On Connections Between Personal Pronouns and Verbal Endings in the Balkans

Brian D. Joseph
The Ohio State University

Introduction

In dialectal Macedonian and Bulgarian, a first person plural (1PL) verbal ending *-ne* is found for expected *-me* (e.g., *sne* 'we are', *vidofne* 'we saw', *berene* 'we carry', etc.). In Joseph 2004, it is suggested that this development is the result of (analogical) influence from the 1PL pronoun (e.g., nominative *nie*) onto the verbal ending, given that there are some parallels within Slavic (e.g., Old Slavic *pobyxomy* for expected *pobyxomŭ*, with the innovative vocalism *-y* presumably based on that of the 1PL nominative form *my* (Duridanov et al. 1991: 296) or first person dual ending *-vě* for expected *-va*, if, as Dunkel (2002: 100–01) suggests, it shows a "perseveration" of a collocation of pronoun with inflected verb, e.g., *vě jesva 'we two are' > *vě jesvě*) and in New Mexican Spanish (e.g., 1PL *hablabanos* 'we were speaking', discussed in Janda 1995) that show that pronoun-on-verb-ending interaction is an attested type of morphological development. In addition, though, a parallel is offered from the development of certain nonactive verb endings between early post-Classical Greek and later Medieval and Modern Greek, drawing on the analysis of Ruge 1984. Interestingly too, again drawing on the analytical observations in Ruge 1984 but also the typological observations in Ruge 1982 about the structure of person relations, one can cite parallels from Turkish involving matchings between pronominal marking for possession and endings used on verbs. Such Southeast European parallels within Greek, Slavic, and Turkish naturally raise the intriguing possibility that language contact within the Balkans could have played a role in these developments. In Joseph 2004 the focus was mainly on Slavic, so it is worth examining the Greek case more closely in the hope that doing so might shed further light on the relevance of language contact in one direction or another. In the end, no definitive answer may be forthcoming, but the investigation itself nonetheless is worthwhile and revealing.

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In what follows, therefore, intended as a companion piece to my earlier piece (Joseph 2004), I develop the argument on the Greek side in greater detail, and add further relevant facts regarding Balkan parallels that allow for some evaluation of the potential role of language contact in the shaping of verbal endings in these languages. It is altogether fitting to do so in a volume honoring my friend and colleague Charles Gribble, as his own work (e.g., Gribble 1987) has opened the doors to the study of South Slavic in general and especially Bulgarian for numerous students over the years. Moreover, Gribble 2003 contains intriguing observations that helped me in my own understanding of these developments on the South Slavic side. I thus quite happily dedicate this piece to Chuck's honor.

Summary of the Greek Facts

The development in question in Greek is the emergence of an innovative third person plural nonactive (middle/mediopassive) imperfect (past) ending having the form *-ondusan* or *-ondustan*, found in regional dialects and in the usage of many speakers of the standard language as well. This form represents an innovation away from earlier endings such as *-ondan*, also still widely attested in Modern Greek, which is itself based on Ancient Greek *-onto* with the addition of the 3PL active ending *-an*. The ending *-ondusan* and/or *-ondustan* (hereafter, *-ondus(t)an*), or some transformation thereof, occurs in many varieties of Northern Greek (e.g., Skopelos, and, in the form *-ontsan* with loss of unstressed *-u-*, Arachova), in Old Athenian Greek (Central mainland, e.g., Megara), and in Peloponnesian Greek (e.g., Anoya; Kinouria; Lakonia, in the form *-odusan*, with loss of the nasal in the cluster with a voiced stop), as reported by Newton 1972 and Pantelides 2003, among others.

This ending lends itself at least partially to an explanation in purely Greek-internal terms. In particular, the starting point was the Ancient Greek 3PL past mediopassive ending *-onto*, which was extended to **-onto-san* through the addition of the variant active 3PL ending *-san*. This extension process has been operative throughout Greek history at least for active forms, as shown by Classical Attic *égno: san* 'they knew' vs. (earlier) Pindaric *égnon* and Hellenistic *elambánosan* 'they were taking' vs. earlier *elámbanon* (Chantraine 1968: §353; Pantelides 2003); moreover, it is exactly parallel to what happened in the creation of the competing form *-ondan* noted above (though with a different active ending). This ending **-óntosan* would have turned into **-óndosan* via the pan-Greek regular voicing of *-t-* to *-d-* after a nasal, and then in the north of Greece would have become *-óndusan* via the regular northern raising of unstressed *o* to *u*. Alternatively, though also on a

purely Greek-internal basis, one might invoke some influence of the 3PL.IMPF form of 'be', *ísane* (as did Newton 1972, though with some hesitation) so that *-ondusan* in this view would have been a blend of *-onto and *ísane* (and note that in Kimi the ending *-ondisane* is attested).

There are however some problems with these accounts of the origin of *-ondusan*. In particular, while these endings do occur in the north (e.g., Arachova), they are also found in the south (the Peloponnese), where unstressed mid-vowel raising is generally unexpected (though perhaps not entirely unheard of). Moreover, the northern forms (again, e.g., Arachova *-ontsan*) show the loss of *-u-*, which is not at all regular with *-u-* raised from original *-o-*, being expected, rather, with original *-u-*. Also, for *ísane* 'they were' to have played a role, a presumed change of *i* to *u* must be invoked, which, again, is not unheard of, but is more usual when velars or labials together with sonorants are adjacent to the vowel. Therefore, there may be more to the emergence of *-ondusan* than just these developments.

The Proposal of Ruge 1984

Ruge 1984, no doubt reacting to this sense that more must have been going on in the creation of *-ondus(t)an*, advanced the very intriguing proposal that this form was caused by several different pressures. First, there were some influences (beyond those suggested above) internal to the system of endings itself, by way of explaining the variant with *-t-*. Specifically, there was pressure exerted on the 3PL ending by the other plural endings, 1PL *-mastan* and 2PL *-sastan*, themselves innovative reshapings from the Ancient Greek *-mestha* and *-esthe* respectively with, among other things, the extension with *-an* seen in *-ondan*, and this pressure led to the introduction of the *-t-* in the 3PL, giving *-ondustan*, or perhaps more properly since the source of the *-u-* is uncertain, *-ondostan*. That there would be influence within the set of plural endings is significant in light of further developments.

These additional developments involved a reanalysis of the plural endings as being built on weak possessive pronouns, with *-mastan*/*-sastan* being treated as if they were composed of *mas*/*sas* 'our/your'. These pronominal forms are also accusative, but since the 1SG and 2SG endings, *-mun* and *-sun* respectively, look as if they contain the 1SG/2SG possessives *mu*/*su* 'my/your' (and not accusatives *me*/*se*) plus other formatives, it can be assumed that possessives were taken as the basis for the plural endings not accusatives. Such a reanalysis in the 1PL/2PL endings would have allowed for pressure from those endings onto the 3PL (as with the introduction of *-t-*) that would then have led to the 3PL form being *-ondus(t)an*, this form being treated

as if it were built out of *-on-tus-(t)-an* with *-tus-* being identifiable as the 3PL possessive pronoun *tus* 'their'; inasmuch as voicing of *-nt-* to *-nd-* is regular, a surface *-nd-* could be readily interpreted as coming from an underlying /-n-t-/.

Areal Typological Parallels—Language Contact as a Possible Source

As noted at the outset, pronoun/verb-ending interaction is found in South Slavic and in Greek, and there is as well a structural parallel in Turkish, in that what correspond to pronominal possessives in Turkish are generally similar in shape to verbal endings (e.g., the 1SG *-Im* in verbs is identical to the nominal possessive *-Im*, the 2SG *-sIn* in verbs is similar to the nominal possessive *-In*, and so on). Thus, especially in the context of the Balkans, one has to wonder if external pressures (e.g., contact with Turkish on the part of Greek or Slavic, or contact with Slavic on the part of Greek, or contact with Greek on the part of Slavic) may have played a role in any of the developments noted herein, in particular in the reanalysis posited for Greek, or the pronoun/verb-ending matchings in South Slavic.

Some progress can be made at once on the specter of language contact. In particular, Turkish is not very likely to have had any effect here. On the one hand, there are potential chronological problems with invoking Turkish influence; although exact dating seems not to be possible, under present knowledge, for the emergence of the Slavic or the Greek endings, the dialect distribution in each case suggests that they are not terribly recent, and the OCS parallels indicate some relevant influences were present in Slavic independently, at any event. On the other hand, and more tellingly perhaps, the possessive-verb ending parallelism breaks down in Turkish in the plural (e.g., in 1PL past *-k* vs. possessive *-mIz*), while it emerges most clearly and robustly in the plural in Greek and in Slavic specifically in the 1PL form.

Thinking in terms of possible Slavic-Greek interaction here is reasonable as we know that the two languages coexisted side-by-side for hundreds of years and show additional signs of borrowing and mutual influence. Thus, there are numerous loan words, including some outside of a religious context, such as OCS *korab-* 'boat' from Greek *kárabos* 'light ship', that point to contact at a lexical level. More suggestive, however, is an intriguing pattern of convergences at a structural level between the two speech communities. Consequently, interaction between Slavic and Greek becomes a more attractive additional force to posit as being at work in the Greek developments or, by the same token, in the Slavic developments, the directionality of the influence being difficult to decide with any definitiveness.

My earlier paper (Joseph 2004) pointed to Greek-Slavic parallels in the reshaping of verb endings in other ways beyond the pronominal effects in question. For instance, both show a similar distribution for thematic vowels in the past tense, in that the occurrence of *o*/*e* in the Slavic *s-aorist, as with *mog-* 'can, could':

1SG	mog-**o**-xŭ	1PL	mog-**o**-xomŭ
2	mož-**e**	2	mog-**o**-ste
3	mož-**e**	3	mog-**o**-šę

parallels the distribution of *a*/*e* in Greek past active endings, as in the aorist of *mén-* 'stay':

1SG	émin-**a**	1PL	mín-**a**me
2	émin-**e**s	2	mín-**a**te
3	émin-**e**	3	mín-**a**ne

In each case *-e* occurs only in 2SG and 3SG forms, and the other vowel, *o*/*a*, occurs elsewhere. Interestingly also, in that it makes these verbal paradigm connections across the languages more compelling, Slavic *o* matches Greek *a* in two ways: in terms of regular sound correspondences in inherited words with *a (e.g., Slavic 'father' ***o****t-ĭc-* = (Anc.) Greek ***a****t-ta* 'daddy') and in loans from Greek with *a*—in at least some positions (e.g., OCS *k**o**rab-* ~ *k**á**rabos* cited above).

Even more telling perhaps are striking parallels in other respects between (northern) Greek and South Slavic, but especially Macedonian, that center on combinations of verbs and pronouns. This varied evidence of pronoun-verb linkage makes it that much more plausible to assume some active convergence on the reshaping of verbal forms based on associations involving pronouns. In particular, three phenomena are salient here, and they seem to be relatively recent developments in these languages in that they do not occur in Old Church Slavonic nor, in two of the cases, in Ancient Greek. Although it is not certain that these features necessarily developed in one language as the result of contact with the other, the convergences are striking and cannot be ignored in any discussion of possible influence of one language over the other in the realm of the restructuring of the verb.

One parallel is in the placement of weak ("clitic") object pronouns relative to verb (already discussed in Joseph 1983). In Greek, in the standard language and in many (but not all) of the other dialects, the weak pronouns occur before finite verbs (i.e., tensed person-marked forms) and after nonfinite ones

(in particular the participles, especially the active verbal adverbial participle, and the imperatives). This same placement is found in Macedonian, but not in Bulgarian, where the placement is due more to prosodic factors, and (generally) obeys a "Wackernagel"-esque second-position placement regardless of the type of verb. Some relevant examples are given in (1)–(3), from Greek, Macedonian, and Bulgarian, respectively, showing in (a) placement of a weak object pronoun relative to a finite verb, with and without a subject pronoun, in (b) placement with an imperative, again with and without an overt subject pronouns, and for Slavic, in (c), in a negated imperative:

(1) a. ton vlepo/ eγo ton vlepo
him see/1SG I/NOM
'I see him'

b. vlepe ton!/ esi vlepe ton
IMPV.Sg you
'See him!'/'You see him!'

(2) a. go gledam/ jas go gledam
him see/1SGI/NOM
'I look at him'

b. gledaj go!/ ti gledaj go
IMPV.SG you
'[You] look at him!'

c. ne gledaj go!
not
'Don't look at him!'

(3) a. gledam go/ az go gledam
see/1SG him I/NOM
'I look at him'

b. gledaj go!/ ti go gledaj!
IMPV.SG you
'Look at him!'/'You look at him!'

c. ne go gledaj!
not
'Don't look at him!'

The difference between Macedonian and Bulgarian with regard to placement of weak object pronouns—note in particular how the presence of a subject pronoun (2ab, 3ab) or negative marker (2c, 3c) before the verb has no effect on pronoun placement in Macedonian but does alter the placement in Bulgarian—is significant, and the usual assumption, given what is known about second position "clitic" placement in other Slavic languages, is that Macedonian is innovative here. What is striking here, without, at this point, concern for the causes of the innovation, is that on the surface the end result of the innovation in Macedonian parallels the Greek configuration for weak pronoun placement. Moreover, by way of emphasizing what pronominal marking could mean for a verb, Aronson 2006 has referred to these very sorts of developments as a movement within the Balkans towards what he calls "polypersonal" verbs, in that not only are subjects encoded on the verb via personal endings but so too are objects via the weak pronouns. Influence of the sort posited for *sne* (etc.) and *-ondus(t)an* that flows from pronominal forms onto personal endings thus becomes more plausible in this context of polypersonal verbs.

A second such case, one that is found on the Slavic side not only in dialectal Macedonian but also dialectal Bulgarian, concerns the occurrence of multiple accents in what can be described as a single phonological domain, or, more specifically, the phonological domain of a word extended on the right edge by the addition of one or more weak pronouns, either object pronouns in the case of a verb (positioned on the right with imperatives and participles, as noted above) or possessive pronouns in the case of a noun. In such cases in Greek, with certain underlying accentual patterns, there is the addition of an accent on the syllable to the left of the weak pronoun, as in (4). In standard Macedonian, as in (5), representing a west central dialect, there is a rightward shift of the accent (Friedman 1993: 254). However, in a dialect zone in the Balkans that includes "a relatively compact area in southwestern Bulgaria and neighboring regions of Macedonia and Greece" (Alexander 2002), one finds an added accent in the extended domain, as shown in (6), dialectal Bulgarian examples from Alexander 2002:

(4) a. vlépete / vlépeté ton!
IMPV.PL IMPV.PL him
'See!' 'See him!'

b. ónoma
'name'

ónomá tu
his

'his name'

(5) a. vodeníčari

'millers'

b. vodeničári-te
DEF.PL
'the millers'

(6) a. víkamé go
call/1PL him

'We call him'

b. dóktori-té
doctor/PL DEF.PL

'the doctors'

Some sense of which language is innovative can be developed here, since the accent adjustment seen in (4) has been a part of Greek for millennia, having a more or less direct analogue in Ancient Greek; on the other hand, the double accent in southern Balkan Slavic seems to be an innovation affecting (among other things) combinations of verbs with pronouns. Strikingly again, then, in general terms, the innovation is in the direction of the situation found in Greek and results, therefore, in some superficial convergence between Slavic and Greek. Thus, even if perhaps not directly relevant for the *sne*/*-ondus(t)an* developments per se, the double accent provides another link between verbs and pronouns that is found in both Greek and South Slavic.

A third parallel concerns the occasional use of the accusative for marking pronominal indirect objects with the verb *veli* 'says' (Bužarovska 2001). This feature is found in the Macedonian dialects of the Lower Vardar River area (i.e., those located in what is now northern Greece), as in:

(7) a. on go veli
he him/ACC says/3SG

'He says to him'

b. majka i ja veli
mother her/POSS her/ACC says

'Her mother says to her'

This usage parallels the case usage found in northern Greek, where accusative is used for indirect object functions (vs. genitive used in this way in southern dialects, including the standard language), as shown in:

(8) a. aftos ton lei
he/NOM him/ACC says/3SG
'He says to him'

b. I mana tis tin lei
the-mother her/POSS her/ACC says
'Her mother says to her'

In both languages (note possessive *i* versus object *ja* in Macedonian [7b] and possessive *tis* versus object *tin* in Greek (8b)), the possessive function is not affected by this shift for indirect object, even though the possessive and the indirect object continue the same case in other dialects. There are differences, in that accusative is used in northern Greek for indirect object with nouns as well as with pronouns, whereas this usage seems to be limited to pronouns in these Macedonian dialects, but as in the other parallels noted above, the surface result is strikingly convergent between the two languages.

Evaluation of the Evidence

Taking in the "big picture," we can say that what all these facts show is an overall pattern of convergence between South Slavic and Greek that hinge on linkages between pronouns and verbs in various ways, both with regard to the internal composition of the markings on the verb for the person of the subject (the function of the verb endings) and with regard to combinations involving object pronouns with verbs. The preponderance of such evidence for convergence is hard to ignore when considering these interactions between pronouns and verbs.

What is hard to show, however, at least in any conclusive way, is that language contact had anything to do with the convergence. For instance, while it is noteworthy that these innovative developments are focused to a large part on the generally southern regions of the South Slavic territory, where contact with Greek speakers would have been especially prevalent, such evidence is entirely circumstantial.

Moreover, the superficial convergences noted in section 4, as suggestive as they may be of contact, may not be as compelling as might appear for evidence of Greek-Slavic, contact-induced change. In particular Alexander

2002 sees the double accent phenomenon in South Slavic as a Slavic-internal innovation, not related to the Greek situation in any way—an entirely reasonable conclusion in light of significant differences between the Greek double accent phenomenon and the ostensibly similar Balkan Slavic situation. For instance, in Greek the double accent occurs only with extended domains such as those created by the addition of weak pronouns, whereas in Balkan Slavic some single lexical forms participate: Alexander cites, for instance, *tólková* 'thus, so much'. Also, in Greek the extra accent is always one syllable to the left of the domain extender, whereas in Balkan Slavic the extra accent can be on the domain extender itself, as in (6b) above: *dóktori-té*.

The placement of the weak object pronouns, too, while certainly lending itself to interpretation as a contact-induced innovation in Macedonian, cannot conclusively be shown to the result of contact with Greek. A similar pattern of placement developed independently in Spanish, for instance. Given that imperatives and the verbal adverbs (active participles) often occur in initial position in a sentence, it would not be surprising for them to be the forms that come to have weak object pronouns positioned on their right, as a reanalysis of Wackernagelian second position.

Finally, the use of a direct object form (accusative) after a verb of speaking could well be an independent innovation in each language. The same phenomenon is found in English with the verb *tell* and in Sanskrit with several verbs of speaking. Also, in both English and Sanskrit, the use of direct object forms in such constructions seems to be an innovative movement away from indirect object marking (e.g., with dative case).

Furthermore, to return now to the readjustments in the form of verbal endings that this study began with, even then language contact is not conclusive. For Slavic linkages between pronouns and verb endings to have been involved in the Greek developments by which *-ontosan* became *-ontus(t)an*, the effects would have to have been manifested in the northern Greek region. Since the apparently pronominally based *-ondus(t)an* is found in the South as well, for southern Greek one would have to either posit spread from the North, or else admit that just the internal pressures alone could be sufficient. But if the latter is the case for the South, presumably it could be so also for the North. The most one could point to, perhaps, is added facilitation from external models which South Slavic could have provided. Yet, at any rate, the New Mexican Spanish development noted in at the outset shows that these sorts of changes can happen independently, without the provocation that language contact can provide. Moreover, it is not even clear that the same case form was at work in the Balkan Slavic and the Greek developments in question: while the possessive (or possibly accusative) pronoun was involved

in the Greek change to *-ontus(t)an*, the Slavic forms such as *sne* (etc.) might be taken instead to involve pressure from the nominative, though admittedly the nominative form now is *nie*, not *ne*. This is especially so if the Macedonian 1PL past forms such as *vidofme* (or *vidofne*) are taken to have their *-f-* via analogy to the 1SG form *vidof*, thereby inviting an analysis of *vidofme* as *vidof#me* with an internal word-boundary, so that something akin to a nominative subject form (e.g., *-ne*) would be a most appropriate subject-marking attachment.

Ultimately, then, we may well have a typical Balkan outcome here: lots of suggestive parallels but no hard evidence to link them. Language contact could be involved, but need not be. Nonetheless, the exploration is not unfruitful, as we certainly learn from examining the parallels and sharpen our understanding regarding the language-internal dynamics at play in these developments.

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Dept. of Slavic & East European Languages & Literatures
The Ohio State University
400 Hagerty Hall
1775 College Road
Columbus, OH 43210 USA
joseph.1@osu.edu