THE RELATIVE PRONOUNS IN ACTS AND ELSEWHERE

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The relation of the indefinite relative to the simple relative pronoun in Greek has engaged the attention of many New Testament grammarians and there has been a general effort to show that the classical distinction between them is at least sometimes maintained by New Testament writers. The following full statement from Moulton, Grammar of New Testament Greek, I, p. 91 f., indicates the maximum concession that is generally allowed to any theory of coalescence:

"Turning to the Relatives, we note the limiting of ὅστις, a conspicuous trait of the vernacular, where the nominative (with the neuter accusative) covers very nearly all the occurrences of the pronoun. The phrase ἐν ὅστιν is the only exception in NT Greek. The obsolescence of the distinction between ὅς and ὅστις is asserted by Blass for Luke, but not for Paul. A type like Lk 24 eἰς πόλιν δανείδ ἦτις καλεῖται Βηθλεέμ, may be exactly paralleled from Herodotus (see Blass 173) and from papyri: so in an invitation formula αὖριον ἦτις ὅστιν ἐ, "tomorrow, which is the 15th"—cf. Mt 27 62. Hort, on 1 Pet 2 11 (Comm. p. 133), allows that 'there are some places in the NT in which ὅστις cannot be distinguished from ὅς.' 'In most places, however, of the NT,' he proceeds, 'ὅστις apparently retains its strict classical force, either generic, "which, as other like things", or essential, "which by its very nature".' A large number of the exceptions, especially in Lucan writings, seem
to be by no means cases of *equivalence* between *ὅς* and *ὅστις*, whether agreeing or disagreeing with classical use. Some of them would have been expressed with *ὅστις* in Attic: thus in Acts 11:28 we seem to expect ἤπερ ἐγένετο. Others throw a subtle stress on the relative, which can be brought out by various paraphrases, as in Lk 1:20, 'which for all that.' Or *ὅστις* represents what in English would be expressed by a demonstrative and a conjunction, as in Lk 10:42, 'and it shall not be taken away.' In Mt we find *ὅστις* used four times at the beginning of a parable, where, though the principal figure is formally described as an individual, he is really a *type*, and *ὅστις* is therefore appropriate. We may refer to Blass 172, for examples of *ὅς* used for *ὅστις*, with indefinite reference. The large number of places in which *ὅστις* is obviously right, according to classical use, may fairly stand as proof that the distinction is not yet dead. We must not stay to trace the distinction further here, but may venture on the assertion that the two relatives are never absolutely convertible, however blurred may be the outlines of the classical distinction in Luke, and possibly in sporadic passages outside his writings. Kalker (Quaest. 245f.) asserts that Polybius uses *ὅστις* for *ὅς* before words beginning with a vowel, for no more serious reason than the avoidance of hiatus; and it is curious that among twenty-three more or less unclassical examples in the Lucan books fourteen do happen to achieve this result. We chronicle this fact as in duty bound, but without suggesting any inclination to regard it as a key to our problem. If Kalker is right for Polybius—and there certainly seems weight in his remark that this substitution occurs just where the forms of *ὅς* end in a vowel—we may have to admit that the distinction during the *Koula* period had worn rather thin. It would be like the distinction between our relatives *who* and *that*, which in a considerable proportion of sentences are sufficiently convertible to be selected mostly according to our sense of rhythm or euphony: this, however, does not imply that the distinction is even blurred, much less lost.”

No doubt many occurrences of *ὅστις* in the New Testament permit of reading into them a kind of generalizing force but there are other phenomena, quite apart from the subjective
evidence of subtle shades of meaning attributed to individual passages by the modern reader, which compel the conclusion that the indefinite relative is merely a synonymous substitute for the simpler form in many Kouv writings. These lines of evidence are three:

1) The limitation of the forms used. Except for the stereotyped ἐν ὅτεν only the nominative forms occur. This has always been noted but no reason can be given why the classical indefinite sense should be illustrated so exclusively in the nominative.

2) The large degree to which the corresponding forms of the simple relative have been ousted by the compound. This is more than a repetition of the previous point—for it means, for example, not only that ἡτες is comparatively frequent in these writings but that ἦ is comparatively rare. Why the proper sense of the simple relative should be less frequently illustrated for example in the feminine nominative singular than in the masculine singular or in the oblique cases of the feminine is a question that would be difficult to answer for those who wish to maintain even an occasional survival of the classical distinction.

3) It is sometimes possible to compare within a single author instances of the use of the two pronouns when the very similarity in thought and form between the parallels shows that the distinction is merely a matter of declension, if one may say so, rather than of sense.

For these reasons it is possible to assert the complete extinction in most New Testament writings (not to mention other examples of late Greek) of any difference between the two pronouns, except for cases when ὅτες, ὅ τι occurs without antecedent in the sense “whoever”, “whatever”.

The book of Acts confirms this general conclusion. As Blass already suggested, the intermixture in Luke’s writing is very complete. For that author the relatives had become a single pronoun declined as follows:

- ὅς ἡτες ὅ
- ὅτες ἡτες ὅ
- ὅ ὅς etc.
- ὅν etc.

The exceptions to this composite declension are few (in Acts

1 Even here ὅ, ὅν etc., has become an alternative usage.
only four out of a total for both pronouns of about 200 occurrences:

- δτου genitive occurs as well as oδ in the phrase ἐς ἐς δτου (oδ) in Luke 12 50; 13 8; 15 8 v. l.; 22 16; 22 18 v. l.
- α in Luke 5 10 17 29; 6 17; 8 13 (bis); 9 27 31; 10 30; 13 30 (bis); 17 12; 20 47; 23 29; 24 23; Acts 1 11; 7 40; 10 45 v. l.; 28 10.
- α in Luke 8 2; 23 27 29.

These exceptions may many of them be explained on different grounds.

a) Two are doubtful readings

Luke 10 39 η και παρακαθασθείσα (om. η Ν* ΤΞ 579 boh)
Acts 10 45 α ζωνθθον (δσοι all Greek MSS except B)

b) Some instances are probably due to Luke’s sources

Luke 8 13 5 δταν ἀκούσωσιν 2 Mark 4 13 α δταν ἀκούσωσιν
Luke 20 47 α κατεσθίονσιν Mark 12 40 α (article) κατεσθιοντες

Luke 23 19 Βαραββᾶν δτις ην Mark 15 8 ην δε ὁ λεγόμενος
dia στάσιν τινα γενομένην ἐν Βαραββᾶς μετὰ τῶν στα-
tὴ πόλει καὶ φόνου βληθεὶς ἐν σιστικῶν δεδεμένος οὗτος ἐν
tη φυλακῇ τῆς στάσει φόνον πεποίη-
κεσαν

Acts 7 40 α προπορεύονται Exod. 32 1 3 22 3 (LXX) α
ημῶν προπορεύονται ημῶν

c) In some cases the simple pronoun is used to avoid repetition of similar forms of τις or δτις 3

Luke 8 2 α ἤταν τεθεραπευμέναι (γυναῖκες τινες immediately precedes and the next verse has ἤτεραι πολλαί, οὗτοι κτλ.)
Luke 9 27 εἰς τινες ... 5 δι ημή γευσόμεθα θανάτου (avoiding the repetition in Mark 9 1 εἰς τινες ... oὗτοι οὗ μη γευ-
σομεθα θανατου)

2 So Luke 8 13 5 has o πρὸς καίρων πιστεύοντι (no relative clause in Mark) but Luke 8 15 has οὕτως ... ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον after Mark 4 20 οὕτως ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον.
3 In Luke 10 30 and 17 12 α is preceded by τις and τω respectively.
Luke 9:31 οἱ ὄφθαλμοι ἐν δέκα ἔλεγον (the preceding words are ὀπίσως ἦσαν Μωσὴς καὶ Ἰάκωβ)
Luke 24:23 οἱ λέγοντες (τίνες occurs in verses 22 and 24)
Acts 9:36 ἢ διερμηνευομένη λέγεται Δορκάς (the antecedent is τις μαθήτρια and the last clause of verse 35 is ὀπίσως ἔπεστρεψαν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον).

Similarly in the following symmetrical clauses it may be supposed that rather than a repeated ὀπίσως (αὐτοὶ) the simpler forms were preferred as suiting the gnomic form:
Luke 13:30 εἰδὼν ἔσχατοι οἱ ἔσονται πρῶτοι καὶ εἰδὼν πρῶτοι οἱ ἔσονται ἐσχάτοι

d) In some cases a somewhat complicated antecedent may explain the use of the simpler relative:
Luke 5:29 καὶ ἦν ὁχλὸς πολὺς τελωνῶν καὶ ἄλλων οἱ ἦσαν μετ' αὐτῶν κατακείμενοι
Luke 6:17 καὶ πλῆθος πολὺ τοῦ λαοῦ ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ καὶ τῆς παραλίου Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος, οἱ ἥλθον ἀκούσαν αὐτοῦ
Luke 23:27 ἡκολουθεὶ δὲ αὐτῷ πολὺ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ γυναικῶν αὐτῷ ἐκποτοῦντο

The Epistle to the Hebrews among the New Testament writings is generally the closest in style to Luke. Though the connection by relatives is frequent there is only one exception to the general rule by which δέσι supplies three nominative forms and ὁ all the rest. The exception is 11:33 ὁ.

The equivalence of forms from both pronouns may be seen in such cases as:
Heb. 9:2 σκηνὴ γὰρ κατεσκευάσθη ἡ πρότη, ἐν ᾗ . . . ἔτις
Heb. 9:6 τῆς πρωτῆς σκηνῆς . . . ἔτις . . . καθ' ἔν
Heb. 13:7 μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, ὀπίσως . . . δόν

Although Blass claims for Paul more fidelity to the classic distinction between the relatives than for Luke, his case is not well substantiated. There is for Paul practically a consistent

5 In view of ὁσιάς . . . ὀπίσως in Heb. 10:8 and 11 Hort's conjecture for 10:1 in place of ὁσιάς ὁ as or ὁ of the MSS. should have been ὀπίσως rather than ὁ.
mixed declension identical with that indicated above except for the neuter plural nominative, where ἄνω seems to have nearly supplanted ἃ. According to Burton, I. C. C. Galatians, p. 257, "the only certain instance of ἄ in nom. is Col. 2 22; in 1 Cor. 4 6 and Tit. 2 1 it was felt to be accus.; in Col. 2 17 the reading is uncertain; in Eph. 5 4 it is possibly an accus., but more probably a nom." The nominatives will then be ὁς, ὅτι, ὁ; ὁτως, ὁτως, ὁτως, ὁτως, and for Paul the only exceptions for this mixed arrangement are, in addition to possible instances of ἄ just mentioned:

Rom. 16 7 ὁ καὶ πρὸ ἑμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ
Phil. 2 20 ὅτις γνησίως τὰ περὶ υμῶν μεριμνήσει

In the former case the reading is uncertain: ὁ is not read in Ν*Δ et al. If ὁ is original the form may be due to the desire to avoid repetition (cf. above, p. 153), since ὁτως occurs in the preceding clause modifying the same antecedent. Similarly the ἄ of Col. 2 22 is succeeded by ἄνω in the next verse.

The equivalence in meaning and use of the two pronouns in Paul is well illustrated by the list of greetings in Romans from which one doubtful exception is derived:

Rom. 16 4ff. ὁτως .... ὁκ .... ὁς .... ὅτι .... ὁτως .... ὁι
(v. l.) .... ὅτις

or from parallels between Ephesians and Colossians:

Eph. 1 22f. τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὅτις ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ
Col. 1 24 τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ὁ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία
Eph. 5 5 πλεονέκτης, ὁς (v. l. ὁ) ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρὴς
Col. 3 5 πλεονέξια, ὅτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία

Compare also the parallels:

Rom. 4 16 Ἄβραάμ, ὁς ἐστὶν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν
Gal. 4 28f. ἡ δὲ ἀνω Ἰερουσαλήμ ... , ὅτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν

The evidence from these writers is confirmed by the general though not absolutely uniform custom of the other books of the New Testament. Two facts, the survival of certain nominative forms of the indefinite relative, and particularly the fact that these forms have nearly driven out the corresponding forms of

6 Blass however maintained even here that the exchange depended on whether a mere fact (ὅς) or a characteristic (ὅτις) was given.
the simple relative, seem to prove that there is not a difference of meaning and that the almost uniform employment of certain parts of the indefinite relative forbids any argument based on its earlier use to express cause, characteristics or indefinite reference.\(^7\)

What led to this development in Hellenistic Greek we may of course only conjecture. The avoidance of hiatus is a natural suggestion since \(\eta\tau\varsigma,\ \omega\tau\iota\varsigma\epsilon\varsigma,\ \alpha\tau\iota\varsigma\epsilon\varsigma\) are forms of the indefinite relative with a terminal consonant which would replace forms of \(\sigma\varsigma\) ending in a vowel. There is however little if any evidence of intention to avoid hiatus by New Testament writers. If that is the original intention or tendency the motive must have been already forgotten.\(^8\)

Another suggestion may be offered. The avoided forms of the simple relative are the only ones which agree in all but accent with the corresponding forms of the article (i.e., \(\eta,\ \omega\iota,\ \alpha\iota\)).\(^9\) Especially where a participle followed in the nominative, the ambiguity of the short forms in unaccented text or in speech might be annoying.\(^10\) In any case the presence of the compound relative is due in the New Testament to an established tendency of the language away from the forms \(\eta,\ \omega\iota,\ \alpha\iota\) (and, perhaps by

\(^7\) See the effort to explain its occurrences in A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of Greek N. T.*, pp. 726–731, and the claim of at least occasional special meaning in such English commentaries (to mention no others) as Lightfoot on 2 Thess. 1:9; Gal. 4:24; Phil. 1:28, 4:3; Westcott on Heb. 2:3; Frame on 2 Thess. 1:9; Charles on Rev. 2:24 al.

\(^8\) As already mentioned by Moulton, F. Kälker, *Quaestiones de elocutione Polybiana* in *Leipsiger Studien* II (1880) ii. 245 ff. argued that \(\eta\tau\varsigma,\ \omega\tau\iota\varsigma\epsilon\varsigma,\ \alpha\tau\iota\varsigma\epsilon\varsigma\) as well as \(\eta\\rho\epsilon\varsigma\) etc., \(\epsilon\tau\iota\nu\alpha\tau\iota\epsilon\rho\iota\) were used to avoid hiatus both by Polybius and (p. 311) by Diodorus Siculus. For Polybius Hultsch, *Philologus* XIV. (1859), 288 ff., XV. (1860), 162 f. agrees. As for Moulton's observation with regard to the Lucan writings that in some 23 unclassical occurrences of the indefinite relative \(\iota\) without it would have produced hiatus it may be answered that this is no evidence of an interest in the avoidance of hiatus since nearly half the words in the New Testament begin with vowels. Thus of the 25 instances in Luke's writings of \(\eta,\ \omega\iota\) and \(\alpha\iota\) above, p. 153 some 15 are found to be followed by vowels.

\(^9\) Contrast \(\delta\) vs. \(\tilde{o}\), \(\tau\alpha\) vs. \(\tilde{a}\).

\(^10\) So Blass; note however that when Luke has retained \(\omega\iota\) with the analytical imperfect \(\eta\varsigma\alpha\nu\) immediately follows the relative (Luke 5:17, 29; 82).
analogy, from ἃ)—a tendency revealed in other writings not only by the frequency of ἡτίς, ὅτις, etc., but by the extensive use of the intensives ὅστορ and ὅς καὶ and (in the plural) of ὅσοι.

ὁστορ is not represented in the New Testament though it would have been very convenient for supplying the neuter forms which ὅ τι, ὅτις did not satisfactorily provide. Of 109 instances of ὅστορ in Josephus collected by H. Paur, Observationes et notationes ad Flavii Josephi elocutionem, p. 24, ὅστορ accounts for 48, ὅστερ for 31. The other compounds in ὅστερ occur occasionally in the New Testament and seem to retain sometimes their literary flavor, e. g. Luke 11 ἐπιδήστορ. They are especially common in Hebrews.

ὁσοι and ὅσα occur frequently in the New Testament both where πάντες precedes and where no quantitative force seems to be implied.

ὅς καὶ appears also to be used in Hellenistic Greek in much the same way as ὅτις, ὅστορ, ὅς ἡ, and without giving to the succeeding word the emphasis which καὶ is expected to convey. This appears especially in the neuter singular where neither ὅσον nor (on account of confusion with ὅτι) ὅ τι could be employed. Note in Acts:

11 30 ὅ καὶ ἐπολύσαν
26 9 ὅ καὶ ἐποίησα.

Perhaps it is this idiom which accounts for the likeness of Gal. 2 10 to Acts 11 30 rather than the literary dependence which Plooij and others find (Harvard Theological Review XV (1922), 169). Similarly an unnecessary καὶ occurs after ὅ ( (= ὅ τι) ὅ), e. g. Luke 1 35; Acts 10 29; 24 26. Where the demonstrative and antecedent are included in the neuter relative of course the simple ὅ (or ἃ) is used (see Bruder’s concordance, p. 621). Beside the neuter forms several instances of ἡ καὶ, ὅ καὶ, ἃ καὶ occur (Luke 10 39 v. l.; 23 27 v. l.; Acts 1 11; 28 10) as well as instances in the oblique cases. A further study of this colorless use of καὶ in relative clauses (which appears also in the papyri) would correct certain common errors of translation and interpretation in the New Testament.