

The syntax of predicative participles in Homeric Greek in comparison with Other Indo-European languages

Greek, among all ancient Indo-European languages, is the one which developed the usage of participles to the greatest extent, and thus it is a good starting point for a comparative study of participial syntax in Indo-European languages. Already in Homeric Greek, we find a great diversity of what we call predicative participles. Firstly, there are the truly predicative participles with an expressed or unexpressed copular verb in place of a finite form, an expression characteristic of the poetic language. Secondly, there are participles, sometimes called semi-predicative, used with verbs of perception, movement, speech and others which are constructed with a participle.

The aim of my paper is to present an analysis of the syntax of predicative and semi-predicative participles in Homeric Greek. I shall discuss their main syntactic characteristics and look for constraints on their usages, in order to define in what specific context they are most likely to be used in place of other verbal forms.

Furthermore, I am going to compare the Homeric usage of these participles with other Indo-European languages, mostly Vedic Sanskrit, but also Latin, Lithuanian and others. I hope to shed new light on the question whether it is possible to reconstruct the syntax of predicative participles in Proto-Indo-European and thus to indicate to what degree the Homeric usage is inherited and how much it has innovated on the Greek level.

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