of asymmetric differential object marking, comparable to the situation in Spanish shown in (17) and different from the situation in Finnish shown in (16) above:

(17) Asymmetric object marking, Spanish (Bekins 2014: 4–5)[36]
a. *Mari vió a una mujer* Mari see.PRET.3sg DOM a-SG woman.SG
b. *Mari vió una mujer* Mari see.PRET.3sg a-SG woman.SG
'Mari saw a woman.'

The second subsystem explains the different object marking with, for example, ⲛⲁⲩ *nau* 'to see' (with ⲉ-/ⲉⲣⲟ= *e-*/*ero=*) as opposed to, for example, ⲛⲟⲩϫⲉ *noud*ʲ*e* 'to throw' (with ⲛ-/ⲙⲙⲟ= *n-*/*mmo=*) (Layton 2011: paras. 166–172; Reintges 2004: 217–231; Müller 2021: chap. 4.7 and 7.2). It aligns with symmetric differential object marking, as shown above. Support-verb constructions largely conform to the second system (e.g. ϯ-ⲟⲥⲉ ⲛ-/ⲙⲙⲟ= *ti-ose n-*/*mmo=* give-loss DOM 'to lose (something)'), yet there are some remnants of old possessed nouns that allow for 'head marking' when the object is pronominal (e.g. ⲕ-ϯ-ⲣⲛⲧ-ϥ *k-ti-rēt-f* 2sg-give-name-POSS.3sg 'you are calling him').

Support-verb constructions in Greek allow for either internal agreement, i.e. an objective genitive, or external agreement, that is, an accusative or a prepositional phrase (cf.

[31] Yet 'a number of verbs that have an experiencer subject and a stimulus object never occur in the passive' (Luraghi 2010: 69). Non-canonical subjects are observed with δοκέω *dokeō* 'to seem' (Benedetti & Gianollo 2020) but do not appear in support-verb constructions (Benedetti 2013b: 126).

[32] Distinguishing between suppletive and categorial periphrasis is often difficult (e.g. Popescu 2018).

[33] However, 'active voice is not related to the presence of the accusative case but to the presence of the agent as subject (in the nominative case) of the structure' (Lavidas 2009: 94).

[34] 'Roegiest (2007) identifies two such subsystems in two different Romance languages, Rumanian (referentiality-based subsystem) and Spanish (agentivity-based subsystem)' (Zakrzewska 2017: 235).

[35] Stern-Jernstedt rule: 'the n-marked form is obligatory with the imperfective tenses (present and imperfect) when the object is grammatically definite, and optional, it seems, with all other tenses' (Engsheden 2018: 156).

[36] The permissibility of object marking in Spanish is triggered by animacy (Bekins 2014: 5).

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Montaut 2016: 149; Hoffmann 2023: 50). However, unlike in Coptic, the distinction between the genitive and the accusative cases does not seem to be related to the properties of the object, cf. for example, the range of objects in terms of animacy and referentiality cited in Section 2 from classical literature, but to the internal structure of the support-verb constructions, that is, tending towards a syntagm or a word. When a support-verb construction allows for both an accusative and a genitive or prepositional phrase in the object slot, the latter options are numerically predominant. This may be related to the reduced transitivity of the support-verb construction vis-à-vis a transitive verb, for example, out of the structures cited in Section 2, only πρόχυσιν ποιέομαι *prok^{h}usin poieomai* 'to sacrifice', λείαν ποιέομαι *leian poieomai* 'to plunder', ἁρπάγην ποιέομαι *harpagēn poieomai* 'to steal', and λώβαν τίθημι *lōban tit^{h}ēmi* 'to dishonour' take patient-objects. Equally, the object with ἐγγύην λαμβάνω *egguēn lambanō* 'to take out a surety' is a beneficiary; the object with ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ek^{h}ō* is a patient. Lysias contrasts the support-verb construction and the semantically related simplex verb:

(18) Lysias 30.23–24 οὐχ ὅταν τοὺς ἀδυνάτους εἰπεῖν **κολάζητε**, ἀλλ' ὅταν παρὰ τῶν δυναμένων λέγειν **δίκην λαμβάνητε**
*ouk^{h} hotan tous adunatous eipein **kolazēte**, all' hotan para tōn dunamenōn legein **dikēn lambanēte***
'not when you **punish** *those who cannot speak/defend themselves*, but when you **collect punishment** from *those who are able to speak/defend themselves*'

The transitive verb κολάζω *kolazō* takes an accusative object referring to a patient. The patient is qualified as being unable to prevent the event. The support-verb construction δίκην λαμβάνω *dikēn lambanō* takes a prepositional object with παρά *para* + genitive referring to people who are affected by the event but are able to influence the outcome. The lower degree of affectedness of the object is encoded in the support-verb construction and its object pattern vis-à-vis the simplex verb.[37]

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

While support-verb constructions fill two slots in the c-structure, they fit into one slot in the f-structure (Section 1). The support verb and the predicative noun participate in argument sharing of the subject and the direct-object components, if the direct object is in the accusative case. However, accusative objects remain a minor use pattern from classical into post-classical times. Objective genitives, with the predicative noun, or prepositional phrases, with the support-verb constructions, prevail (Section 2).

From a synchronic perspective, the support-verb-construction families around ἐξουσίαν *exousian* and ἐγγύην *egguēn* in the documentary papyri illustrate the variability of the pattern, for example, ἐξουσίαν ἔχω *exousian ek^{h}ō* and ἐγγύην ποιέομαι *egguēn poieomai* are largely limited to the higher registers unlike other members of the support-verb-construction family (e.g., Özbay 2020 *make a comment* vs *make a contribution*; Fendel 2024). Apart from sociolectal variation, support-verb constructions in the papyri show dialectal variation (e.g.,

[37] An anonymous reviewer suggested viewing the contrast between the simplex verb and the support-verb constructions rather as one between simple punishment and using the law. Yet, this interpretation aligns with the interpretation along the lines of affectedness suggested here. Suppose that simple punishment is the act of punishing someone without giving them the chance of defending themselves, i.e. using their rights within the legal framework, whereas punishment using the law (in the sense of 'exacting justice') means that the person to suffer the punishment is given the opportunity of a defence within the framework of the law. In the former case, the defendant will suffer punishment without any mediation; in the latter case, it is likely that the severity of the punishment and thus the impact on the one to be punished is mediated by the framework of the law (and the defendant's defence).

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Leech 2009 *to take / to have a shower*; Fendel 2021b) and idiolectal variation (Section 3.3). Accusative objects, however, remain a minor use pattern, which does not seem to become a major use pattern under the influence of language contact (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 44–62). Language-contact patterns, such as ἐγγύην λαμβάνω *egguēn lambanō* + accusative object (Section 3.3), are isolated. In the case of ἐγγύην λαμβάνω *egguēn lambanō* + accusative, it does not even seem that a Coptic pattern was transferred onto Greek, but rather that the patterns of the simplex verb and the support-verb construction were confused, possibly with the Coptic pattern acting as a reinforcing influence.[38]

From a diachronic perspective, accusative objects with support-verb constructions seem to appear (i) as a marginal pattern inherited from classical times (cf. Section 3.1) and (ii) as a pattern reflecting internal lexicalisation and increasing loss of the syntagm character of the structure (cf. Section 3.2). For support-verb constructions in languages other than Greek, their univerbating, the unaccusative f-structure, and their co-existence with simplex verbs seem to introduce systemic changes (Section 4). Conversely, support-verb constructions in Greek align with simplex verb phrases. The syntax of support-verb constructions does not run counter to the verbal syntax otherwise, which may aid the fact that they do not introduce systemic changes. Rather, they are an established and inherited part of the verbal lexicon and syntax.[39]

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Abbreviations

ACC: accusative case
ACT: active voice
AOR: aorist tense (Greek)
ARTINF: articular infinitive (Greek)

[38] An anonymous reviewer objected that conclusions cannot be drawn from such limited data. However, many bilingual interferences are not even part of the language user's idiolect, but one-off creations that the community of language users may even make the individual aware of, such that the interference phenomenon will not become entrenched in their idiolect. Thus, the amount of data to consider is not the number of instances of a bilingual interference. If a phenomenon is more than a one-off, it is likely to be idiolectal, or perhaps even sociolectal or dialectal. The amount of data to consider is the support-verb-construction family around each predicative noun singled out for analysis. Based on this comparative data, we can establish whether a phenomenon is a one-off or not in a specific context. With regard to P. Lond. 6.1916, it is also noticeable that the letter (i) shows several other interference phenomena, (ii) that interference phenomena concern several domains of the morphosyntax, and (iii) that the editor considers the letter to be written by the same writer as P.Lond.6.1915, which ends with a Coptic passage (Bell & Crum 1924: 72–80; see further Fendel 2022: chap. 10).

[39] From a language-contact perspective, support-verb constructions align with Matras' (2015) prediction that inflexional morphology would only be borrowed as a last resort. Support-verb constructions as categorial periphrastics would be inflexional rather than derivational (Section 4).

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CONJ: conjunctive (Coptic)
DAT: dative case
EBG: early Byzantine Greek (AD 400–650)
FIG ETY: *Figura etymologica*
FUT: future tense
GEN: genitive case
H: higher register (contracts, sales, etc.)
IMP: imperative mood
IMPF: imperfect tense (Finnish)
INF: infinitive mood
L: lower register (letters)
PART: partitive case (Finnish)
PG: Ptolemaic Greek (300–0 BC)
PL: plural
POSS: possessive suffix (Coptic)
PP: prepositional phrase
PR: present tense
PRET: preterite tense (Spanish)
PTC: participle mood (Greek)
RG: Roman Greek (AD 0–400)
SBJ: subjunctive mood (Greek)
SG: singular
SVC: support-verb construction
VREL: verb of realisation

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