

THE ORIGINS OF A HOMERIC PECULIARITY: MH PLUS AORIST IMPERATIVE

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1. The Problem of the Aorist Imperative in Prohibitions

The Classical Greek system of commands and prohibitions shows a particularly interesting three-way interaction of negation, mood, and aspect. In second person positive commands the imperative is used in both the present and the aorist. In prohibitions, by contrast, the imperative is used only in the present, while it is the subjunctive that is used in the aorist. This rule is found explicitly formulated at Koch 479, note 94:¹

τὸ Μὴ ἀπαγορευτικὸν οὐ συντάσσεται ὑποτακτικῷ ἐνεστώτι,
ἀορίστῳ δέ. οἷον μὴ ποιῆς οὐκ ἐρεῖς, ἀλλὰ μὴ ποίει, μὴ ποιήσης δὲ
ἐρεῖς, καὶ μὴ ποιήσον οὐκ ἐρεῖς.

In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* there are thirteen second person prohibitions involving aorist aspect.² Of these, ten conform to the rule requiring the aorist subjunctive: *Il.* 5.684, 9.33, 9.522, 15.115, 23.407, 24.568, 24.779; *Od.* 3.55, 11.251, 15.263. There are, however, three cases in Homer which apparently violate the rule against μή plus aorist imperative:

¹ G. A. Koch, *Aelii Herodiani Philetaerus in Moeridis Atticistae Lexicon* (Leipzig 1830).

² The overall rarity of the aorist aspect in prohibitions in Homer is quite surprising. Of all second person prohibitions (whether present or aorist), the aorist constitutes only 8.22%. This contrasts strikingly with second person positive commands, of which the aorist accounts for 45.95%. In third person prohibitions the aorist is 6.97%, but 37.35% of third person positive commands. The same rarity of the aorist is also found in prohibitions involving the imperative infinitive. Of second person prohibitions with *infinitivum pro imperativo*, only 13.04% are aorist, whereas 44.89% of positive *inf. pro impv.* are aorist. The situation in the Attic orators is quite different. In them the aorist constitutes 43.75% of prohibitions and 45.32% of positive commands—an almost equal distribution. (See C. W. E. Miller, “The Limitation of the Imperative in the Attic Orators,” *AJP* 13 (1892) 399–436.) In early Latin the perfect subjunctive is likewise rare in prohibitions: 13.16% in Plautus and 11.54% in Terence. (See Anton Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik* [Munich 1965] 336.) In Vedic, however, the situation is completely reversed: *mā* plus aorist injunctive constitutes 88.10% of prohibitions, whereas in positive commands the aorist imperative is only 6.23% in the *Ṛgveda*. (See J. Avery, “The Unaugmented Verb-Forms in the Rīg- and Atharva-Vedas,” *JAOS* 11 (1885) 326–61.)

- Il.* 4.410 τῷ μὴ μοι πατέρας ποθ' ὁμοίῃ ἔνθεο τιμῇ
Il. 18.134 ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν μήπω καταδύσσο μῶλον Ἀρήος
Od. 24.248 ἄλλο δέ τοι ἔρέω, σὺ δὲ μὴ χόλον ἔνθεο θυμῷ

These three cases have been much cited, and were discussed at considerable length notably by Hentze³ and Ammann.⁴ Since Ammann in particular tried to account for these apparent exceptions by arguing for a systematic difference in illocutionary force between μή plus aorist subjunctive and μή plus aorist imperative, it is necessary here to show that they are equivalent in aspectual value and are, in fact, interchangeable without a change of meaning or conversational implicature⁵ comparable to that occasioned by interchange of present and aorist stems. First of all, Ammann himself grants that *Od.* 24.248 “stimmt völlig zu”⁶ *Il.* 9.32–33 σοὶ πρῶτα μαχήσομαι . . . σὺ δὲ μὴ τι χολώθῃς; both show the structure first person future indicative followed by μή plus a form of the aorist, cf. also *Il.* 15.115. Furthermore, *Il.* 4.410 and *Il.* 24.568 are also comparable, a fact that Ammann misses by failing to consider the larger contexts in which they occur. Both 4.410 and 24.568 occur in corresponding positions and functions within isomorphic discourse structures:

1. The speaker begins a reply to his addressee with a prohibition with present imperative and a vocative.

- 4.404 Ἀτρεΐδῃ, μὴ ψεύδε' 24.560 μηκέτι νῦν μ' ἐρέθιζε, γέρον

2. The speaker presents his own argument.

3. The speaker concludes with a prohibition introduced by τῷ referring to 2. and the dative μοι; accordingly the aorist stem is used to convey the meaning “in the light of 2, now do not *Verb*.”

- 4.410 τῷ μὴ μοι . . . ἔνθεο τιμῇ 24.568 τῷ νῦν μὴ μοι . . . ὀρίνῃς

If *Il.* 18.134 does not have a parallel prohibition with the aorist subjunctive in quite such a closely matching discourse structure, nevertheless *Il.* 9.522–23 τῶν μὴ σὺ γὰρ μῦθον ἐλέγξῃς / μηδὲ πόδας is very similar. In both cases the prohibition follows (1) a concession to the addressee and (2) a counter

³ C. Hentze, “Die Entwicklung der Funktionen der Partikel μή in den homerischen Gedichten,” *BB* 28 (1904) 191–256.

⁴ H. Ammann, “Die ältesten Formen des Prohibitivsatzes im Griechischen und Lateinischen,” *IF* 46 (1927) 328–44.

⁵ “Conversational implicature” is a technical term in modern semantics and pragmatics. See H. P. Grice, “Logic and Conversation,” in P. Cole and J. Morgan eds., *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts* (New York 1975) 41–58. The term refers to assumptions beyond the literal meaning of a statement which the speaker intends the hearer(s) to make. Since, however, such assumptions can be denied without actual logical contradiction, they cannot be said to be implied, but only implicated. Conversational implicature is important here since a prohibition with the present imperative may impute to the addressee an intention or inclination to the prohibited action: compare *Il.* 12.229 μὴ . . . ἔα to *Il.* 5.684 μὴ . . . ἔάσῃς.

⁶ Ammann (above, note 4) 335.

argument that motivates the prohibition. This extent of agreement is rather impressive in as much as there are only ten cases of prohibitions with the aorist subjunctive in Homer from which to find parallels.

There are basically two classes of explanation for Homeric $\mu\eta'$ plus aorist imperative. The first class treats (at least some of) the instances as historical relics, retentions of an earlier syntactic construction. The second class treats $\mu\eta'$ plus aorist imperative as a special development arising from processes peculiar to the epic *Dichtersprache*. Class one will be discussed in section 2, class two in section 3.

2.1 Morphological Restrictions on the Aorist Imperative in Prohibitions and the Proto-Indo-European Construction $*m\bar{e}$ plus Injunctive.

While the leading treatments⁷ of the problem are not unitary enough to be referred to as a standard theory, nevertheless a standard approach can be discerned. It proceeds from the observation that in each case the actual form of the aorist imperative in prohibitions is morphologically identical to the unaugmented aorist indicative, i.e., that it is an injunctive form of the aorist imperative paradigm rather than a form in $-\emptyset$ (zero), $-\theta\iota$, $-\sigma\omicron\nu$, $-\sigma\alpha\iota$, or reformed injunctives $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$, $\delta\acute{o}\varsigma$, etc. Accordingly the two cases of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron$, and sometimes $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$ as well are explained as syntactic relics, retentions of the Proto-Indo-European construction according to which prohibitions were expressed by $*m\bar{e}$ plus a form of the injunctive.⁸ However, it has not been explicitly demonstrated that the non-occurrence of $\mu\eta'$ with the second person singular active of all aorists and the second person singular middle of the sigmatic aorist (forms which are not injunctive in origin) is unlikely to be a matter of coincidence. Such a demonstration is needed in view of the small number of cases in question. The following statistical considerations will show the necessity of positing some systematic reason for the limitation of $\mu\eta'$ to injunctive forms of the aorist. I estimate that the injunctive forms of the aorist imperative in Homer constitute only about

⁷ J. M. Stahl, *Kritisch-historische Syntax des griechischen Verbums der klassischen Zeit* (Heidelberg 1907) 232; J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* 1 (Basel 1926) 214–15; H. Hirt, *Indogermanische Grammatik* 6. *Syntax* 1 (Heidelberg 1934) 265. E. Schwyzler, *Griechische Grammatik* 2 (Munich 1959) 343 excludes $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$, having recognized its origin in a future stem (vol. 1, p. 788). P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* 2. *Syntax* (Paris 1963) 230–31 also treats $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$ separately from $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron$, cf. vol. 1, p. 417.

⁸ $*m\bar{e}$ plus injunctive in prohibitions is continued in Indo-Iranian. In Hittite the prohibitive particle $\bar{l}\bar{e}$ is combined (with only two exceptions) with the indicative, not the imperative. In early Latin *ne* plus imperative shows a striking restriction to certain verbs “meist der Gemütsbewegung” (Szantyr [above, note 2] 340) of the type *ne time*. See also Hélène Vairel-Caron, *Exclamation: ordre et défense* (Paris 1975). It may not be a semantic accident that the one case of $\bar{l}\bar{e}$ with the second person imperative in Hittite (Sommer, *OLZ* [1939], 683) $\bar{l}\bar{e}$ -ta *naḫi* can be glossed exactly by Latin *ne time*.

26.88% of the total frequency of aorist imperatives. From this it follows that the probability of finding that all three cases of $\mu\eta$ plus aorist imperative are restricted to injunctive forms is only $p = (.2688)^3 = .0194$, i.e., on only a little less than two sets of texts like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* out of a hundred would such a limitation arise if there were no factor motivating it.⁹ Statistically this is a highly significant result.

The limitation of $\mu\eta$ to injunctive forms of the aorist imperative, however, is only part of the story; it has not been realized that there is a further statistically significant restriction involved on the forms of the aorist imperative that occur in prohibitions. For not only are they all injunctive forms, but they are all second person singular middle injunctives, i.e. *-so forms. Now such second person singular middle injunctive forms of the aorist imperative constitute only 29.30% of all the second person injunctive forms in Homer by text frequency. Thus there is only a probability of $p = (.2930)^3 = .0252$ that this further limitation is merely coincidence, even granted that $\mu\eta$ is restricted to injunctive forms in general. In other words, the restriction of *-so forms is almost as unlikely as the overall restriction to injunctive forms and therefore in just as much need of explanation. No such explanation has been formulated in the literature.¹⁰

The status of *καταδύσσειο* is also a difficulty: should it be regarded as an injunctive form? Now the usage of the term “injunctive” is somewhat loose. On the one hand, it is used as a purely morphological term to describe the forms of the aorist imperative paradigm of Greek that are identical to unaugmented aorist indicative forms. On the other hand, it is used as a syntactic term to refer to a mood, or at least a set of forms with syntactic functions distinct from that of the imperative and which existed only at earlier stages of the language. The injunctive forms of the aorist imperative used in prohibitions can be assessed as non-imperative only at stages of the language at which the second person singular active injunctive (e.g. forms like *ἐνισπες*, *σχές*, which later were assessed as second person singular active imperatives in the absence of morphological imperatives), rather than the subjunctive, was employed in prohibitions; i.e., in a system of prohibitions comparable to that found in the

⁹ My estimates are derived from the gross frequency data of L. Schlachter (“Statistische Untersuchungen über den Gebrauch der Tempora und Modi bei einzelnen griechischen Schriftstellern,” *IF* 22 [1907/8] 202–42) and my computer search of third person imperatives and of injunctive forms of the second person imperative. While absolute accuracy is not claimed, the significance levels of the tests calculated in the text will not be substantially altered by a totally precise count. Calculated by the hypergeometric distribution (i.e. with fixed marginal frequencies), $p = .0192$.

¹⁰ In fact Stahl (above, note 7) appears to be the only scholar to address the problem directly. However, he merely assumes without discussion that the second person middle injunctive was the last to be replaced by the subjunctive in prohibitions. This assumption, moreover, appears to contradict the premises of the explanation he proposes for the historical development of the Greek rule excluding the aorist imperative from prohibitions.

R̥gveda.¹¹ Now if the ten cases of μή plus aorist subjunctive in prohibitions are taken as representing the productive syntactic rule in Homeric Greek (as in fact they generally are), it does not seem likely that an *aoristus mixtus* like καταδύσσο ever existed as a non-imperative form.¹² Strangely, only Chantraine has explicitly noted the morphological peculiarity of καταδύσσο in the context of this syntactic problem: "La forme n'est pas proprement dit un aoriste,"¹³ although he draws no conclusions from it. However, if καταδύσσο did exist as an aorist (whatever its origin) at a time when the injunctive was syntactically distinct from the imperative, it would have been assessed as an injunctive, and thus its preservation would have been another instance of retaining a relic construction.

2.2 A New Approach

If the chronology of the syntactic change μή plus aorist injunctive → μή plus aorist subjunctive could be substantially lowered, a new and totally exact account of the limitation of μή to *-so forms only can be formulated, and this explanation could also apply to καταδύσσο. A lower dating of the replacement of the injunctive by the subjunctive in prohibitions seems more than possible when the distribution of the Homeric prohibitions involving the aorist is analyzed according to their metrical contexts.

Consider first prohibitions involving the aorist subjunctive. It is a remarkable fact that nine of the ten aorist subjunctives in prohibitions can be changed into the corresponding injunctive forms without any alteration of their metrical word-shapes in their verse contexts:

Line final ◡---:	<i>Il.</i> 5.684 ἐάσῃς → ἑάσας <i>Il.</i> 9.33 χολώθῃς → χολώθης <i>Il.</i> 9.522 ἐλέγξῃς → ἐλέγξας <i>Il.</i> 23.407 λίπῃσθον → λίπεσθον <i>Il.</i> 24.568 ὀρίνῃς → ὀρίνας <i>Od.</i> 3.55 μεγῆρῃς → μέγηντας
Line final ◡◡---:	<i>Od.</i> 11.251 ὀνομήνῃς → ὀνόμηντας <i>Od.</i> 15.263 ἐπικεύσῃς → ἐπικεύσας
Pre-caesural ◡◡-◡:	<i>Il.</i> 15.115 νεμεσήσεται' → νεμεσήσας'

¹¹ See Karl Hoffmann, *Der Injunktiv im Veda* (Heidelberg 1967).

¹² The Sanskrit seventh, -sa-, aorist is a completely independent innovation: see J. Kurylowicz, "Indoiranica," *Comptes rendus de la Société des Sciences et des Lettres de Wrocław* 3 (1948); M. Leumann, "Morphologische Neuerungen im altindischen Verbalsystem," *Medemel. Kon. Nederl. Akad. Afd. Letterkunde N.R.* 15 (1952) 73–123; and C. Watkins, *Indo-European Origins of the Celtic Verb* (Dublin 1969) 17. According to J. Avery ("The Unaugmented Verb-Forms of the Rig- and Atharva-Vedas," *JAOS* 11 [1885] 326–61) the -sa- aorist occurs only nine times in the injunctive in the *R̥gveda* and only once with mā.

¹³ Chantraine (above, note 7) 2.231.

The remaining subjunctive (line initial) *δείσῃτ'* at *Il.* 24.799 is peculiar in any case, since it is a sigmatic aorist with a long vowel subjunctive in a form where the thematic vowel neither enters into a diphthong nor is followed by a consonant cluster (i.e. where *η* could be later substituted for *ε* without violation of the meter, as it almost always is). Chantraine remarks, "Chant 'recent', mais l'on corrigé *δείσετε* avec hiatus":¹⁴ of course, *δείσατε* would be metrically identical as a dactyl-shaped word.

On the hypothesis that the initiation of the change *μή* plus aorist injunctive → *μή* plus aorist subjunctive could be dated to a period well into the development of epic poetry in Greek, the following evolutionary theory results. Either all or twelve of the thirteen prohibitions involving aorist stems could originally have been injunctives (including the morphologically unambiguous second person singular active) at the time of their creation in the verse. Later, after the replacement of the injunctive by the subjunctive in prohibitions was implemented in the spoken language, all the cases of *μή* plus aorist injunctive that had been preserved in the oral tradition were modernized or "corrected" to the subjunctive wherever this was possible without transposition to another metrical location. Such a process of modernization would be exactly parallel to the replacement of short vowel subjunctives in diphthongal and consonant cluster contexts, and similar to many other later "corrections" in the text of epic.¹⁵

Conversely, it is just in the three cases involving **-so* injunctives that such a substitution of the subjunctive would not have been metrically possible:

- * *μή* . . . ἐνθῆαι (ἐνθῆσαι) θυμῶ
- * *μή* . . . ἐνθῆαι (ἐνθῆσαι) θυμόν
- * *μή* πω καταδύσσαι μῶλον Ἄρῃος

would not scan. First of all, the contraction *εαι* > *η* is fairly rare in the second person middle and the contraction *ηαι* > *η* is quite unlikely. (Uncontracted *θῆαι* probably remains at *Od.* 19.403, and cf. *θήης* at *Il.* 5.432.) Moreover, even if contraction were possible, it would yield a form that would violate the exceptionless fifth and very strong fourth foot spondee zeugma (no full word boundary after contracted biceps).

Although it is difficult to calculate the exact probability that all (or 90%) of the aorist subjunctives in prohibitions could be transformed into metrically equivalent corresponding injunctives purely as a matter of coincidence, it is by no means a necessary result. Furthermore, consideration of aorist subjunctives which occur in other syntactic contexts in which the injunctive would not have been historically appropriate shows

¹⁴ Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* 1. *Phonétique et morphologie* (Paris 1973) 456.

¹⁵ Paul Kiparsky, "Tense and Mood in Indo-European Syntax," *Foundations of Language* 4 (1968) 30–57, has hypothesized the survival of the injunctive in Homer in quite a different syntactic context, "historical imperfections."

that the 100% (or 90%) interchangeability observed in prohibitions is likely to be significant statistically. It is clear that far less than 90% of the aorist subjunctives in syntactically non-injunctive contexts have metrically equivalent injunctive forms; this is also true of the subset of second person forms, e.g. *Il.* 10.444 ὄφρα κεν ἔλθητον, *Il.* 5.351 εἰ χ' ἐτέρωθι πύθηται.

In contrast to the interchangeability of aorist injunctive and subjunctive the second person singular active present imperative is metrically secure in prohibitions. Consequently, the analysis developed here requires that the replacement of the present injunctive in prohibitions antedate the replacement of the aorist injunctive. Such a chronological difference provides a welcome factor to help explain why Greek developed an asymmetrical prohibition system from the symmetrical PIE system.

3.1 *μή* plus Aorist Imperative as a Creation of the Epic Dichtersprache

The most recent and most extensive discussion of the three cases of *μή* plus aorist imperative in Homer is that of Smith.¹⁶ His original hypothesis is: "It does, then, seem possible that the three occurrences in the epic of aorist imperative forms in prohibitions are all to be explained not as survivals of an earlier and once more general usage of the 'injunctive' forms but rather as the results of formulaic adaptation." Specifically in the case of *ἔνθεο* Smith argues that "familiarity with *ἔνθεο* in fifth foot position, and particularly with *θυμός* as final word, led the poet to use that form on two occasions even when the imperative was to be negated."¹⁷ In support of this conjecture it can be shown that *ἔνθεο* does in fact show a statistically significant tendency to the fifth foot even as compared to other dactyl-shaped words. While fifth foot location is the most frequent for dactyl-shaped words, the proportion of such word-shapes so located is only 35.3%. Thus, if there were no special factor favoring fifth foot location for *ἔνθεο*, the probability that all of its four occurrences would be just there, as in fact they are, would be only $p = (.353)^4 = .015$. Furthermore, when the locations of *σύνθεο* are compared with that of *ἔνθεο*, the following table results.

	fifth foot	elsewhere
<i>ἔνθεο</i>	4	0
<i>σύνθεο</i>	3	6

A difference in locational tendencies as great (or greater) than this (even with so few occurrences) would arise at random with a probability of only $p = .049$. The non-random factor for *σύνθεο* is clearly its role in the

¹⁶ P. M. Smith, "Notes on the Text of the Fifth Homeric Hymn," *HSCP* 83 (1979) 45–50.

¹⁷ Smith (above, note 16) 46.

formula $\sigma\acute{\nu}\delta\grave{\epsilon}\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\mu\epsilon\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\nu$.¹⁸ (The effect of the vowel versus consonant onset on locational tendency can only be assessed when the locations of dactyl-shaped words are cross-classified according to the types of onset relevant in metrical sandhi.) Furthermore, in support of Smith's hypothesized association of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron$ with $\theta\upsilon\mu\tilde{\omega}/-\acute{\omicron}\nu$, the rates of 75% for $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron$ and 100% for $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron$ co-occurring with $\theta\upsilon\mu\tilde{\omega}/-\acute{\omicron}\nu$ are higher than those for a substantial number of other second and third person verbs having multiple occurrences with $\theta\upsilon\mu\tilde{\omega}/-\acute{\omicron}\nu$. For $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$ the corresponding argument is not so strong, because the selectional restrictions on complements with this verb are not so restrictive (even if more so than for the root aorist $\acute{\epsilon}\delta\upsilon\nu$, or the future $(-)\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon/\omicron-$, for which latter note *Il.* 23.622 $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\upsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\alpha\iota$ and *Od.* 20.53 $\kappa\alpha\kappa\tilde{\omega}\nu\delta'\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\alpha\iota$). In the *Iliad* the mixed aorist $(-)\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon/\omicron-$ is restricted to human subjects, although this restriction disappears in the *Odyssey*. The complements must come from one of three closely allied semantic fields: (1) $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\kappa\eta\acute{\nu}$, (2) $\tau\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\chi\epsilon\alpha$, $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\alpha$, and (3) $\delta\acute{\omicron}\mu\iota\lambda\omicron\nu$, $\sigma\tilde{\upsilon}\lambda\alpha\mu\acute{\omicron}\nu$, to which last belongs $\mu\tilde{\omega}\lambda\omicron\nu$ $\text{'}\acute{\Lambda}\rho\tilde{\eta}\sigma$. Consequently there is a greater possibility of sandhi variants of forms of $(-)\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon-$, such as *Il.* 4.86 $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\theta'$ $\delta\acute{\omicron}\mu\iota\lambda\omicron\nu$; note also *Il.* 9.231 $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\eta\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\alpha\iota\acute{\alpha}\lambda\kappa\eta\acute{\nu}$ for epic correction.

There remains, moreover, the basic question whether formulaic adaptation can be carried to the point of violating a solidly established and otherwise exceptionless rule of the language. Clearly formulaic adaptation cannot be a linguistically unconstrained process. Generally one expects the innovating structures arising from it to have some basis in linguistic variants whether available in the *Dichtersprache* or from the spoken language (or an interaction of the two). In other words, the theory that $\mu\eta$ plus aorist imperative arose through formulaic adaptation can be rendered all the more plausible insofar as model for the process of hyperextension of $\mu\eta$ to the aorist imperative can be provided.

3.2 The Possible Evolution of a Linguistic Model

It is possible to formulate a hypothesis to account for the development of $\mu\eta$ plus aorist imperative within the *Dichtersprache* that does not directly violate the syntactic rule requiring $\mu\eta$ plus aorist subjunctive at any given stage. The form $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$ is crucial to this hypothesis.

As remarked in section 2, $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$ is an *aoristus mixtus*, a sigmatic aorist with the thematic vowel. Aside from $\acute{\iota}\xi\omicron\nu$ (for which see Chantraine¹⁹ and Leumann²⁰) there are only six roots on which thematic

¹⁸ The semantically anomalous $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron\theta\upsilon\mu\tilde{\omega}$ *Od.* 15.27 could be a case of adaptation, cf. $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron\mu\tilde{\iota}\theta\omicron\nu$ *Od.* 12.153, 19.268.

¹⁹ Chantraine (above, note 14) 418.

²⁰ Manu Leumann, "Aoristi mixti' und Imperative von Futurstamm im Griechischen," *Glotta* 32 (1953) 204–13.

sigmatic aorists are formed: οἶσε, ἄξοντο, λέξεο, ὄρσεο, (-)βήσετο, and (-)δύσετο. These forms have been diversely explained,²¹ but there is a consensus recognizing their relation to future (or desiderative) stems. In fact all the mixed aorists share a number of striking peculiarities that point strongly to the specific explanation given in part by Debrunner²² and most completely and in greatest processual detail by Leumann.²³ All six have corresponding futures in -σε/ο- (note ὄρσουσα, *Il.* 21.335). The significance of this last point has not been adequately appreciated. Of the more than 650 verbs with sigmatic aorists in Homer, only about 35% have corresponding futures. If there were no special reason for *aoristi mixti* to be associated with futures the probability would be only $p = .0019$, or about two in a thousand, that such a strong association with futures would occur. This statistical result strongly supports the hypothesis that *aoristi mixti* evolved out of futures. Leumann's stages seem likely: (1) Second person plural future indicatives in -σε- such as οἴσετε (*Il.* 3.103), ὄψεσθε (*Il.* 24.704), and ἄξετε (*Il.* 3.105) and ἄξεσθε (*Il.* 8.505) were used with, or analyzed as having, the illocutionary force of imperatives. This is a perfectly reasonable supposition and easily paralleled in later Greek, as in many other languages. (2) Singular forms such as οἶσε (*Od.* 22.106, where Odysseus echoes in his command Telemachus's σάκος οἶσω, 22.101) were created to fill out the paradigm for the new imperative. Leumann points to *Il.* 3.103–5 as a prototypical context for the evolution of future imperatives:

οἴσετε ἄρν' . . . ἡμῖς οἴσομεν ἄλλον ἄξετε δὲ Πριάμοιο βίην.

(3) Finally, the mixed aorist indicative was created in "wortliche Wiederaufnahme" of the command in subsequent narrative, as at *Il.* 8.505 ἐκ πόλιος δ' ἄξεσθε βόας reported as completed at 8.545 ἐκ πόλιος δ' ἄξοντο βόας or *Il.* 11.512–13 ὦ Νέστορ . . . ἄγρει, σῶν ὄχεων ἐπιβήσεο, πὰρ δὲ Μαχάων βαινέτω taken up in the narrative at 11.517:

αὐτίκα δ' ὦν ὄχεων ἐπεβήσετο, πὰρ δὲ Μαχάων βαῖν'.

The precise form of the process at this third stage is not crucial for the following argument.

Once the crucial assumption is granted that future imperatives existed in the singular at some stage of the Dichtersprache, a fairly straightforward account of the evolution of μῆ plus aorist imperative

²¹ Notably by J. Wackernagel, "Vermischte Beiträge zur griechischen Sprachkunde 9," *Kleine Schriften* (Göttingen 1953) 803–12, Chantraine (above, note 14). See also E. Risch, *Wortbildung der homerischen Sprache* (Berlin 1974²) 250, who already in the first edition saw an origin in a future stem.

²² A. Debrunner, "Homerica," *IF* 40 (1922) 111–12.

²³ Leumann (above, note 20).

becomes possible. It need only be assumed that the prohibition $\mu\eta\ldots\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$, or ones like it, were created at a stage when the *-se-* form was still open to assessment as a future imperative or, at any rate, had not yet been reanalyzed as an aorist. As a non-aorist such an imperative would have been free to co-occur with $\mu\eta$ just like the present imperative. At a somewhat later stage of course, these “future imperatives” were reanalyzed as aorists with the establishment of forms with secondary endings such as $\acute{\alpha}\xi\omicron\nu\tau\omicron$ and $(-)\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\tau\omicron$. As a result of this reanalysis the Dichtersprache now possessed $\mu\eta$ plus aorist imperative and thus a construction that could provide the basis for hyperextension, particularly under compositional pressure. The rarity of such extension could be explained by assuming that it took place only under conditions of quite strong pressure, such as those proposed for $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\omicron$ by Smith. Such a hypothesis is at least consistent with the semantics of aorist and present in prohibitions. A future imperative would be excluded from uses open to the semantic interpretation “continue V-ing” and “cease V-ing” carried by the present, and would merge without difficulty into the future time reference of the aorist in prohibitions.

4. A Brief Assessment

In section 2.2 it was suggested that aorist prohibitions were still expressed by the injunctive and not the subjunctive fairly late into the oral epic tradition and that the apparent instances of $\mu\eta$ plus aorist imperative are the metrically unmodernizable remains of this injunctive construction. This hypothesis has the advantage of simplicity, generality, and directness, but its chronological assumption might seem drastic. The hypothesis of section 3.2 which invokes morphosyntactic reanalysis of future imperatives created by the Dichtersprache in conjunction with compositional pressure is much more complex, must make several assumptions about relative chronology of composition in the oral tradition, and is particularistic. Furthermore, it makes no implications for the development of the subjunctive mood. The hypothesis of section 2.2 has the advantage of greater explanatory power, since it provides a more principled account for the statistically significant limitation of $\mu\eta$ to the second person singular middle, which remains a historical accident on the hypothesis of section 3.2. Finally, the account of $\mu\eta\ldots\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omicron$ sketched in section 3 is compatible (given the necessary chronological assumptions) with the hypothesis that all aorist prohibitions in Homer originally involved the injunctive and not the subjunctive.²⁴

²⁴ For many stimulating discussions and much valuable criticism I am grateful to Peter M. Smith and to Helen Haskell for unfailing support and encouragement.