

THE SYNTAX OF THE PERIPHRASTIC PROGRESSIVE IN THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE NEW  
TESTAMENT\*

by

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*Abstract*

In this article, I discuss the use of the periphrastic progressive construction of εἰμί with present participle in the Septuagint and the New Testament. I argue that a broad distinction can be made between two main uses, called ‘durative progressive’ and ‘focalized progressive’. In both cases, a number of syntactic frames can be specified in which the periphrastic construction occurs. I conclude the article by discussing the relationship between the Septuagintal and the New Testamental use of the periphrastic construction, arguing that while there are many similarities, this relationship should not be conceived of in terms of *imitation*, as some scholars have suggested.

**Keywords:** verbal periphrasis, progressive aspect, syntax, Septuagint, New Testament.

## 1. Introduction

While the periphrastic progressive, consisting of a form of the verb εἶμι in combination with the present participle (as in ἦν προσευχόμενος “he was praying”), is generally considered a grammatical feature typical for the Septuagint (henceforth LXX) and the New Testament (henceforth NT),<sup>1</sup> its use (semantics/pragmatics and syntax) is still not well understood.<sup>2</sup> Remarkably, there are virtually no studies dealing with the use of the construction in the LXX, with the exception of those by Verboomen, Evans and Hauspie (all of these studies being primarily concerned with the influence of the Hebrew model on the Greek construction).<sup>3</sup> The NT has received considerably more

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. H.S.J. Thackeray, *A grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909) 195; F.C. Conybeare and S.G. Stock, *Grammar of Septuagint Greek* (Boston, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995[1905]) 68-69; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch. Bearbeitet van Friedrich Rehkopf* (15th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979) 285-287; J.W. Voelz, “The language of the New Testament,” ANRW II, 25.2 (1984) 962.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the use of the construction in Archaic and Classical Greek, see K. Bentein, “PROG imperfective drift in Ancient Greek? Reconsidering eimi ‘be’ with present participle,” *TPhS* 110 (2012) (*in press*).

<sup>3</sup> A. Verboomen, *L'imparfait périphrastique dans l'Évangile de Luc et dans la Septante* (Louvain/Paris: Peeters, 1992) 24-71; T.V. Evans, *Verbal syntax in the Greek*

attention, though opinions vary greatly and a consensus is still far from being reached. Porter, for example, claims that we cannot adequately distinguish between forms such as ἦν διδάσκων (Luke 13:10) “he was teaching” and others of the type ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλά (Matt 19:22) “he had many possessions”, leading him to suggest a progressive interpretation for the latter case as well: “for he was in progress possessing many things”.<sup>4</sup> The older studies of Björck and Aerts, on the other hand, heavily emphasize that such forms should strictly be kept apart (the latter example being an instance of ‘adjectival’ rather than ‘verbal’ periphrasis).<sup>5</sup> In their opinion, what characterizes the use of the progressive construction in the NT is the fact that it forms a temporal frame for one or more foregrounded events,<sup>6</sup> drawing an explicit comparison

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*Pentateuch: Natural Greek usage and Hebrew interference* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2001) 220-257; K. Hauspie, “Periphrastic tense forms with eimi and gignomai in the Septuagint of Ezekiel,” in *Et sapienter et eloquenter: Studies on rhetorical and stylistic features of the Septuagint* (ed. E. Bons and T.J. Kraus; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011) 127-152.

<sup>4</sup> S.E. Porter, *Verbal aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with reference to tense and mood* (SBG 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989) 454-455, 480.

<sup>5</sup> G. Björck, *Ἡ διδάσκων: Die periphrastischen Konstruktionen im Griechischen* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell (diss. Uppsala), 1940) 17-40; W.J. Aerts, *Periphrastica. An investigation into the use of εἶναι and ἔχειν as auxiliaries or pseudoauxiliaries in Greek from Homer up to the present day* (Amsterdam: Hakkert (diss. Amsterdam), 1965).

<sup>6</sup> Tabachovitz (followed by Aerts, *Periphrastica*) has suggested that this use of the construction can be retraced to the LXX (D. Tabachovitz, *Die Septuaginta und das*

with English sentences of the type “I was reading the newspaper *when she came in*” (what is called a ‘frame construction’). Closer inspection reveals, however, that many examples (especially in the LXX) cannot be described in such terms. In (1), for example, it is unclear in what way the periphrastic progressive (occurring at the end of a pericope) forms a temporal frame for one or more storyline events.

(1) συνιδόντες κατέφυγον εἰς τὰς πόλεις τῆς Λυκαονίας Λύστραν καὶ Δέρβην καὶ τὴν περίχωρον, κακεῖ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν (Acts 14:6-7)

“When the apostles learned about it, they fled to the cities of Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia and to the surrounding territory, and there they preached the good news.” (CEV, slightly modified)

In his recently defended doctoral thesis, Johnson<sup>7</sup> follows Björck and Aerts in distinguishing between ‘adjectival’ forms and ‘true’ progressive examples. His approach is new, however, in so far as he argues that periphrastic progressives denote events that are “highlighted” in discourse (referring to Longacre’s saliency cline).<sup>8</sup>

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*Neue Testament: Stilstudien* (Skrifter utgivna av Svenska institutet i Athen 8, IV; Lund: Gleerup, 1956) 41-47).

<sup>7</sup> C.E. Johnson, *A discourse analysis of the periphrastic imperfect in the Greek New Testament writings of Luke* (Ph.D. Thesis: University of Texas at Arlington, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Johnson, *Discourse analysis*, 21: “it is my hypothesis that just as the Historical Present provides highlighted storyline, the periphrastic imperfect provides highlighted background information”. For the saliency cline, see e.g. R.E. Longacre, *The grammar of discourse* (Topics in Language and Linguistics; 2nd ed.; New York/London: Plenum Press, 1996) 21-29.

Though again this view seems to hold true for a number of cases, I do not find Johnson's evaluation of (1) very enlightening: "the highlighting of such action may be intended to elicit wonder at such tenacity and an expectation of something significant to follow".<sup>9</sup>

The main aim of this article is to provide an in-depth analysis of the use of the periphrastic progressive in the LXX and NT (§2). Next to clarifying some of the claims that have been made in the secondary literature, this will allow us to determine more precisely the relationship between the use of the construction in the LXX and NT, to which I will return in the conclusion (§3).

Recent cross-linguistic research forms the starting point for my own analysis.<sup>10</sup> In a variety of publications (mainly based on the European languages), Pier Marco Bertinetto and his collaborators have argued that the aspectual functions of constructions similar to Ancient Greek εἶμι with present participle (e.g. Latin *esse* with present participle, English *be* with present participle, Italian *andare/stare* + gerund) typically range from *stative* to *progressive* to *habitual* (though of course not all constructions cover this entire continuum, quite the contrary). In this framework, the earlier mentioned ἦν γὰρ ἔχων κτήματα πολλά (Matt 19:22) "he had many possessions"

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<sup>9</sup> Johnson, *Discourse analysis*, 103.

<sup>10</sup> P.M. Bertinetto, "Vers une typologie du progressif dans les langues d'Europe," *MLing* 16 (1995) 37-61; P.M. Bertinetto, "The Progressive in Romance, as compared with English," in *Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe* (ed. Ö. Dahl; Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000) 559-604; P.M. Bertinetto, K.H. Ebert and C. de Groot, "The progressive in Europe," *Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe* (ed. Ö. Dahl; Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000) 517-558.

qualifies as stative. As to the progressive function, Bertinetto and his collaborators argue that it can be subdivided into two main uses, called ‘durative progressive’ and ‘focalized progressive’.<sup>11</sup> The difference between these two types lies in the fact that only with the focalized progressive the event is evaluated with regard to a single point in time, called the ‘focalization point’.<sup>12</sup> In illustration, compare examples (2) and (3) (with the Greek synthetic imperfect):

(2) ἄνθρωπός τις κατέβαινεν ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ εἰς Ἱεριχὼ καὶ λησταῖς περιέπεσεν (Luke 10:30)

“A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers.”  
(WEB)

(3) μετὰ ταῦτα ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν, καὶ ἐκεῖ διέτριβεν μετ’ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐβάπτιζεν (John 3:22)

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<sup>11</sup> Compare the distinction made by Cohén with regard to the Semitic languages between “concomitance” and “non-concomitance” (D. Cohén, *La phrase nominale et l'évolution du système verbal en sémitique: Études de syntaxe historique* (CLSPL 72; Leuven: Peeters, 1984) 317).

<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that with the durative progressive (and other imperfective functions) there is no overlap with the reference time established by another event (which is typical for imperfective verbs, by virtue of their being temporally unbounded). In a sentence such as “Mary said that John was a great teacher” the temporal relation between “was” and “said” is also one of overlap. However, these events are much less narrowly connected than is the case with focalized progressives.

“Later, Jesus and his disciples went to Judea, where he stayed with them for a while and was baptizing people.” (CEV)

In (2), the event of going to Jericho occurs in strict connection with the focalization point provided by the aorist *περιέπεσεν*. While, as Bertinetto, Ebert & de Groot indicate,<sup>13</sup> this use of the progressive can be considered prototypical (and is by far the most often referred to in the literature), we must also recognize a second type of progressive, which is evaluated relative to a longer period of time. In (3), there is no strict connection with a single focalization point: the imperfect *ἐβάπτιζεν* denotes the continuation of a process in a broader time-frame.<sup>14</sup> In examples such as these, there may be a sense of iteration or repetition, though not necessarily (depending on the lexical aspect of the verb in question).<sup>15</sup>

It is important to realize that the cross-linguistically based terminology provided by Bertinetto and his collaborators cannot but offer a very general theoretical framework: from a syntactic point of view, each language will realize these aspectual functions in

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<sup>13</sup> Bertinetto, Ebert and de Groot, “The progressive,” 565.

<sup>14</sup> Compare B.M. Fanning, *Verbal aspect in New Testament Greek* (OTM; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 206. It should be noted, however, that durative progressives can also denote events occurring in a more narrow time-frame. In the following example (borrowed from Bertinetto, “The progressive,” 571), the event indicated by the durative progressive occurs between two well-defined points in time: “[Yesterday, during my sleep], Ann was playing for two hours all by herself”.

<sup>15</sup> See Fanning, *Verbal aspect*, 244-249; P.M. Bertinetto, *Il dominio tempo-aspettuale: Demarcazioni, intersezioni, contrasti* (Torino: Rosenberg and Sellier, 1997) 227 (fn. 8).

different ways (entailing (small) semantic/pragmatic differences). In English, for example, using the progressive in co-ordination with a storyline event (as in our previously mentioned example (2)) would be uncommon. Rather than saying “a man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers”, one would use subordination, either “a certain man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell among robbers” (compare with Latin *cum inversum*) or “when a certain man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, he fell among robbers”. In my discussion of the progressive examples from the LXX and the NT, I therefore further subdivide both durative and focalized periphrastic progressives by means of the syntactic configurations or *frames* in which they occur. A precise description of such syntactic frames leads to a better understanding of the use of the construction in the LXX and the NT, and offers an adequate basis for comparison of the use of the construction in these two texts.

For my description of these syntactic frames I adopt two main criteria: (a) whether the periphrastic progressive occurs in a *subordinate* or a *main* clause, and (b) whether the periphrastic progressive (and more generally the clause in which it occurs) *precedes* or *follows* a foregrounded event to which it can be semantically/pragmatically related.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Intra-clausal coherence relations are often considered ‘semantic’ (or ‘local’), while inter-clausal ones ‘pragmatic’ (or ‘global’). The distinction is somewhat arbitrary; with Givón we can postulate a functional continuum ranging from (semantic) ‘event integration’ to (pragmatic) ‘cross-event coherence’. Givón takes coherence to be a ‘multi-strand’ phenomenon: next to temporal coherence (our main point of interest), he refers to *spatial coherence*, *thematic coherence* and *referential coherence*. Such coherence relations can be established either cataphorically (anticipatorily) or anaphorically (retrospectively). See T. Givón, “Coherence in text vs. coherence in

It may be clear that the second criterion will be especially fruitful for focalized progressives, where the event denoted by the periphrastic construction is narrowly connected with the storyline.

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mind,” in *Coherence in spontaneous text* (ed. M.A. Gernsbacher and T. Givón; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995) 59-115; id., *Syntax: An introduction* (2 vols.; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2000).

## 2. The syntax of the periphrastic progressive<sup>17</sup>

### 2.1. The durative progressive use<sup>18</sup>

In what follows, I give an overview of the use of the durative progressive in the LXX and the NT. As the reader will notice, such durative progressives are particularly prominent in the LXX (with 85% (= 115/135) of the total number of (clearly

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<sup>17</sup> In §2, all clearly periphrastic examples from the LXX and NT are listed (note that when a verse contains more than one form, this is not explicitly indicated). I have also included a number of ambiguous cases, as indicated between brackets ('ambig.'). My research was carried out on the basis of the online *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, using Rahlfs' edition for the LXX (A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (2 vols.; 9th edn.; Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1935)) and Aland et al.'s edition for the NT (K. Aland, M. Black, C.M. Martini, B.M. Metzger and A. Wikgren, *The Greek New Testament* (2nd edn.; Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1968)). For the specification of the (morpho)syntactic frames in which the periphrastic progressive occurs, I use the following abbreviations (in alphabetical order): 'FP' = focalization point; 'FUT' = future tense; 'HIST PRES' = historical present; 'IMPER' = imperative; 'MAIN' = main clause; 'PLQPF' = pluperfect; 'PRES' = present tense; 'PROG' = periphrastic progressive; 'PTCP' = participle; 'SUBJ' = subjunctive; 'SUBORD' = subordinate clause. For the sake of clarity, 'FP' is indicated in superscript, and 'MAIN'/'SUBORD' in subscript.

<sup>18</sup> In my discussion, I distinguish between three hierarchical levels of increasing specificity, to which I refer with the terms 'use' (e.g. 'the durative progressive use'), 'type' (e.g. 'PROG used in the main or subordinate clause') and 'subtype' (e.g. 'MAIN/SUBORD PROG (FUT, IMPER, SUBJ)').

periphrastic) progressive examples belonging to this type, versus 58% (= 38/65) in the NT).

### 2.1.1. PROG used in the main or subordinate clause

#### i. MAIN/SUBORD PROG

[LXX: Gen 40:13 (ambig.); Num 35:23; Deut 9:22; 9:24; 19:6; 31:27; 1 Kgdms 14:26 (ambig.); 2 Kgdms 13:32; 3 Kgdms 2:46b (ambig.); 2:46f (ambig.); 2:46k (ambig.); 4:1 (ambig.); 5:4 (ambig.); 5:15; 18:12; 4 Kgdms 17:41; 1 Chr 8:40; 12:40 (ambig.); 23:26; 29:15 (ambig.); 2 Chr 26:5; 36:15; 1 Esd 2:17; 2:21; 2 Esd 3:13; 13:26; 16:14; 18:7; 19:3; 23:26; Jdt 9:14 (ambig.); 1 Macc 5:53; 6:11; 14:8; 2 Macc 1:6; 3:11; 10:6; 3 Macc 3:3; Pss 9:35 (ambig.); Job 29:4; Hos 8:6 (ambig.); 12:12 (ambig.); Jonah 1:10; Jer 39:30; Ezek 1:12; Dan 10:2.

NT: Mark 1:13 (ambig.); 5:5 (ambig.); Luke 24:32; 24:53 (ambig.); John 3:23; 10:40; Acts 1:14; 12:5; 16:9; 16:12; 21:3; 22:20; 2 Cor 5:19 (ambig.); Gal 1:23; Col. 3:1 (ambig.); Titus 3:3; 1 Pet 2:25 (ambig.); Rev 1:18 (ambig.)]

The first durative progressive type constitutes a very general syntactic configuration, accounting for a large part of the durative progressives in the LXX and NT. In these examples, the periphrastic progressive is used in the main or (less frequently) subordinate clause, without there being a temporal coherence relation of overlap between the event it denotes and another, foregrounded event in the clause preceding or following it. In such cases, the periphrastic construction is often accompanied by adverbials stressing the (long) duration of the event, such as ἐμοῦ ζῶντος (Deut 31:27) “during my life”; ἡμέρας τρεῖς “three days” (1 Chr 12:40); τρεῖς ἑβδομάδας (Dan. 10:2)

“three weeks”; ἡμέρας τινάς (Acts 16:12) “some days”.<sup>19</sup> The adoption of such a broad time-frame may lead to a sense of iteration/repetition, as in (4):

(4) καὶ ἐν τῷ Ἐμπυρισμῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ Πειρασμῷ καὶ ἐν τοῖς Μνήμασιν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας παροξύνοντες ἦτε κύριον τὸν θεὸν ὑμῶν (Deut 9:22)

“And at The Burning also and at The Temptation and at The Graves of Lust, you were provoking the Lord your God” (NETS)

ii. MAIN/SUBORD PROG (FUT, IMPER, SUBJ)

[LXX: Gen 4:12 (ambig.); 4:14 (ambig.); 18:18; Exod 22:24; 25:20; Num 14:33; Deut 28:29; 28:33; 28:66; 1 Kgdms 12:14; 2 Kgdms 24:13; 3 Kgdms 1:2; 13:32; 2 Chr 15:16 (ambig.); 29:11 (ambig.);<sup>20</sup> 2 Esd 6:8; 6:10; 7:25; 7:26; Tob (cod. Sin.) 9:3-4; Mal 3:3; Isa 9:15; 19:18 (ambig.); 22:24; 32:2; 34:9; Ezek 34:29; 44:11; Dan 6:27; 6:28.

NT: Matt 10:22; 24:9; Mark 13:13; 13:25; Luke 5:10; 12:35; 21:17; 21:24; 1 Cor 14:9]

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<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that we also find the periphrastic progressive accompanied by adverbials referring to the left temporal boundary of the event, such as ἐκ νεότητος αὐτῶν “from their youth” in ἦσαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰουδα μόνοι ποιοῦντες τὸ πονηρὸν κατ’ ὀφθαλμούς μου ἐκ νεότητος αὐτῶν (Jer 39:30) “the children of Israel and the children of Judah alone have been doing evil in my sight from their youth”. In such cases we must use a continuative perfect in English (*have been doing*) (though not in all European languages).

<sup>20</sup> In 2 Chr 15:16; 29:11 an infinitive of purpose is used, rendering these two examples very similar to the ones discussed under the second subtype.

While perhaps it could be argued that these examples should not be categorized under a separate subtype, I have nonetheless chosen to do so (for the sake of clarity, and because they form a relatively large group). Whereas with the previous subtype the periphrastic construction (or, to be more specific, the auxiliary εἰμί) is almost exclusively used in the imperfect tense (45/52 = 87%, including ambiguous cases), here we find it in some less prototypical (from a cross-linguistic point of view) morpho-syntactic contexts, such as the future tense or the imperative/subjunctive mood.<sup>21</sup> An example with the future tense is given in (5):

(5) οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς γλώσσης ἐὰν μὴ εὔσημον λόγον δώτε, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ λαλούμενον; ἔσεσθε γὰρ εἰς ἀέρα λαλοῦντες (1 Cor 14:9)

“So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye will be speaking into the air.” (ASV)

As Amenta notes,<sup>22</sup> the use of such a tense or mood almost automatically brings about a durative (rather than focalized) interpretation. She refers to the Italian construction of

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<sup>21</sup> Compare Ceglia on the use of the future tense with the progressive periphrasis: “in effetti le forme di questo tempo presentano un carattere semi-modale che poteva, forse, difficilmente conciliarsi con quello aspettuale che la perifrasi esprime, o quantomeno renderlo meno perspicuo” (L. Ceglia, “L’evoluzione della costruzione perifrastica verbale nel greco del Nuovo Testamento,” *AGI* 83 (1998) 37).

<sup>22</sup> L. Amenta, *Perifrasi aspettuale in greco e in latino. Origini e grammaticalizzazioni* (ML 38; Milano: Franco Angeli, 2003) 81.

*stare* + gerund (always used as a focalized progressive), which cannot be used in the future tense.

### 2.1.2. PROG used in the main clause preceding a foregrounded event

#### i. <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> AORIST

[LXX: 1 Kgdms 2:18; 3:1; 4 Kgdms 6:8; 2 Esd 15:2 (ambig.); 15:3 (ambig.); 15:4 (ambig.); 1 Macc 6:18; 16:14; Jer 33:20 (ambig.); Sus 1 (ambig.); Dan 4:4.

NT: Acts 2:5]

In a number of other examples, we find a temporal coherence relation of overlap between the event denoted by the periphrastic progressive and a foregrounded event expressed in the aorist. Consider example (6):

(6) ἦσαν δὲ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν· γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης συνήλθεν τὸ πλῆθος (Acts 2:5-6a)

“Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under the sky. When this sound was heard, the multitude came together.” (WEB)

Here, the periphrastic progressive ἦσαν κατοικοῦντες forms the background for the storyline event συνήλθεν. The temporal coherence relation between these two events, which is cataphorically established, is of a more ‘global’ nature (in other words, there is weak semantic/pragmatic connectivity between the two events): the main function of the clause is to establish the Jewish people as a topical referent.

#### ii. καὶ ἐγένετο <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> AORIST

[LXX: 2 Kgdms 3:6; 13:23]

In two examples from the LXX, the periphrastic form is preceded by καὶ ἐγένετο “and it came to pass, and it happened”, the translational equivalent of Hebrew וַיְהִי. καὶ ἐγένετο is typically used as an introductory phrase specifying circumstances,<sup>23</sup> in anticipation of a foregrounded event. Consider example (7):

(7) καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι τὸν πόλεμον ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ οἴκου Σαουλ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ οἴκου Δαυιδ καὶ Αβεννηρ ἦν κρατῶν τοῦ οἴκου Σαουλ. καὶ τῷ Σαουλ παλλακὴ Ρεσφα θυγάτηρ Ιαλ καὶ εἶπεν Μεμφιβοσθε υἱὸς Σαουλ πρὸς Αβεννηρ ... (2 Kgdms 3:6-7)

“And it happened, while there was war between the house of Saoul and between the house of David, that Abenner was prevailing over the house of Saoul. And Saoul had a concubine Respha daughter of Ial, and Memphibosthe son of Saoul said to Abenner ... .  
” (NETS)

Here, καὶ ἐγένετο introduces the circumstances at the beginning of a new pericope: together with ἐν τῷ εἶναι τὸν πόλεμον “there was war”, the periphrastic progressive ἦν κρατῶν “he ruled” forms the background against which storyline εἶπεν occurs. As with the first subtype, there is no narrow semantic/pragmatic connectivity between the event denoted by the periphrastic progressive and that denoted by the aorist form εἶπεν: the circumstances that are specified are of a very general nature.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. K. Beyer, *Semitische syntax im Neuen Testament* (SUNT 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968) 29: “allgemeine Zeit- bzw. Situationsangabe ... oder begleitende Nebenumstände”. See also M. Johannesson, “Das biblische καὶ ἐγένετο und seine Geschichte,” *KZ* 53 (1925) 161-212; S.H. Levinsohn, *Discourse features of New Testament Greek* (2nd ed.; Dallas: SIL, 2000) 177-180.

### 2.1.3. PROG used in the subordinate clause preceding a foregrounded event

i. <sub>SUBORD</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN/SUBORD</sub> AORIST

[LXX: 4 Macc 4:22.

NT: Matt 24:38 (ambig.)]

With this third durative type a temporal coherence relation between the periphrastic progressive and a foregrounded event is again cataphorically established. The difference with the second type lies in the fact that the periphrastic construction occurs in a subordinate clause. Consider example (8):

(8) ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πολεμῶν ἦν κατ' Αἴγυπτον Πτολεμαίῳ, ἤκουσέν τε ὅτι φήμης διαδοθείσης περὶ τοῦ τεθνάναι αὐτὸν ὡς ἔνι μάλιστα χαίροιεν οἱ Ιεροσολυμίται (4 Macc 4:22)

“For while he was waging war against Ptolemy in Egypt, he heard that a rumor had spread about his death and that the Hierosolymites had celebrated with all possible joy.”

(NETS)

Here, a temporal coherence relation between the periphrastic progressive πολεμῶν ἦν and storyline ἤκουσεν is explicitly cued by the subordinating conjunction ἐπειδὴ. While such syntactic embedding could be taken as a signal of a greater degree of semantic/pragmatic connectivity between the two events,<sup>24</sup> the coherence relation between them is nonetheless of a global nature: πολεμῶν ἦν indicates the very general

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Givón, *Syntax*, 2:328: “the stronger is the semantic or pragmatic connectivity between two events/states, the stronger will be the syntactic dependencies between the two clauses that code them”.

circumstances under which ἤκουσεν occurs. Note, moreover, that the preposed subordinate clause is anaphorically connected to the previous discourse, as explicitly indicated by the particle γάρ.<sup>25</sup>

#### 2.1.4. PROG used in the main clause following a foregrounded event

##### i. <sub>MAIN/SUBORD</sub> AORIST <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG

[LXX: Gen 4:2 (ambig.); 14:12; 1 Kgdms 2:11; 3 Kgdms 1:15; Jdt 4:13; 1 Macc 11:41.

NT: Matt 7:29; 27:55 (ambig.); 27:61 (ambig.); Mark 1:22;<sup>26</sup> 14:40]

With this fourth type the periphrastic progressive follows a foregrounded event with which it can be semantically/pragmatically connected. With the first subtype, the periphrastic progressive is used to give a thematic addition, specifying the circumstances under which the foregrounded event occurs. Consider example (9):

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<sup>25</sup> Givón notes that when a language allows both preposed and postposed adverbial clauses (such as Ancient Greek, as well as English), the former type “tends to have more global, diffuse pragmatic connections to its discourse context, and is thus less integrated into the semantic structure of the main clause” (Givón, *Syntax*, 2:328, 343). Such clauses serve as ‘coherence bridges’ between the preceding discourse and the following clause.

<sup>26</sup> In Matt 7:29 and Mark 1:22 a synthetic aorist denoting a foregrounded event is absent. However, if we take it that the initial phase of the imperfect ἐξεπλήσσοντο is contextually emphasized (what some call an ‘ingressive value’), we may compare these two examples with the others listed under §2.1.4. Alternatively, they could be listed under §2.1.1.

(9) ἔλαβον δὲ καὶ τὸν Λωτ υἱὸν τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ Ἀβραμ καὶ τὴν ἀποσκευὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπόχοντο· ἦν γὰρ κατοικῶν ἐν Σοδομοῖς (Gen 14:12)

“And they also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, and his chattels and departed, for he was living in Sodoma.” (NETS)

The clause containing the periphrastic progressive is anaphorically connected to the preceding clause, as explicitly signalled by the particle γάρ. There is a temporal coherence relation of overlap between ἔλαβον and ἦν κατοικῶν, but semantic/pragmatic connectivity is weak: as in §2.1.2 and §2.1.3, the periphrastic progressive indicates the very general circumstances under which the storyline event occurs.

## ii. <sub>MAIN</sub> AORIST <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG

[LXX: Gen 4:17; 26:35; Josh 10:26; 1 Kgdms 18:9; 2 Kgdms 4:3; 8:15; 20:3; 3 Kgdms 1:4; 5:24; 10:26a (ambig.); 4 Kgdms 17:25; 17:28; 17:29; 1 Chr 18:14; 2 Chr 9:26 (ambig.); 17:12; 30:10; 36:5a; 36:16; 2 Esd 4:4; 11:4; 12:13; 12:15; Jdt 1:16 (ambig.); 16:20; 1 Macc 3:12; Dan 1:16.

NT: Mark 9:4; 14:54; Luke 1:22; 2:51; 4:44; 6:12; Acts 2:42; 8:13; 9:28; 14:7]

While with this subtype too the periphrastic progressive follows a foregrounded event, the nature of the temporal coherence relation between these two events is of a different nature: rather than being one of temporal overlap, we have a temporal coherence relation of *sequentiality*. In the Septuagintal examples, εἰμί with present participle most often imitates the Hebrew *wayehi qotel*-structure,<sup>27</sup> which could be used to stress the

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<sup>27</sup> Verboomen, *L'imparfait périphrastique*, 27-48. Cf. also Cohén, *La phrase nominale*, 323.

duration of accomplished (consecutive) events (in such cases, one would normally employ the synthetic aorist in Ancient Greek). Consider example (10):

(10) καὶ παρήλθον ἐπὶ πύλην τοῦ Αἰνκαὶ εἰς κολυμβήθραν τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ οὐκ ἦν τόπος τῷ κτήνι παρελθεῖν ὑποκάτω μου. καὶ ἤμην ἀναβαίνων ἐν τῷ τείχει χειμάρρου νυκτὸς καὶ ἤμην συντριβῶν ἐν τῷ τείχει. καὶ ἤμην ἐν πύλῃ τῆς φάραγγος καὶ ἐπέστρεψα (2 Esd. 12:14-15)

“And I passed on to the fountain gate, and to the king’s pool; and there was no room for the beast to pass under me. And I went up by the wall of the brook by night, and mourned over the wall, and passed through the gate of the valley, and returned.” (BGS)

Here, παρήλθον, ἤμην ἀναβαίνων and ἤμην συντριβῶν denote temporally sequential events (this is additionally signalled by the cataphoric marker καί), the difference between the synthetic and periphrastic forms lying in the explicit stressing of the duration of the event with the latter. While there is no temporal overlap between παρήλθον and ἤμην ἀναβαίνων (and ἤμην συντριβῶν), these events are temporally adjacent, so that the temporal coherence relation between them can be considered of a more local nature (also note the referential and spatial continuity).

While in the NT the construction of εἰμί with present participle is freely employed, we find similar cases where the left temporal boundary of the event denoted by the periphrastic construction is contextually emphasized (what some call an ‘ingressive’ value).<sup>28</sup> Consider example (11):

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<sup>28</sup> See e.g. Ceglia, “L’evoluzione della costruzione perifrastica,” 30-33, 35-36. Perhaps the use of the periphrastic form in these examples could be compared to what Rijksbaron calls the “immediative imperfect” (A. Rijksbaron, *The syntax and semantics*

(11) καὶ ὁ Πέτρος ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ἕως ἔσω εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, καὶ ἦν συγκαθήμενος μετὰ τῶν ὑπηρετῶν καὶ θερμαινόμενος πρὸς τὸ φῶς (Mark 14:54)

“Peter followed from a distance and went into the courtyard of the High Priest's house. There he sat down with the guards, keeping himself warm by the fire.” (GNB)

In this case too, ἠκολούθησεν, ἦν συγκαθήμενος and (ἦν) θερμαινόμενος can be taken to be temporally sequential (note again the presence of the cataphoric marker καί). Two contextual factors which are of particular relevance in cases such as these are: (a) the occurrence of a lexically perfective verb (ἠκολούθησεν) bringing about a change of state and thus creating the appropriate conditions for the occurrence of another event/series of events;<sup>29</sup> (b) pragmatic knowledge, which tells us that the relationship between following, sitting and warming oneself will be one of *sequentiality*, rather than temporal overlap.

### 2.1.5. PROG used in the subordinate clause following a foregrounded event

i. MAIN/SUBORD AORIST SUBORD PROG

[LXX: Jdt 14:17; Zech 7:7.

NT: Mark 15:43; Luke 9:53; John 1:28 (ambig.); Acts 1:13]

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*of the verb in Classical Greek* (3rd edn.; Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006) 17-18). Cf. also Fanning, *Verbal aspect*, 252-253.

<sup>29</sup> ἠκολούθησεν possesses what Caenepeel calls a ‘contingency structure’ (M. Caenepeel, *Aspect, temporal ordering and perspective in narrative fiction* (Ph.D. Thesis: University of Edinburgh, 1989) 70).

With this fifth and final durative progressive type, the event denoted by the periphrastic progressive is again anaphorically related to another storyline event, providing a thematic addition. Contrary to what we have seen in §2.1.4, however, we find the periphrastic construction in a subordinate clause. Consider example (12):

(12) καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν, οὗ ἦν Ἰουδιθ καταλύουσα, καὶ οὐχ εὗρεν αὐτήν (Jdt 14.17)

“ And he went into the tent, where Ioudith was staying, and he did not find her.”  
(NETS)

Here, the periphrastic progressive ἦν καταλύουσα occurs in a relative clause, providing additional information about the antecedent τὴν σκηνὴν. As in most of our previous examples, the temporal coherence relation between the event denoted by the periphrastic construction and another foregrounded event (i.e. εἰσῆλθεν) is of a general, global nature: Judith need not actually be staying in the tent at the very moment of entering.

## 2.2. The focalized progressive use

In this second section, I give an overview of the use of the focalized progressive in the LXX and the NT. While such focalized examples also occur in the LXX, they are more typical for the New Testament (with 42% (= 27/65) of the total number of (clearly periphrastic) progressive examples being of the focalized type, versus only 15% (= 20/135) in the LXX).

### 2.2.1. PROG used in the main clause with the time of speaking serving as FP

i. <sub>MAIN</sub> ἰδοὺ PROG (PRES)<sup>FP</sup>

[LXX: Judg 8:5 (cod. Vat.); 3 Kgdms 1:25; 4 Kgdms 17:26; 1 Esd 1:25 (ambig.).

NT: Acts 5:25 (ambig.); Col 1:6]

With this first (rather marginal) type of focalized progressive, there is no temporal coherence relation of overlap with another foregrounded event serving as focalization point. Rather, the time of speaking constitutes the (pragmatically specified) focalization point.<sup>30</sup> Consider example (13):

(13) ὅτι κατέβη σήμερον καὶ ἐθυσίασεν μόσχους καὶ ἄρννας καὶ πρόβατα εἰς πλῆθος καὶ ἐκάλεσεν πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ Αβιαθαρ τὸν ἱερέα, καὶ ἰδοὺ εἰσιν ἐσθίοντες καὶ πίνοντες ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπαν Ζήτω ὁ βασιλεὺς Αδωνίας (3 Kgdms 1:25)

“For he has gone down today, and has sacrificed calves and lambs and sheep in abundance, and has called all the king’s sons, and the chiefs of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and they said, ‘Long live king Adonias’.” (BGS)

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<sup>30</sup> It is important to realize that not all instances of the periphrastic progressive with εἰμί in the present tense are of the focalized progressive type (though admittedly the durative-focalized distinction can be hard to make). Contrast with Pusch: “present reference, being imperfective *per definitionem*, does not allow situations or processes to be visualized as durative, without, however, precluding the option of emphasizing them as on-going at the reference point” (C.D. Pusch, “Aspectuality and focality - Reflections on semantics-pragmatics relations and isomorphism in Romance progressive periphrases,” in *Verbalperiphrasen in den (ibero-)romanischen Sprachen* (ed. C.D. Pusch and A. Wesch; Hamburg: Buske, 2003) 186).

Here, the prophet Natan informs king David that Adonia and his guests are eating and drinking *at that very moment* (rendered by GNB with “right now”). It may be clear that in comparison with most of the examples discussed under §2.1 the time frame in which the event denoted by the periphrastic progressive occurs is much more narrow (this event being narrowly connected to the time of speaking). It is worth noting that in almost all examples of this (sub)type the periphrastic progressive is accompanied by the focalizing particle ἰδοῦ, which according to Bailey functions as “an instruction to pay mental attention”.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.2.2. PROG used in the main clause preceding a foregrounded event serving as FP

#### i. <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN(/SUBORD)</sub> AORIST/HIST PRES<sup>FP</sup>

[LXX: Exod 3:1; Num 11:1; 1 Kgdms 7:10; 23:26; 2 Kgdms 19:10; 4 Kgdms 6:26; Jdt 9:1; 10:21.

NT: Matt 8:30 (ambig.); Mark 2:6 (ambig.); 2:18; 4:38 (ambig.); 5:11 (ambig.); 10:32 (ambig.); Luke 1:10; 1:21; 2:8 (ambig.); 2:33; 4:20; 4:38; 8:32 (ambig.); 11:14; 15:1; 17:35 (ambig.);<sup>32</sup> 24:13; John 18:18 (ambig.); 18:25; Acts 8:28; 11:5 (ambig.); 19:14]

Similarly to what we have seen with the durative progressive (§2.1.1), there is one focalized subtype which is predominant, accounting for most of the examples. This concerns a syntactic configuration whereby the periphrastic progressive, occurring in the main clause, is co-ordinated with an aorist form denoting a foregrounded event

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<sup>31</sup> N.A. Bailey, *Thetic constructions in Koine Greek* (Ph.D. thesis: VU-University Amsterdam, 2009) 361-372.

<sup>32</sup> Luke 17:35 is (quite exceptionally) situated entirely in the future. Here, the FP is expressed by the synthetic future παραλημφθήσεται/ἀφεθήσεται.

(serving as focalization point). While some examples of this construction can be found in the LXX, the construction is particularly often employed in the NT (note, however, that many examples are ambiguous). One such case would be (14):

(14) ἐπεχείρησαν δέ τινες καὶ τῶν περιερχομένων Ἰουδαίων ἐξορκιστῶν ὀνομάζειν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔχοντας τὰ πνεύματα τὰ πονηρὰ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ λέγοντες, Ὁρκίζω ὑμᾶς τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν Παῦλος κηρύσσει. ἦσαν δέ τινος Σκευᾶ Ἰουδαίου ἀρχιερέως ἑπτὰ υἱοὶ τοῦτο ποιοῦντες. ἀποκριθὲν δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ πονηρὸν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ... (Acts 19:13-5a)

“Some Jewish men started going around trying to force out evil spirits by using the name of the Lord Jesus. They said to the spirits, ‘Come out in the name of that same Jesus that Paul preaches about!’ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this, when an evil spirit said to them ... .” (CEV)

In this example, ἦσαν ποιοῦντες (“they were doing this”) forms the immediate background to the foreground event ἀποκριθὲν εἶπεν “(he answered and) he said”, to which it is cataphorically related.<sup>33</sup> Contrary to what we have seen with the durative progressive in §2.1.2, there is a narrow (‘local’) temporal coherence relation of overlap between these two events, with the aorist form following the progressive construction serving as focalization point. It should be mentioned, however, that the pronoun τοῦτο establishes an anaphoric relationship with the preceding clause, and, perhaps more importantly, that the clause containing the periphrastic construction also serves a more

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<sup>33</sup> While in this particular example the conjunct participle ἀποκριθὲν is narrowly connected with the aorist εἶπεν, occasionally we only find a conjunct participle (serving as focalization point), followed by a verb in the imperfect tense (see e.g. Luke 1:21).

global coherence purpose, in that a topical referent is introduced (that is, the seven sons): the periphrastic form has a ‘presentative’ value (presenting a discourse-new subject),<sup>34</sup> occurring (almost) at the beginning of a pericope.<sup>35</sup> As such, various of the examples listed for this subtype have been (wrongly) interpreted non-periphrastically by one or more scholars.<sup>36</sup>

ii. <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> ἰδοῦ (AORIST)<sup>FP</sup>

[LXX: 2 Kgdms 15:32.

NT: Luke 13:10; Acts 10:30; 12:6]

As with the previous subtype, we are dealing with a co-ordinated structure whereby the periphrastic progressive precedes its focalization point. Here, however, the focalizing particle ἰδοῦ plays a particularly prominent role (note that in 2 Kgdms 15:32 a(n) aoristic) verb is even absent).<sup>37</sup> Consider example (15):

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Bailey, *Thetic constructions*, 204 for our example (14).

<sup>35</sup> In Luke 24:13, the entity (δύο ἐξ αὐτῶν “two of them”) that is introduced is accompanied by the particle ἰδοῦ at the beginning of the sentence. As Johannessohn notes, this is an atypical position for ἰδοῦ, which normally occurs in the second part of the sentence, pushing the narration forward (M. Johannessohn, “Das biblische καὶ ἰδοῦ in der Erzählung samt seiner hebräischen Vorlage,” *KZ* 67 (1942) 57-8). For two similar cases, see Luke 10:25 and 23:50.

<sup>36</sup> For extensive discussion of one such case (Luke 1:10), see K. Bentein, M. Janse and J. Soltic, “And the mass was praying outside: A note on Luke 1:10,” *Neot* 46 (2012) 1-8.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Beyer, *Semitische syntax*, 57.

(15) καὶ ὁ Κορνήλιος ἔφη, Ἄπὸ τετάρτης ἡμέρας μέχρι ταύτης τῆς ὥρας ἤμην τὴν ἐνάτην προσευχόμενος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μου, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ἕστη ἐνώπιόν μου ἐν ἐσθήτι λαμπρᾷ (Acts 10:30)

“Cornelius answered: Four days ago at about three o'clock in the afternoon I was praying at home. Suddenly a man in bright clothes stood in front of me.” (CEV)

Here, the foregrounded event for which ἤμην προσευχόμενος forms the immediate background, and with which it temporally overlaps, is the appearance of a new entity on the scene, introduced by the focalizing particle ἰδοὺ (which constitutes the focalization point).<sup>38</sup> The use of ἀνὴρ as subject and ἕστημι as predicate after ἰδοὺ are typical for Luke (ἕστημι especially in Acts),<sup>39</sup> in Johannessohn’s opinion,<sup>40</sup> ἕστη has lost most of its lexical value and could be replaced by a form of εἶμί (or even entirely dropped).

iii. καὶ ἐγένετο <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> AOR<sup>FP</sup>

[LXX: 3 Kgdms 21:12]

With this third subtype the periphrastic progressive is preceded by καὶ ἐγένετο, which we have already encountered as a translational equivalent of Hebrew וַיְהִי (used to introduce circumstances) in §2.1.2. Consider example (16):

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<sup>38</sup> As Bailey notes, ἰδοὺ brings with it a certain “vividness” or “immediacy” (Bailey, *Thetic constructions*, 334). For the use of ἰδοὺ after durative verbs, see Johannessohn, “Das biblische καὶ ἰδοὺ,” 45-46.

<sup>39</sup> Johannessohn, “Das biblische καὶ ἰδοὺ,” 36, 48, 55.

<sup>40</sup> Johannessohn, “Das biblische καὶ ἰδοὺ,” 54-55.

(16) καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον, πίνων ἦν αὐτὸς καὶ πάντες οἱ βασιλεῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἐν σκηναῖς· καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς παισὶν αὐτοῦ Οἰκοδομήσατε χάρακα (3 Kgdms 21:12)

“And it happened, when he answered him this word, as he was drinking, he and all the kings with him, that he said to his servants, ‘Build a palisade!’” (NETS, slightly modified)

While some scholars take ἀπεκρίθη as the focalization point for πίνων ἦν (“and it happened that when he received the answer, he was drinking”), in my view both elements set the stage for the foregrounded event εἶπεν (i.e. as if both verbs were subordinated: “it happened that when he received the answer and when they were drinking that he said”).

**iv.** καὶ ἐγένετο <sub>MAIN</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> ἰδοῦ (PTCP/IMPF)<sup>FP</sup>

[NT: Luke 5:17, 14:1]

With this fourth and final subtype the periphrastic progressive is accompanied by καὶ ἐγένετο, while (καὶ) ἰδοῦ occurs in the main clause (i.e. a combination of the two previous subtypes). Consider example (17):

(17) καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν διδάσκων, καὶ ἦσαν καθήμενοι Φαρισαῖοι καὶ νομοδιδάσκαλοι οἱ ἦσαν ἐληλυθότες ἐκ πάσης κόμης τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ Ἰουδαίας καὶ Ἱερουσαλήμ· καὶ δύναμις κυρίου ἦν εἰς τὸ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτόν. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες φέροντες ἐπὶ κλίνης ἄνθρωπον ὃς ἦν παραλελυμένος (Luke 5:17)

“It happened on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every village of Galilee, Judea, and

Jerusalem. The power of the Lord was with him to heal them. Behold, men brought a paralyzed man on a cot.” (WEB)

Here, καὶ ἐγένετο occurs at the beginning of a new pericope, introducing multiple circumstances:<sup>41</sup> we find a temporal adverbial (ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν “one day”), together with two periphrastic progressives specifying the actions of three different subjects (καὶ αὐτὸς (= Jesus), οἱ Φαρισαῖοι “the Pharisees” and οἱ νομοδιδάσκαλοι “the teachers of the Law”).<sup>42</sup> These background events are cataphorically connected to the main event, introduced by the focalizing particle ἰδοῦ: the appearance on the scene of persons (ἄνδρες) carrying a sick person.

As to the verb forms following ἰδοῦ, we find either a participle (Luke 5:17) or an imperfect tense (Luke 14:1). Since in the former case it could be argued that the participle does not function as the predicate,<sup>43</sup> and in the latter case ἦν only makes a minor semantic contribution, both verb forms have been put between brackets for the formulation of this fourth subtype.

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Johannessohn, “Das biblische καὶ ἐγένετο,” 205-206; Beyer, *Semitische syntax*, 48-52. Typically, the more general circumstances come first (i.e. ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν).

<sup>42</sup> Moreover, it is added in a kind of parenthetical sentence that καὶ δύναμις κυρίου ἦν εἰς τὸ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτόν “the power of the Lord was with him to heal them”.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Johannessohn, “Das biblische καὶ ἰδοῦ,” 52. In other words, (17) should not be understood as “and behold two men were carrying on a sickbed a man who was paralyzed”, but rather “and behold two men, who were carrying on a sickbed a man who was paralyzed”.

### 2.2.3. PROG used in the subordinate clause preceding a foregrounded event serving as FP

i. <sub>SUBORD</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> ἰδοῦ (PLQPF)<sup>FP</sup>

[NT: Acts 1:10]

While the preposed subordinate clause would seem a ‘natural’ syntactic environment for the focalized progressive (given that (a) cross-linguistically, syntactic embedding is one of the main backgrounding devices, and (b) stronger semantic/pragmatic connectivity between two events is typically reflected syntactically (cf. fn. 24)), I have found remarkably few examples for this third type (which is restricted to Luke’s writings): both in the LXX and the NT, focalized progressives are predominantly used in main clauses.<sup>44</sup>

For the first subtype, where ἰδοῦ forms the focalization point for the periphrastic progressive, I have only found a single instance from the NT, example (18):

(18) καὶ ὥς ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν πορευομένου αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο παρειστήκεισαν αὐτοῖς ἐν ἐσθήσεσι λευκαῖς (Acts 1:10)

“While they were looking steadfastly into the sky as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white clothing.” (WEB)

Here, the subordinating conjunction ὥς explicitly cues a temporal coherence relation between the event denoted by the periphrastic progressive, ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν “they were

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<sup>44</sup> In this context, Björck has even suggested that the “schwach entwickelte Periodisierung des volkstümlichen Erzählungsstiles” may have stimulated the rise of the progressive construction as an alternative means of indicating background information (Björck, *Die periphrastischen Konstruktionen*, 64-65).

looking”, and the main event, that is, the appearance of two events on the scene, introduced by ἰδοῦ.<sup>45</sup> While this is similar to what we have seen in §2.1.3 (where we have encountered ἐπειδή in the subordinate clause), it may be clear that in this case semantic/pragmatic connectivity is much stronger. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the preposed adverbial clause is also anaphorically related to the preceding discourse (both the non-specified subject and the pronoun αὐτοῦ establishing a referential coherence relation with the preceding clause).<sup>46</sup>

As the pluperfect παρειστήκεισαν only makes a minor semantic contribution, I have put ‘PLQPF’ between brackets when formulating this subtype (compare §2.2.2).

ii. καὶ ἐγένετο <sub>SUBORD</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> AOR<sup>FP</sup>

[NT: Luke 9:18, 11:1 (ambig.)]

With this second subtype, which only occurs in the New Testament, the progressive is used in a subordinate clause and additionally introduced by καὶ ἐγένετο. Consider example (19), where we find an exceptional example of the periphrastic progressive infinitive:<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> It is worth noting the similarities with our previous example (15): again we find ἰδοῦ accompanied by ἀνήρ (ἄνδρες) and a form of ἴσθημι (which is typically Lucan). As noted before, ἰδοῦ has a “surprise value”: suddenly two men appear on the scene.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. again Givón’s concept of ‘coherence-bridge’ (see fn. 25).

<sup>47</sup> This is a typically Lucan usage, which goes against the general trend found in the LXX (where we mostly find subordinate clauses with a finite verb). Cf. Johannessohn, “Das biblische καὶ ἐγένετο,” 199.

(19) καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν προσευχόμενον κατὰ μόνας συνῆσαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί, καὶ ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτοὺς λέγων, Τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ὄχλοι εἶναι (Luke 9:18)

“It happened, as he was praying alone, that the disciples were with him, and he asked them, ‘Who do the multitudes say that I am?’.” (WEB)

Similarly to what we have seen in (17), καὶ ἐγένετο occurs at the beginning of a new pericope, introducing multiple circumstances,<sup>48</sup> that is, Jesus being in prayer and the disciples being with him. A temporal coherence relation of overlap between the event denoted by the periphrastic progressive εἶναι προσευχόμενον and ἐπηρώτησεν is categorically established. This coherence relation is of a ‘local’ nature, the aorist form serving as focalization point.

### iii. <sub>SUBORD</sub> PROG <sub>MAIN</sub> AOR<sup>FP</sup>

[NT: Luke 5:29]

As an illustration of a third subtype where the periphrastic progressive occurs before its focalization point in a subordinate clause, Luke 5:29 can be mentioned, printed under (20):

(20) Καὶ ἐποίησεν δοχὴν μεγάλην Λευὶς αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἦν ὄχλος πολλὸς τελωνῶν καὶ ἄλλων οἱ ἦσαν μετ’ αὐτῶν κατακείμενοι. καὶ ἐγόγγυζον οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ λέγοντες, Διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ

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<sup>48</sup> Note that the second circumstance (συνῆσαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί “the disciples were with him”) is asyndetically connected to the first (compare with our earlier example (16)).

ἀμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίετε καὶ πίνετε; καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς (Luke 5:29-31a)

“Levi made a great feast for him in his house. There was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them. Their scribes and the Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?’ Jesus answered them ... ” (WEB)

This example differs from the two previous ones in that the subordinate clause containing the periphrastic progressive is not immediately preposed to a main clause containing the focalization point, as a result of which semantic/pragmatic connectivity is somewhat lower. Rather, two events are backgrounded to the aorist form (ἀποκριθεὶς) εἶπεν: (a) tax collectors were reclining with Jesus; (b) the Pharisees murmured. The former event is expressed by the periphrastic progressive,<sup>49</sup> which thus also serves a global coherence purpose, that is, introducing the tax collectors (compare §2.2.2).

#### **2.2.4. PROG used in the main clause following a foregrounded event serving as FP**

i. MAIN(/SUBORD) AORIST/HIST PRES<sup>FP</sup> MAIN PROG

[LXX: Gen 29:2 (ambig.); 1Chr. 21:20; 1 Esd 1:49; Jer 4:24.

NT: Mark 15:40 (ambig.); Luke 8:40; Acts 10:24]

With the fourth focalized progressive type the periphrastic progressive is used in the main clause, following its focalization point. In such cases, the clause containing the

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<sup>49</sup> Compare Luke 8:32; 15:1; 24:13; Acts 8:28. For some observations on the discourse-use of the synthetic imperfect and the periphrastic progressive, see also Björck, *Die periphrastischen Konstruktionen*, 65; Amenta, *Perifrasi aspettuali*, 137-139.

periphrastic progressive gives additional information, specifying the circumstances under which the main event occurs (compare §2.1.4). Consider example (21):

(21) τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν Καισάρειαν· ὁ δὲ Κορνήλιος ἦν προσδοκῶν αὐτούς, συγκαλεσάμενος τοὺς συγγενεῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἀναγκαίους φίλους (Acts 10:24)

“On the next day they entered into Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his relatives and his near friends.” (WEB)

Having been informed about the arrival of Peter and some of the Lord's followers from Joppa (which constitutes a storyline event), it is specified by the periphrastic progressive that Cornelius was waiting for them (ἦν προσδοκῶν). There is a narrow temporal coherence relation of overlap between these two events, which is established anaphorically, εἰσῆλθεν forming the focalization point. Note that the pronoun αὐτούς also establishes an anaphoric link, but with Acts 10.23, rather than the immediately preceding clause.

## 2.2.5. PROG used in the subordinate clause following a foregrounded event serving as FP

i. <sub>MAIN</sub> AOR<sup>FP</sup> <sub>SUBORD</sub> PROG

[LXX: 2 Esd 23:22; Bel 21.

NT: Acts 2:2, 12:12]

With the fifth and final focalized type, we find the progressive construction in a subordinate clause following the focalization point. The subordinate clauses used in this type of syntactic frame are mostly non-restrictive (descriptive) relative clauses,

presenting additional information about an event in which the antecedent is involved.

Consider example (22):

(22) καὶ εἶπα τοῖς Λευίταις, οἳ ἦσαν καθαριζόμενοι καὶ ἐρχόμενοι φυλάσσοντες τὰς πύλας, ἀγιάζειν τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ σαββάτου (2 Esd 23:22)

“And I told the Levites who were purifying themselves and were coming, guarding the gates, to keep the sabbath day holy.” (NETS)

Here, the periphrastic progressive occurs in a relative subclause, giving additional information about the activity in which the Levites are involved. There is a temporal coherence relation of overlap with the foregrounded event denoted by the aorist form εἶπα, which serves as focalization point. While this resembles what we have seen in §2.1.5 (where we also encountered a relative clause), semantic/pragmatic connectivity between these two events is much stronger: the speaking occurs at the very time when they were purifying themselves.

### **3. Concluding remarks**

I have shown that the use of the periphrastic progressive in the LXX and the NT is more complex than has previously been assumed. Following recent cross-linguistic research, I have argued that we can make a broad distinction between two main uses, called ‘durative progressive’ and ‘focalized progressive’. I have furthermore argued that both durative and focalized progressives can be further subdivided into a number of types and subtypes, on the basis of the syntactic frames in which they occur (two main criteria being the occurrence of the periphrastic progressive in the main or the subordinate clause, and its occurrence before or after a foregrounded event with which it can be semantically/pragmatically related). For both uses we have encountered one syntactic

configuration which is predominant (in terms of frequency), more particularly  $\text{MAIN/SUBORD PROG}$  for the durative progressive and  $\text{MAIN PROG MAIN AORIST/HIST PRES}^{\text{FP}}$  for the focalized progressive.

As to the relationship between the LXX and the NT with regard to the use of the periphrastic progressive, my analysis clarifies that while there are a lot of commonalities between these two texts, there are also a number of important divergences (which undermines the claim that the New Testamental cases would imitate the LXX; cf. footnote (6)). Very generally, we have observed that while the focalized progressive type occurs rather infrequently in the LXX, it becomes more frequently attested in the NT. From a diachronic point of view this seems to be a common development,<sup>50</sup> but further analysis of a corpus of Post-classical texts would be needed to confirm this hypothesis. On a more concrete level, we have encountered syntactic configurations which occur almost exclusively in either the Septuagint or the New Testament, such as  $\text{καὶ ἐγένετο MAIN PROG MAIN AORIST}$  (LXX) for the durative progressive, and  $\text{καὶ ἐγένετο MAIN PROG MAIN AOR}^{\text{FP}}$  (LXX),  $\text{καὶ ἐγένετο MAIN PROG MAIN ἰδοῦ (PTCP/IMPF)}^{\text{FP}}$  (NT),  $\text{SUBORD PROG MAIN ἰδοῦ (PLQPF)}^{\text{FP}}$  (NT),  $\text{καὶ ἐγένετο SUBORD PROG MAIN AOR}^{\text{FP}}$  (NT), and  $\text{SUBORD PROG MAIN AOR}^{\text{FP}}$  (NT) for the focalized progressive.

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<sup>50</sup> Bertinetto and his colleagues refer to the semantic development *stative* → *durative progressive* → *focalized progressive* → *habitual* with the term “PROG imperfective drift” (Bertinetto, “Vers une typologie”; Bertinetto, “The progressive in Romance”; Bertinetto, Ebert and de Groot, “The progressive in Europe”). Cf. also Bentein, “PROG imperfective drift”.

As for future research, I believe that the distinction between the two main progressive uses, next to the specification of the syntactic frames in which they occur, offers an adequate conceptual framework to further investigate Aerts' bold claim with regard to the (remarkably frequent) use of the periphrastic progressive in Post-classical Christian texts that "the reminiscences of the Biblical model can clearly be discerned in all the writings mentioned, even if there is a slight difference here and there".<sup>51</sup> A preliminary analysis of the evidence found in the fourth-century *Acts of Philip* seems to indicate that it must be rejected: focalized progressives (on which Aerts seems to focus) become more frequently employed in subordinate clauses, mostly introduced by ὥς (a use which occurs remarkably infrequently in the LXX and NT, cf. my observations in §2.2.3).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Aerts, *Periphrastica*, 55-6. Aerts is almost forced to such a strong claim since he considers the use of the periphrastic progressive in the NT a 'Septuagintalism' rather than a natural development (following Tabachovitz, *Die Septuaginta und das Neue Testament*; cf. also Verboomen, *L'imparfait périphrastique*). For an entirely different view, see Björck, *Die periphrastischen Konstruktionen*; W. Dietrich, "Der Periphrastische Verbalaspekt im Griechischen und Lateinischen," *Glotta* 51 (1973) 188-228.

<sup>52</sup> For some examples, see e.g. ὥς δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἦσαν ὁμιλοῦντες ἀλλήλοις διὰ τὰ γεγονότα θαυμάσια, ἦλθεν τις πρῶτος τῆς πόλεως βοῶν καὶ λέγων (*A. Phil.* (Vat.gr. 824), 26.6-27.2) "when the people were speaking to each other about the miracles that had happened, some officary of the city came shouting and saying"; καὶ ὥς ἤμην ἀκροώμενος τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ, ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς μου εἶδον ὑμᾶς παρερχομένους (*A. Phil.* (Vat.gr. 824), 97.16-18) "and when I was listening to his words, I lifted my

#### ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

BGS = Brenton Greek Septuagint (1851)

ASV = American Standard Version (1901)

CEV = Contemporary English Version (1999)

GNB = Good News Bible (1992)

NETS = New English Translation of the Septuagint (2009)

WEB = World English Bible (2002)

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eyes and I saw you passing by”; ὡς δὲ ταῦτα ἦν λέγων ὁ Φίλιππος, καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰωάννης εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν (*A. Phil.* (Vat.gr. 824), 128.1-2) “when Philip was saying these things, behold John entered the city”.