

# Greek sporting terms of foreign origin\*

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## I Introduction

For some reason I have not been able to abandon an idea I got more than a decade ago: that the terms of foreign origin used in the language of sport should constitute a very rewarding area for deeper insights into the character of modern Greek lexicology and morphology. Thus a year ago an impulse moved me to take a second look at the material I had originally collected between 1991 and 1994, in order to try to give the subject a somewhat more systematic treatment. I am still at it. You should not interpret this as a sign of my being a sports fan; on the contrary, more than once my wife has expressed her astonishment at the fact that someone with so little sporting inclination can display such an interest and devote as much time and effort as I have done to newspaper coverage of this particular area of human activity. The explanation is simply that my fascination is linguistic.

The basis of this paper is the vocabulary of sports and athletics as found in the Athenian daily *Eleftherotypia* from the period December 1989 to January 1990 inclusive, and from July to August 1992. The texts from 1992, almost exclusively reports from the summer Olympics, were added to achieve a balance in the corpus, since November and December proved to be a period when there was an overwhelming dominance of football in the sports pages. This sports corpus consists of 905 Kb text, i.e. some 174,000 running words (the average word length in my material is 5.21 letters).

In order to establish whether certain terms are also in wider use outside the sporting domain, I have recently run check-up concordances on a larger body of material, including also non-

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\* Although this paper has been restructured and amended in the light of the discussion that followed the lecture, most of its original, somewhat oral character has been retained.

sporting texts from *Eleftherotypia*, one novel (Alki Zei's *Achilles' Fiancée*) and material from the magazine *Diavazo* on books and literature – altogether 8.6 Mb (1.65 million running words). I have also collected texts from the on-line sports pages of *Athlitismos*, *Eleftherotypia*, *Kathimerini* and *Vima* from January to March 2001, in all some 527 Kb, i.e. approximately 101,000 running words. The entire material thus roughly amounts to 9.1 Mb or 1.75 million running words.

My paper is organized in the following manner: first come some deliberations about sports and athletics as a social and cultural phenomenon and about the language of sport in general; then follows a brief discussion about sporting terms of foreign origin in Greek newspapers; and finally I present an analysis of some particular features.

## II *Sport and society*

In the minds of many people sports are closely connected with spare time, leisure, excitement and entertainment. The British author Nick Hornby has said that “[Sport] has all of life’s business in it and no meaning... [It] contains as much pleasure, pain, irony, tragedy and comedy as a writer will ever need” (Coleman and Hornby 1996: 4-5). Not all agree, though; George Orwell, for example, saw sport as “an unfailing cause of ill will”, and certain kinds of behaviour among sports fans may even indicate that it is perceived as something in a sense existing outside the general social framework. There are thus reasons to expect sport to be a rather specific area of human activity, governed by rules of its own. In most respects, however, the world of sport resembles and reflects society at large. Furthermore, sport is sometimes a clearly *political* issue in society, and during the century or so that sports have existed in their modern forms, their importance – negative or positive – as a national and international phenomenon has grown enormously.

A sporting competition should abide by a well-defined set of rules, and cheating is – at least officially – seen as a punishable offence and a sign of moral debasement. Both these circumstances can be regarded as an analogy to social life: the ultimate goal of life is social advancement, attained within the written and unwritten laws of society, to the benefit of oneself and one’s family or corporation.

Since the language under scrutiny here is Greek, I find it appropriate to remind the reader that it has often been claimed that in particular *one* supposedly inherent property of ancient sport made it morally equal, if not superior, to social life: its *idealism*. Sports were to be pursued for the honour of winning, not to attain economic or other material advantages. However, the "Olympic idea" did not mean amateurism, since in ancient Greece sportsmen were sponsored: "wealthy patrons and city-states paid for athletes to train for the Olympics" (Nixon 1996: 19). The professionalization of sports today can be regarded as a sign of their adaptation to the modern industrial society that developed in the nineteenth century, as a private, commercial enterprise in a capitalist nation or, when applicable, as a collective, nationalized enterprise in a non-capitalist, socialist state or a right-wing dictatorship.

Nowadays the prerequisites for sports and for life in general are very similar, and the close links between socio-political conditions and sports are made painfully obvious when expressed as hooliganism, interpreted as a type of social unrest often triggered by sports but psychologically originating in feelings of social frustration and dissatisfaction. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, when nationalism in Europe, in less than a hundred years, had conquered the minds of most Europeans, sports had become an integrated element in national ideologies, supposedly reflecting the greatness of the nation, embodied in individuals or teams.

One of the reasons for the present popularity of sport is no doubt the growing importance of mass media, which has contributed decisively to creating the image of sportswomen and sportsmen as the heroes of our time, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of sports, admittedly to a significant extent linked with the wealth that comes with stardom, but also reinforcing their inherent ideological properties.

### III *The language of sport*

It is a commonplace observation that strong cultural influences from one country upon the surrounding world are often accompanied by an influx of words and expressions from the language of that country into those of the other countries. In many European

languages you can read the political, social and cultural history of a language's users from early days to the present time.

The older these once foreign elements are, the less they are perceived as alien, since they have long since adapted to their new "home" grammatically, phonologically and lexically (cf. note 6 below). In general terms the possibility of linguistic adaptation, combined with the actual need for foreign words, names of technological or other novelties, are the most decisive factors for the success a loan-word.

When modern sports began to spread, they created just such a need for a new terminology. Consequently, writing about them in newspapers and other publications called for a new linguistic competence on the part of the journalists. He or she not only had to master this hitherto unknown terminology but also to find new and suitable descriptive means and establish new linguistic usages. In this way images and expressions from other areas of human life came to be utilized to build up the language of sport.

Compared to the sociologists' lively interest in its social and political implications, linguists seem to have been far more reluctant to investigate the language of sport. This lack of interest strikes me as peculiar, since it is a fascinating field for sociolinguistic research as well as for investigations into vocabulary, stylistics, foreign words, slang, metaphors, stereotypes, or grammatical phenomena such as inflection and compounding.

A Swedish linguist has told me (in earnest, as far as I can judge) that the reason for this indifference might be that scholarly work in this area has had a low academic status and accordingly carried little weight in competition for a university post in linguistics. Nonetheless some research has been pursued in Sweden, albeit to a very limited extent, based mainly on corpora from daily papers and covering some of the aspects mentioned above.

Furthermore, another sign of the ever-growing popularity of sport is the fact that it has found its way into an area where sooner or later all changes in society are mirrored: the realm of literature. Such a process may take quite some time, probably because, for historical reasons, many people have experienced sports and "culture" (in the traditional sense) as antithetical entities. On 19 July 1992 Mary Papagiannidou published an article about this phenomenon in the Athenian newspaper *To*

*Vima tis Kyriakis*. After a thorough survey of sports in the writings of Greek intellectuals since the end of the nineteenth century she points out that it has taken a long time for sports to find their way into literary works in Greece, and that this applies not least in relation to football:

Τελευταίο στάδιο, η "Φανέλα με το εννιά" του Μένη Κουμανταρέα. Είναι το πρώτο βιβλίο που γράφεται για το ποδόσφαιρο και είναι πραγματικά απορίας άξιον πώς άργησε τόσο πολύ να συγκινηθεί η λογοτεχνία από το δημοφιλέστερο άθλημα στην Ελλάδα.

The final stage is *The number nine shirt* by Menis Koumandareas. This is the first book written about football, and one has every reason to wonder how it can have taken so long to get literature engaged in the most popular sport in Greece.

(Papagiannidou 1992)<sup>1</sup>

Since sports generally reflect the surrounding society and the changes in it, the language of sport should be expected to underline phenomena that are particular to a given country. But there is a two-way relationship between sport and metaphor: sport can also act as a source of metaphors, e.g. in English expressions like "it's not cricket" (it's not fair) and "to be on a sticky wicket" (to be in a difficult situation). In the light of my previous deliberations about various aspects of the language of sport, one would expect that, as a result of factors arising from the social and political rôle of sports in combination with the so-called language question in Greece, the Greek sporting vocabulary would display an increasingly puristic character the further back you go in time. On the other hand, as purism faded away, it should have been easier for sports and games introduced into Greece to bring their foreign terminologies with them.

Gunnar Tingbjörn, now retired from the Department of Swedish at the University of Gothenburg, has dealt with foreign words and the stylistic features of Swedish sporting language, e.g. in his unpublished thesis of 1968, *Sport och idrott* ("Sports and athletics"), which is an investigation of English loan-words in Swedish sports language between 1910 and 1960. The foreign

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<sup>1</sup> All English renderings of Greek quotations are mine.

words are indiscriminately of English origin, Tingbjörn says, because sport as a modern phenomenon originates in nineteenth-century England. If Gunnar Tingbjörn's findings for Swedish hold true also for Greek and what he, as well as the Eleftheroudakis *Εγκυκλοπαιδικόν Λεξικόν*, states about England being the "native" (γενέτειρα) country, English should be the major donor language of sporting terms. If we go back to 1931, we will find the following in the article about "σπορτ" (N.B. not "σπορ") in the *Εγκυκλοπαιδικόν Λεξικόν*:

Το σπορτ υπό τας ποικιλωτάτους αυτού μορφάς είνε σήμερον διαδεδομένον ανά την υφήλιον και εξ ίσου προσφιλές εις αμφότερα τα φύλα.

Sport, in all its varieties, is today spread all over the world and equally popular with both sexes.

And further, in the article "Αθλητισμός":

Εις την Αγγλίαν όμως, όπου τα Πανεπιστήμια και τα λοιπά ανώτερα σχολικά ιδρύματα με ενθουσιασμόν τας ενεκολπώθησαν και τα εκαλλιέργησαν με ιδιαιτέραν στοργήν, ονομάσθησαν *αθλητικαί* ασκήσεις (athletics), οι δε διαγωνισμοί εις ταύτας, *αθλητικοί* διαγωνισμοί (athletic games). [...] Ο σύγχρονος αθλητισμός, καλλιεργηθείς εντατικώτατα εις την γενέτειράν του Αγγλίαν και την Αμερικήν, αλλά και εις την λοιπήν ηπειρωτικήν Ευρώπην και τας Σκανδιναβικάς χώρας, και διαδοθείς, ιδία από της ανασυστάσεως των νεωτέρων Ολυμπιακών αγώνων (1896), εις όλον τον πεπολιτισμένον κόσμον, περιέλαβε μέγα πλήθος ασκήσεων και παιδιών και ατελεύτητον κυριολεκτικώς ποικιλίαν αγωνισμάτων.

In England, however, where universities and other higher institutions of learning have enthusiastically adopted them [i.e. sports] and developed them with special affection, they have been named *athletics*, whereas the competitions are called athletic competitions. [...] Contemporary sports, cultivated intensely in their native England and in America, but also on the European continent and in the Scandinavian countries and thence spread, particularly through the reinstatement of the modern Olympic Games (1896), to the whole civilized world, comprise a wide

range of exercises and games and a literally infinite variety of competitions.

One can notice that, except for "cricket",<sup>2</sup> the terms for various sports and games used in the *Εγκυκλοπαιδικόν Λεξικόν* are "Greek" in the sense that they do not contain any foreign morphemes, e.g.

**αθλητικά αγωνίσματα** (athletics, sports athlétiques):  
*αγωνίσματα στίβου και κονίστρας* (track and field):  
δρόμοι, πηδήματα, ρίψεις

**βαρέα (απλά) αγωνίσματα:** *πάλη, πυγμαχία, άρσις βαρών*

**αθλητικά παιχνίδια:** *ποδοσφαίρις* (foot-ball), *αντισφαίρις* (lawn-tennis) [...] καθώς και αι υπό της Αμερικανικής Χριστιανικής Αδελφότητος των Νέων συντεθείσαι *παιχνίδια χειροσφαίρις* (ή καλαθοσφαίρις, basket-ball), *αντισφαίρις διά χειρός* (volley-ball) [...]

#### IV *Sporting terms of foreign origin*

Now to the main theme of this paper. The first question I presume my readers will ask when confronted with the expression "sporting terms of foreign origin" is likely to be "what is a *sporting term*?" To answer this question both "sporting" and "term" must be adequately defined. One problem is that "sporting terms" are often metaphors, something which makes it difficult accurately to define what is specifically "sporting" about them, semantically or otherwise. As for "term", I find that the ordinary definition "a word belonging to a specific discourse", i.e. chemistry, linguistics, law, sport etc., is sufficient.

When it comes to "sporting", however, things immediately become much more complicated. Let us first consider the fact that the language of sport basically reflects one of the darker areas of human activity: warfare. The obvious analogies between a real, bloody battle and a sporting competition make this unavoidable; suffice it to consider words like "attack", "shoot", "fight",

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<sup>2</sup> To my knowledge, in Greece cricket has been played only on the Ionian Islands, the reason being that they were under British rule for some sixty years in the nineteenth century.

"defend", "win", "strike", "siege", "firing line" (γραμμή πυρός). To realise that these words are transformed into metaphors in certain contexts presupposes knowledge of the particular language in which they are used. On the other hand, on most occasions a native speaker uses such images unconsciously, i.e. without reflecting upon the original semantic content of the morphemes.

Since we are here dealing with sporting terms of *foreign* origin, i.e. borrowed into Greek from other languages, it should be kept in mind that words constituting images can be borrowed between languages in two ways: either translated or imported more or less in their original phonetic form. Most metaphorical sporting terms are *translated* rather than borrowed, since, as I pointed out above, to be meaningful, a metaphor must build on morphemes known to the user. Consequently, morphemes imported from foreign languages *without* translation cannot be proper *images* in their new linguistic environment, but on the other hand they are often confined to specific discourses and therefore undoubtedly "terms".

Let us consider an example to find out the implications: take the "Greek" noun σουτ and the corresponding verb σουτάρω; these words cannot be used in connection with weapons in Greek, neither those used in war nor those of hunting, despite the fact that the basic morphemes are the English "shoot"/"shot". Thus, in Greek, the use of these words is normally limited to sports: σουτάρεις, "you shoot/kick [a ball]", or κάνεις σουτ, "you take a shot"; but the noun, as well as the verb, is actually excluded from the terminology of shooting as a sport, σκοποβολή. Very rarely do you find σουτ/σουτάρω in colloquial Greek outside the area of sports: τον σούταραν, "they kicked him [out]", in the sense "he was fired". Incidentally, in my material σουτάρω is the only true war image borrowed untranslated into Greek primarily as a sporting term. For all other English examples mentioned above ("attack", "shoot", "fight", "defend", "win", "strike", "siege") Greek words are used, and this is also the normal procedure in other languages.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Actually, the word "attack" was borrowed from French into English as well as into Swedish in the early seventeenth century.



A highly probable second question would be: "What is meant by *foreign origin*?" Here my definition is a word which partly or wholly originates from another language than Greek and which is used in Greek, i.e. transliterated foreign words and words containing at least one foreign morpheme.

This is merely a *formal* classification, which does not take into account whether or not a particular word is perceived as "foreign" by a native speaker. As indicated above, an established, commonly used, "integrated" loan-word is usually considered indigenous and does not cause any reaction, since original aberrations from the phonology and/or the morphology of the recipient language have been abolished and replaced according to the rules of the new linguistic surroundings. Furthermore, another characteristic of such an integrated word is that it stands for a notion which cannot be expressed with a "non-foreign" word.

However, I have settled for the following two ways of looking upon a "sporting term". With regard to its *origin* it can be one of five things:

(a) *a transliterated foreign word* (e.g. σπορ – the French pronunciation has replaced the original English "σπορτ" – "sport", φάουλ, "foul", κόρνερ, "corner") and words containing at least one foreign morpheme, e.g. αντι|ντόπιγκ.

(b) *a compound or non-compound calque*, i.e. terms "translated" into Greek morpheme by morpheme, e.g. ποδό|σφαιρίο (older ποδο|σφαίρισις) "foot|ball".

(c) *a Greek word existing with the same meaning already in the ancient language but not used primarily about sport*, e.g. έφηβος, "young man", hence "junior [athlete]" (cf. Παγκόσμιο Πρωτάθλημα Εφήβων Ελευθέρας [Πάλης], "World Free Style Wrestling Junior Championships"), παις, ancient Greek for "child", as in Πρωτάθλημα Παίδων (the genitive plural παίδων occurs fourteen times in all in the corpus).

(d) *a Greek word used as a sporting term already in the ancient language*, e.g. πάλη, "wrestling", πυγμαχία, "boxing".

(e) *a modern Greek word not used primarily about sport, e.g. διαιτητής (= ρέφερι), "referee".*

Only (a) and (b) above meet the criteria for a "foreign" term. Sometimes synonyms belonging to (a) and (e) are found, e.g. γκολ and τέρμα (as a translation of γκολ), the latter usually for a goal scored and the former for the physical goal that the goalie keeps, φινάλε and τελικός (sc. αγώνας or δρόμος) for a "final", etc. "Sporting terms of foreign origin" are thus words that conform to one of the criteria under (a) or (b) above in combination with any type below.

*Semantically, a foreign sporting term can be:*

(a) *a word whose original semantic contents are directly related to sport and which is used exclusively in a sporting context. Examples: γκολτζίης, μπόουλινγκ, τένις.*

(b) *a word whose original semantic contents are not connected primarily with sport but which is used exclusively in a sporting context in the recipient language. Examples: μπάσκει, πέναλτι, ρέφερι.*

(c) *a word used in connection with sport but whose semantic base is not primarily related to sport. Examples: κομπάρσος, ρεβάνς, φαβορί.*

With these definitions as a foundation I have settled for a division into five groups when describing the foreign terms in Greek, the distribution of which is based on language of origin. One group contains those of "mixed origin", i.e. words containing morphemes from more than one language, whereas the other groups consist of unchanged, transliterated words from English, French, Italian or other languages. Because of the character of Greek morphology, unchanged loan morphemes should be capable of being interpreted, morphologically or syntactically, as nouns, or adjectives, or adverbs. Consequently verbs, which must be altered to function in Greek, are found exclusively in group 1, "Mixed origin", whereas the other four groups consist chiefly of nouns and a few adjectives (after each example the number of occurrences is given in brackets):

1. Mixed origin (morphemes from more than one language, 43 types) 26%. Examples:

αυτογκόλ (2). Greek *αυτο-* + Eng. *goal*

σκοράρω (6) Eng. *score* + It. *-ar-*

μπασκετμπολίστας (17). Eng. *basket-ball* + It. *-ista*

2. English (73 types) 44%. Examples:

γκολκίπερ (7). Eng. *goalkeeper* (*τερματοφύλακας* [54])

μάνατζερ (5). Eng. *manager*

οφσάιντ (3). Eng. *offside*

3. French (26 types) 17%. Examples:

πατινάζ (3). Fr. *patinage*

τουρνουά (53). Fr. *tournoi*

4. Italian (12 types) 7%. Examples:

καμπιονάτο (8). It. *campionato*<sup>4</sup>

φινάλε (10). It. *finale*

5. Other languages (10 types) 6%. Examples:

καγιάκ (17). Eskimo *kayak*

καράτε (1). Japanese *karate*

Already a quick glance at sporting terms consisting of one morpheme reveals that the distribution between the donor languages supports the assumption of English being the major donor to the Greek language: 44% are of English origin, 17% of French and 7% of Italian (the figure for French origin was higher than I, at least, had expected):

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<sup>4</sup> This word is used seven times, exclusively about Italian football, but also the Greek (το ιταλικό) πρωτάθλημα appears five times (once “το ιταλικό πρωτάθλημα γυναικών”).

*Table 1*  
**Distribution of sporting terms  
 according to donor language**

	No.	%
English	73	44
Mixed origin	43	26
French	27	17
Italian	12	7
Other languages	10	6
Unknown origin	1	<1
Total	165	100

If instead we look at the distribution of morphemes among the terms of mixed origin, the result is as follows:

*Table 2*  
**Combinations of morphemes  
 in "terms of mixed origin"**

Eng. + Eng.	1
Eng. + Gr.	6
Eng. + It.	14
Eng. + It. + Gr.	3
Eng. + Turk.	1
Eng. + Venet.	1
Fr. + ?	1
Fr. + Gr.	1
Fr. + It.	1
Fr. + It. + Gr.	1
Gr. + Eng.	3
Gr. + It.	2
Iran. + Gr.	3
Iran. + It.	1
It. + Gr.	4
It. + It.	1

This means that the total number of occurrences is distributed like this:

*Table 3*  
**Distribution of morphemes  
 in "terms of mixed origin"  
 according to donor language**

	No.	%
English	28	34
Greek	23	27
Italian	23	27
French	4	5
Iranian	4	5
Turkish	1	1
Venetian	1	1
Unknown origin	1	0
Total	82	100

Here also English takes the lead with at least one morpheme in one third of the items, closely followed by Greek and Italian. English and Italian have an absolute majority with 61%, leaving French, Iranian, Turkish and Venetian well behind with only 12% together. The Iranian morphemes are, of course, found in the four chess terms *σακιέρα* (2), *σακιστής* (14), *σακιστικός* (16) and *σακίστρια* (6).

#### V Nouns

The general grammatical structure of modern Greek is different from that of the donor languages in some important respects, above all in morphological richness. Thus the correspondence between grammatical and morphological categories is a prominent feature in Greek: gender, number and case of nominals are marked by means of stress and endings, and tense, aspect, person and number in the verbs by means of stem, stress and endings. In words of Greek origin this presupposes certain phonological patterns at the end of the stem and/or of the ending itself, something which may cause problems when adapting a foreign morpheme or stem to the Greek morphological system. These

problems can be overcome in various ways. For *nouns* used as sporting terms the solutions may be as follows:

(a) Morphologically unadapted:

αντιντόπιγκ<sup>5</sup> and αυτογκόλ (Greek + English)

(b) *Nomina agentis*:

The reason why type A.1.a below is more frequent than A.1.b is that most nouns in -ής (except for -τζής) are of Greek origin, whereas most of those in -ας are formed on a foreign basic morpheme (μπασκεμπολ-, πολ[ο]-, ραλ[ι], τεν[ις]-, χανμπολ-). A peculiar "Greek" example is αρσι|βαρ|ίστας < άρση βαρών "weightlifting" (< άρσις, stem αρσι-, and βάρος).

A. with Italian *-ist-*:

1. masculine:

a. -ist- + -ας: αρσιβαρίστας, μπασκεμπολίστας, πεταλουδίστας, πολίστας, ραλίστας, σπιλίστας, τενίστας, χανμπολίστας.

b. -ist- + -ής: σκακιστής.

2. feminine:

-ist- + -ρια: σκακίστρια, βολειμπολίστρια, μπασκεμπολίστρια, πεταλουδίστρια, τενίστρια.

B. with "Turkish" -τζής: γκολτζής.

(c) -ισμα: from verbs in -άρω:

κοντράρισμα, μαρκάρισμα, ντοπάρισμα, πλασάρισμα, σκοράρισμα.

## VI Verbs

As far as the verbs are concerned, one group is of special interest from the above-mentioned viewpoints, namely those in -άρω. There are 42 different verbs in the entire material, occurring 152 times, and they are particularly frequent in sporting texts. Here they are, distributed according to text type:

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<sup>5</sup> αντιντόπιγκ (Gr. αντι- + Eng. *doping*) is found only once in the collocation αντιντόπιγκ κοντρόλ, which seems a little strange to me, since one should expect a control of *doping*, not of *antidoping*.

## 1. Verbs found exclusively in non-sporting texts (11 types, 14 tokens):

μπαρκάρω 1	σουλατσάρω 1
μποϊκοτάρω 2	σπινιάρω 1
μποτιλιάρω 1	στυλιζάρω 1
ξεμπαρκάρω 1	φιλτράρω 3
παρκάρω 1	φουντάρω 1
σαλπάρω 1	

## 2. Verbs found in sporting texts only (23 types, 96 tokens):

γουστάρω 2	πρεσάρω 4
κοντράρω 5	προβάρω 1
κοντρολάρω 1	σεντράρω 1
κοουτσάρω 3	σκοράρω 16
μαρκάρω 7	σουτάρω 21
μοντάρω 2	στοπάρω 1
μπλοφάρω 1	στραπατσάρω 1
ντεμποντάρω 5	τρακάρω 2
ντοπάρω 3	φορμάρω 10
ντουμπλάρω 3	φορτσάρω 1
ντριμπλάρω 2	φρεσκάρω 1
ποντάρω 3	

## 3. Verbs found in both types of texts (8 types, 42 tokens):

(S = sport, M = miscellaneous)

κριτικάρω S 1, M 2	ρισκάρω S 5, M 3
μπλοκάρω S 3, M 2	σοκάρω S 3, M 2
ξεμπλοκάρω S 1, M 2	φλερτάρω S 3, M 1
πλασάρω S 10, M 2	φρακάρω S 1, M 1

The higher frequency in sporting texts becomes even more apparent if the occurrences in group 3 M are added to those in group 1 (= 29) and the occurrences in group 3 S to those in group 2 (= 123): 89% of all occurrences can be found, or are found exclusively, in sporting texts.

From a *semantic* point of view, it is interesting to note that some of the verbs occurring only in sporting contexts have a broader semantic sphere, e.g. γουστάρω, μοντάρω, προβάρω, στραπατσάρω, τρακάρω and φορτσάρω, while some of those in group 3

seem rather unlikely to arise in connection with sport, e.g. φλερτάρω:

Ενα νεαρό 21 χρονών, αμυντικό φλερτάρει για να αποκτήσει η Αρσεναλ.

Εκεί, όπου, το ελληνικό χάντμπολ φλερτάρει στις 4.45 το απόγευμα, με τη μεγαλύτερή του διάκριση, στην αναβαθμισμένη φέτος διοργάνωση, την 7η βαλκανιάδα ανδρών.

Παρτενέρ του Βάτα [...] είναι ο διεθνής Σουηδός, Ματς Μάγκνιουσον, που [...] παρουσιάζεται όλο και καλύτερος, ενώ "φλερτάρει" συνέχεια με τ' αντίπαλα δίχτυα.

From a *morphological* viewpoint verbs are especially interesting. In Greek the opposition between perfective and imperfective aspect regularly requires a morphological marking by means of different stems. There is one option traditionally called "sigmatic": the active perfective stem consists of the imperfective stem (ending in a plosive) + /s/ (έ|λειψ|α < λειπ|ω) or the imperfective stem + vowel + /s/, the latter for verbs stressed on the final syllable in the active present tense (γέλ|ασ|α < γελ|ώ, κάλ|εσ|α < καλ|ώ, αγάπ|ησ|α < αγαπ|ώ). In addition there is a variety of "irregular" options: change of vowel in the stem (έ|στειλ|α, στάλ|θηκα < στέλν|ω), change of stem altogether (είπα from λέ|γ|ω). Some, very few, verbs do not comply with this pattern: some of these are defective and cannot express the perfective aspect (e.g. είμαι and ξέρω) and occur only marked for imperfectivity, whereas others appear, extremely rarely, with the same stem for both aspects, e.g. κάνω (although the older perfective stem καμ- is found also in demotic literary texts). The structural need of aspect marking, however, becomes obvious from the fact that verbs of the former type regularly have their missing perfective forms supplied by other, semantically closely related verbs. Thus the non-existent perfective past of είμαι is supplied by στάθηκα (< στέκομαι, "stand", "remain") or υπήρξα (< υπάρχω, "exist"), both meaning "I was [for a limited period]", "I became", and the missing perfective past of ξέρω by γνώρισα ("I knew for a limited period", ingressive "I got to know" < γνωρίζω, "know", i.e. in practice a synonym of ξέρω).



The verbs under discussion here consist of a foreign basic morpheme combined with the Latin/Italian<sup>6</sup> verb marker *-ar-* and Greek endings for person. This combination does not automatically allow for markedness for perfective aspect, i.e. the forming of a perfective stem. Nevertheless these verbs often – but not always – form such a stem, e.g. from *παρκάρω* the past tense *παρκάρησα/παρκάρισα*, marked for perfective aspect, or *πάρκαρα*, used for both aspects. The vacillating spelling reveals the morpho-phonological problem I have already indicated: a sigmatic perfective stem cannot be formed, neither an active nor a medio-passive one, since the clusters */rs/* and */rst/*, the former rare, the latter non-existent in Greek words, do not appear at the end of such a stem, where the */s/* can be preceded only by one of the vowels */a/*, */e/*, */i/*, or one of the voiceless stops */k/* and */p/*: *γελασ-*, *καλεσ-*, *αγαπησ-*, *κοιταξ-*, *χωνεψ-*.<sup>7</sup> Hence the addition of the vowel */i/* between *-ar-* and */s/*, i.e. *-ησ-* or *-ισ-*, which allows the formation also of a medio-passive stem in */isθ/*, if not dissimilated, or */ist/*, if dissimilated according to the rule: *πλασσαρισθούν* or *μαρκαριστεί*, respectively.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the *-άρω-* verbs are slightly reshaped so as to conform with verbs in *-ώ* or *-ίζω*. For reasons not stated, Georgios Babiniotis prefers the spelling with iota in his 1998 dictionary (e.g. *παρκάρισα*, Babiniotis 1998: 1358), and in my corpus all four occurrences in the medio-passive voice, *μαρκαριστεί*, *ξεμπαρκαριστεί*, *πλασσαρισθούν* and *φιλτραρίστηκαν*, are spelt with an iota (notice the fluctuation */sθ/* – */st/*).

<sup>6</sup> The morpheme *-ar-* is not perceived as alien, since it was borrowed into Greek some eight centuries ago.

<sup>7</sup> The active perfective stems in */ps/* from verbs with an imperfective stem in */f/* are the result of the development of Greek phonology: the contemporary */f/*, in Greek orthography {Φ}, was originally the aspirated voiceless stop */p<sup>h</sup>/* which developed into the fricative */f/*, just as */t<sup>h</sup>/*, grapheme {Θ}, developed into */θ/*. As a result of the modern Greek dissimilation rule the fricative */f/* then became a */p/* again when combined with the voiceless sibilant */s/*.

<sup>8</sup> The cluster */sθ/* in medio-passive perfective stems should, according to the morpho-orthographic rule of the official grammar of demotic, be dissimilated to */st/* and spelt *στ*.

In my entire material:

– nine verbs appear in the past tense marked morphologically for perfective aspect: κοουτσάρισε/κοουτσάρησε, είχε μαρκαριστεί, μπλοφάρησε, μπιτσιλιάρισαν, ντουμπλάρισε, θα ξεμπαρκαριστεί, προβάρησε, στοπάρησε and φιλτραρίστηκαν.

– twelve with a past tense unmarked for aspect: ξεμπαρκάρουμε, ξεμπλόκαρε, ντριμπλαρε, πλάσαρε, ποντάρουμε, πρεσάρουμε, ρίσκαραν, σέντραρε, σόκαρε, σούταρε, τράκαρε and φούνταραν.

– only four occur in both aspects: κοντράρησε/κοντράρισε – κόντραρε, μπλοκάρησε – μπλόκαρε, πλασαρισθούν – πλάσαρε and σκοράρησε – σκόραρα.

### VII Some "puristic" terms

Almost all terms pertaining to specific sports or games have the qualities one would expect: sports and games are "modern". However, some were introduced fairly early, which explains calques like ποδόσφαιρο, also αντιποδόσφαιρο ("παίζουν αντιποδόσφαιρο", three times). Other such terms are άρση βαρών (55), εμποδίστρια/εμποδιστής (4) and καλαθοσφαίριση, also καλαθόσφαιρα (3), as well as μπάσκετ (177), πιγκ-πογκ (6) as well as επιτραπέζια αντισφαίριση (1).

If we check my entire material against the ancient/puristic terms mentioned in the *Εγκυκλοπαιδικόν Λεξικόν*, some of them are found: ρίψεις (twice with reference to sports), δρόμος (31, δρόμος μετ' εμποδίων, Παγκόσμιο ρεκόρ στα 110 μ. μετ' εμποδίων), πήδημα (1), πάλη (46), πυγμαχία (31), ποδοσφαίρισις (ποδόσφαιρο 144). (Incidentally, in Sotiris Patatzis's novel *Μεθυσμένη Πολιτεία* [1984] the headmaster of the local school uses the word φουτουμπωλίστας when commenting ironically – in *katharevousa* – on football.) One example of terms consisting solely of Greek morphemes is σκυταλοδρομία, "relay-race" (σκυτάλη, "baton").

### VIII Conclusion

Even if the material is not analysed thoroughly, but only on the basis of a few points, some general conclusions may be drawn. The – rather self-evident – assumption that English should be the major provider of foreign sporting terms in Greek holds true. It can also be noted that foreign terms appear to have replaced

puristic Greek ones in the course of the twentieth century, but that occasionally terms of Greek and foreign origin exist side by side and are still in use.

As far as morphology is concerned, the same, somewhat inconsistent, pattern appears for sporting terms of foreign origin as for loan-words in general: nouns and adjectives are sometimes accepted without being adjusted to the normal prerequisite for a Greek nominal – that it must be declinable. Verbs, on the other hand, cannot function in Greek if the corresponding requirement is not fulfilled. Therefore verbs borrowed from foreign languages must be adapted, and this is achieved by means of the verb-marking morpheme *-αρ-* and the normal endings for tense, person and number. Marking for aspect may, however, still be a problem. It is noteworthy that verbs of foreign origin treated in this way are far more frequent in sports language than in other discourses found in newspapers.

On one occasion I discussed metaphors and imagery in the language of sport with a friend of mine, Magnus Wistrand, Professor of Latin, who has written an important scholarly work on violent Roman “sports”. He told me the following little story to emphasize the versatility of sporting imagery:

Once, some graffiti were found somewhere in Britain. On a wall someone had written JESUS SAVES, and below there was an addendum in a different handwriting: BUT KENNY DALGLEISH SCORES ON THE REBOUND.

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