

# THE ORIGINE OF PARTICIPAL SUFFIXES IN ALBANIAN

*Erzen Koperaj*

Facultu of Social Scxiences,  
University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”,Albania

---

## Abstract

In the I.E. languages are atested various kinds of participles having stem-building suffixes in relation of the grammatical cathegory of tense and diatheses, but not all of them are attested in each I.E.language. In the course of the evolution, in Albanian verbal system, only the past passive participle, is inherited form the I.E. non-finite forms. The I.E. suffix *-meno* has reflected *-m*, the reflexes of *-no*, has yielded *-n(ë)/rë*, and I.E. suffix *-to* has reflected *-të*. In Albanian, the participial suffixes are added to the verbal stem, which are the same as that of the past. After the formal distinction of the participial adjectives from the mere participles through the pre-articulation and after the formation of the analytic perfect, the Albanian past participle has undergone to a restriction of its functions as a term of the sentence, and an extension of its use as an integral part of the analytic perfect forms on the other. As a result of this change, the participle suffixes have been reorganised as well. The article aims to analyse the developement of these suffixes, in their form-building role, and in their grammatical functions.

---

**Keywords:** Diachronic linguistics, Albanian language, non-finite forms, passive participle, participle suffixes, I.E. suffixes, participial adjectives

## Introfuction

In the I.E. Languages are atested various kinds of participles having the following stem-building suffixes but not all of them are attested in each I.E.language. The Albanian verbal system has been almost completely reorganized in the course of its evolution. Beside some inherited forms, of course evolved, a set of other verbal forms has been created as well. This evolution, in most of its cases, has been carried out since the preliterate period. As a result of the great changes produced in the verbal system of the non-finite forms, Albanian has developed a set of non-finite forms of the verb, of which one is synthetic, whereas the others are analytic. For such a reorganization Albanian has utilized various means inherited from ancient

times. The Albanian participle, as most of the Albanian morphological categories, seems to have undergone a far going development from early Indo-European forms. It is clearly seen that the suffixes are attached relatively later considering the phonetic developments at the end of the theme. Regarding the participle suffixes, it is clear that simple components of the Albanian participle, which are also the oldest, have not been uninterrupted reflexes of the respective Indo-European suffixes *-mo*, *-no*, *-to*, ( see E. Hamp, 2007: 348, V. Orel, 2000: 938, K.Topalli, 2010: 455).

### **The non-finite forms of the Albanian**

The non-finite verbal forms of the Albanian verbal system appear at such a stage of development, so that only the participle has remained as the only non-finite synthetic form while other forms are only analytical. Non-finite analytical forms of the Albanian verbal system in the course of time have gained features that characterize mitigated forms. These include the diathetic difference in contraposition active-passive voice, while in other languages, in their responsible forms, such a phenomenon is not encountered. We also notice time contraposition in the analytical non-finite forms, as we find it primarily in the early documented Albanian ( XVI-XVII centuries), *me baam~me pasë baam*, *pa shkuom- pa pasë shkuom*; *tue dalë; tue pasë dalë*. This may also include the taking of the negative particle *mos* that creates contra-osition *me baam~mos me baam*, *tue baam~ tue mos baam*; *për të bërë ~ për të mos bërë (to do ~ not to do)*. Sometimes, the negative implicit form of the type *pa bam* can also take this negative particle, e.g. *pa mos kjanë*. What is striking is the enrichment of the syntactic functions of the analytical forms and the shrinking of the syntactic functions of the participle, as already said, it is the only non-finite synthetic form of Albanian arising during its documented period, such as making a comparison from the *Missal* to the documented Albanian, rarely can we meet it as a separate structure but mostly just as an integral part of the mitigated and non-finite analytical forms. The non-finite verbal forms of the infinitive, negative and gerundive take additional structures, direct objects expressed by the short forms of the personal pronoun, predicative and adverbials, especially in some uses of Buzuku and Budi they also take a subject that is not linked to the governing verb, in this way getting closer at this point with the mitigated verb forms. Despite being presented as newer features these characteristics must have been formed before the XVI century as they are met in old authors.

### **The origine of participial suffixes**

By an exposition made in connection to the formation of the participles and their syntactic functions in the authors of written Albanian in

XVI-XVII centuries, it results that the Albanian has seen a variety of options in forming the participle, sometimes even free alternatives that have replaced each other. Taking into account the state of today's language of this dialect we can say that we can also trace the historical development of this verbal category in the aforementioned authors. As seen above (the suffixes that form the participles in the works of the old authors) it is clearly shown that from *Buzuku* (XVI cent.) to *Kazazi* and *Variboba* (XVIII cent.) the components of the participle from the unconditional free variations we meet in *The Missal* (*Meshari*) come crystallizing and pass to fixed suffixes according to the type of the verbal stem, which in most cases is the same as that of the past definite. As for the passive participle with formants, *-m*, *-në*, *-të*, the question concerning its origin as well as the question whether it has developed at first in one dialect, and extended to the other one, are unavoidable. The data of the attested Albanian clearly show that in all its dialects existed these forms of participle.

By analyzing the forms by which the participles appear in the old authors, certainly the use of these forms that we meet in *Buzuku* draws the attention. Although the use of two different forms of the same verb was well encountered in Budi, Bardhi, Bogdani, Kazazi and da Lecce, unlike the author of the *Missal*, these cases in these authors can be called isolated cases, where one suffix is absolutely dominant and can be called part of the system while the other a trace of an old linguistic situation (as it is the case with the participles *-në*, *pam/ panë*, etc.), or a new trend (as it can be said for the suffix *-un*, *marrë/ marrun*, etc.). It is hard to believe that the Gheg dialect or its variations in the period of *Buzuku* has used three variants of components for the same participle. Considering it as an effort for a common language within the Gheg dialect we are forced to conclude that *Buzuku* included all known forms of Gheg dialect of that period. This is also reinforced by the linguistic situation of the participles and adjectives that derive from the participles of today's Gheg dialect where the earlier components of the participles are still preserved. Referring to the dialectological Atlas, on the cart. n. 86 (*Atlasi dialektologjik i gjuhës shqipe*, The Dialect Atlas of Albanian, Vol.I, Napoli, 2008), it is appeared the territory map where these forms are used), the map on how to use the adjective *i larë/ e larë*, it gives us a clear picture that in the peripheral idioms of Gheg (idioms which also maintain an older linguistic state than other dialects) we encounter forms: *i lān / e lane*; *i lā / e lame*; *i lāt / e lāt*; *i lamun / e lame*; but in none of these dialects do we encounter the alternation of the suffixes.

After *Buzuku*, the verbs of the third conjugation, those whose theme ends in a long vowel or clustered vowels *-uo/-ue*, the suffix *-m* remains the dominant, while the verbs whose theme ends in a consonant, the suffix *-un(ë)* is the dominant one. This is also seen in the tendency to create compound

suffixes where the only compound suffix (more precisely it must belong to the second half of 1700) is *-mun* (formed by the merger of two alive suffixes of the Gheg in the XVII-XVIII centuries).

As explained above (regarding the participle suffixes) it is clear that simple components of the Albanian participle, which are also the oldest, have not been uninterrupted reflexes of the respective Indo-European suffixes (K.Brugmann, 1895:112). It emerges that Albanian has utilized various participial suffixes, particularly those (*-no* and *-to*) in building the past participle. It is a debate of the adjectival origin of those suffixes (Sh.Demiraj, 1986: 934; B.Bokshi, 1998: 43).

Is it possible that the Albanian participle in its historical development has emerged without a component or with zero component and has retaken them again in the course of time from the adjective? This is difficult to be proved. The Albanian participle, as most of the Albanian morphological categories, seems to have undergone a far going development from early Indo-European forms. It is clearly seen that the suffixes are attached relatively later considering the phonetic developments at the end of the theme.

### **The origine of *-m*, *-në*, *-të*, suffixes**

To accept that *-m*, *-të*, *-në* suffixes are adjective components which later have passed to the verbal system in the formation of the participles is something to be criticized:

Statistically, the works of the old Gheg authors of the XVI-XVIII century show that these suffixes are consolidated into the non-finite verbal forms and into the adjectives coming from the verb that derive from the participles of the verb.

Taking into consideration the morphological and syntactic hierarchy and the nature of word formation of the Albanian language, the adjectives' class must have been influenced by the verb and not vice versa.

The suffix *-m* must not have been forwarded to the participles from the adjectives through the development *ashtë lem*, where *lem* was an adjective *is born*, because unlike *ashtë i lem*, the *ashtë lem* sytagma means an action that is done and not the demonstration of a subject's quality.

From the viewpoint of syntactic functions, as separate determinants, the participle and the adjective that derive from the participle are just formally distinguished from the articles which indicates that in the works of the old authors even when they were used with articles (*i*) *bām*, (*i*) *shtÿm*, they have been more perceptible as a participle rather than a genuine adjective (M.Çeliku, 2006: 204).

The prevalence of these suffixes in participles (in the works of old authors) and today's adjectives that derive from the participle suggests that the source of these suffixes comes from the verbal system.

The participle of the verbs *marrë*, *dalë*, *përcjellë*, in which the *-ë* suffix indicates that it is a sequel of *-në*, where the consonant */n/* is removed as a result of the meeting with the ending consonant of the theme, respectively, */r/*, */rr/*, */l/*, */ll/*, (K. Topalli, 2010: 463) show that the adjectives *i marrun*, *i dalun*, *i përcjellun*, are much more recent creations than the participles, which reinforces the view that participle suffixes did not derive from adjectives.

The *-t* element, resulting in participles with the compound suffixes *-tun*, *-jtë*, but also appearing in the past simple of some verbs, stems precisely from the *-të* component of the former participle, e.g. in verbs such as *gjeta*, *gje-t-un*; *roita*, *roi-t-un*; etc., where theme forming suffixes *-t- /jt-*, in origin must have been primarily displayed in the participle and hence must have been extended to the theme of the past simple.

The finding and maintaining of the most archaic elements of adjectives today does not prove that the components are extended for analogy from the adjectival system. In the development of morphological categories, the innovation or the linguistic phenomenon spreads and prevails throughout the system (in our case the participle), while the archaic features are better retained in the peripheral elements or in the derivatives out of the system. In this case the participle in a much more frequent use than the adjective would be more inclined towards the unification of the suffixes, whereas its most archaic elements are kept in the adjectives that derive from the participle. Are not the adjectives with the suffix *-shëm* the most obvious example, which are the only ones that keep track of the participle of the future of the former Albanian, while the Albanian documented verbal system does not have them in its non-finite forms?

### **The distribution of the participial suffixes**

These suffixes could be retained in other non-finite verbal forms because it cannot be assumed that the old Albanian has known only the participle as a non-finite form. *-n*, *-ë* exactly, must not be influenced from the adjective but from an implicit form (I think from the synthetic infinitive or another implicit form closer to the noun) because the influence by the case system of the noun is obvious (*-në*, *-të*, can be analyzed as case endings, more specifically of the objective case). This blend of the components of the participle with the infinitive must have been done when the analytical structures of the non-finite verbal forms were created (*me shukuom*, *pa batë*, *për të mpsuom*, *për me nfallunë*, *tue prekunë*, etc...) to which prepositions started to become a petrified and out of the lexis element but formally

distinctive of one implicit form to another. The first elements to create the analytical form (ie. *me, pa, për, tuke,*) were as well prepositions of the objective case. The preservation or redistribution of the above prepositions to the non-finite verbal forms must have been something expected for the Albanian (there are a lot of examples of how the evolution of ending sounds and analogy have caused substantial changes in its linguistic subsystems).

In this way, since the analytical element with a prepositional origin became the final determinant of the implicit form (*the infinitive, negative and gerundive*), then these suffixes have gone toward the dominance of one model that is conditioned by the ending sound of the theme of the verb. This is because the form-formative suffixes due to their sequential occurrence within the paradigm (as they are unchanging elements) and because of having a smaller scale of abstraction compared to the flexion can be separated from the word structure more easily and become more mobile in use. In Gheg, since the infinitive has been and is one of the most used and expressive verbal forms, "winning" the competition with the elaborate forms (the subjunctive), the variations of the suffixes of the participle have failed to be equal as it has happened in Tosk where the component *-në/-r(ë)* appears (a dialect which has not known or eradicated a synthetic infinitive and later the analytical one of the type *me baam.*)

Historically, the flexion of today's forms of the participle compared to those of the nominal and adjectival system shows that forms without flexion, as it is the participle type *ba-m, pre-m,* must have been forms of male gender because nouns of the male gender appear with this form, without flexion; whereas the participles ending in *-ë* such as *la-në/ la-rë, dha-në/dhë-në, pi-të* must have been forms of the two other genders, feminine and neutral, because the nouns of these genders come up with this flexion. The putting of the articles in the evolution of the non-finite forms, mainly of the participle, must have also played a significant role. By taking the front articles *i, e, të,* the participles (today adjectives) come up as passive, *i, e, të baam,* while the creation of the neutral nouns from the verb *të bamtë* is given meaning in the active. Perhaps this was the reason for the termination of the opposition active voice participle - passive voice participle but also that of the gender in the Albanian participle. This reorganization through the occurrence of the front article brought the neutralization of participle suffixes which showed no more the gender but simply began to stay in line with the ending sounds of the theme. I think Buzuku's language represents the last traces of this linguistic situation. The oppositions *-në, -m, të, (lanë, laam, latë)* had lost their differentiating character, therefore they emerge as free variants. I do not judge the use of such participles *baam, batë, banë; leem, lenë, letë* etc... as an effort of Buzuku to create a variation on his regional dialect. Some authors (E. Çabej, 1968, V.I: 42, A.V.Desnickaja,

1959: 218, B.Bokshi, 1998: 38) noted that in Buzuku's *Misal*, the past participle of the same verb built with various participial suffixes, does not show a dialect feature, but is author's effort to give all dialectal forms. In these oppositions, few even to the author of the *Missal*, it is obvious that these suffixes, as grammatical opposition to each other, have been going out of the system and more likely they represent the last stage of the disappearance of the gender category of the participle.

## Conclusion

Taking into account the scale of use of the participle components of the old authors, it is clearly shown that the most stable and productive is *-n /-r*; *-un/-ur* which continue to be used as participle components. While the suffixes *-m* and *-të*, as given in the examples of the participles of the reviewed authors, have been removed passing mostly as components of the adjectival (with articles) and the adverbial system (petrous, including only the suffix *-të*). By examining the use of these components in written Albanian in the XVI-XVIII centuries this removal may have derived from the trend that the Albanian must have had, initially in Tosk and then in Gheg, to unify the suffixes of the participle. The creation of compound suffixes *-nun*, *-tun* and *-mun* in Gheg in the eighteenth century can be judged as such a phenomenon. But it seems that more effective was the unification in Gheg through unexpanded forms passing later the participle components in a wider use to adjectives and adverbs. Avoiding the use in the participle of *-m* and *-të* may have derived from the fact that these suffixes in Albanian language have been widely used as other parts of speech. The participle in the work of Buzuku, Budi, Bardhi, Bogdani, The Anonymous of Elbasan and Gj.N. Kazazi besides building analytical forms of the tense category of the verbal system or in forming the admirative it is even met as an independent member playing also different syntactic functions. Although in today's Albanian the syntactic functions of the participle are very limited, old Gheg authors bring it more diverse in the role of the subject predicative, determinant predicative of the direct object, part of the nominal predicate, part of the compound predicate after the modal verb *duhet* (must) and especially in the role of the isolated determinant. But unlike the above roles which more or less are met in all the authors, in Buzuku we meet it in the role of the *predicate*, which is not typical, but it is likely to be more a fluctuation of our first writer rather than a feature of the Albanian of that period. There are a few cases, when the participle is used in predicative role: *Kush muo sham, shan atëh qi më dërgoih* (Meshari.LXXXVI); *..na sëmunë e ju të fortë* (Meshari. LXXXI). The participle has been depleted of its meanings in Albanian. This is clearly seen in *The Missal* examples where the participle does not have a determinant role but it is in the function of a gerundive, which is not

encountered in the later Albanian. What distinguishes or pushes aside the infinitive from the participle is the adjectival character of the participle. But when the front articles emerged the adjectives that derive from the participle began to differentiate morphologically from the participle. So, *-m,-n,-të*, components were not sufficient indicators to express opposition such as that of gender, number or case that the Albanian participle as well as the participles of other Indo-European languages have had. These oppositions were made by the front article. Something like that is proven in the use of these participle forms in Buzuku but also in other later authors.

### References:

- Ajeti, I., *Historia e Gjuhës Shqipe* (Morfologjia historike). Prishtinë, 1969.
- Ashta, K., *Leksiku i plotë i veprës së Gjon Buzukut(1555)*, Revistë Shkencore e Institutit Pedagogjik Dyvjeçar të Shkodrës, 1964, nr.1, p.97-130.
- Bacinski, I., *L'infinitif et le moyens de son remplacements*. Bucarest, 1946.
- Bokshi, B., *Pjesorja e shqipes*, Prishtinë, 1998.
- Bruger, M., *Indo-European Linguistics*, Berlin-New York, 2003.
- Brugmann, K., *Die mit dem Suffix -to- gebildeten Partizipia im Verbalsystem des Lateinischen und des Umbrisch-Oskischen*. Indogermanische Forschungen 5. 1895, p.89-152.
- Clark, J., *An introduction in Indo-european languages*, Cambridge 2007.
- Çabej, E., “*Meshari*” i Gjon Buzukut, (analytic edition), Tiranë, Vol.I, II, 1968.
- Çabej, E., *Hyrje në Indoeuropianistikë*. Tiranë, 2008.
- Çeliku, M., *Format e pashtjelluara të foljes në gjuhën shqipe*, Tiranë, 2006.
- Demiraj, Sh., *Gramatikë historike e gjuhës shqipe*. Tiranë, 1986.
- Demiraj, Sh., *Fonologjia historike e gjuhës shqipe*. Tiranë, 1996.
- Desnickaja, A. V., *Mbi strukturën morfologjike të gjuhës shqipe*. BUST SSS 3, 1959.
- Fiedler, W., *Formes verbales analytiques de type “balkanique” dans l’histoire de la langue albanaise*. RA 2, 1985.
- Gabinskij, M. A., *Возникновение инфинитива как вторичный балканский языковой процесс (на материале албанского языка)*. Ленинград, 1967.
- Hamp, E. P., *On Baltic, Luwian and Albanian participles in \*-m-*. Balt. IX (1), 1973; *Studime krahasuese për shqipen*, Prishtinë 2007.
- Haspelmath, M., *Passive participles across languages. Voice: Form and Function*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. (1994). p.151–177.
- Fortson, B.W., *Indo-European Language and Culture*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2004.
- Lafe, E., *Trajtat e pjesores te Gjon Buzuku*. Konferenca e Parë e Studimeve Albanologjike, Tiranë, 1962.



- Orel, V., *A consise historical gramar of albanian language*, Leiden 2000.
- Orel, V., *Proto-Albanian Verb: Problems of Reconstruction*. Zeitchrift für Balkonologie. Wiesbaden, 22, 1986.
- Topalli, K., *Evolucioni i sistemit foljor të gjuhës shqipe*. Tiranë, 2010.
- Topalli, K., *Gramatikë historike e gjuhës shqipe*. Tiranë, 2011.