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CHAPTER 12

Conclusion part III

In this part of the dissertation, I adapted the methods used in the study of *ergens* and the conclusions drawn from that study for use in the study of a dead language. In order to have access to interpretations that were independent from my personal analysis, I used academic translations of the Greek texts in three languages. In addition, I carefully studied the collocations and contextual characteristics of $\pi\omicron\upsilon$. On the basis of these two sources of information, I have given a description of $\pi\omicron\upsilon$. The first descriptive chapter of this part was based on a synchronic corpus of prose texts from the classical period. This prose corpus was compared to a more diachronic corpus in chapter 10 in order to find out how the various uses of $\pi\omicron\upsilon$ may have developed and to test the hypotheses on the use of $\pi\omicron\upsilon$ against a corpus on which these hypotheses were not based. In chapter 11, I compared the contextual characteristics and uses of *ergens* and $\pi\omicron\upsilon$. Now I will summarize the results from the previous chapters.

12.1 The description of synchronic $\pi\omicron\upsilon$

In the chapter on synchronic $\pi\omicron\upsilon$, I discussed the contextual characteristics of $\pi\omicron\upsilon$ and its implications for the interpretations of the particle. On the basis of the results of the study of *ergens*, I took a corpus linguistic approach to the study of the properties of the context in which $\pi\omicron\upsilon$ occurs.

I found evidence for three types of interpretations of $\pi\omicron\upsilon$ in the Attic authors.

1. a locative interpretation 'somewhere, anywhere'
2. a generalizing locative interpretation 'some ... somewhere' (i.e. 'the specifics do not matter')
3. a modal interpretation¹

The first interpretation showed clear contextual characteristics like the presence of locative verbs, adverbs and prepositions. The second interpretation is often accompanied by the indefinite pronoun *τις* 'some, someone, something, somehow, εἰ 'if, whether' or, less frequently, by ἢ 'or'.

It was harder to describe the characteristics of the modal use of *που*. Although there was variation in the translations of *που*, the translations of modal *που* shared one characteristic. In most cases, the translations chosen showed a positive argumentative orientation. That is, the translators chose translations which generally aim to evoke conclusions associated with the truth of the statement in the addressee. The most frequent translations were in English: *surely, I presume, of course*, in French: *j'imagine, sans doute, à plus forte raison* and in German: *doch, doch wohl, wohl, sicherlich*. A type of translation that was found in all languages were those presenting the information as accessible to the speaker as in English: *of course, you know, as you know*, French: *bien sûr, tu le sais, vous le savez* and German: *natürlich, wisst ihr wohl, bekanntlich, selbstverständlich*.

The forms that were frequently found in the direct environment of *που* directed us in a comparable direction. Almost 40% of the instances of modal *που* was directly preceded by the particle *δή*, which, according to most descriptions of the particle, is said to mark that the content of the statement is evident. The collocation *δή που* is so frequent, that Denniston even discusses it separately from *που*. He says that this collocation can be rendered best by 'of course'.

Another form which is frequently collocated with *που* is ἤ (23 times out of 304 modal instances of *που*, i.e. 8%). In the prose texts, the combination ἤ *που* is most frequently found in *a fortiori* arguments and preceded by conditional clauses. In tragedy and comedy, the collocation is most frequently found to mark an inference that is drawn from (recently received) new information. The former use may perhaps be seen as a more specific use of the latter.

A last collocation is the adverb *πάντως* 'in all respects, certainly', which is sometimes added to *δή που*, but can also be used with *που* alone. This combination is often found in answers.

A more diverse group of characteristics is found among the predicates. The most frequent predicates with *που* are copula constructions with adjectives like *ἀδύνατον* 'impossible', *δῆλον* 'clear' and *ἀναγκαῖον* 'necessary', verbs of knowing like *οἶδα* and *γινώσκω*, *δεῖ* 'there is need, must' and verbs of saying. Especially the frequent presence of the verbs *οἶδα* and *γινώσκω*, which occurred significantly more often than

¹For the *about/around* interpretation, which is found in Herodotus, there was no convincing evidence neither in the diachronic corpus nor in the synchronic prose corpus.

expected on the basis of chance², drew our attention, because verbs of knowing generally imply that the information presented is an irrefutable fact or a generally shared value or belief.

The types of contexts in which *που* is regularly found are the following. As we already saw above, *που* is found in arguments and inferences and in answers to obvious questions (e.g. πάντως δήπου). It is also found in obvious or trivial statements as was described by Sicking (1993, 57-59), in (fatalistic) statements about the gods (Wackernagel, 1885) and in incredulous and reluctant questions, as is noted by Deniston.

What all these types of contexts seem to have in common, is that the speaker implies that the information he provides is accessible to the addressee via reasoning, inference or by shared moral values and knowledge of the world. This suggests that the function of *που* may have been more interactional than the purely epistemic interpretation *I present this statement as true*. The function of *που* may have been to acknowledge that the information provided is, according to the speaker, accessible to the addressee. This would explain its use in argumentation, since if one suggests that the information provided is generally known or inferable, the addressee is less likely to be critical towards that information, because he does not want to deviate from the norm. In answers to trivial questions *που* may have been used to mark that speaker and addressee both know that this was shared information.

If a speaker states something that is already known to the addressee, the inference would be that the speaker thinks that the addressee did not have that information, which in the case of an obvious statement may imply that the speaker thinks the addressee is not very smart. If, for the sake of an argument, the speaker wants to provide that information anyway, he may want to mark that he is aware that the information is not new to the addressee. This can of course also be used rhetorically to suggest that the addressee should know something.

In sentences expressing indignation, the speaker may want to mark that the moral values that cause the indignation are shared between the speaker and the addressee.

This more interactional interpretation of *που* does not change the conclusion that *που* had a positive argumentative orientation, but it would explain much of the use and the contextual characteristics of the particle, such as the collocation with *δή* and *ἦ*, the frequent presence of verbs of knowing and many other characteristics that were discussed. Therefore, in view of the evidence, it seems that the function of modal *που* was to express that the speaker thinks that what he states is true and that this is (or should be) accessible knowledge to the addressee.

12.2 The development of modal *που*

In the section on the development of modal *που*, I studied works from the following authors (fragments excluded): Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and

²Together with *ἐπίσταμαι* they occurred 20 times out of 304 modal instances of *που* (7%).

Aristophanes.

In the earliest texts there were already modal instances of *που*, but not all collocations and constructions were yet in place. The collocation *δή που*, for instance, does not yet seem to be a collocation in Homer and Hesiod. However, in the earliest tragedies *δή που* does seem to already have its collocational value.

It seems that already in the earliest texts there were basically three uses of *που*:

1. the locative use
2. the weak locative use with a generalizing function
3. the modal use with a positive argumentative orientation and the suggestion that the addressee has access to the information provided (by means of reasoning or knowledge of the world)

The modal use may have arisen as an inference on the basis of the larger context, but that cannot really be shown, because the development probably took place before the textual transmission started. The weak locative use seems to have arisen in contexts with other indefinite markers like *τις* and possibly also in *εἰ* ('if, whether')-clauses, which describe generally occurring or repetitive situations and *ἢ...ἢ...* 'either... or' clauses.

The locative use of *που* is generally marked by locative markers like verbs implying a place, locative adverbs and locative prepositions. The weak locative use may also be accompanied by locative markers, but is most frequently found with the indefinite *τις*, the conjunction *εἰ* 'if, whether' and *ἢ...ἢ...* 'either... or' clauses. The modal examples are, especially in later times, accompanied by *δή*, *ἦ* and mental state predicates like verbs of knowing. In later times, they are also frequently found in assertive sentences with the copula. In general, modal *που* is found in sentences which contain information that can either be deduced by inference or which is already accessible to the addressee for other reasons. In poetic texts this can be seen, for example, in its use in fatalistic statements about the gods.

12.3 A comparison of Dutch *ergens* and Ancient Greek *που*

The comparison of the contextual characteristics of *ergens* and *που* shows that although they seem to have had the same starting point, the modal uses of the two particles may not have been completely comparable. With respect to the locative interpretation, they seem to be quite alike. Both forms seem to be triggered by locative verbs, adverbs and prepositions. Also, the generalizing function of the locative interpretation seems to be shared, although its combination with conditionals is confined to *που*. The *about/around* interpretation may have existed only in the Ionian dialect. That is, there is no compelling evidence that it also existed in the Attic dialect. We also lack compelling evidence for the existence of a temporal interpretation of *που* and for a *somehow* interpretation. There are instances in which it would be possible to interpret *που* in this way, but there is no positive evidence that *που* really had this interpretation.

The comparison between modal *ergens* and modal $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$ has shown that although both particles have the same origin and both developed a modal use, this modal use is probably not the same. The Greek particle $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$ is less frequently combined with mental state predicates, first person verbs and subjective copula constructions. In other words, $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$ seems much less connected to the mental space of the speaker than is the case for modal *ergens*. On the other hand, *ergens* is not frequently found together with ‘evidently’ or in arguments, factual statements, conclusions, (fatalistic) statements about god(s) and in incredulous questions.

In addition, we do not find many instances of metaphorically locative uses of $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$. The lack of metaphorical uses of locative $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$ and the differences in the contextual characteristics between modal *ergens* and modal $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$ strongly suggest that Dutch *ergens* and Ancient Greek $\pi\upsilon\upsilon$ developed different modal functions from a highly comparable starting point.

