1. GENITIVE ABSOLUTE PTC CONSTRUCTIONS

a. In Grammar, an “absolute” construction is one that has no syntactic dependencies within the core clause. That is, it is not syntactically dependent upon (governed by) something else in the clause. Let’s take the idea of a genitive noun. Why are the genitive nouns in the following sentences in the genitive case?

(1) ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.
(2) ἐγὼ ἤκουσα τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ.
(3) ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρός.

b. Greek has a participial construction called the “Genitive Absolute.” There are several features of this construction:

(1) The participle is adverbial (not adjectival) and always anarthrous!

(2) The PTC will be in the genitive case (but not due to any syntactic dependency requiring the genitive case!), and if there is an overt subject, it likewise will be genitive case.

(3) The subject of the PTC will not be linked to any other participant in the core clause (almost 100% of the time). Some (Healey & Healey, Culy) have described the GA as a “switch reference device” since the S of most adverbial PTCs is also the S of the main verb; when this is not the case, the GA will be performed by someone who is not the S of the main verb.

c. Practice from Mounce pp. 279–280:

λέγοντες ταῦτα, οἱ μαθηταὶ ἀπῆλθον ....

λεγόντων τῶν προφητῶν ταῦτα, οἱ μαθηταὶ ἀπῆλθον ....

eἰπόντες ταῦτα, οἱ μαθηταὶ ἀπῆλθον ....

eἰπόντων τῶν προφητῶν ταῦτα, οἱ μαθηταὶ ἀπῆλθον ....
διδαχθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἐρημον οἱ δοῦλοι.

διδαχθέντων τῶν προφητῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἐρημον οἱ δοῦλοι.

d. NT exx. of the GA

Mark 14:43

43Καὶ εὐθὺς ἐτὶ αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος παραγίνεται Ἰούδας

And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came...

Luke 11:14 (NA28)

14Καὶ ἦν ἐκβάλλων δαιμόνιον [καὶ αὐτὸ ἦν] κωφόν· ἐγένετο δὲ τοῦ δαιμονίου ἐξελθόντος ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφὸς καὶ ἔθαυμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι.

14Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled.

John 8:30 (NA28)

30Ταῦτα αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν.

30As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

2. Periphrastic participial constructions.

Simply put, these are forms of εἰμί ('to be', used as an auxiliary verb) along with a present-stem or perfect-stem PTC¹ (that matches the gender/# of the S). As such, these are simply “predicate uses” of the PTC (one of the three functions of any adjective). Frequently this construction is used for the Pft M/P I, 3p form (since adding -νται at the end of a verb stem—especially one which ends with a consonant—was cumbersome even for native Greek speakers!).

¹ Only a few aorist-stem PTCs are used in periphrastic constructions: Luk 23:19; Act 8:15; 2 Cor 5:19.

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Col 2:5  εἰμὶ χαίρων  I am rejoicing
Matt 7:29  ἦν...διδάσκον  he was...teaching
Mark 13:13  ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι  you will be hated
John 2:17  γεγραμμένον ἐστίν  it is written

3. Other functions of the PTC:

a. Instrumental use (adverbial).

1 Cor 4:12  καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερέσις; λοιδορούμενοι εὐλογοῦμεν, διωκόμενοι ἀνεχόμεθα, 12and we labor, by working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure.

b. Concessive use (adverbial).

Mark 8:18  ὁφθαλμοὺς ἐχοντες οὗ βλέπετε καὶ ὡτα ἐχοντες οὐκ ἀκούετε; 18Though you have eyes, do you not see, and though you have ears, do you not hear?

c. Functions like a regular verb (sort of).

Matt 4:4  ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· γέγραπται· οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτῳ μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος θεοῦ. 4But he answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”