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GENITIVE ABSOLUTE AND PLATONIC STYLE

H o l g e r T h e s l e f f

According to our grammars, the genitive absolute is a normal and neutral part of the mechanism of Greek language. It is true that it occurs in all periods of ancient Greek, from Homer down to Byzantine times, and apparently in most genres of style. Yet, apart from the fact that its external form (concentration, assonance, etc.) and its pregnant meaning make it liable to employment for specific stylistic ends, there are great fluctuations in its frequency: it is preferably used in some types of context and avoided in others. This suggests that the GA is not, after all, stylistically neutral in itself — as neutral as, say, a possessive genitive or an *εἰ* clause. It may have inherent 'stylistic' overtones owing to the genres of style or the types of context in which it is normally used.¹

E. H. SPIEKER² has made the following general observations on the occurrence of the GA: Poetry is on the whole more restrictive than prose. Homer³, Hesiod and the elegists offer few examples. Pindar has 39 instances (8 of them doubtful). Sophocles has a total of 84 cases. Generally the frequency is low in drama, both in lyric and in trimeter parts. But Eur. *Alc.* (which has much narrative) has 16 examples in trimeter, *Med.* 9 examples, *Ba.* only 3. Aristophanes has a total of some 88 cases.⁴ Attic prose offers the highest percentages, and here, as later, the GA is particularly common in narrative. Thucydides, apparently like Herodotus, has an average rate of occurrence of about 1.5 per

¹ The most common classification of such generic shades of style in Greek is 'poetic', 'prosaic', 'vulgar'. But in the case of the GA this classification is far too vague and general. For some notes on generic shades of style, see my *Studies in the styles of Plato*, *Acta Philos. Fenn.* 20, Helsinki 1967, esp. p. 27 f.

² On the so-called Genitive Absolute and its use especially in the Attic Orators, *A.J.Ph.* 6, 1885, 310—343. The notes on the frequency (314—322) include information supplied by GILDERSLEEVE, MILLER, and GOODELL.

³ J. CLASSEN, *Beobachtungen über den homerischen Sprachgebrauch*,² Frankfurt a.M. 1879, 180—183, has counted 80 cases in Homer, doublets included. Cf. H. THESLEFF, *Arctos N.S.* 2, 1958, 187 ff.

⁴ Cf. 341.

Teubner page. In Antiphon and Andokides I the rate is less than 1, in the rest of the speeches of Andokides and in most of Lysias' speeches it is considerably more than 1; but Lysias XIII, probably owing to its plain style, has a remarkably low frequency. Isokrates uses GA freely in XVI—XIX, but less in the most elaborated works. Aischines II has more GAs than I and III. Demosthenes has a very high frequency in XII and LV, but the spurious XIII and LX on the other hand show a very low frequency. Lykourgos has one third of the instances in the myth of Kodros. The frequency of GA in Plato is described as low, owing to the predominance of conversation and argumentation; we shall return to him. Of the New Testament authors, John has considerably less instances than the rest of the gospels.

Thus, according to SPIEKER, the GA is mainly a narrative device which is not so much used in description or argumentation, nor in easy conversation. He infers¹ that spoken language only employed brief GAs, and mostly fixed formulae.

This picture has to be corrected on some points. It is true that historical narrative abounds in GA: e.g. Xen. *HG.*, which is not included in SPIEKER's statistics, has an average of about 2 per Teubner page in narrative parts. Even the earliest extant piece of prose narrative, the Abu Simbel inscription (Ditt. Syll.³ 1, first half of the 6th century), has one instance. But plain story-telling and simple 'mythic' narrative on the other hand appear to be rather restrictive. The brief fragments of the logographers of course offer no reliable basis for statistics, but it is perhaps significant that there are no examples of GA in Pherekydes of Syros,² Akousilaos, Hekataios,³ and Charon, whereas Pherekydes of Athens and Hellanikos, whose style is somewhat more sophisticated, have several examples each.⁴ The extensive mythic pastiche in Plato *Prt.* 320c—322d includes no narrative GA, whereas the brief 'historical' narrative of a naval battle scene in *La.* 183d—184a has three examples. It is true that the GA is quite common in the Aesopica,⁵ but their linguistic form is late and the style is deliberately condensed.

¹ Cf. 339—342. B. L. GILDERSLEEVE, *A. J. Ph.* 9, 1888, 137—157, has some additional notes on the *σεμνότης* sometimes produced by the GA.

² The end of Vors. 7 B 5 is not a direct quotation. — Cf. the low frequency of GA in Homer.

³ Disregarding two instances in description, Hdt. 2.71 and 73 (*FGrH* 1 F 324b). For the authenticity of these passages, see SAARA LILJA, *Arctos N.S.* 5, 1967, 85—96.

⁴ Pherekydes of Athens, *FGrH* 3 F 20, 22, 35, 82; Hellanikos *FGrH* 4 F 59, 79b bis, 169a bis. As to the stylistic differences in logographic prose, see SAARA LILJA, *On the style of the earliest Greek prose, Commentationes Hum. Litt. Soc. Scient. Fenn.* 41, 3, Helsinki 1968, esp. p. 98—100.

⁵ Cf. W. SCHMID, *Gesch. d. gr. Lit.* I, 1, 679 n. 10.

In argumentation the GA is by no means as rare as SPIEKER seems to think.¹ Leaving aside the early instances, the GA is remarkably frequent e.g. in the fragments of Anaxagoras² and Zenon of Elea,³ but not very frequent in *Hp.Aer.*⁴ There are many instances in the fragments of Hippokrates of Chios which, if authentic, are the earliest example of geometrical prose.⁵ In the orators it is easy to find argumentative passages with a high frequency of GA: choosing at random *Isae.* 3.45—51 (rather less than two Teubner pages), we can count in it four instances. — It may be noted in this connection that GAs are quite common in the condensed, systematic style of laws.⁶

Pure description naturally has little occasion to use GA, whether temporal, causal, concessive, or hypothetical. Hence the prose of geographical or technical description (e.g. geographical fragments, Simon, *Hp.Oss.*) has a very low frequency of GA.

Taking a somewhat closer view of the usage of comedy, one gets the impression that the GA was decidedly avoided in easy conversation, even more so than SPIEKER's view implies. *Ar.Ach.* has the following instances: 19 (*οὔσης κυρίας ἐκκλησίας*, ceremonious formula), 183 (mock-ceremonious), 355 (*ἐμοῦ 'θέλοντος*, mock-solemn formula), 503 (*ξένων παρόντων*, ceremonious formula), 538 (in speech of Dikaiopolis), 984 (in cetics of the chorus), 1159 (lyrics, hardly colloquial); in addition, with syntactic reference (cf. below p. 120): 67 (*ἐπ' Εὐθυμένους ἄρχοντος*, administrative formula), 302 (*σοῦ . . . λέγοντος . . . οὐκ ἀκούσομαι*, colloquial, cf. 337), 547—554 (extensive

Genitive absolute in Plato Table of statistics

The 'late group' has been distinguished from the 'early and middle groups' and the *spuria*.⁷ — In counting the instances of pure GA I have followed the same principles as SPIEKER (p. 320 n. 1): "Every case of a noun and an accompanying participle has been regarded as one example (including, of course, cases where the subject is omitted); where, therefore, several

¹ His view is probably biased by his assumption that the GA originated in a temporal genitive. In *Arctos N.S.* 2, 1958, 187 ff. I have argued that the GA is predominantly ablative (separative) in origin and, consequently, that the causal shade of meaning is old.

² Vors. 59 B 1, 4 (five instances, twice *τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων*), 5, 9, 13.

³ Vors. 29 B 2, four instances.

⁴ I have counted 19 instances, 8 of them in chapter 10.

⁵ Simpl. CAG 9, p. 60—60 (printed in MARIA TIMPANARO CARDINI's *Pitagorici*, II, 42 ff.); note *τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων* p. 65 bis. If not authentic, the fragments reflect the style of Eudemos whom Simplicius is quoting.

⁶ In the Laws of Gortyn (BUCK 110) e.g. 2.49, 10.35, 12.26, apart from formulae such as 5.2 *πατρὸς δόντος*, 11.49 *παριόντος τὸ δικαστᾶ*.

⁷ Cf. my Studies (above), 13—25.

participles accompany one noun, or vice versa, the whole has been treated as one example." Some allowance must be made of accidental omissions and subjectivity of judgment, especially regarding the question of 'syntactic reference'. — A Stephanus page and a consecutively printed Teubner page are approximately in the ratio of 5:4.

	Number of pure GA	Including instances with synt.ref. ¹	Average per 10 Steph. pages		Number of pure GA	Including instances with synt.ref.	Average per 10 Steph. pages
<i>Hp. Mi.</i>	2	(7)	1 (5)	<i>Ti.</i>	111	(130)	15 (18)
<i>Ion.</i>	5	(11)	4 (9)	<i>Criti.</i>	11	(12)	7 (8)
<i>La.</i>	9	(15)	4 (6)	<i>Sph.</i>	26	(29)	5 (6)
<i>Cri.</i>	14	(16)	13 (15)	<i>Plt.</i>	38	(47)	7 (9)
<i>Ap.</i>	14	(28)	6 (11)	<i>Phlb.</i>	22	(33)	4 (6)
<i>Mx.</i>	15	(18)	10 (12)	<i>Ep. 7</i>	32	(41)	11 (15)
<i>Grg.</i>	40	(72)	5 (9)	<i>Lg. I</i>	26	(30)	10 (12)
<i>Men.</i>	19	(25)	6 (8)	II	12	(14)	5 (6)
<i>Euthphr.</i>	5	(8)	4 (6)	III	26	(30)	10 (11)
<i>Cra.</i>	30	(36)	5 (6)	IV	15	(20)	7 (10)
<i>Ly.</i>	11	(15)	6 (8)	V	21	(23)	10 (11)
<i>Chrm.</i>	12	(23)	5 (10)	VI	27	(29)	8 (9)
<i>Prt.</i>	29	(42)	5 (8)	VII	35	(36)	10 (10)
<i>Euthd.</i>	10	(18)	3 (5)	VIII	22	(24)	10 (11)
<i>Phd.</i>	45	(69)	8 (11)	IX	25	(30)	9 (10)
<i>Smp.</i>	41	(60)	8 (12)	X	20	(27)	8 (10)
<i>Prm.</i>	18	(38)	5 (10)	XI	22	(25)	9 (10)
<i>Tht.</i>	21	(44)	3 (6)	XII	19	(21)	7 (8)
<i>Phdr.</i>	45	(59)	8 (11)	<i>Epin.</i>	19	(20)	10 (10)
<i>R. I</i>	5	(8)	3 (4)	<i>Just.</i>	—	—	—
II	8	(12)	3 (5)	<i>Virt.</i>	—	—	—
III	7	(10)	3 (4)	<i>Hp. Ma.</i>	9	(12)	4 (5)
IV	13	(20)	5 (7)	<i>Hipp.</i>	1	(3)	1 (4)
V	19	(24)	6 (8)	<i>Thg.</i>	5	(7)	5 (7)
VI	16	(23)	6 (8)	<i>Alc. 1</i>	23	(27)	7 (8)
VII	12	(14)	5 (6)	2	9	(17)	7 (13)
VIII	20	(24)	8 (9)	<i>Amat.</i>	7	(8)	10 (11)
IX	5	(12)	3 (6)	<i>Clit.</i>	3	(5)	6 (11)
X	11	(15)	4 (6)	<i>Sis.</i>	—	(1)	— (2)
				<i>Min.</i>	2	(4)	2 (5)
				<i>Erx.</i>	6	(8)	4 (6)
				<i>Ep. 1</i>	5	(5)	
				2	4	(5)	
				3	10	(11)	
				4	2	(2)	
				5	—	—	
				6	2	(3)	
				8	9	(11)	
				9	1	(1)	
				10	—	—	
				11	1	(2)	
				12	—	—	
				13	—	(1)	

¹ Cf. p. 120.

descriptive list, perhaps colloquial style overdone), 894 (pathetic). *Ar.Ra.*: 127 (βούλει . . . ταχείαν (sc. ὁδόν) σοι φράσω; — νῆ τὸν Δί' ὡς ὄντος γε μὴ βαδιστικοῦ, idiomatically colloquial, cf. below p. 123), 414 (lyr., hardly coll.), 815 (lyr., non-coll.), 820 (lyr., non-coll.), 1062 (anapests, hardly coll.), 1111 (lyr., with ὡς, possibly a colloquial phrase underlying), 1499 (lyr., hardly coll.); with syntactic reference: 88 (apparently colloquial), 361 (anap., hardly coll.), 1028 (anap.), 1071 (anap.), 1085 (anap.), 1118 (lyr., with ὡς, colloquial). *Men.Dysc.*: 14—15 bis (narrative of the prologue, hardly colloquial); with syntactic reference: 40 (prol., hardly coll.), 657 (pathetic). Thus it seems that instances of really absolute genitives, without overtones of literary or formal style, are extremely rare in comedy: no instance in *Ar.Ach.*, one in *Ra.*, and none in *Men.Dysc.* After all, was the GA ever productively current in colloquial Attic?

It may be of some interest to see what support can be found in Plato to the suggestions made above. His wide register of styles may also offer some further clues to the stylistic shades of the GA and, vice versa, the results obtained may add to the interpretation of particular passages.¹

If it is true that the GA is a sophisticated device of literary or formal diction rather than a colloquial construction, we should perhaps expect it to be much more common in Plato's late works than in his early works. At a first glance the table of statistics does not seem to answer to such expectations. Obviously the GA is not a characteristic of Plato's 'late style'. On the whole there is a slight increase in its frequency, but there are considerable fluctuations, and distinct tops are reached in the early *Crito* and the late *Timaeus*.

However, a closer analysis of the instances in *Cri.* will remind us of the elusiveness of general statistics in the case of Plato who incessantly varies his style. Of the 16 instances 6 occur in the final speech of the *Laws* which is clearly rhetorical² The rest consist of the following: 43c ἢ τὸ πλοῖον ἀφίηται ἐκ Δήλου οὐ δεῖ ἀφικομένου τεθνάναι με; (grave, probably somewhat ceremonious, following a statement by Kriton in a similar style), 44c . . . ὡς σὺ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἠθέληκας ἀπιέναι ἐνθένδε ἡμῶν προθυμουμένων (Kriton, dignified, trying to persuade Socrates), 47d ἄρα βιωτὸν ἡμῖν ἐστι διεφθαρμένου αὐτοῦ; (intellectual argument), 48c ἐμὲ ἐνθένδε πειροῦσθαι ἐξιέναι μὴ ἀφιέντων

¹ For Plato's variation of style, cf. the general observations made in my *Studies* (above).

² Cf. my *Studies* (above), 118. — The instances are: 52a, c bis, 53d, 54a bis.

^ρΑθηναίων (probably solemn, note the lack of article), 48d εἴ πη ἔχεις ἀντιλέγειν ἐμοῦ λέγοντος (argumentative idiom, cf. below), 48e ὡς χρὴ ἐνθένδε ἀκόντων ^ρΑθηναίων ἐμὲ ἀπιέναι (solemn, cf. above),¹ *ibid.* μὴ ἄκοντος (playful reference to the preceding instance), 49d ἀρχόμεθα ἐντεῦθεν βουλευόμενοι ὡς οὐδέποτε ὀρθῶς ἔχοντος οὔτε τοῦ ἀδικεῖν οὔτε τοῦ ἀνταδικεῖν (intellectual argument). With ὑπέρ 50b (rhetorical). Once with θαυμάζω: 50c εἰ οὖν αὐτῶν θαυμάζομεν λεγόντων (possibly colloquial).

The last two instances require a note. It quite commonly happens in Greek that a genitive with a participle attached to it seems to depend syntactically on another word in the context. SPIEKER (p. 327) is inclined to prefer the absolute interpretation of such instances in classical Greek. True enough, to some extent they must have suggested a GA, though the strength of the syntactic dependence of the genitive probably varied from case to case and may sometimes have been more significant than the absolute notion. Participles of λέγω are common in 'pure' GAs, and hence *Cri.* 50c naturally suggests GA, though the θαυμάζομεν inserted in it is certainly relevant. *Chrm.* 173b ἐκ δὴ τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων has very strong associations with the common GA formula τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων.² But for instance *Cra.* 390d νομοθέτου . . . (sc. ἔργον ἐστὶν ποιῆσαι) ὄνομα, ἐπιστάτην ἔχοντος διαλεκτικὸν ἄνδρα can hardly have suggested a GA in the first place, in spite of the fact that there is a predominantly absolute participle construction in a similar context just before: *ibid.* τέκτονος . . . ἔργον ἐστὶν ποιῆσαι πηδάλιον ἐπιστατοῦντος κυβερνήτου. It is often impossible for us to determine which notion, syntactic dependence or independence, was predominant. Those cases that seem to me somehow related to the absolute construction I shall class as 'GA with syntactic reference'.

Now, as we have seen that pure GA in *Cri.* appears to occur only in passages of rhetorical, argumentative or solemn style, we may with some confidence examine the rest of the early and middle dialogues from the same point of view. In general the stylistic variations are quite manifest in these writings,³ and so the colouring of the context may help in determining the shade of the GA. In the late works such variations are not so obvious.

First the speeches. *Mx.* has a high frequency of GA, evidently owing to its rhetorical style. It should be noted that the only GA in the dialogic introduc-

¹ ἐκόν and ἄκων will here be treated as participles.

² Examples from rhetorical prose in SPIEKER 339.

³ Cf. my *Studies* (above), *passim*.

tion has syntactic reference: 236a Ἀσπασίας δὲ καὶ χθρὲς ἡκροώμην περαινούσης ἐπιτάφιον λόγον (with a somewhat mock-solemn ἡκροώμην for ἡκονον). *Ap.* has a lower frequency; here Plato has introduced a certain degree of Socratic naïveté, but the GAs still sound rhetorical, e.g. 18c ἀπολογουμένου οὐδενός, d μηδενός ἀποκρινομένου, 32b καὶ ἐτοίμων ὄντων ἐνδεικνύναι . . . τῶν ῥητόρων καὶ ὑμῶν κελευόντων . . . The more or less formal speeches inserted in the other writings often include what would seem to be rhetorical or argumentative GAs, e.g. *La.* 182a, 188b (Σωκράτους παρόντος), *Grg.* 464b bis, c, 465c, d, e bis, 483a, 484b bis, 508c (τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων), *Men.* 81c, *Chrm.* 156e, 157a, *Prt.* 313a, 325b bis, 350d, e, 355a (τούτου οὕτω ἔχοντος), d bis, e, *Phd.* 87a bis, c, d, 108a, c, 113d (τούτων δὲ οὕτως πεφυκότων), 180c, d, 184e, 185a bis, *Phdr.* 230e, 232b ter, 234a (v.l.), b, e, 237e, 238a, b, 239a, 240a, d, e, 241b, *R.I.* 340e, IV. 421c. In *Smp.* the speech of Pausanias has the largest proportion of this kind of GA (8 instances including 3 with syntactic reference). Similarly large proportions occur in *Phdr.* in the speech of 'Lysias' (9 instances, 3 with syntactic reference) and the first speech of Socrates (10 instances, 1 with syntactic reference). Plato evidently felt the GA to be appropriate to rhetorical argumentation.

In dialogue parts GA also quite often accompanies argumentation. On the whole argumentative passages which include GAs tend to concentration and abstraction rather than to conversational slackness or play. There are occasional examples of this in the early writings, e.g. *La.* 198a where Socrates resumes the elenchus after a very lively interlude: σὺ δέ, Νικία, λέγε ἡμῖν πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς . . . οὐκοῦν καὶ σὺ τοῦτο ἀπεκρίνω ὡς μόριον, ὄντων δὴ καὶ ἄλλων μερῶν, ἃ ξύμπαντα ἀρετὴ κέκληται; Cf. *La.* 192e, *Grg.* 498ab, *Men.* 78b, 85d, *Ly.* 217d, e bis, 218d, *Chrm.* 166a, 174d. In *Phd.* there are several examples, e.g. 80b τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων, 94b, 101b, 102d, 103d bis. The very abstract argument in the latter part of *Prm.* includes many instances such as 149b καὶ οὕτω δὴ αἰεὶ ἐνός προσγιγνομένου μία καὶ ἅψις προσγίγνεται, c οὐκ ἄρα ἔνεστιν ἀριθμὸς ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἐνός μὴ ἐνότος ἐν αὐτοῖς. *Tht.* and *R.* III—X also offer quite a number of examples, e.g. *Tht.* 152b, 154b, 155b, *R.* III. 409e, 410e, V. 450d, VI. 508e, 509b, 510c, 511d, X. 610b, 611a. — In *Cra.* the etymologies are often presented with a GA introduced by ὡς, e.g. 403a 412a, b, 413e. Here, too, the tone is argumentative and not markedly colloquial.

The type ἐμοῦ (σοῦ) λέγοντος (εἰπόντος, ἐρομένου) seems to have an

idiomatic use in lively argumentation, as *Grg.* 451c καὶ εἴ τις τὴν ἀστρονομίαν ἀνέροιτο, ἐμοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι . . . , οἱ δὲ λόγοι οἱ τῆς ἀστρονομίας . . . περὶ τί εἰσιν . . . , εἴποιμ' ἂν ὅτι . . . , *Euthphr.* 7c ἴσως οὐ πρόχειρόν σοί ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἐμοῦ λέγοντος σκόπει εἰ . . . , ἀρα . . . , cf. *Ion* 538d σκέψαι δὴ σοῦ ἐρομένου, εἰ ἔροίό με . . . , and further e.g. *Hp.Mi.* 369e, *Grg.* 458e, 460e, 469c, 481e bis, *Men.* 72b, 74c, *Prt.* 343d, 353a, *Tht.* 201d, *Phdr.* 243d, *R.* II. 370a, VI. 501e, VII. 523c. The idiom occurs both in colloquial passages and in contexts of abstract style. At any rate it is part of Plato's technique of argumentation.

In abstract argumentation there occurs further a specific type of GA with syntactic reference: *Grg.* 509c δυοῖν οὖν ὄντων, τοῦ ἀδικεῖν τε καὶ ἀδικεῖσθαι, μεῖζον μὲν φαμεν κακὸν τὸ ἀδικεῖν, cf. 477b, 478d, 490a, *Men.* 85a, 99b, *Ly.* 220c, *Prt.* 359a, *Euthd.* 281e, *Phd.* 71a, *Prm.* 129a, 143d, e bis, *Tht.* 187c, *R.* IV. 434b, etc.

Occasionally Platonic GAs clearly suggest other kinds of formal style: *Grg.* 521e κατηγοροῦντος ὀψοποιοῦ (play with forensic term), *Men.* 90a πατρὸς . . . Ἀνθεμίωνος, ὅς ἐγένετο πλούσιος οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου οὐδὲ δόντος τινός (mock-ceremonious, play with legal term), *Euthphr.* 4d ἀνδροφόνου γε ὄντος τοῦ ἀποθανόντος (Euthyphron, forensic), e τούτων οὕτω πραχθέντων (Socrates, mock-forensic), *Prt.* 319c κελευόντων τῶν πρυτάνεων (formal and ceremonious), *Phd.* 116c ἀναγκαζόντων τῶν ἀρχόντων (formal and ceremonious), *Smp.* 175a ἐμοῦ καλοῦντος (in formal reply by a slave), 223a Σωκράτους παρόντος τῶν καλῶν μεταλαβεῖν ἀδύνατον ἄλλω (probably a touch of solemn declaration),¹ *R.* V. 461b εἰάν τις . . . μὴ συνέρξαντος ἄρχοντος ἄπτηται . . . (legal).

The GA is sometimes employed in strict and formal narrative in Plato's early and middle works. As was mentioned above, Laches' brief account of a battle episode includes three instances of narrative GA, *La.* 183d, e, 184a. Note further *Smp.* 174c (mock-didactic narrative), 219c, 220b bis, e, 221a (all in the speech of Alkibiades),² *Phdr.* 228c (sophisticated narrative), *R.* III. 393e (report of the contents of Il.I in a formal style). Sometimes myths and similar pieces of visionary narrative have GAs: *Smp.* 209b (speech of Diotima), *Phdr.* 247e, 251b bis, 254b, d, 255a ter (all in the second speech of Socrates),

¹ Cf. 214d bis, where the first instance, in spite of its colloquial context, has a solemn tone: note ἢ θεὸν ἢ ἄνθρωπον. In 217c οὐδενὸς παρόντος is emphatic and pregnant, so also *Prt.* 309b παρόντος ἐκείνου, *Phdr.* 228e παρόντος δὲ καὶ Λυσίου, 244a παρόντος ἐραστοῦ.

² The first instance occurs in a pathetic passage addressing the 'judges', the rest occur in the narrative of Socrates' achievements in war.

259b bis (myth), 274d bis (myth), *R.* II. 359d, e bis (myth), III. 390b (myth), VI. 498b (visionary), X. 614b, d, 616a, 619b (concluding myth). But the extensive pastiche in *Prt.* and the eschatological myths in *Grg.* and *Phd.* have no narrative GA. It is also significant that the easy-going everyday style of the opening narrative in *Prt.* does not admit GAs. On the other hand, when the reporting narrative in the middle dialogues tends to concentration and strictness, as it often does after the opening scenes, GAs may occur in it. Mostly such GAs are of the type εἰπόντος αὐτοῦ, αὐτοῦ ἐρωτήσαντος, cf. *Ly.* 211c, 223b, *Chrm.* 155c, e, *Prt.* 334c, 337a, c, 339e, 348b, c, *Euthd.* 272e, 275b, d, 276b, 283d, *Phd.* 69e, 84c, 115b, 118a, *Smp.* 174d, 176a bis, 185c, 198a, 212c, 214a, 222c, 223b, c, d, *Prm.* 127a, d, 130a bis, 136e, *R.* I. 338a. Perhaps it can be inferred that narrative GA is a literary device.

When looking for examples of GA in obviously colloquial contexts, we may first note a very common type with syntactic reference: genitive and participle with ἀκούω and similar verbs, e.g. *Ion* 536d εἴ μου ἀκούσαις λέγοντος περὶ Ὀμήρου, *La.* 193e, *Grg.* 451e, *Euthd.* 285e bis. There is no reason for doubting that this usage was well-established in colloquial Attic.

It is, furthermore, reasonable to infer that GAs with syntactic reference to other words, and introduced by ὡς or ἄτε, were freely used in ordinary conversation. Such instances as the following sound rather colloquial: *Grg.* 489a . . . παρὰ σοῦ, ἄτε ἱκανοῦ ἀνδρὸς διαγινῶναι ὠμολογηκός, *Euthd.* 273e . . . περὶ ὑμῶν . . . ὡς τὸ πολὺ τοῦτο δεινοῖν ὄντων, 295d ἐπειτά μου ἦττον ἐπιμελεῖται ὡς ἀμαθοῦς ὄντος. Cf. e.g. *Grg.* 499c, 500b, *Prt.* 349e, *Phd.* 66a, 115e, *Smp.* 190b (speech of Aristophanes), *Tht.* 191a, *Phdr.* 242e, *R.* IV. 433 e.

Without syntactic reference, the type *Euthd.* 295b, *Prm.* 137c ὡς ἀποκρινομένου ἐρώτα ("ask me, I'll answer") is occasionally found in lively dialogue.¹ At the end of *Chrm.* there occur two successive instances, both with the imperative implied: 176b . . . ἦν ἐπάδειν παρέχης Σωκράτει καὶ μὴ ἀπολείπη . . . — ὡς ἀκολουθήσοντος . . . καὶ μὴ ἀπολειπομένου, c — βιάση ἄρα . . . ; — ὡς βιασομένου . . . πρὸς ταῦτα σὺ αὖ βουλεύου. Cf. *Cra.* 428a θαρρῶν λέγε . . . ὡς ἐμοῦ ἐνδεξομένου, *Grg.* 495c, *Chrm.* 165b, *Euthd.* 285d, *Phd.* 77e, 96a, 100c, *R.* I. 327c, V. 458b, 471e. This usage is clearly idiomatic, and its colloquial flavour is beyond doubt.

But apart from these usages GAs are extremely rare in colloquial contexts. This fact, together with the indications considered above, entitles us to try to

¹ Cf. KÜHNER—GERTH II 93 ff., SPIEKER 334 f.

interpret the remaining instances of GA in a colloquial or otherwise informal context as carrying a shade of literary or formal style.

In most cases such an interpretation seems to make good sense. For instance, in the opening of *Hr.Mi.*, σὺ δὲ δὴ τί σιγᾶς, ὦ Σώκρατες, Ἰππίου τοσαῦτα ἐπιδειξαμένον, the GA must be somewhat pompous. In *Ion* 541e πάλαι ἐμοῦ λιπαροῦντος, mock-pomposity adds to the pathos of the passage. In *La.* 180e the GA suits the dignified style of old Lysimachos, and a somewhat similar style is adopted by Socrates in the first part of the dialogue: this is reflected by the GA in 185a. In *Grg.* 461a the GA adds to the weight of the conclusion of the Gorgias episode. In *Men.* 76b κὰν κατακεκαλυμμένος τις γνοίη, ὦ Μένων, διαλεγόμενον σου, ὅτι καλὸς εἶ, the GA resumes the playful solemnity of κατακεκαλυμμένος. In *Men.* 89b οὐδὲς ἡμεῖς ἂν παραλαβόντες ἐκείνων ἀποφηνάντων ἐφυλάττομεν ἐν ἀκροπόλει, Socrates plays with political jargon. In *Euthphr.* 3b, ὡς οὖν καινοτομοῦντός σου περὶ τὰ θεῖα is more formal than Socrates' preceding words, ὡς καινοῦς ποιοῦντα θεοῦς. *Chrm.* 163d ὦ Κριτία, . . . καὶ εὐθὺς ἀρχομένου σου σχεδὸν ἐμάνθανον τὸν λόγον, ὅτι . . . is probably mock-solemn: Socrates refers to the impression that Kritias' speech has made on him. In the myth of Protagoras, 320d νείμαντος δέ μου, ἔφη, ἐπίσκεπαι, the GA adds to the 'archaic' concentration of the utterance. In *Prt.* 339c οἶσθα οὖν . . . ὅτι προϊόντος τοῦ ἄσματος λέγει που, Protagoras is speaking *ex cathedra* (cf. below, *Phdr.* 238d). In *Euthd.* 301a ἀλλὰ τίνα τρόπον, ἔφη, ἑτέρου ἑτέρῳ παραγενομένου τὸ ἕτερον ἕτερον ἂν εἶη; the abstract question of Dionysodoros makes a comical contrast to the colloquial context. In *Phd.* 117a . . . οἶμαι . . . γέλωτα ὀφλήσειν παρ' ἐμαυτῶ, γλιχόμενος τοῦ ζῆν καὶ φειδόμενος οὐδένοσ ἐτι ἐνόητος, the GA gives a special solemn emphasis to Socrates' last point. In *Smp.* 173a μὴ σκῶπτ', ἔφη, ἀλλ' εἰπέ μοι πότε ἐγένετο ἡ συνουσία αὕτη. κἀγὼ εἶπον ὅτι παίδων ὄντων ἡμῶν ἔτι, ὅτε τῇ πρώτῃ τραγωδία ἐνίκησεν Ἀγάθων, τῇ ὑστεραία ἢ ἢ τὰ ἐπινίκια ἔθνευ αὐτός τε καὶ οἱ χορευταί, the formal matter-of-factness of the reply stands out from the playful context; the reply is important: Plato wants to emphasize the distance which he is keeping to the events recorded. *Smp.* 194b offers a sequence of participles in mock-panegyric. In *Tht.* 151d Theaitetos adopts a solemn tone in answer to a speech of Socrates. In *Phdr.* 238d ὥστε ἐὰν πολλάκις νυμφόληπτος προϊόντος τοῦ λόγου γένωμαι, μὴ θαυμάσης, Socrates is likely to play with literary allusions.¹

¹ The type προϊόντος τοῦ λόγου or χρόνου occurs several times in rhetorical prose, see SPIEKER 340.

In addition to the idiomatic types already mentioned, I have found in Plato only one instance of a GA which obviously does not carry a shade of formal or literary style: *R. I.* 350d ἄτε καὶ θέρους ὄντος. The context is a piece of lively background narrative, and literary allusions are out of the question. Apparently this is a colloquial idiom corresponding to the formula χειμῶνος ὄντος which is found five times in Aristophanes (SPIEKER p. 340).

Though, as we have seen, the GA is not a characteristic of Plato's 'late style', it can be said to contribute to the solemn, rhetorical and intellectual traits of this specific diction. Already in *Phd.* and *R. II—X* the majority of instances occur in argumentative passages of heavy style. In the late works this is the rule. The high frequency of GA in *Ti.*, as compared with e.g. *Phlb.*, probably indicates that Plato felt the GA to be more appropriate to a continuous exposition than to dialogue.

The use of GA in the spurious works offers very little that is worth notice. Some of the dialogues, especially *Alc. 2*, perhaps conform to rhetorical standards somewhat more than Plato's early dialogues. Most of the letters are clearly rhetorical, and this seems to account for the high frequency of GA in them.

To sum up: In classical Greek the genitive absolute appears to be a device of formal or literary style. It is commonly employed in formal or strict narrative and in rhetorical or otherwise formal argumentation, and in various legal and ceremonious contexts. Most of the instances in Plato have to be interpreted according to these rules. Colloquial Attic admitted a free use of constructions resembling a GA in syntactic dependence of ἀκούω and similar verbs and, with ὡς or ἄτε, in syntactic dependence of other words. The type ὡς ἀποκρινόμενον ἐρώτα and occasional idioms such as (ἄτε) θέρους ὄντος, perhaps ἐμοῦ λέγοντος, are also colloquial. But on the whole the GA was not an organic part of everyday speech.