The Syntax of Greek and Latin 4: Displaced and discontinuous constituents
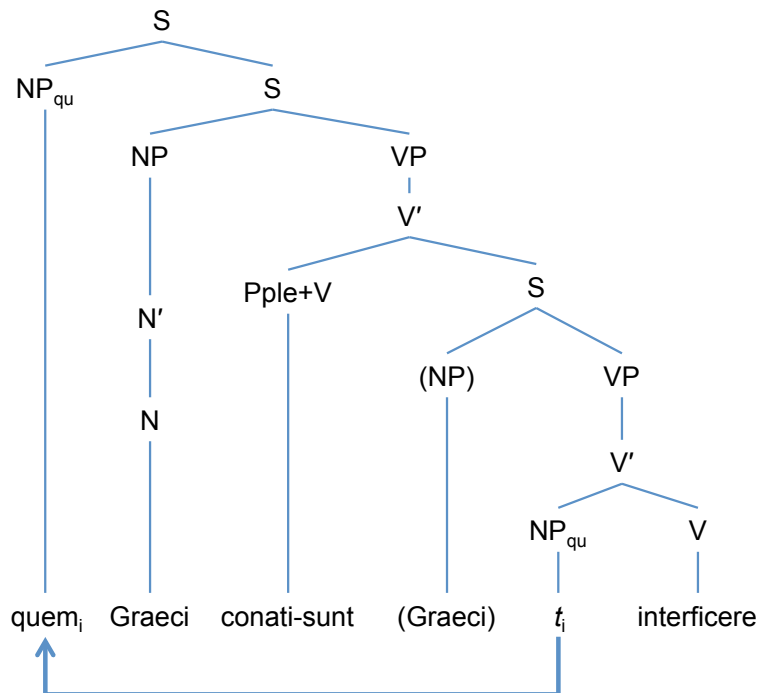
1   Displaced constituents

- We expect subject to appear next to VP in S, object to appear next to V in VP etc. …
- … but many constituents normally appear in positions other than those predicted by the rules given so far

   stellae [*quas Graeci cometas uocant*]   obj precedes subj in RC
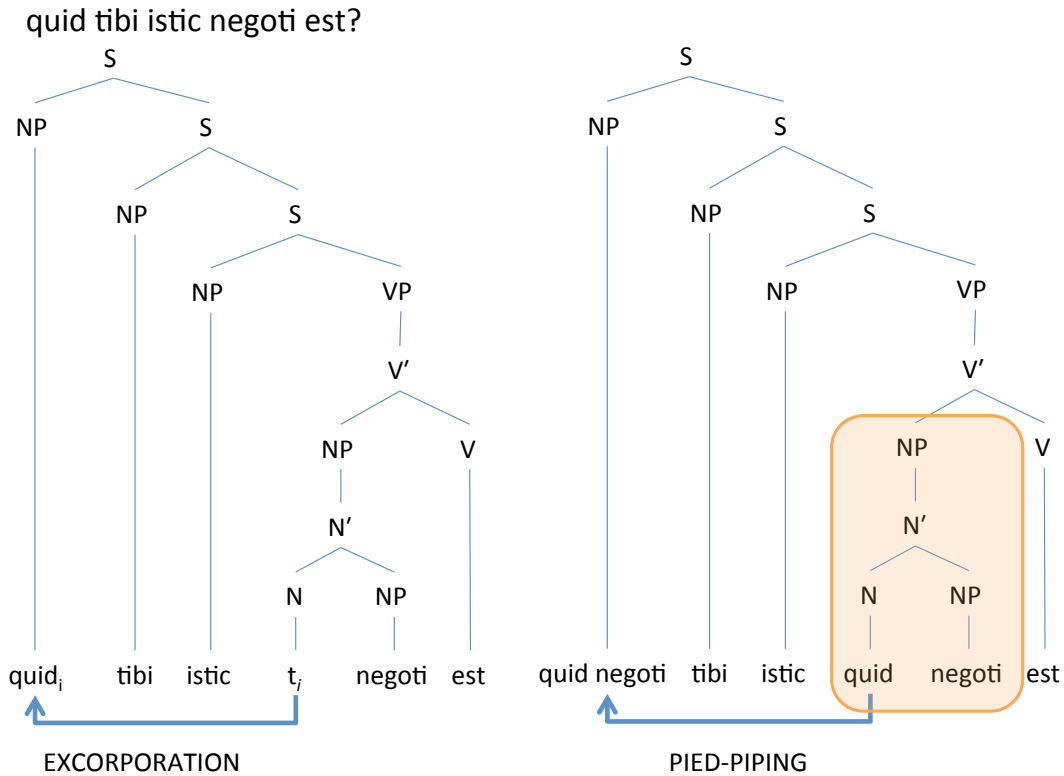
   quem Graeci conati sunt interficere?   obj stands first in S

- Relative and interrogative (*wh-*) elements normally stand first in their clauses or sentences by virtue of their function:
    - relative pronoun binds to an antecedent (*stellae*)
    - interrogative binds an unknown variable:

      'for which X did the Greeks try to kill X'
- Therefore we need rules of displacement (=**transformations**) which move elements to designated locations under specific circumstances

quem Graeci conati sunt interficere?

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- If an qu-element is part of a larger unit, it may move independently
- Alternatively, the whole unit may move

quid tibi istic negoti est?

EXCORPORATION

PIED-PIPING

2 Topicalisation

- **Topic** = a part of a sentence seen as corresponding to what the sentence as a whole is about

  I see __wine__ as a anecessity. (topic marked by intonation)

- **Topicalisation** = process of forming derived construction with constituent marked as a topic

  [NP Wine] [NP I] [VP see [*t*] as a necessity]

  Italiam utroque mari duae classes, proximumque Galliae litus rostratae naues praesidebant

  Italy on both seas was guarded by fleets, and the contiguous coast of Gaul by ships of war

  [Italiam]ᵢ utroque mari duae classes [*t*ᵢ] …,

  [proximumque Galliae litus]ⱼ rostratae naues praesidebant [*t*ⱼ]

3 Focalisation

- Process of forming a derived construction to give a constituent special emphasis or focus:

  I would cheat in exams [PP under no circumstances]

  [PP Under no circumstances] would I cheat in exams [*t*]

4 Topicalisation and focalisation are different

- In English, focalisation triggers auxiliary inversion (like in questions):

I would cheat in exams [PP under no circumstances]

[PP Under no circumstances] would I cheat in exams [*t*]

- But topicalisation does not:

[PP In examinations] I would cheat [*t*] under no circumstances

- Both topicalisation and focalisation can happen together:

[In examinations]$_i$ [under no circumstances]$_j$ would I cheat [t$_i$] [t$_j$]

- But the order appears to be [TOPIC] [FOCUS] …:

- [Under no circumstances]$_j$ [in examinations]$_i$ would I cheat [t_i] [t_j]

Italiam utroque mari duae classes, proximumque Galliae litus rostratae naues preasidebant