Zeus' Guide to Participles

Hello! My name is Zeus! As Lord of the Universe, I invented something for my favorite language: Greek! That thing is *participles* (PTCs), or in Greek, μετοχαί (μετοχή = "participation"). Participles "participate" in the action of the sentence.

Here follows my user-friendly "Guide to Participles." Yes, it's a bit long, maybe a bit intricate. But it's also designed to direct you to the info you need. Enjoy!

1   FORMS: Rules of Thumb

Remember certain rules of thumb:

1. When working with PTCs, try your best to determine (a) if it really is a PTC in the first place, and (b), if so, *what its form is*. Use the very excellent paradigm tables at the end of vols. 1 and 2 of *Athenaze*. Do not, in other words, simply guess; *check!*

2. *Middle* PTCs (-μενος etc. forms) are declined (have adjective endings) like 1st/2nd declension adjectives, for instance, **καλός** (masc. 2nd decl.), **καλή** (fem. 1st decl), **καλόν** (neut. 2nd decl.). Hence pres. mid PTCs of **λύομαι**, "ransom,"

	SINGULAR		
	masc.	fem.	neut.
nom.	λυόμεν-ος	λυμομέν-η	λυόμεν-ον
gen.	λυμομέν-ου	λυμομέν-ης	λυμομέν-ου
	etc. "ransoming"		

3. *Active* PTCs, *aorist passive* PTCs, and active "perfect" (i.e., stative) PTCs *always* decline according to the following, basic pattern:

   - masc. & neut: THIRD DECL.

   - feminine: FIRST DECL. (like nouns with short alpha).

   For example:

   Present active PTC of **λύω**

λύων	λύουσα	λύον
λύοντος	λυούσης	λύοντος
λύοντι	λυούση	λύοντι
λύοντα	λύουσαν	λύον

   etc. ("releasing")

Aorist passive PTC of λύω
λυθείς   λυθεῖσα   λυθέν
λυθέντος   λυθείσης   λυθέντος
etc. ("released," "having been released")

Perfect active PTC of λύω
λελυκώς   λελυκυῖα   λελυκός
λελυκότος   λελυκυῖας   λελυκότος
etc. ("having released")

4. As *adjectival forms of verbs*, PTCs *must agree* with the noun or pronoun (expressed or implied) that they modify in *case, number, and gender*.

5. Generally speaking, *when making finite verbs into PTCs, <u>retain the original tense</u>*.

   a. PTCs don't always, though they can, indicate time.

   b. Where they indicate time, that's *relative to the main verb*. (Aorist = time prior to main verb, present = time during.)

   c. Otherwise, they indicate *aspect*. (Aorist PTCs = "undefined" aspect, i.e., simple action. Present PTCs = *imperfective aspect*, action repeated, continuous, initiated, vivid, etc.)

2   "Generic" or "Default" Translating

PTCs can *almost* (but not quite) always be translated with an *-ing* form (active and middle) or with some variant of an *-ed* form (passive).

ὁ κύων **τρέχων** οἴκαδε σπεύδει. "The dog, **running**, hurries home."

ὁ **τρέχων** κύων. "The **running** dog."

Still, the *syntax* of PTCs can mostly be understood as alternate ways of expressing something else, often a clause of some kind. Try always to translate PTCs *idiomatically*, not mechanically; see further below.

3   SYNTAX: "Clause Replacement" Use of Participles

Here follow various "clause-replacement" uses of PTCs: usages that can be understood as standing in for a variety of *clauses*, mostly subordinate, sometimes not. These will be PTCs in the *predicate position* (no article attached to front of them). These usually go best into English as if you're translating *the subordinate clause they're intercahngeable with*.

3.1   Conditional

"**If the dog is (isn't) running**, it is (isn't) happy."

ὁ κύων, **ἐὰν (μὴ) τρέχῃ**, (οὐ) χαίρει.

ὁ κύων **(μὴ) τρέχων** (οὐ) χαιρει.

*Note that a negative protasis, whether clause or PTC, always **μή**.*

3.2   Causal

"**Because/since/inasmuch as the dog is (isn't) running**, it is (isn't) happy."

ὁ κύων (οὐ) χαίρει **ὅτι (οὐ) τρέχει**.

ὁ κύων (οὐ) χαίρει **ἅτε (οὐ) τρέχων**.

Note the **οὐ** negative in preceding.

***ἅτε** can be translated as "inasmuch as." You don't need it for causal PTCs; it stresses that the speaker or writer alleges the cause on her/his own authority.*

3.3   Concessive

"**Although the dog is running**, still, it is isn't happy."

ὁ κύων, **εἰ καὶ τρέχει**, ὅμως οὐ χαίρει.

ὁ κύων, **καίπερ τρέχων**, ὅμως οὐ χαίρει.

***καίπερ** can be translated as "although." It emphasizes concession, but is not always found with concessive PTCs.*

3.4   Temporal/Circumstantial

"**When(ever) the dog is running**, it is happy."

ὁ κύων, **ὅταν τρέχῃ**, χαίρει.

ὁ κύων **τρέχων** χαίρει.

These can be indistinguishable from conditional or causal PTCs.

3.5   Future Participle of Purpose

"The dog runs **in order to be happy**."

ὁ κύων τρέχει **ἵνα χαίρῃ**.

ὁ κύων τρέχει **χαιρήσων**.

3.6   Sequential action

These are PTCs that replace verbs lined up sequentially, one action following the preceeding in time. All but the last action will typically be represented by an aorist particicple; but the non-PTC at end may well be in aor, too!

"**Go home, do your homework**, and go to sleep." (sequential commands)

ἴθι οἴκαδε, τὴν ἐργασίαν ποίησον, κατάδαρθε.

Better:

οἴκαδε ἐλθών (PTC "having gone home"), **τὴν ἐργασίαν ποιήσας/ποιήσασα** (PTC "having done your homework"), κατάδαρθε (imperat. "go to sleep!").

3.7   Use of ὡς with Participles

ὡς with a participle "sets forth the ground of belief on which the agent acts" (Smyth 2086), especially with PTCs of cause or purpose:

ὁ κύων χαίρει **ὡς τρέχων** (cause).

> "The dog is happy because, so it thinks, it is running."
>
> OR "The dog is happy as if because it is running."
>
> OR "The dog is happy under the pretence that it is running."

ὁ κύων τρέχει **ὡς χαιρήσων** (purpose).

> "The dog runs in the belief that it will thereby be happy."
>
> OR "The dog runs as if for the purpose of becoming happy."

3.8   Absolute Participles

Greek has two absolute PTC constructions: genitive and accusative.

The term "absolute" here simply means that the PTC is in a case (gen. or acc.) flagging its *disconnection from the relational syntax of the main part of the sentence.*

(I.e., the PTC doesn't modify a word that's subject, DO, IndO, object of prep., etc. It stands outside those structures.)

(Actually, the origin of these was probably not "absolutism" (i.e., disconnection) but adverbial: for gen. abs., genitive of cause/origin, for acc., the adverbial accusative.)

Absolute PTCs, whether genitive or accusative, are always of the "clause-replacement" variety.

3.8.1   Genitive Absolute: When Used, When Not

The point of the genitive is only to show that the noun or pronoun the PTC modifies has no syntactic connection to the rest of the sentence.

Not **gen. absol.:**

> ὁ κύων χαίρει **ἅτε τρέχων**. ("The dog is happy **inasmuch as it is running**." τρέχων modifies κύων, the subject of the sentence.)

Yes **gen. absol.!**

> ὁ φίλιππος χαίρει **ἅτε τοῦ κυνὸς τρέχοντος**. ("Philip is happy **inasmuch as the dog is running**.")

> *The PTC (τρέχοντος) modifies a noun (κυνός)* **disconnected** *("absolute" = "untied") from playing a grammar role in the main part of the sentence.*

3.8.2 Accusative Absolute

Accusative absolute is like the genitive absolute except in one way: *the noun/pronoun it modifies is always* **impersonal** *and* **unexpressed** *— i.e., it is used* **only** *with impersonal verbs.*

Acc. absolutes *are always impersonal verbs in a neuter accusative singular form of the PTC:*

"**It being necessary for the dog to run,** Philip is happy."

δέον (neut sing acc pres PTC) **τὸν κύνα τρέχειν**, ὁ Φίλιππος χαίρει.

"**It having been resolved** by ("**it having seemed good** to") me to let the dog loose, it ran and ran."

δόξαν μοι τὸν κύνα λῦσαι, ἔδραμε πάνυ πολύ. ("I decided to let the dog go, and so it ran and ran.")

The PTC phrase still stands outside the syntax of the rest of the sentence, except that the PTC itself is impersonal and so has nothing it modifies.

3.9 Modal Participles

3.9.1 Regular Modal Participles

Modal PTCs are like clause-replacement PTCs (above), except they are usually translated as if adverbs. That is, *in terms of meaning, that have to do with the "how" of the verb, though in terms of grammar, they still modify an expressed or unexpressed noun or pronoun.*

"The dog **happily** runs (lit. "**being-happy** runs")."

ὁ κύων τρέχει **χαίρων**.

3.9.2 Special/Idiomatic Modal Participles: λανθάνω, φθάνω

λανθάνω and φθάνω regularly appear as modal PTCs (usually in aorist) with idiomatic meanings:

"The dog runs **unseen** to the boy."

ὁ κύων τρέχει **λαθὼν** τὸν παῖδα. (Quasi-Lit., "The dog runs **'blinding'** the boy [to its running].")

"The dog runs **before the boy gets a chance to do so**." (Lit., "The dog **anticipating the boy** runs.")

ὁ κύων τρέχει **φθάσας τὸν παῖδα**.

4   SYNTAX: Noun-Phrase/Clause

This is the use of PTCs *in the attributive position*, i.e., preceeded by an article. These can be translated with noun phrases, relative clauses (w/ w/o demonstrative), nouns, etc.

"The dogs **that run**," "the **running** dogs"

οἱ **τρέχοντες** κύνες

"Those **who run**," "the **runners**"

οἱ **τρέχοντες**

You can even find these without the article: **τρέχοντες**, "**those who run**," "**runners**"

5   SYNTAX: Indirect Discourse Participles with Verbs of Perception

"I see the dog running." "I see that the dog is running."

ὁρῶ τὸν κύνα τρέχοντα.

6   SYNTAX: Complementary Participles

The following are basically idiomatic usages of PTCs "filling out" (complementary) the meaning of a special verb. Note that the PTC itself usually cannot be translated into an English *-ing* or *-ed* form.

"The dog *happens* **to be running**." (Lit., "The dog *hits-upon* **[while] running**.")

ὁ κύων *τυγχάνει* **τρέχων**.

"The dog *is evidently/plainly* **running**."

ὁ κύων *φαίνεται* **τρέχων**.