THE CONTRACTED FORMS IN THE PRESENT INDICATIVE MIDDLE AND PASSIVE OF ATHEMATIC VERBS IN POETRY OF ANCIENT GREECE OF ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL PERIOD


The aim of the paper is an attempt at analysing the contracted forms of the second-person singular of athematic verbs in Greek poetry. Verbs such as δύναμαι and ἐπισταμαι have forms with -sai and -h, -ai in the present indicative middle and passive. Contemporary scholars express different views on where the contracted forms appear. The paper presents the opinions of ancient grammarians and modern linguists on the mentioned subject. The critical analysis of these opinions has been contrasted with the forms present in the poetry of archaic and classical period.

Key words: -η ending, -αι ending, athematic verbs, Greek poetry.

In Greek language spirant σ remained unchanged, disappeared or was transformed depending on its position. Sigma between vowels behaved in very different ways. In Indo-European languages intervocalic consonants tended to become weakened. This resulted in their voicing, spirantisation or disappearance. Sigma tends to disappear, and in the transition phase it is weakened and becomes h. The transition phase is evident in the Laconian, Argolic and Elean dialects. *s remained unchanged when it occurred after *-η and *-r (δόσογμε < *dns, θροσογμε < *dhrsμ), when it originated from gemination -ss- (πόσιμε < *pod-si) and from -τσ- (Ἀτρομμε < *atlants). In many cases the spirant was reintroduced by analogy: in sigmatic aorist, in dative plural with -σι and in athematic verb forms.¹

¹See also: Frąckiewicz 2012: 9–15. The problem itself is similar to that of the so-called „Attic Rückverwandlung” (cf. Szemerenyi 1991: 1338–1356; Palmer 1986: 293).
According to the general theory, in the Attic dialect in the forms of second-person singular of the present indicative middle and passive of verbs with athematic conjugation σ was restored by way of analogy to forms of perfect indicative and pluperfect middle and passive (thus τίθεσαι, ίζεσαι). Some contemporary linguists are uncertain whether σ was always restored. They believe that in Attic dialect and in other dialects there are also forms where the intervocalic σ disappears without contraction and the forms contracted (δόναι, δόνητι and δόναι; ἐπίσται, ἐπίστημι and ἐπίστεσαι). It is hence problematic to which dialect forms ending in -αι and -η belong to and what is the type of contraction.

**THE OPINIONS OF MODERN LINGUISTS**

Goodwin believes that the forms contracted in -αι occur “occasionally”. Smyth is more precise and claims that these forms are poetic, dialectic or late. Schwyzer provides the forms and the place where they have occurred (dialects, works or authors): ἐπίσται – appears in Attic tragedy and in Pindar, ἐπίστημι in Theognis, δόναι – Aeolic and Doric form, δόνητι in Euripides and on Ptolemaic papyrus, δόναισαι in Homer. Brugmann also found forms with -αι in tragedians, but he does not specify the place of their occurrence. Jurewicz mentions the δόνη form. He only observes that in present both forms are used: δόνη and δόναισαι. Moreover, Smyth in his *The sounds and inflections of the Greek dialects: Ionic dialect* states that the ἐπίστημ form in Thesigis is the result of the contraction of -ε and -αί: -α(σ)αι > -ε(σ)αι > -η. The ἐπίσται (αι < -ασαι) and the ἐπίστεσαι form (characteristic of the Attic dialect) occur in Doric dialect of Pindar and in Aeschylus. According to Smyth, the δόναισαι form appears in Homer, in Pindar and in Attic prose, but Attic poetry notes the occurrence of δόναι. The δόναι form is also characteristic of Doric dialect. δόνη is the form resulting from Ionic δόναια, δόναισαι occurs in Attic dialect. Adrados believes that the δόνη form can be Attic or old Attic and that this form is based on Ionic

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2 Goodwin 1900: 144.
3 Smyth 1956: 154.
4 Schwyzer 1939: 668.
5 Brugmann 1913: 405.
7 Smyth here pays attention to the opinion of Herodian that -αι ending from -ασαι is characteristic of Ionic dialect (see below); according to him, to regard δόναισαι and ἐπίστεσαι forms as Ionic is not correct, that Choiroboskos citing Herodian has to do (Smyth 1894: 502).
form without contraction.\textsuperscript{9} He shares the same opinion with Schwyzer, who regarded the δύνη form to be Aeolic and Doric.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{THE OPINIONS OF ANCIENT GRAMMARIANS}

The ancient grammarian Herodian who lived in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD\textsuperscript{11} also studies δύνη and ἐπίστη forms sometimes not analyzed by contemporary scholars. He observed, so as Smyth, that these forms are poetic.\textsuperscript{12} Herodian adds that these forms rarely occur in Attic dialect:

\begin{quote}
Πόθεν τὸ δύνη καὶ ἐπίστη κατὰ πάθος Ἰάδος διαλέκτου γέγονεν ἐνδεία τοῦ σ καὶ τροπῆ τοῦ α εἰς ε δύνει καὶ ἐπίστει, καὶ κράσι τοῦ ε καὶ α εἰς η φυλαττόμενον καὶ τοῦ τ δύνη καὶ ἐπίστη. αὕτη δὲ ἡ χρήσις παρὰ μὲν τοῖς ποιηταῖς μᾶλλον ἔστι, παρὰ δὲ τοῖς ἀπτικίζουσι σπανίως.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

Why δύνη and ἐπίστη? In the Ionic dialect the forms δύνασαι and ἐπίστασαι gave way to δύνεαι and ἐπίστεαι with the disappearance of σ and with a changing α into ε and (forms) δύνη and ἐπίστη with the contraction of ε and α into η and with a retaining τ. This use is more frequent in poetry, in Attic dialect it is rare.

\begin{quote}
τὸ δ δύνη καὶ ἐπίστη κατὰ πάθος λέγουσιν, ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ δύνασαι καὶ ἐπίστασαι, δύνασαι ἐπίστασαι καὶ Ἰωνικὸς δύνει καὶ ἐπίστει, καὶ κατὰ κράσιν τοῦ ε καὶ α εἰς η δύνη καὶ ἐπίστη, καὶ μένει τὸ τ προσγραμμένον.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

As for δύνη and ἐπίστη one say that from δύνασαι and ἐπίστασαι (is) δύνασαι, ἐπίστασαι, and in Ionic dialect δύνεαι and ἐπίστεαι and after the contraction ε and α into η and ἐπίστη (forms appear) and τ is added.

According to Herodian, δύνη form originated from: δύνασαι > δύνασαι > δύνεαι > δύνη. The changing α into ε is characteristic of the Ionic dialect, thus, according to him, the forms ending in -τη are Ionic.

The Theodosius presents a completely different view of the way of contraction. According to him, δύνη and ἐπίστη forms are the result of the contraction of two α:

\begin{quote}
τὸ δύνασαι καὶ ἐπίστασαι κατὰ ἀποβολήν τοῦ σ ἐκφέρουσι δύνασαι καὶ ἐπίστασαι, κατὰ δὲ συναίρεσιν τὸν δύο α δύνη καὶ ἐπίστη, προσγραμμένον τοῦ τ.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{10}Adrados 1953: 126–127; Schwyzer 1939: 668.
\textsuperscript{11}Many works of Herodian not been preserved, however, we can find some references at later grammarians.
\textsuperscript{12}Smyth 1956: 154.
\textsuperscript{13}Herodianus 1863: 33, 1–4.
\textsuperscript{14}Herodianus 1867: 840, 2–5.
\textsuperscript{15}Theodosius 1894.
One quotes δύνασαι and ἔπιστασαι (forms) after the loss of σ: δύνασι and ἔπιστασι, after the contraction of two αα δύνηι and ἔπιστηι with i added.

However, the opinion of Theodosius relates to Aeolic dialect. On the other hand, Herodian does not mention these forms in Aeolic dialect. Thus we can believe opinions of Herodian and Theodosius to be independent.

Based on the above, Herodian and Theodosius, the ancient grammarians, in contrast to modern linguists, analyse in detail the way of contraction in the forms ending in -η. They disagree in which dialects the contracted forms are present. They are, as far as I know, the only sources known to us about this.

THE FORMS IN POETRY

After discussing the ancient and contemporary grammarians’ opinions on the subject, we should analyse the contracted forms in poetry of archaic and classical period. Below, for the problematic verbs I present forms found in the critical apparatus having regard to the fact that every copist and editor corrects the variants preserved in the manuscripts in order to present a coherent and standardized text.

We should pose a fundamental question in which dialects, according to the general theory, the contracted forms are present. Generally, the contraction is characteristic of the Attic dialect. However, the forms of athematic verbs ending in -sai are exceptions. In the Attic dialect σ was reintroduced by the analogy of the verbs with stem that end with a consonant. Therefore, the ἔπιστη, δύνηι and ἐπισται, δύναι forms occurring in lyric poetry and in tragedy but not in early Attic prose, are probably not Attic. It is also problematic which is the type of contraction.

The ἔπιστη and δύνηι forms can be found in Theognis and in Anacreontics:

Δημώνας, […] οὐ γὰρ ἔπιστη (Thgn. 1085)
ὀσον δύνηι βάθυνον (fr. anacr. 4, 6)
‘συ γὰρ οὐ δύνηι φιλίσαι’ (fr. anacr. 31, 11)

In tragedy, they occur only in dialogue parts:

σὺ δ’ οὐ λέγεις γε, δράςς δὲ μ’ εἰς ὦσον δύνηι (Eur. Andr. 239)
δράςς δ’ οὐδὲν ἴμας εὐ, κακὼς δ’ ὦσον δύνηι (Eur. Hec. 253)

16 Analysis based on editions such as: Aeschylus 1990; Aristophanes 1907; Aristophanes 2002; Carmina Anacreontea 1984; Euripides 1916; Euripides 1944; Euripides 1973; IEG 1998; Pindarus 1987; Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta 1955; Sophocles 1970; Sophocles 1973; Theocritus 1999.

17 See above. According to Herodian, an ancient grammarian, these forms are poetic. Smyth also regarded these forms to be poetic, dialectic or late.
The theory of Herodian would be attested by forms in lyric poetry but there are only two forms in Anacreontics and one in Theognis so we do not confirm that certainly these forms are Ionic, especially because they occur in tragedy as well. And the question is why the contracted forms are present in writing Ionic dialect. This problem is difficult also because the written Ionic dialect had the forms without contraction whereas the forms contracted were observed in colloquial language. Moreover, the Ionic forms in tragedy, in dialogue parts are difficult to explain. Considering that in Ionic dialect the forms without contraction occur more frequently, δύνη would be an exception with contraction or variant form to the also Ionic δύνας form.

The δύνη form occurs also in comedy but only once and as opposed to the forms in tragedy, it is a subjunctive with a regular contraction.

It also raises many doubts that δύνη form, noted by manuscripts, in tragedy, following Porson, is changed to δύνας form (Soph. Ph. 798; Eur. Hec. 253). Porson believes this form to be more Attic. δύνη form is relatively frequent in later texts, also in prose. In Menander (Men. Dys. 808), Crates (Crates SH fr. 363, 2), Pseudo-Pythagoras (Carm. Aur. 8, 19), in Ionic prose (Hp. VC 14, 36 Littre), in mature Attic prose (Plat. Phaedo 58d, 8; Isoc. I 21) and in late prose (Plb. VII 12, 5). However, it is usually subjunctive (Crates SH fr. 363, 2; Men. Dys. 808; Plat. Phaedo 58d, 8; Isoc. I 21; Hp. VC 14, 36).

The ἐπίσταται form appears in tragedy and in Pindar:

εἰ δὲ λόγων συνείμενον κορυφάν, Ἰέρων, ὥρθον ἐπίσταται (Pind. Pyth. III 80)
ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐπίσταται, καὶ τὸ μή ἀμελεῖν μάθε (Aesch. Eum. 86)
[...][] δὲ ἐκείνης / ὑπάκου ἐξτάσεως ἐπίσταται τὴν ἰκασίαν κύρωσον δίκην (Aesch. Eum. 581)

δύνας occurs in Alcaeus and in Theocritus:

αι τι δύνας κατεχ[.....]ο (Alc. fr. 119, 8)
οὕτε τὸν ὄγκον ἀγείνῳ ὥρθον δύνας, ὡς τὸ πρίν ἄγες (Theoc. X 2)

This form can be found in Sophocles, in a choral part and in dialogue parts:

οὕτῳ κατ’ ἡμιαρ σῷ δύνας μολεῖν ποτε (Soph. Ph. 798)
'Αλλ’ ὤ τι δύνας μάκισσον (Soph. Ph. 849)

Based on the above, the forms in -αι occur in Pindar, Alcaeus, Theocritus and in tragedy. They are, as far as I know, all attested forms. In the light of the facts mentioned it is difficult to draw any specific conclusions. Lyric and tragedy

18 Marchewka 2002: 82; West 1982: 12.
19 Aristoph. Eq. 491.
20 Fiderer 1920: 99.
21 Schwyzer 1939: 668.
contain the many words and forms which are not really Doric or Aeolic. The language of poetry is different from ‘normal Doric’ and ‘normal Aeolic’. The poets use an artificial language, some elements of a heightened style which were regular in poetry.

The form in Alcaeus would be Aeolic, in Pindar would be Aeolic or Doric, in Theocritus Doric. Whereas in tragedy, we cannot establish which dialect those forms belong to. According to Porson, those forms are more Attic. According to scholars the Doric forms in the dialogue of tragedy, can also be explained. Buttmann states that scholars express divergent views on forms with -αι. Some (as Porson) believe that they are Attic, some (as Schol. Victor.) that they are Doric. He claims that Atticists reject δόνη Indicative (originating from Ionic δόνει). However, the forms in -η not only appear in Theognis (1043 Br. = 1085 IEG) and in Carmen Aureum, but also in Sophocles (Ph. 798) and in Euripides (Hec. 253). According to him δόνη Ionic form occurs also not infrequently in Attic writers, therefore it can be found as used by later authors. Consequently, he regarded the forms with -σαί to be characteristic of the older Attic prose only whereas the forms with -η to be in poetry and in later works.

The five other forms of Present Indicative Middle and Passive raise doubts. It is difficult to establish whether they originate from thematic verb or athematic verb. πέτομαι / πέταμαι verb has both forms, thematic and athematic. LSJ note: “The only pres. in Hom. and Att. Prose is πέτομαι; πέταμαι is used by Sapph. Supp. 10.8, Simon. 30, Pi. P. 8.90, N. 6.48, E. Ion 90 (anap.), AP11.208 (Lucill.), and in later Prose.” No information is available on this verb in comedy. However, the contracted forms πέτει and πέτη occur in Euripides and Aristophanes:

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νῦν γὰρ πέτη τε καὶ φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖς (Eur. Ba. 332)
Τί πέτει [...] (Aristolph. Pax 95)
Αὐτὴ σὺ, ποί ποί ποί πέτει [...] (Aristolph. Av. 1199)
 [...] ὅποθέν ποτ' εἴ (codd. πέτη) (Aristoph. Av. 1201)
Κάπειται δὴ οὕτω σιωπῇ διαπέτει (Aristoph. Av. 1217)
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These forms may be considered thematic. According to this interpretation πέτει would be the variant form to πέτη from *πέτεσαί, where ε is the thematic

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24 LSJ s. v. πέτομαι
vowel. Thus in the codes: πέτη (Av. 1201). Smyth claims that the forms with -η occur in tragedy, while forms in -ει are characteristic of prose and comedy. The forms with -ει would show pass of μι-verb into the ο inflection. The πέτη form may originate from athematic verb πέταμαι. πέτη would be the result of the contraction: πέτασαι > πέτασαι > πέτασαι > πέτη. In view of this type of contraction πέτη may be Ionic form. The form of three manuscripts with πέτη is not supported by any editor.

έφη is a contracted form of Present Indicative occurring in a choral part, which is noted only by Brugmann and Schwyzer: τί μοι τῶν δυσφόρων έφη (Soph. El. 143). Probably, this form originates from έφίσσαι. This form is interesting, because the forms with -η often appear in the second-person singular of Indicative Middle and Passive of the ο inflection and linguists note the contracted forms of the Indicative of athematic conjugation only among deponent verbs. And Jebb notes the έφει form. However, the forms with -ει suffix are believed to be later. -ει was written in the fourth or third century B.C., thus this form seems unlikely in tragedy.

To conclude, the forms of indicative in -η and -αι appear in lyric poetry (έπι στη, δύνη, ἐπίσται, δύοι), in tragedy (δύνη, δύοι) and in comedy (δύνη), while they do not occur in epic poetry. There are nine forms ending in -η, and seven in -αι. Most probably, I analysed all the places of occurrence of forms with -αι. In Pindar and Alcaeus there are two forms in -αι, one in Theocritus, four in tragedy, one of which is noted after Porson. The form in Alcaeus can be Eolic, in Pindar Aeolic or Doric, in Theocritus Doric. In tragedy, it is not possible to establish which dialects the contracted forms belong to. Thus, we must agree with Schwyzer that the forms with -αι ending are characteristic of Aeolic and Doric dialect and they also occur in tragedy. The analysis of the opinions of ancient grammarians shows that the forms with -η are not unknown to them. Most probably, in my view, the forms in -η occurring in Theognis and in Anacreontics are Ionic. It is supported by the type of contraction and dialectal features of works. In tragedy there are only two forms with this contraction, while δύνη (Eur. Hec. 253) is changed to δύναι form after Porson. Modern linguists believe that forms

27 Brugmann 1913: 405.
28 Schwyzer 1939: 668.
30 Auerbach-Golias 1962: 86.
32 Pind. Pyth. III 80; Aesch. Eum. 86; Aesch. Eum. 581; Alc. fr. 119, 8; Theoc. X 2; Soph. Ph. 798; Soph. Ph. 849.
in -η and -αι are poetic, dialectic or late. The analysis of those forms in comedy do not reveal much as well, because there are not forms with -αι ending. There is one form in -η, but it is subjunctive. The analysis of other texts also does not resolve the problem. Certainly the δύνη form can be found in poetry and in prose, but usually it is subjunctive. Based on the above, one may make a guess that the forms of indicative in -η are Ionic, in -αι are Doric and Aeolic, in tragedy the use may have been reasoned by the influence of the earlier literary tradition and the desire to produce a work of a heightened style. In comedy, δύνη form would not be difficult to explain. This would be considered a regular Attic form of subjunctive. In order to draw the conclusions concerning forms ending in -η, the analysis of other texts, which I have not covered here, is recommended.

EDITIONS

Primary sources

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Sophocles 1822: *Sophoclis Philoctetes*, P. Buttmann (ed.), Berolini 1822

Secondary sources

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FORMAE CUM CONTRACTIONE IN INDICATIVI PRAESENTIS SECUNDA PERSONA VERBORUM CONIUGATIONIS IN -ηι APUD QUOSDAM ANTIQUOS POETAS GRAECOS

Argumentum

Hoc studio formae in -ηι et -αι quaeantur atque disputatio, ubi formae cum contractione occurrant, continetur. Viri ac feminae docti in his rebus explicandi multum inter se dissertant. Sunt, qui putent indicativi praesentis secundam personam in -σαι semper exire. Allii tradunt post σ eiectum contractionem interdum passam esse in -ηι et -αι e. g. ἐπιστήμη, ἐπιστασια. Formae in -ηι ex Ionico -εαι ortae sunt, quod Herodianus testatur. Sententia Theodosii formae quaeantae ex -ααι ortae sunt. In contemporanea linguarum doctrina formae in -ηι et -αι unui dialecto non atribuuntur. Inter viros doctos non consensum est, ubi et quam frequenter hae formae occurrerent. Igitur formae apud quosdam antiquos poetas Graecos exhibita cum opinionibus vororum doctorum comparatae sunt.