

# Auxiliary Verbs and the Participle in the Tsakonian Dialect: Towards a Periphrastic Verbal System

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## 1 Introduction

One of the many aspects that mark out Tsakonian from the other Modern Greek dialects is the way it organizes the morphology of the verb. The most striking characteristic is the periphrastic nature of the indicative system, which has been remarked upon in all the classic works on the dialect, such as those by Pernot (1934), Deffner (1880, 1881), Δέφνερ (1923) and Κωστάκης (1951, 1999), and has also been discussed by researchers who have made particular studies of periphrasis in Greek, such as Aerts (1965), who devotes several pages of his work “Periphrastica” (84, 102-9, 125-7) to a description of the unusual way that Tsakonian forms the present and perfect tenses.

## 2 Formation of the periphrases

The present and imperfect (henceforth referred to as imperfective periphrases) are formed in both voices using the auxiliary *είμαι* (in the present and the imperfect respectively) and the present participle, e.g. *emi gráfu* (Peloponnesian Tsakonian (Pel.T.)) / *gráfo ma* (Propontis Tsakonian (Prop.T)) (= \**είμαι γράφων*), *ema gráfu* (Pel.T) / *gráfo ma(ni)* (Prop.T) (= \**ήμουν γράφων*), *emi grafúmene* (Pel.T) / *grafómne ma* (Prop.T) (= \**είμαι γραφόμενος*), *ema grafúmene* (Pel.T) / *grafómne ma(ni)* (Prop.T) (= \**ήμουν γραφόμενος*). The present perfect and past perfect (henceforth referred to as perfect periphrases) are formed in the active voice using the periphrastic auxiliary verb *έχω* (in the present and the imperfect respectively) and the verbal adjective in *-τός*, e.g. *emi éxu grafté* (Pel.T) / *éxo ma grafté* (Prop.T) (= \**[είμαι έχων] γραφτό*), *ema éxu grafté* (Pel.T) / *éxo ma(ni) grafté* (= \**[ήμουν έχων] γραφτό*) and in the passive voice with the monolectic auxiliary verb *είμαι* (in the present and the imperfect respectively) and either the verbal adjective (in Pel.T and Prop.T) or the passive perfect participle (in Prop.T only), *emi grafté* (Pel.T) / *grafté ma* (Prop.T) / *graméne ma* (Prop.T) (= \**είμαι γραφτός / γραμμένος*), *ema grafté* (Pel.T) / *grafté ma(ni)* (Prop.T) / *graméne ma(ni)* (Prop.T) (= \**ήμουν γραφτός / γραμμένος*).

Leaving to one side the similarly periphrastic future tense, the modal origin of which marks it out from the other tenses as regards both its usage and its morphosyntactic formation (for the future periphrasis in Tsakonian, see Λιόσης 2010), the only instance in Pel.T where we find synchronically monolectic indicative types is the aorist paradigm, e.g. *eyráva*, *eyrávere*, *eyráve* etc. ‘I, you, he/she/it wrote etc’. But in the now extinct Tsakonian dialect of the Propontis, just

as frequently as the monolectic aorist types we find periphrastic structures with the same function (henceforth referred to as perfective periphrasis), formed using the present (or imperfect) of *είμαι* and a type of participle which is generally considered either to be derived from an older active perfect (Deffner 1880) or thematic aorist, or else to imitate the ending of the present participle of oxytone verbs (Pernot 1934:240-1), e.g. *αγαπικό μα* (= \*αγαπηκώς είμαι) ‘I loved’. The perfective periphrasis is unknown in today’s Tsakonian dialects of the Peloponnese (Λιόσης 2007:783-6); similar fossilized structures have, however, been sporadically recorded by 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century researchers, e.g. *εμί ορακί* (= \*είμαι ορακώς) ‘I saw’, *εμί apostakí* (= \*είμαι αποστακώς) ‘I opened my legs’.

### 3 The participles

Each of these periphrases is historically linked to the development and functionality of the participle with which it is formed. A historical examination of these participles may therefore lead us to useful conclusions, or at least to useful questions concerning the history of periphrasis in this dialect.

In the early mediaeval period, the only participles that can generally be considered to have remained a living part of the Greek language are those which belonged to the regular paradigms of the old second and first declensions, i.e. the mediopassive present participles in *-όμενος*, *-ομένη*, *-όμενον* and the perfect participles in *-μένος*, *-μένη*, *-μενον* (Χόρροκος 2006:435-7). In time, however, the former died out, together with the equivalent active types, while the latter were preserved either as adjectival determiners or as predicates in stative periphrases of the perfect together with the verb *είμαι*, e.g. *είμαι γραμμένος* ‘I am written’. It is easy to see that Tsakonian had already diverged from the situation described here. The biggest difference is that the active participles and the passive present participle not only did not disappear, but have preserved many of their older functions and even developed new ones. At the same time, rather amusingly, the verbal adjective has taken the place of the passive perfect participle, the only one to have been preserved in SMG and in most of the other Modern Greek dialects.

#### 3.1 The present participles

Let us take a closer look at the present participle. In the other Greek varieties, the only relic of the old active participles of the third declension with their complicated declensional paradigm is the indeclinable participle in *-οντα(ς)*, which has been preserved only as an adverbial determiner of the subject, e.g. *έφυγε κλαίγοντας* ‘he/she left crying’. Conversely, in Tsakonian the participle is genuine: In the active voice there are 4 morphologically distinct types, which make distinctions of gender and number, e.g. *γράφ-u /-o* (masc., sing.), *γράφ-a* (fem., sing.), *γράφ-unda /-(o)nda* (neut., sing. & plur.), *γράφ-unde /-(o)nde* (masc. & fem., plur.). The passive present participle in *-ύmene / -ómne* retains the same degree of finiteness: here too there are 4 different types, e.g. *γραφ-ύmene / -ómne*

(masc. & neut., sing.), *γρᾱf-uména* / *-ómna* (fem., sing.), *γρᾱfuméni* / *-ómni* (masc. & fem., plur.), *γρᾱf-úmena* / *-ómna* (neut., plur.).

The absence of case distinctions and the convergence of masculine and feminine in the plural of both voices and masculine and neuter in the passive singular should not be considered symptomatic of a process of grammaticalization analogous with that which ultimately produced the SMG type in *-οντας*, since these exact characteristics are common to all determiners in this dialect, compare, for example, the following adjectives and pronouns, e.g. *kuváni* ‘black’ (masc. & fem., plur.), *atfé* ‘big’ (masc. & neut., sing.), *éndei* ‘they’ (masc. & fem.), *pie* ‘who/which’ (masc. & neut., sing.). On the other hand, the neuter ending *-unda* / *-(o)nda* (in place of the expected *\*-u < -ov*), which is historically derived from either the masculine accusative or the neuter plural, shows that the changes which ultimately produced the Modern Greek indeclinable type had begun in Tsakonian too, but stopped at a very early stage, presumably supported by the other participles, which had not been affected by these changes.

The present participle preserves to this day a high degree of functionality. A characteristic example is the predicative use of adjectival participles which have been replaced in Modern Greek by complement clauses. These participles agree with the subject or the object of verbs which belong to one of the following semantic fields:

a) Verbs of feeling, perception, knowledge (agreement with the object), e.g. *áli eci orúa san trajá, áli san ónu fíaxunde* ‘she saw some running like billy-goats, others like donkeys’ (Pel. T.; Κωστάκης 1986, 3:414), *θοράκα to spóre s areá ni ríxno* ‘I saw that he was scattering his seed sparingly’ (Prop. T; Κωστάκης 1986, 1:125), *s epáka jóunde* ‘I heard them laughing’ (Pel.T.· Κωστάκης 1999:141), *η eréka akañinúmene tas ton krópo* ‘I found him wallowing in dung’ (Pel.T.· Κωστάκης 1999:141) etc.

b) Verbs of starting, finishing, tiredness, satiation, harm; in this category are included a large number of verbs with many synonymous meanings. It seems that in Prop.T. this category is absent. Agreement is exclusively with the (logical) subject, e.g. *άηγα δραρίνδου* ‘I started (= took) running’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:131), *ó apasátse tósan úra aú* ‘he didn’t finish talking all that time’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:99), *apombítse a γρύσα mi rotúa ti djaváti* ‘my tongue got tired of asking passers-by’ (Οικονόμου 1870:48), *ekófte pazía na namu rái* ‘she rushed to come and see us’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 2:85), *ekserokráni i púe mi fíaxa ts<sup>h</sup>apólite* ‘my feet were chapped with running barefoot’ (Κωστάκης, 2:341-2), *alithozie ksikázu* ‘he went cross-eyed from looking’ (Κωστάκης, 1986, 1:51) etc.

Some of these participles, more often than in SMG, are nominalized, e.g. *to aposurúmene* (= *\*to αποσυρόμενον*) ‘the dregs’ (Κωστάκης, 1986, 1:117), *o fusú* (= *\*o φουσών*) ‘the devil’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:325), *o exúmene* (= *\*o εχόμενος*) ‘the rich man’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:307), *o éxu* (= *\*o έχων*) ‘the owner’, cf. the utterance: *θα sembrépsi me ton éxu to zovgázi* ‘he will go into partnership with the owner of the pair (of oxen)’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:312).

These participles are also used very frequently to express adverbial relations which in SMG are realized either with the indeclinable type in *-όντας* or with adverbial clauses:

- a) manner, e.g. *ekáne aηγοδέρου* ‘he came panting’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:16),
- b) purpose, e.g. *i líci im barinde t̃funde ta ζcíná* ‘the wolves come to eat the goats’ (Λιόσης 2007:536),
- c) time (simultaneous actions), e.g. *paríu ts o mbapú na kópsi kaiδία ja ta prúata n’ orái tam brováta paría δραpínda* ‘while grandfather was coming to cut branches for the sheep, he sees the ewe come running’ (Λιόσης 2007:536),
- d) opposition, e.g. *n embíkate emí dé θélunde* ‘you did it against our will’ (Κωστάκης 1951:138).

As we can also see from this last utterance, in many cases these adverbial participles do not agree with the subject of the verb, but may be realized as a free-standing, absolute part of the sentence (nominative absolute), e.g. *ekáne tán to cízi, o íλε t̃fému* ‘he came in the heat of the day, the sun trembling’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 3:102), *úra t̃funde ekánaí tse ta kambzía* ‘while we were eating, the children came too’ (Κωστάκης 1999:141).

### 3.2 The active past participle

The second active participle in Tsakonian appears somewhat more problematic. From the available data about Pel.T. (Οικονόμου 1846, Οικονόμου 1870, Λεκός 1920:58-9, Pernot 1934:241, Κωστάκης 1951:118) I gathered 14 instances overall: *γρavú* (*eyráva* ‘I wrote’), *orakú* (*oráka* ‘I saw’), (*e)kanú* (*ekána* ‘I came’), *zakú* (*ezáka* ‘I went’), (*e)mbikú* (*embika* ‘I did’), *vaiú* (*evaía* ‘I yelled’), *dakú* (*edáka* ‘I burned’), *darkú* (*edárka* ‘I beat’), *levú* (*eléva* ‘I peeled’), *pekú* (*epéka* ‘I said’), *γερakú* (*eyeráka* ‘I got old’), *pakú* (*epáka* ‘I heard’), *ferkú* (*férka* ‘I brought’), *apostakú* (*apostáka* ‘I opened my legs’).

With regard to morphology, the same applies as in the case of the participles discussed above: here too are preserved 4 different suffixes of gender and number, e.g. *γρav-ú* /-ó (masc., sing.) ~ *γρav-úa* /-á (fem., sing.) ~ *γρav-únda* /-ó(ta) (neut., sing. & plur.) ~ *γρav-únde* /-óte (masc. & fem., plur.). The stem of these particles must be considered to derive historically from a perfect form. Support for this view can be easily found in the case of those participles containing the element *-k-*, e.g. *orák-a* < *έώρακα*, and also for those with stems in a voiced fricative, which Τζιτζιλής (to appear) has shown to be derived from the stems of attested Doric perfect forms, e.g. (*e)γρáv-a* < Dor. *γέγραβ-α* (= Att. *γέγραφ-α*), *tará* ‘I agitated’ < \**taráy-a* < Dor. *τετάραγ-α* (= Att. *τετάραχ-α*). It is therefore logical to assume that the endings of these participles are also derived from the old endings *-ός*, *-v íα*, *-ός* of the active perfect. The objection raised by Pernot (240), who was unaware of the Asia Minor subdialect, that the feminine ending, according to the phonetic laws of the dialect, should have had the form *-úza*, was rightly rejected by Aerts (1965:84, footnote 1), since it could have arisen from the (early medieval) ending *-ῶσα*. A similar conversion is shown by the

feminine ending *-á* in Prop.T. Another important point is that these participles, like the equivalent perfect indicative, have undergone syncretism with the aorist and were interpreted as perfective. The same process took place in all forms of Greek: “The far-reaching syncretism of aorist and perfect forms also includes the participles” (Aerts 1965:90). The alternation between aorists in *-κα* and *-σα* was therefore a universal characteristic of mediaeval Greek, referred to in all the bibliography on the subject (e.g. Χόρροκς 2006, 443); in Tsakonian, however, for the perfective stem of the indicative, the prevalence of the element *-k-* (or, better, the absence of the element *-σα*) is absolute. Within this framework, the only example that appears to continue a thematic aorist, the type *(e)kan-ú /-ó* (Aor. *ekán-a*), does not constitute a real exception. Even if we accept the fact that some role was played by the thematic aorist participle endings *-ών*, *-οῦσα*, *-όν*, the most important point is that what ultimately developed was an active perfective participle opposed to the imperfective participle of the same voice.

It is, however, worth noting that in the subdialect where it was best preserved, that of the Propontis, I have been unable to find a single example of its use outside of perfective periphrases. In Pel.T too, the only two examples where it is used adverbially come from Λεκός (1920:59): *kanú tse orakú o adría ayorátse tan ámbele* ‘having come and seen it, Andreas bought the vineyard’ and *gravúnda tu kambziune, apolikame ton karpó* ‘when the children wrote, we sent the wheat’. In both cases, the participles describe a previous action. In the second example, not only is the participle freely, but its subject appears in the genitive (a genitive absolute), a fact that casts doubt on the authenticity of the examples “recorded” by the Tsakonian man of letters.

#### 4 Interpretation

The necessary condition which allowed the formation and preservation of periphrases in Tsakonian was the fact that the participles had remained very much a living part of the morphology of the verb. I hope that the discussion presented above has made this clear. Aerts (1965:98) observes this in reverse with regard to the majority of Greek dialects “It goes without saying that where the participle has disappeared, the periphrases have also been dropped”. In other words, in contrast to other varieties of Greek, Tsakonian has diachronically had recourse to a cross-linguistically useful and convenient tool for the construction of periphrases. Furthermore, the use of participles added another semantic characteristic to the verbal stem, that of gender, and it seems likely that the need to achieve gender distinction was a factor in the preservation and generalization of periphrases in the Tsakonian verbal paradigm, although it is admittedly difficult to determine which came first. The opposite development in Modern Greek, i.e. that pressure in favour of a lack of gender marking on the verb could have played some role in the replacement of perfect periphrases with participles by those using the infinitive, has not been taken into account in the bibliography.

The fact that something is possible in a language does not, of course, mean that it is inevitable. Garcia’s (1987, in Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994:133)

statement that a periphrasis is born when there is a need to express a specialized or new meaning that is not expressed (or not overtly expressed) by the monolectic type, is of course correct; it is, however, too general to explain why Tsakonian is the only Greek dialect to have developed an imperfective suppletive periphrasis (for the term suppletive periphrasis see Aerts 1965:3), i.e. why it has replaced the monolectic present and imperfect types with a periphrasis which has taken on the full range of meanings of the tenses in question. This periphrasis does not function simply as an alternative possibility, as is the case, for example, with the pair *γέγραπται* - *γεγραμμένον ἐστί* in Ancient Greek, nor does it have an exclusively progressive meaning, as in the case of the English *I am writing* (in contrast to *I write*), but constitutes a fully functional imperfective stem, and consequentially may admit equally of habitual or continuous and progressive or non-progressive readings.

This fact also provides the most important argument in favour of the hypothesis that the periphrastic present and imperfect constitutes an innovation of the Tsakonian dialect, rather than continuing a tendency inherited from Ancient Greek. According to Aerts (1965:17), the present periphrasis in Ancient Greek is “predominantly situation-fixing, situation-describing and intransitive”, while later “a new form of application appears, namely that which we shall call the progressive periphrasis, after Björck”. This progressive periphrasis is confined to religious texts, and therefore cannot have been the model for the construction of the periphrasis in Tsakonian, the speakers of which did not convert to Christianity until a much later date (108-9). The author also rejects the hypothesis that we are dealing with a Laconism (106): “A study of the inscriptions of Laconia [...] has shown that the few periphrases that occur are all of the *πρέπον ἐστί* type. The Tsakonian periphrasis is, therefore, almost certainly not a Laconism.”

Aerts (109) ultimately concludes that this is an independent development in Tsakonian which was influenced by the perfective periphrases of both voices and arose as a mechanism for differentiation between the indicative and subjunctive moods, the latter of which, in the active voice, coincides exactly with a reconstructed monolectic indicative and is combined with the subjunctive marker *να*, e.g. *ἐνὶ γράφῃ* ~ *να γράφῃ* (= *\*εἶναι γράφων* ~ *να γράφει*). The view that the final push for the development of the new structure was given by the tendency of this dialect to make distinctions of mood, more specifically the basic distinction between indicative and non-indicative (subjunctive), with the greatest possible morphological facility, is discussed, not without reservations, by Τζιτζιλής (to appear) too (see below). Τζιτζιλής also considers the fact that the old monolectic types of the present indicative are not lost, but instead re-used in the subjunctive, to be a characteristic example of the change of a verbal system through role redistribution among the existing types.

I agree that the perfect periphrases lent support to the formation of the present and imperfect periphrases, although the fact that the verbal adjective is used instead of the participle in the passive voice weakens this argument to some degree. I do however believe that the need which caused the use of periphrasis to

become general in these two tenses was the tendency for overt morphological distinction of aspect (imperfective vs. perfective), and not modality (indicative vs. subjunctive). Because if we accept Aerts's view, it is difficult to explain why in the aorist the indicative has remained monolectic; also the presence of the marker *να* would appear to be redundant. In addition, in the imperfect, where the distinction between indicative and subjunctive is meaningless, there should be no need for replacement of the monolectic type. Τζιτζιλής (to appear) points out that the opposition between aorist (perfective) and imperfect (imperfective) was better expressed through the replacement of the monolectic imperfect by a periphrastic one. And only then this construction was analogically spread to the present tense. That this is the right order is obvious in other dialects where the need to underline the imperfectivity of the imperfect lead to its augmentation with frequentative suffixes, as in *κλαίω* 'I cry' ~ *κλαίνκα* (Pharasa, Asia Minor; Dawkins 1916: 180), in *αγαπώ* 'I love' ~ *αγάπινα* (Paxoi, Ionian Islands; Κρίκη & Λιόσης (to appear), in *πιέννω* 'I drink' ~ *πί-ισκ-α* (Silli, Asia Minor; Κωστάκης 1968:81) etc.

This general explanation could be satisfactory for our case, because it connects tendencies observed in many Modern Greek dialects. However, I think that in Tsakonian in particular there are additional phonetic and morphological reasons to believe that the present and imperfect periphrases took shape under pressure for clear expression of the bipolar opposition between perfective and imperfective: as well as the undoubtedly perfective indicative stems in *-k-*, the dialect also makes use of the perfective element *-s-* (from the old sigmatic aorists), exclusively for the formation of the perfective subjunctive, e.g. *orák-a* 'I saw' ~ *\*na (o)rás-u*, *eθík-a* 'I slaughtered' ~ *na \*θís-u*, which according to the phonetic laws of the dialect was subsequently lost between vowels (> *na ráu*, *na θíu*), i.e. in oxytone verbs and those where the stem ends in a vowel. However, this development meant that the stem of the perfective subjunctive now coincided with that of the monolectic present indicative. And how better to solve this problem than to replace the stem of the latter with a periphrasis that uses the present participle and is therefore characteristically marked as imperfective? Schematically (the periphrases are in brackets):

mood aspect		mood		→	mood	
		indicative	subjunctive		indicative	subjunctive
imperfective	perfective	*θί-u	(na) θί-u		[eni θíu]	(na) θί-n-u
		e-θík-a	(na) *θís-u > (na) θί-u		e-θík-a	(na) θί-u

Furthermore, the coincidence of the perfective and imperfective subjunctive is remedied by the addition of the frequentative affix *-n-*. This means that we have 4 clearly distinct stems in a symmetrical system: of the old perfect (*θik-*), of the old aorist (*θi-*), an extended *n*-stem (*θin-*) and a "periphrastic" one (Aux. + *θi-*). However, if the distinction between perfective and imperfective aspect is expressed in this dialect by the distinction between monolectic types and periphrases, should not the imperfective subjunctive be periphrastic too? The

answer may be found in the dialect of the Propontis. Examples such as those given below are abundant in the available material: *mí sa ni kakomeletó to kaví* ‘don’t bring bad luck on the child’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 2:12), *mí sa fozómna mané* ‘don’t be afraid, mother’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 2:221), *mí sa léo pi klévyo ma* ‘don’t say that I steal’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 2:79), *mí sa sinorizómne* ‘don’t try to get even’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 3:206) etc.

It is clear that we are dealing here with periphrastic imperfective subjunctives, which appear, however, only in a negative context, that is together with the negative particle *μη* of the subjunctive, and in the second person. This is not by chance; according to Veloudis (1987), second-person negative structures are, as a general rule in Greek, the only ones that can appear without the marker *va*. The only instance of an affirmative periphrasis (where, obviously, *va* is present) is the utterance *na sa éx(o) tan galosína t* ‘may you have your health’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 2:26) which does not, however, constitute a genuine exception because the verb *έχω* lacks the distinction between perfective and imperfective stems. Thus for the 2<sup>nd</sup> person the equivalent schema in Prop.T is:

mood aspect	indicative	subjunctive
imperfective	[γράφo sa]	(mi) [sa γράfo]
perfective	γράβε	(na) γράps

I believe that the morphosyntactic regularity of this phenomenon allows us to interpret it as systematic, rather than as an example of language attrition (for examples of the latter see Λιόσης 2007:686-839). In fact, Givon (1979) numbers negatives among the most conservative contexts, where old structures are most likely to be preserved for the longest time. Another relevant archaic aspect of Prop.T is that it does not make use of the extension *-n-* in the formation of the imperfective subjunctive stem: in other words this subdialect is deprived of the other means to reinforce imperfectivity. Is it perhaps possible that the presence of the subjunctive marker led to the final “correction” of this mood, contributing to the prevalence of the monolectic types?

If the above description is correct, it is another indication of the increased importance of aspect in the Tsakonian verbal system: the periphrases fill the gap that opened up in place of the imperfective stem, restoring, in Haspelmath’s (2000:656) terminology, the “paradigm symmetry” of the verb; given that the imperfective and perfective stems of verbs whose stems end in a consonant never coincided (e.g. γραf- / γραps-) – obviously the periphrases of these verbs were formed analogically with those of oxytone verbs and those whose stem ends in a vowel – we must hypothesize that the criterion operating here is likely to be that of “inflectional generality” (for the term see Haspelmath 2000:656), i.e. the need to generalize in the latter two classes of verbs too a morphologically transparent, declinable type for the imperfective stem.

Another possible indication that the imperfective was identified with periphrastic forms and the perfective with bound expressions is the presence in Prop.T of periphrastic imperfective imperatives, e.g. *ts<sup>h</sup>aupúta sa* ‘take your shoes off (imp.)’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 3:260-1; cf. the monolectic perfective imperative *ts<sup>h</sup>aupútos*). In Pel.T the distinction was once again realized by the addition of *-n-*, e.g. *órine* ‘see! (imp.)’~ *óra* (perf.).

## 5 The perfect periphrases

Moser (2008) refers to a similar reorganization of the Greek verbal system based on the bipolar opposition perfective vs. imperfective, which resulted in the absence of the perfect tenses from the system for several centuries. When the need arose again, the only available forms were the periphrastic ones. We may suppose that in Tsakonian the gap in question was originally filled by the periphrases with the active perfect participle. Soon, however, these periphrases converged, in terms of both morphology and function, with the aorist, as we can see from examples such as the following (Prop.T), where any (past) perfect reading of the periphrases are not accepted:

- a) utterances with temporal determiners, e.g. *memía ayrevó tar o jatré* ‘At once (suddenly) the doctor became angry’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:21),
- b) narratives where the periphrases are linked by parataxis with monolectic aorists having a synonymous meaning, e.g. *pondiáe, kriakó tse penátse* ‘he caught cold, he fell ill and died’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 2:86),
- c) instances of alternation between direct and reported speech within the framework of a narrative, e.g. *po tinení γλιτομό dén énda, pekó ta o papá* ‘there’s no escaping from him, said the priest’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 1:236),
- d) temporal modifiers, e.g. *fastó tar etíne, áma t akukó tótoda ojú* ‘he went out of his mind when he heard such things’ (Κωστάκης 1986, 3:133).

It was therefore necessary to resort to another periphrasis, which was ultimately constructed using the old verbal adjectives in *-τός*, e.g. *éxo ma trijité t ambéll* ‘I have harvested the vineyard’ (Prop.T.; Κωστάκης 1986, 3:253), *ep éxu deitá tan ejída* ‘I have tied up the goat’ (Pel.T; Pernot 1934:225) etc. To the question of why, with the partial exception of Prop.T, the dialect did not make use of the passive participle in *-μένος*, a possible answer is that this would have created confusion with paroxytone types of the present participle, e.g. *grafu-ména* ‘being written (fem., sing.)’, *grafu-méni* (masc./fem. plur.).

## 6 Conclusions

In previous papers I have spoken about the Tsakonian future and counterfactual periphrases (Λιόσης 2010, Liosis 2010) which are formed using the auxiliary *είμαι*. If we also consider the generalized use of this auxiliary, together with *έχω*, in the formation of imperfective, perfective and perfect periphrases in this dialect, we can comprehend the central role it played in the system as this was reorganized in order to achieve new distinctions of tense, aspect and modality, or to include new semantic characteristics such as gender. The emergence and

prevalence of periphrases in the dialect must therefore be seen from this perspective. Dahl (1985), Bybee & Dahl (1989:56), Bybee & Perkins & W. Pagliuca (1994: 104-124) say that, cross-linguistically, periphrases are usually associated with perfect and progressive, while past, perfective and imperfective are usually expressed monolectally. Thus the past, perfective and imperfective periphrases in Tsakonian show that it is not a “usual” language, and this fact is likely to have consequences for the theory of grammaticalization itself.

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