CONTENTS

Acknowledgements page viii
List of abbreviations x
Note on translations xiv

1 The AC so far 1
   1.1 Why do we need another study of absolute constructions? 1
   1.2 Prior research on ACs 4
      1.2.a The history of the term ‘absolute’ 4
      1.2.b The definition of ACs 7
         1.2.b.i No definition 7
         1.2.b.ii Description instead of definition 8
         1.2.b.iii Sentence appositions 11
         1.2.b.iv Unusual case usage 12
         1.2.b.v Dominant participles 13
         1.2.b.vi Summary 14
      1.2.c How did ACs arise? 15
         1.2.c.i No view expressed 16
         1.2.c.ii Grammatical vs. semantic case usage 17
         1.2.c.iii OV to VO: Lehmann’s explanation 22
         1.2.c.iv Transformation 23
         1.2.c.v A promising approach 25
      1.2.d Links between ACs and other constructions 27
      1.2.e Summary 28
   1.3 The scope of this study 28
   1.4 Summary of findings 30

2 Early Greek 33
   2.1 Introduction 33
   2.2 The Genitive Absolute in Homer: an overview 36
      2.2.a General 36
      2.2.b Ambiguities 38
      2.2.c The nature of the absolute participle 41
      2.2.d Semantics 42
   2.3 Homeric questions 44
      2.3.a ‘Lateness’: a preamble 45
## CONTENTS

2.3.b Further components: signs of development? 46  
2.3.c Transitivity 50  
2.3.d Genitive participles instead of an expected conjunct participle 57  
2.3.e Summary 64  
2.4 Future research? The Homeric GA in comparison with other means of grammatical subordination 65  
2.5 The GA in Hesiod 68  
2.6 The GA in the seventh and sixth centuries BC 73  
2.7 Absolute participles and related phenomena 76  
2.8 Conclusions 79  

3 Early Latin 82  
3.1 Introduction 82  
3.2 The Latin Ablative Absolute: an overview 83  
3.2.a The formal make-up of the AA 83  
3.2.b The AA in Early Latin: formal make-up and semantic types 86  
3.2.c Classical Latin 88  
3.3 Delineating the AA semantically: absolute and other ablatives 89  
3.4 Delineating the AA syntactically: obligatory and dominant nominal qualifiers across Latin 97  
3.4.a The *ab urbe condita* construction (AUC) 97  
3.4.b The gerundive 102  
3.4.c Summary 108  
3.5 ‘Nominal’ ACs in Latin 108  
3.5.a Adjectival AAs 109  
3.5.b Comparative matters 115  
3.5.c Substantival AAs 117  
3.5.d *sens* 121  
3.6 ACs in Italic 122  
3.7 Conclusions 123  

4 The Sanskrit locative absolute and its syntactic surroundings 127  
4.1 Introduction 127  
4.2 Sanskrit literature: a brief sketch 128  
4.3 Some elements of Sanskrit grammar 130  
4.3.a Nominal expressions and case syntax 130  
4.3.b The Sanskrit locative absolute 137  
4.4 Supposedly absolute locatives in the *Rigveda* 139  
4.4.a Time 139  
4.4.b Time, space and probably both 143
CONTENTS

4.4.c Space 145
4.4.d Excursus: a particularly tricky case 148
4.5 Actual Rigvedic LAs: expressions of natural time 153
4.6 LAs in context 156
4.7 The Sanskrit perspective 159
4.8 The origins of the Western perspective 165
4.9 Conclusions 168

5 Proto-Indo-European roots of ACs 172
5.1 Introduction 172
5.2 Recapitulation: what makes ACs absolute? 173
  5.2.a What does not make them absolute 173
  5.2.b What does make them absolute: the obligatory qualifier 176
5.3 Obligatory and apparently obligatory qualifiers: a cross-linguistic look 176
  5.3.a The AUC 177
  5.3.b Various case usages 185
  5.3.c Conclusions 190
5.4 The elements of the AC 192
  5.4.a Participles 192
  5.4.b Case 200
5.5 Proto-Indo-European 206
  5.5.a ACs in PIE 207
  5.5.b AUCs and ‘nominal’ ACs 214
5.6 From PIE into the daughter languages 216
  5.6.a Sanskrit 216
  5.6.b Latin 217
  5.6.c Greek 219
5.7 Absolute or not: an excursus 222
5.8 Conclusions 224

Appendix 1 Literature on ACs 230
Appendix 2 ACs, potential ACs and constructions similar to ACs 233
Bibliography 236
Index of cited passages 251
General index 254