Eimi and the adjectival participle in Ancient Greek[*]

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In this paper, I discuss constructions of the Ancient Greek verb *eimi* 'I am' with present and perfect participle. I focus on those uses where the participle has a so-called 'adjectival' function. The two main goals are: (a) to give a unified semantic description of this phenomenon, and (b) to clarify whether the adjectival participle is also categorially adjectival. I argue that adjectival periphrasis typically involves the predication of properties, and that the constructions under analysis should be located on an intracategorial continuum.

1. INTRODUCTION

The participle was much favoured in Ancient, especially Classical, Greek. Not only did it have a large number of forms, its uses were diverse, ranging from modification to reference and predication. In this paper, I discuss one type of predicative use, commonly known as 'adjectival periphrasis'. This term is mostly used for combinations of the verb *eimi* 'I am' with the present participle, as in (1). It has been noted, however, that the perfect and even the aorist participle can have a similar adjectival function, as illustrated in Examples (2) and (3).

(1)   *houtoi ge <u>mainomenoi eisin</u>* (Plato, *Protagoras* 350b)[1]
        [they at:least raging (PRES.) are]
        'they at least are mad'

(2)   *hoi de alloi ... <u>ekpeplēgmenoi ēsan</u> tōi pragmati* (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6.3.15)
        [the PTC others … astonished (PERF.) were by:the matter]
        'the others were astonished by the matter'

(3)   *oute gar thrasus out' oun <u>prodeisas eimi</u> tōi ge nun logōi* (Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 89-90)
        [neither for bold nor PTC fearing:prematurely (AOR.) I:am by:the at:least now speech]
        'for I am neither bold nor fearing prematurely by your present words'

My focus here is on the use of the perfect and especially the present participle. More particularly, I address the following two interrelated questions: (a) 'What semantic characterisation can be given to adjectival periphrasis?', and (b) 'What is the categorial status of the adjectival participle?'. Although diachrony is an important factor, it will not be of primary interest here. Rather, I concentrate on the linguistic situation in Classical Greek (5-4 c. B.C.), and to a lesser extent on that in Archaic Greek (9-6 c. B.C.).[2]

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[1]   The Greek text and translation are taken from the Loeb series, the latter sometimes slightly modified to highlight the periphrastic construction. For the sake of clarity, periphrastic forms are underlined. I have also added a word-by-word translation of my own for readers not familiar with Ancient Greek.
[2]   My corpus consists of the data collected by the major studies on verbal periphrasis in Ancient Greek, most importantly Björck (1940) and Aerts (1965).

2. SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

Let us start with the first point on the agenda, the semantic characterisation of adjectival periphrasis. Here, it will be helpful to have a closer look at the system of predication in Ancient Greek, which I have sketched in Table 1. Please note that this overview is not exhaustive, but merely serves to illustrate the function of the present and perfect participle when combined with *eimi*.

(Table 1)	*Predication in Ancient Greek: synthetic verbs versus combinations with eimi*		
ACTION	**Synthetic verb** *paideuei*: 'he educates'	***eimi* + participle** *didaskōn esti* (PRES.): 'he is teaching' *akēkoōs esti* (PERF.): 'he has heard'	Ø
PROPERTY	**Synthetic verb** *ploutei*: 'he is rich'	***eimi* + participle** *khlōrizon esti* (PRES.): 'it is green' *tethneōs esti* (PERF.): 'he is dead'	***eimi* + adjective** *kakos esti*: 'he is evil'
OBJECT	**Synthetic verb** *basileuei*: 'he is king'	***eimi* + participle** *arkhōn esti* (PRES.): 'he is a ruler' *hōrismenon esti* (PERF.): 'it is something specific'	***eimi* + noun** *patēr esti*: 'he is a father'

In this overview, I make a threefold distinction between 'actions', 'properties' and 'objects' (cf. Croft 2001, ch.2). Constructions with a participle occur next to synthetic verbs and combinations of *eimi* with a noun or an adjective. Clearly, what characterises constructions with an adjectival participle such as *khlorizon esti* 'it is green' and *tethneōs esti* 'he is dead' is the fact that they predicate properties, and not actions or objects. This is not a new insight: it was formulated in similar terms more than a century ago by Kühner & Gerth (1898-1904: 1.39) among others.

Previous studies, however, did not go beyond observing the fact that constructions of *eimi* with an adjectival participle typically predicate properties. In my view, there is much more to say about this matter. Three observations seem essential. Firstly, I argue that adjectival periphrasis can best be described at the sentence level in terms of what may be called a 'property reading'. I use this term because it highlights the fact that adjectival periphrasis involves properties, but others may prefer to speak of an 'imperfective' or 'stative' reading or construal. I contrast this 'property reading' with an 'actual occurrence reading', and characterise it as lowly, or non-agentive, and time-stable. The advantage of such an approach is that it allows for ambiguity, an issue not addressed in previous studies. Secondly, I think we can make a basic distinction between those cases where a property reading constitutes the default construal and others where it does not. As we will see, some predicates are more naturally inclined towards a property reading than others. Thirdly, I argue that adjectival periphrasis can be characterised by a particular kind of constructional integration between the verb *eimi* and the participle, which distinguishes periphrastic constructions from synthetic constructions predicating properties. More specifically, only one representative component state of *eimi* is elaborated by the participle, resembling the integration of *eimi* with a regular adjective (cf. Langacker 2008: 397 for a schematic representation).

I will not pursue this third, more technical, observation here. Rather, I would like to give an overview of the main types of adjectival periphrasis with the present and perfect participle.

2. 1. A property reading as default construal

As I have already noted, some predicates are more naturally inclined towards a property reading than others. In such cases, we may speak of a property reading as the default construal. In my overview here, I distinguish between constructions with the present and the perfect participle.

With regard to the present participle, some frequently occurring predicates are grouped in predicate classes in Table 2. As you will notice, the predicates listed here are commonly considered 'stative' (Vendler 1957). Certainly the most important predicate class is the first one, containing 'verbs of being'. Following Fanning (1990: 135), these predicates may also be called 'verbs with lexicalised predication of properties'. Obviously, when verbs of this class are combined with *eimi*, a property reading comes naturally, as they denote time-stable properties, and their subject is not or lowly agentive.

(Table 2)	*Predicate classes with the present participle* (after Fanning 1990)
'Verbs of being (predication of qualities, conditions, or attributes)'	*eu phroneō* 'I think rightly', *zaō* 'I am alive', *prepei* 'it is fitting'
'Verbs of existence, identity or class-membership'	*perieimi* 'I remain', *apeimi* 'I am absent', *huparkhō* 'I exist'
'Verbs of passive or inert possession'	*ekhō* 'I have'
'Verbs of passive attitude, cognition, state'	*homologeō* 'I agree upon', *thelō* 'I want', *protiō* 'I prefer in honour'
'Verbs of passive perception'	*blepō* 'I see'
'Verbs of location and corporeal position'	*menō* 'I stay'

Predicates of the last class, containing 'verbs of location and corporeal position', are the least evident when it comes to a property reading as default construal. That this class of predicates does not always have a property reading, is shown in (4), where the verb *thakeō* 'I sit' is used with a progressive meaning ('was sitting'). What is crucial, but often neglected, is the sentential context. Consider Example (5). A verb such as *menō* 'I stay' does not naturally invite a property reading. Only when we take into account the oblique argument, *en tōi tēs politeias ēthei* 'in the spirit of the constitution', is it clear that a time-stable situation with a non-agentive subject is meant. This is also indicated by the co-ordination with the adjective *sōphrones* 'wise'. Because of this important role of the context, some scholars may prefer to discuss examples of this type under the heading of 'a property reading as non-default construal'.

(4)   *all' hostis ēn thakōn atarbēs tēs theas, hod' an legoi* (Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 22-3)
        [but whoever was sitting (PRES.) fearless of:the sight, he PTC could:say]
        '… whoever was sitting there not terrified by the sight, he could tell you'

(5)   *idiai d' houtō sōphrones ēsan kai sphodr' en tōi tēs politeias ēthei menontes*
        (Demosthenes, *Olynthiaca* 3, 26)
        [in:private PTC so modest they:were and very in the of:the constitution spirit staying (PRES.)]
        'Yet in private they were so modest and very careful to obey the spirit of the constitution…'

Concerning the perfect participle, a property reading can be considered the default with one particular use commonly known as 'resultative'. In Table 3, some of the predicates used for this construction are grouped in classes.

(Table 3)	*Predicate classes with the perfect participle* (after Fanning 1990)
'Durative verbs with bounded effected or abolished object'	*kataskeuazō* 'I construct', *sullegō* 'I gather', *diaphtheirō* 'I utterly destroy'
'Other durative verbs with bounded lexical meaning'	*homalizō* 'I make even', *hoplizō* 'I arm', *emplekō* 'I entwine'
'Verbs denoting an instantaneous transition of the subject or object'	*peithō* 'I convince', *aphikneomai* 'I arrive', *podizō* 'I bind the feet'
'Verbs with object-complement constructions denoting an instantaneous naming, appointing, …'	*kathistēmi* 'I appoint'

The predicates listed in Table 3 are commonly called 'accomplishments' and 'achievements', which are both telic. Here, the property expressed by the perfect participle corresponds to the resultant state of the event denoted by the predicate (cf. Langacker 2008: 121). In an example such as (6), where the verb *skeuazō* 'I equip' is used, this concerns the fact that the Arians are now equipped with Median bows.

(6)   *Arioi de toksoisi men <u>eskeuasmenoi ēsan</u> Mēdikoisi* (Herodotus, *Historiae* 7.66.1)
        [Arians PTC with:bows PTC equipped (PERF.) were Median]
        'The Arians were equipped with Median bows'

2. 2. A property reading as non-default construal

I close this brief overview with those cases where a property reading does not constitute the default construal. Not surprisingly, here we find predicates that are not normally interpreted as stative. Some examples are listed in Table 4.

(Table 4)	*Predicate classes with the present participle* (after Fanning 1990)
'Verbs denoting a gradable transition'	*epauksanō* 'I increase'
'Verbs of active cognition, mental attitude or emotional state'	*amphisbēteō* 'I dispute'
'Verbs denoting an instantaneous transition of the subject or object'	*ekplēssō* 'I shock', *parakaleō* 'I invite'
'Verbs of instantaneous "receiving/giving" or "getting/losing"'	*anadechomai* 'I take upon myself'
'Transitive or intransitive verbs with unbounded meaning'	*kakourgeō* 'I do evil'

Consider Example (7), which both Björck (1940: 16) and Aerts (1965: 17) consider 'adjectival'. Here the lexically perfective verb *parakaleō* 'I summon' is used. Under 'normal' circumstances, we would expect the combination of the verb *eimi* with the present participle

parakalōn to express an actual occurrence reading, with a progressive meaning of 'he/it is summoning'. In this particular case, however, the construction *estin ... parakalōn* 'It (the speech) summons' is used to clarify the content of a speech which was written prior to the time of speaking. When the speaker says that the speech summons the Greeks, he is not speaking about a particular instance, but rather about the properties of the speech. Some recent studies would describe examples such as this in terms of 'coercion', denoting that an alternative construal is explicitly required or 'coerced' by the context.

(7)   *Estin de tous men Hellēnas parakalōn epi tēn tōn barbarōn strateian …* (Isocrates, *Antidosis* 57)
        [it:is PTC the PTC Greeks summoning (PRES.) to the of:the barbarians campaign]
        'It (the speech) summons the Greeks to a campaign against the barbarians …'

Next to the description of the content of a speech, another use I came across in Post-Classical narrative texts is the description of a person's character, as illustrated in (8), where the verb *eutelizō* 'I disparage' is used. Such cases are quite fascinating, and it would be most interesting to further research the interaction of the discourse context with a property reading and an actual occurrence reading respectively. Three contextual elements which 'facilitate', so to speak, a property reading, are (a) the use of an inanimate subject, (b) co-ordination with a true adjective, and (c) the use of the present tense.

(8)   *ēn de tapeinophrōn agan kai heauton eutelizōn* (*Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, Vita 4)
        [he:was PTC humble very and himself deprecating (PRES.)]
        'He was very humble and deprecating himself'

3. THE CATEGORIAL STATUS OF THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE

3. 1. Adjectivisation of the present participle?

In the second part of this paper, I want to take a closer look at the categorial status of the adjectival participle. In the past, it has been repeatedly suggested that the adjectival present participle not only functions as an adjective but should be considered categorially adjectival or 'adjectivised'. As a consequence, it is stressed that we cannot speak of true periphrasis in these cases. Not surprisingly, this primarily concerns constructions with lexically imperfective verbs, especially those where the participle is derived from an impersonal and intransitive content verb, e.g. *prepon* 'becoming', *prosēkon* 'fitting' and s*umpheron* 'convenient', which occur most frequently. Björck (1940) calls these, together with a number of other participles, "Daueradjektivierungen", which he opposes to less frequently occurring "Gelegenheits-adjektivierungen". The most vehement opposition against these considerations has come from Porter (1989: 454), according to whom the fact that a participle functions like an adjective does not mean that it really is an adjective.

Although Porter's view seems to me mostly a matter of principle, it is a fact that very few scholars arguing for the adjectival status of the present participle have backed up their claims with formal arguments. An overview of such arguments is given in Table 5. In my view, none of these makes a convincing case for the complete adjectivisation of the present participle. Obviously, it cannot be my intention here to discuss these criteria in great detail, so I limit myself to giving some comments on the three most important criteria, namely adverbial formation, syntactic co-ordination with true adjectives and loss of argument structure. I also pay attention to differences and similarities between Björck's *Daueradjektivierungen* and *Gelegenheitsadjektivierungen*.

(Table 5)   *Formal criteria proposed for adjectivisation of the (present) participle*

Phonological criteria	Morphological Criteria	Syntactic criteria
Phonological reduction of the participle (Amenta 2003: 32)	Adverbial formation (Björck 1940: 17)	Combination with adverbs of degree (Karleen 1980: 120)
Verbal stem no longer recognisable (Amenta 2003: 32)	Formation of comparative and superlative degrees (Björck 1940: 17)	Frequent use in attributive position (Aerts 1965: 17)
		Syntactic coordination with true adjectives (Boyer 1984: 168)
		Loss of argument structure (Kahn 1973: 136)

Adverbial formation is probably the most fruitful argument for adjectivisation of the present participle. In his landmark study, Björck (1940: 17) has drawn attention to the fact that many adjectival participles can be used as adverbs, especially those which he calls *Daueradjektivierungen*. Some examples are given in (9). It is not clear, however, whether adverbial formation of a large part of the *Daueradjektivierungen* is a sufficient argument to generalise that all adjectival present participles are adjectivised, as Björck (1940:24) seems to imply when he notes that "ein prinzipieller Unterscheid, so dass die Gelegenheitsperiphrasen etwa mehr 'verbal' wären, kommt also nicht in Frage".

(9)   *arkōn > arkountōs* 'abundantly'; *diapherōn > diapherontōs* 'differently'; *lusitelōn > lusiteloountōs* 'profitably'; *prepōn > prepontōs* 'fitly'; *prosēkōn > prosēkontōs* 'suitably'; *sumpherōn > sumpherontōs* 'expedient'

Scholars take the co-ordination of a participle with one or more adjectives as a clear sign of its adjectival status, under the assumption that conjuncts are of the same category. In (10), for example, the lexically imperfective participle *deomena* 'needing' is co-ordinated with the true adjective *phobera* 'formidable'. If *deomena* is fully adjectival, however, it is difficult to explain why it retains its argument structure, taking the argument *pronoias kai phulakēs pollēs* 'much vigilance and precaution'. In my opinion, such co-ordination indicates functional likeness, rather than categorial likeness *sensu stricto*. This is also indicated by the fact that Classical Greek has examples where an aorist participle is co-ordinated with an adjective (cf. Example (3), where the aorist *prodeisas* is co-ordinated with the adjective *thrasus*).

(10)   *tauta men* <u>estin</u> *phobera kai pronoias kai phulakēs pollēs* <u>deomena</u> (Demosthenes, *De falsa legatione* 294)
[these:things PTC is formidable and vigilance and precaution much needing (PRES.)]
'Yes, these are formidable offences, and in need of the utmost vigilance and precaution'

Loss of argument structure is a good indication of whether a participle is still felt to be related to a content verb. Contrary to what one would expect, the adjectival participle keeps its argument structure in most cases, as for example in (11). This observation not only concerns *Gelegenheitsadjektivierungen*, but also *Daueradjektivierungen*, even those which have an attested adverb. Björck (1940:20) admits that one could interpret this as a sign of the verbal

nature of his *Daueradjektivierungen*, but he refutes the argument on the basis of two fixed expressions where the participle is adverbialised together with its accusative object (*noun ekhōn > noun ekhontōs* 'sensibly'; *logon ekhōn > logon ekhontōs* 'reasonably'). Of course, such expressions are rare, and it is not clear whether they can also account for participles with a genitive object (as in (10)).

(11)　　*esti de tauta tina dunamin ekhonta*; (Isocrates, *Antidosis* 117)
　　　　[is PTC that what power having (PRES.)?]
　　　　'What power do these things have?'

I hope to have shown on the basis of these few remarks that complete adjectivisation of the adjectival present participle is not self-evident. One additional weakness of previous studies is that they do not deal with the adjectival perfect and aorist participle. While few scholars would argue that the aorist participle is fully adjectival, it has been suggested that the perfect participle is "strongly adjectival" (Aerts 1965: 13).

3. 2.　The intracategorial continuum

The alternative I would like to propose is to locate the adjectival participle on an intracategorial continuum with a more adjective-like and a more verb-like side, a view which is in accordance with recent research of Pompei (2006) on the Ancient Greek conjunct participle. In doing so, we explicitly recognise that time-stability and low agentivity, the defining features of a property reading, are not an 'all-or-nothing affair'.
　　In accordance with the semantic analysis presented above, the present participle is most complex in terms of the intracategorial continuum. While the adjectival perfect participle, which has a property reading as its default construal when combined with *eimi*, tends towards the 'adjectival' side of the continuum, constructions with the present participle occupy a more diverse range of positions along the continuum. More specifically, for the present participle I propose to distinguish between three main groups on the basis of formal and semantic criteria, each of which is illustrated in Table 6.

(Table 6)　　*Three groups of adjectival constructions (with the present participle)*

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
prepon esti 'it is fitting'	*ēn akmazousa* 'she was flourishing'	*esti parakalōn* 'it is inviting'
sumpheron esti 'it is convenient'	*ēn zōn* 'he was alive'	*estin anadechomenos* 'he is taking upon himself'
deon esti 'it is necessary'	*eisin orgizomenoi* 'they are angry'	*estin amphisbētōn* it is disputing'
eksarkoun esti 'it is sufficient'	*eisi mainomenoi* 'they are mad'	*esti kakourgousa* 'it is doing injury'

Semantically, these three groups are much reminiscent of my discussion of the adjectival present participle: the first two groups correspond to those cases where a property reading can be considered the default construal, and the third one to that where it does not. Not surprisingly, the third group is least time-stable and most agentive, as it occurs with predicates that are lexically perfective, and take an object. Although the first and the second group, where the content verb is lexically imperfective, are both time-stable, we can make a rough semantic distinction between the two on the basis of Givón's overview of adjectival properties

(2001: 82-3), which is essentially based on the parameter of time-stability. Participles of the first group mostly have an evaluative meaning, while those of the second group in general express transitory states or states of living, as shown in Table 7. It should be noted, however, that some combinations, mostly with the verb *ekhō*, cannot be easily classified as such (e.g. in Example (11) *dunamin ekhonta* 'having power').

(Table 7)   *Present participles expressing adjective-like properties* (after Givón 2001)[3]

	Prototypical		**Less prototypical**
Size	(*huperballōn* 'excessive')	**Evaluative**	*arkōn* 'sufficient', *areskōn* 'pleasant', *endekhomenos* 'possible' …
Color	*apastraptōn/eksastraptōn* 'shining', *khlorizōn* 'green'	**Transitory states**	*aganaktōn* 'angry', *eunoōn* 'well inclined with', *katheudōn* 'asleep' …
Auditory qualities	?	**States of living**	*eirēneuōn* 'living in peace', *eupathōn* 'prosperous', *hugiainōn* 'healthy' …
Shape	*proekhōn* 'jutting out, projecting'		
Taste	?		
Tactile	*apekhōn* 'far from', *eggizōn* 'nearby'		

The formal characteristics of these three groups are shown in Table 8. Constructions of the first group are formed with participles whose content verb is often intransitive and impersonal, such as *prepei* 'it is fitting'. They are more often used in pre-finite position than those of the second and the third group. This first group consists of a small number of frequently occurring members, which explains why they are used for adverbial formation. In comparison with those of the first group, participles of the second group are less entrenched, and thus less often used for adverbial formation. Constructions in this group are formed with participles whose content verb is personal and often intransitive, for example *akmazō* 'I flourish'. This group also contains, however, a few participles from transitive content verbs. As already noted, the pre-finite position is less often attested here. The third group is in general well recognisable by the fact that its constructions are formed with participles from lexically perfective content verbs. Participles in this third group are even less entrenched than those of the second group. Accordingly, there are no attested adverbial formations. They are formed with participles whose content verb is personal and mostly transitive, for example *parakaleō* 'I summon'. Here, the participle occurs least often in pre-finite position.

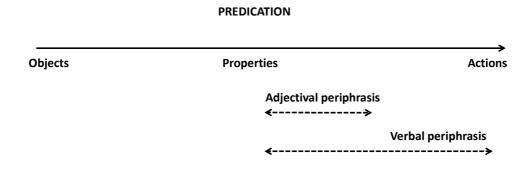(Table 8)   *Formal characteristics of the three groups*

	Total	**Prefinite**	**Intransitive**	**Impersonal**	**Inanimate**
Group 1	69 ex.	45 %	94 %	19 %	88%
Group 2	28 ex.	36 %	61 %	3 %	36%
Group 3	10 ex.	30 %	10 %	0 %	80%

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[3]   In order to verify whether the gaps observed in this overview are consistently motivated, I included examples taken from a corpus of Post-Classical and Early Medieval biographic and hagiographic texts. Though it cannot be excluded that technical treatises may fill up some of the gaps, there is a clear tendency towards the expression of less prototypical properties.

3. 3. Theoretical implications

Let me conclude with a brief note on the theoretical implications of my proposal. The categorial status of the adjectival participle has important consequences for the periphrasticity of the examples. In the past, it has been repeatedly emphasised that adjectival present participles do not form true periphrastics, as they are adjectives ('adjectivised'). With the continuum-view I propose, however, such a generalisation can no longer be maintained. Constructions with the adjectival perfect participle — which are, to a large extent, paradigmatically integrated — raise the same question: how can the notions of adjectival and verbal periphrasis be related to each other? What I would like to suggest, is to view 'adjectival' and 'verbal' periphrasis as non-exclusive terms, whereby the former denotes periphrastic constructions with an adjectival character, and the latter periphrastic constructions per se (based on semantic, syntactic and paradigmatic criteria), as shown in figure 1 on the handout. Constructions with an adjectivised participle are then categorised as instances of the construction *eimi* with adjective.

(Figure 1)   *Adjectival and verbal periphrasis as non-exclusive terms*

PREDICATION

Objects   Properties   Actions

Adjectival periphrasis
◄--------------►

Verbal periphrasis
◄----------------------------------►

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