

Insubordination in Archaic and Classical Latin: commands, requests, wishes and assertives

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Abstract

This paper analyzes subordinate clauses which have gained both syntactic and discursive independence through insubordination, the diachronic conventionalization of main clause usage. First, I introduce the notion of insubordination and discuss its application to a corpus language such as Latin from both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. Second, cases of insubordination from Archaic and Classical Latin are critically evaluated on the basis of evidence from different grammars and corpus research, yielding insubordinate directives (commands and requests with *ut(ei)* + subjunctive), insubordinate wishes (with *ut, utinam* and *si* + subjunctive) and assertives (with *quasi* + subjunctive). Special attention is paid to the pragmatic and syntactic characteristics of these insubordinate constructions such as (i) syntactic versus pragmatic independence from the linguistic common ground, (ii) main clause syntactic complexity, and (iii) the role of discourse particles of adversativity (*at, sed*) and positive polarity (*quidem*).

Keywords: directives; illocutionary force; insubordination; subjunctive; syntax