Prohibition Types in Ancient Greek: A Comparative Approach

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1 Introduction

NB: Objects in blue on this handout can be clicked for more information.

1.1 A formal problem

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
	present imperative	μή + present imperative
	aorist imperative	μή + aorist **subjunctive**

Table 1: Positive and negative 2nd-pers. commands in Greek

(cf. Koch 1830–1 [1969]:437)

μή	+	present imperative	=	PRESENT IMPERATIVE CONSTRUCTION	"PIC"
μή	+	aorist subjunctive	=	AORIST SUBJUNCTIVE CONSTRUCTION	"ASC"

Table 2: Two prohibitive constructions in Greek

1.1.1 Wackernagel (1926–8 [2009]:276) (among others):

- The ASC continues the inherited Proto-Indo-European (PIE) prohibitive construction:
  *$m\acute{e}$ + aorist injunctive > μή + aorist subjunctive.

- The PIC is an innovation of Greek.

1.1.2 Yet prior accounts do not go into much detail about the relative chronology of these developments and what motivated each change, as I will attempt to do in this talk.

1.2 A functional problem

1.2.1 The PIC and ASC are said to be functionally distinct (e.g., Smyth 1956:410–1, since Viger 1672 [1802/24]:458–9):

- The PIC is said to refer to <u>present</u> time, known as an "inhibitive" prohibition (after Hoffmann 1967), of the type *Stop doing that!* or *Do that no longer!*

(1) INHIBITIVE PIC
     <u>παῦε</u>, <u>παῦε</u>, **μὴ λέγε** (Ar. *Wa.* 37).
     '<u>Stop</u>, <u>stop</u>, **don't say (any more)**'.

NB: In all numbered examples on this handout the relevant verb(s) are in **boldface**. <u>Underlining</u> highlights relevant contextual information.

- The ASC is said to refer to <u>future</u> time, known as a "preventive" prohibition, of the type *Don't do that!*

(2) PREVENTIVE ASC
     [Χορὸς Γυναικῶν:] καὶ <u>φιλήσω</u>. [Χορὸς γερόντων:] **μὴ φιλήσῃς** (Ar. *Lys.* 1036).
     '[Women:] "I'm <u>going to kiss</u> you." [Men:] "**Don't kiss** me!"'

1.2.2 This distinction is thought to reflect an aspectual contrast: imperfective (present) vs. perfective (aorist).

1.2.3 Yet there are many counterexamples to this "rule."

(3) CLASSICAL GREEK: PREVENTIVE PIC
     ἀλλὰ **μή** με **καίνετε**, / πατρὸς παλαιοὶ δμῶες (Eur. *El.* 850–1).
     'But **don't kill** me, old slaves of my father!'
     [NB: not 'stop killing me'; cf. μή μ' ἀποκτείνῃς 'don't kill me' in Eur. *Her.* 988]

(4) CLASSICAL GREEK: INHIBITIVE ASC
     <u>οὗτος σύ</u>, κλήθρων τῶνδε **μὴ ψαύσῃς** χερί (Eur. *Or.* 1567).
     '<u>You there!</u> **Stop touching** the bolts with your hand!' [Orestes to Menelaus, who is trying to open the barred doors]

(5) HOMERIC GREEK: PREVENTIVE PIC
     μή με **ἔα** παρὰ νηυσὶ κύνας καταδάψαι Ἀχαιῶν (*Il.* 22.339).
     '**Don't let** the dogs devour me by the ships of the Achaeans'. [NB: not 'stop letting'
     (cf. similarly *Il.* 2.34, 10.193, 21.340, 24.148, 152; *Od.* 8.43, 15.19, 440, 16.133–4, etc.)]

(6) HOMERIC GREEK: INHIBITIVE ASC
     τὼ νῦν **μή** μοι <u>μᾶλλον</u> ἐν ἄλγεσι θυμὸν **ὀρίνῃς** (*Il.* 24.568).
     'So at this time **stir** my heart <u>no more</u> amid my sorrows'. [= 'stop stirring', as Priam has just been doing eight lines earlier (560): μηκέτι νῦν μ' ἐρέθιζε 'provoke me no longer' (cf. similarly *Il.* 21.475, with ἔτι; *Od.* 16.355)]

1.2.4 The preventive/inhibitive distinction thus lacks explanatory power.

1.2.5 Louw (1959): The difference between the PIC and ASC is parallel to the distinction between the present imperative and aorist imperative in positive commands.

- PIC is progressive, conative, habitual, or stative (continuous).

- ASC is ingressive, egressive, or "punctual" (terminative).

1.2.6 The aspectual account succeeds where preventive/inhibitive distinction fails.

1.2.7 Explains many of the examples above, as well as those in (7).

(7) PERFECTIVE/IMPERFECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PIC AND ASC IN POST-HOM. GK.

    a. μὴ φοβοῦ[pres.ipv.]…λάλει…μὴ σιωπήσῃς[aor.sjv.] (*Acts* 18:9).
       '**Don't be afraid**[pres.ipv.]…speak on…**don't fall silent**[aor.sjv.]'.
       **[These happen to be inhibitive and preventive, but the PIC is continuative while the ASC is ingressive.]

    b. εἰ δ᾽ ἔχεις εἰπεῖν ὅ τι
       λοιπὸν πόνων, σήμαινε· **μηδέ** μ᾽ οἰκτίσας
       ξύνθαλπε μύθοις ψευδέσιν (Aesch. *PB* 683–5). [Cf. similarly *Il.* 15.195.]
       'So if you can say what of toils (are) remaining, reveal (them). But **don't try to soothe me with false words**'.
       **[Preventive but conative PIC, per Louw 1959:54–5: "Io enquires about her future, but before Prometheus has an opportunity to answer, she continues — assuming that he, in his pity for her, may try to soothe her with false words."]

1.2.8 Crucially, a perfective/imperfective opposition in prohibitions does not entail that it be manifested as a preventive/inhibitive opposition.

1.2.9 Remaining puzzle:

- The ASC is remarkably rare in Homer (about 8% of all prohibitions).

- The ASC in post-Homeric Greek accounts for roughly half of all prohibitions.

- Homer seems to prefer the PIC no matter what aspectual reading the context favors.

1.2.10 It seems, then, that having two morphologically distinct prohibitive constructions does not in itself entail a systematic aspectual opposition of the kind described by Louw (1959). Homer, at least, appears not to have one.

2 Claims

The formal and the functional analyses are brought together to provide a coherent account of the development of Greek prohibitions:

- Greek inherited one prohibitive construction (the ASC), which could be applied in any kind of prohibitive context.

- As the injunctive ceased to be a distinctive functional category, a new construction emerged (the PIC), based on analogy to positive commands, and began to be preferred to the old construction in all prohibitive contexts (as we find in Homer).

- The imperative was not used in the second-person aorist due to paradigmatic blocking.

- As the language solidified a perfective/imperfective opposition (coded by the aorist and present stem respectively), the two prohibitive constructions came to be used contrastively in terms of this opposition (as we find in Attic drama), such that they occur with roughly equal frequency after Homer.

Thus, the formal, distributional, and functional peculiarities of Greek prohibitions are explained according to their diachrony (viewed as a succession of synchronic grammars).

3　Formal Analysis

3.1　Prior accounts: Wackernagel (1926–8 [2009]:274–7) and Stephens (1983)

3.1.1　Wackernagel (1926–8 [2009]:274–7): The PIC is an innovation of Greek; the ASC continues the inherited way of marking prohibitions in PIE (similarly Chantraine 1953 [2015]:264, Schwyzer and Debrunner 1950:315, 340, 343).

3.1.2　"The imperative form was for positive commands only, and entered prohibitions only by analogical extension" (Wackernagel 1926–8 [2009]:274).

3.1.3　The Indo-European (IE) prohibitive marker *mḗ (> μή, Skt. mā́) did not originally occur with modal forms but was restricted to the "injunctive" used prohibitively.

3.1.4　The injunctive:

- Not a "mood."

- Finite verb form underspecified for tense and mood (Kiparsky 2005).

- Is the regular means of expressing prohibitions in Indo-Iranian (cf. Hollenbaugh 2020).

	Aorist		**Meaning**	**Present**		**Meaning**
VEDIC:	mā́	dā-s	'don't give!'	mā́	dadā-s	'don't give!'
GREEK:	μή	δῷ-ς	'don't give!'	μή	δίδου	'don't give/offer!'

Table 3: Prohibition with the aorist in Ved. Skt. (inj.) and Gk. (sjv.)

3.1.5　Wackernagel (1926–8 [2009]:276): In Sanskrit, "as a rule only aorist forms of the injunctive are used. Consequently, the prohibitive injunctive was established only in the aorist, and in Greek the imperative with μή remained excluded specifically to the aorist."

3.1.6　Even in the earliest attested Sanskrit, Vedic (Ved.), where the present injunctive *is* admissible in prohibitions, they are only *regularly* built with the aorist (Hollenbaugh 2020, Avery 1885).

3.1.7　Stephens (1983): All 10 instances of the ASC in Homer* are metrically equivalent to their corresponding injunctive forms; all instances of the PIC are metrically secure (cf. Willmott 2007:95–6).

　　*　These are: *Il.* 5.684, 9.33, 9.522, 15.115, 23.407, 24.568, 24.779 (Willmott (2007:95, 102) adds 23.428, though it is probably not strictly prohibitive, like 5.487–8 and 16.255); *Od.* 3.55, 11.251, 15.263 (18.20 et sim. are most likely negative purpose/fearing clauses). Cf. Chantraine 1953 [2015]:264, in agreement with Stephens 1983.

3.1.8　He thus locates the replacement of the injunctive by the subjunctive in prohibitions to the time of the composition of the epics (e.g., λίπεσθον was replaced by λίπησθον at *Il.* 23.407).

3.1.9　In the 3 cases where the meter would have been affected by changing to the subjunctive, the injunctive remains, which is formally identical to the aorist imperative, since the injunctive was used to fill out the imperative paradigm in PIE (Wackernagel 1926–8 [2009]:275).

- μὴ...ἔνθεο... (*-ῆαι/-ήεαι) 'don't put in' (*Il.* 4.410, *Od.* 24.248).

- μή πω καταδύσεο... (*-σεαι) 'don't descend yet' (*Il.* 18.134).

3.1.10　The aorist injunctive construction is thus directly attested in archaic Greek, and its identification with the ASC is reasonably well established.

3.2   Explaining the phenomenon: paradigmatic blocking

I: PIE Stage

3.2.1 Prohibition is regularly marked by *mḗ* + aorist injunctive (directly inherited into Ved. Skt.).

3.2.2 The present (or perfect) injunctive is used only as a last resort, if an aorist stem is lacking.

II: Pre-Homeric Stage

3.2.3 There is a functional merger of the injunctive and past indicative in Greek (already in Mycenaean).

3.2.4 Consequently, the injunctive is no longer available for modal use (independent of μή).

	VEDIC SANSKRIT		HOMERIC GREEK	
	Form	**Meaning**	**Form**	**Meaning**
augmentless: (= injunctive)	*dā́-t*	'gave, gives, may give, etc.'	δῶκ-ε	'gave'
augmented:	*á-dā-t*	'gave'	ἔ-δωκ-ε	'gave'

Table 4: Functional range of augmented and augmentless forms in Ved. and Hom. Gk.

3.2.5 The inherited prohibitive strategy is now of opaque formation, in that it corresponds to no synchronic modal category.

3.2.6 The imperative begins to be used as an alternative, morphologically transparent means of expressing prohibition, based analogically on the positive commands.

3.2.7 The imperative then applies wherever possible:

- Applies in second- and third-person present: no regular inherited construction to interfere.

- Applies likewise in the second- and third-person perfect (e.g., *Il.* 23.443, 12.272–3).

- Cannot apply in the first-person: subjunctive is used instead (replacing earlier injunctive).

- Blocked from application in second-person aorist: injunctive construction already "established": paradigmatic blocking.

- Partially applies/partially blocked in third-person aorist: both the subjunctive and imperative used (presumably due to frequency effects).

III: Homeric Stage

3.2.8 The injunctive is replaced by the subjunctive in the ASC (perhaps within the composition of the Homeric epics, per Stephens (1983)).

3.2.9 Consequently, the ASC is no longer opaque, since it has stopped using (what looks like) a preterite indicative.

3.2.10 Yet the PIC is favored generally in prohibition (whereas PIE had favored the aorist construction).

3.2.11 Crucially, the existence of the PIC and the substitution of the aorist subjunctive for the injunctive in prohibition depend on a Greek-specific syntactic change:

- Whereas *mā́* in Vedic Sanskrit could only occur with the injunctive (which I take to be the inherited, PIE situation), Greek μή could occur with any mood of the verb, not only in prohibition but also in adverbial clauses (e.g., negative purpose, fearing, etc.).

- Once the syntactic restriction to the injunctive had been lifted, μή was in principle free to combine with any non-indicative mood of the verb.

- The subjunctive would have satisfied the modality requirement of prohibition and was compatible with future time reference.

- Its use in place of the injunctive would in most cases not substantially have altered the phonological shape of the verbs affected (Stephens (1983)).

IV: Homeric to post-Homeric

3.2.12 Once the ASC and PIC had emerged and coexisted in Greek, they were reinterpreted as the present and aorist counterparts to the positive imperatives (Willmott 2007:107), thereby forming a new, characteristically Greek, prohibitive paradigm.

	PIE paradigm				**Greek** paradigm	
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE			POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
1st pers.	sjv.	*mḗ + inj.			sjv.	μή + sjv.
2nd pers.	pres. ipv.	—	≫		pres. ipv.	μή + pres. ipv.
	aor. ipv.	*mḗ + aor. inj.			aor. ipv.	μή + aor. sjv.
3rd pers.	pres. ipv.	—			pres. ipv.	μή + pres. ipv.
	aor. ipv.	*mḗ + aor. inj.			aor. ipv.	μή + aor. sjv./ipv.

Table 5: Diachronic development of positive and negative commands into Greek

3.2.13 The two constructions then came to be used contrastively to express perfective and imperfective aspect in prohibitions (Louw 1959).

3.2.14 Yet this aspectual specialization must not have been fully grammaticalized until after the time of Homer, where the PIC utterly predominates:[1]

form:	pres. sjv.	pres. ipv.	aor. sjv.	aor. ipv./inj.	pf. ipv. (no sjv.)	pres. inf.	aor. inf.
1st	12 or 13	[N/A]	~6	[N/A]	[N/A]	∅	∅
2nd	∅	**~125**	10 or 11	3	8	≥ 7	2
3rd	1(?)	**36 or 37**	~10	2	3	∅	∅

Table 6: Distribution of prohibitive constructions in Homer

3.2.15 In Homer, the rule for prohibitive formation seems to be: Use the imperative if possible, the subjunctive if need be; and the present is preferred across the board (implying no systematic aspectual opposition).

3.2.16 Yet after Homer, the two constructions are of nearly equal frequency of occurrence.

3.2.17 To account for this unexpected Homeric distribution as compared with later Greek, I turn now to the functional analysis of the data.

4   Functional analysis: The development of contrast

4.1 Prior accounts of the contrastive meaning of the ASC and PIC assume that the perfective/imperfective opposition of Greek continues something ancient, inherited from the proto-

language (e.g., Willmott 2007:110).

4.2 I propose, instead, that there was no such contrast between the two types of prohibitions until a relatively late stage of development.

4.3 Vedic Sanskrit:

- There is no meaningful contrast between the present and aorist injunctive in prohibition (Hollenbaugh 2020), nor is there a perfective/imperfective opposition between the aorist and imperfect indicative (Hollenbaugh 2018).

- The aorist can be used both preventively and inhibitively, as can the present (or perfect).

- Vedic provides the best evidence for the perfective/imperfective opposition in IE (cited by most prior accounts).

- Yet the comparative evidence it provides is, in fact, for a *lack* of contrast.

4.4 If we take this seriously, we must assume only a single regular construction was inherited into Greek, and that it could be used both preventively and inhibitively.

4.5 The numerous examples of the ASC being used inhibitively are thus explained as archaisms rather than anomalies.

4.6 This requires that the perfective/imperfective aspectual opposition in prohibition is a Greek-internal innovation, not yet fully developed in Homer.

4.7 This is consistent with the independent finding that, outside prohibition, the present and aorist stems do not show regular perfective/imperfective opposition until after Homer (ibid., Hollenbaugh forthcoming).

- The Homeric aorist indicative is regularly used in "perfect-like" contexts (8a); the imperfect is most often used in sequential narration (8b).

    (8)   TYPICAL HOMERIC USES OF THE AORIST AND IMPERFECT INDICATIVE
          a.   Ἀτρείδη ποῖόν σε ἔπος **φύγεν**[AOR.] ἕρκος ὀδόντων; (*Il.* 4.350 = 14.83).
               'Son of Atreus, what kind of word **has escaped**[AOR.] the fence of your teeth?'
          b.   αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σὺν νηυσὶν ἀολλέσιν, αἵ μοι ἕποντο,
               φεῦγον[IPF.], ἐπεὶ γίνωσκον[IPF.], ὃ δὴ κακὰ μήδετο[IPF.] δαίμων.
               φεῦγε[IPF.] δὲ Τυδέος υἱὸς ἀρήϊος, ὧρσε[AOR.] δ᾽ ἑταίρους (Hom. *Od.* 3.165–7).
               'But I with the crowded ships that were following me
               took flight[IPF.], when I realized[IPF.] that a divinity was intending[IPF.] evil.
               And the warlike son of Tydeus **fled**[IPF.] and urged[AOR.] on his companions'.

- Cf. also aor. ἔθανον with perfect meaning 'have died' in 84% of occurrences in Homer (e.g., *Il.* 22.486), while perfect τέθνηκα has stative meaning 'be dead'.

4.8 In sum, the imperfect is aspectually neutral, most often having an "aoristic" function, while the aorist covers ground typically associated with the perfect aspect.

4.9 This being the case, the aorist and imperfect can hardly stand in direct opposition to one another, and are commonly conjoined undifferentiated in sequential narration (so Wackernagel 1926–8 [2009]:235).

(9)   Aorist and mixed imperfect in sequential narration in Homer
ᾠχόμεϑ᾽[IPF.] ἐς Θήβην, ἱερὴν πόλιν Ἠετίωνος,
τὴν δὲ διεπράϑομέν[AOR.] τε καὶ ἤγομεν[IPF.] ἐνϑάδε πάντα (*Il.* 1.366–7).
'We **went**[IPF.] to Thebes, the holy city of Eetion,
and then we **sacked**[AOR.] it and **led**[IPF.] hither all (its spoils)'.

4.10   By contrast, post-Homeric Greek shows a more developed perfective/imperfective opposition, such that the aorist is regularly used to sequence events, while the imperfect is used mostly for "backgrounding" (Hollenbaugh forthcoming; cf. Rijksbaron 2002:11–4).

4.11   There is simply no reason, then, to assume that Greek inherited a perfective/imperfective opposition in its verbal system generally.

4.12   So, Homeric prohibitions seem to show the same lack of grammaticalized perfective/imperfective opposition that has been independently observed elsewhere.

4.13   As a consequence, the (innovative and aspectually neutral) PIC is preferred to the ASC in Homer.

4.14   But later, when the perfective/imperfective opposition was fully developed, the PIC was interpreted as belonging to the imperfective paradigm, and the ASC to the perfective paradigm.

4.15   This makes the two constructions equal partners in a newly developed perfective/imperfective opposition.

4.16   In effect, the ASC occurs with about the same frequency as the PIC after Homer.

- A sample of five plays apiece from Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes shows that the ASC is used in roughly 46% of prohibitions.

- In the *New Testament* (*NT*), the ASC accounts for roughly 65% of prohibitions.

4.17   This analysis has the advantage of accounting for the distributional asymmetry between the two constructions in Homer and not having to view the wide functional range of the PIC and ASC as in any way exceptional (cf. Willmott 2007:102 and (6) above).

4.18   At the same time, it accounts for the roughly equal frequency of the two constructions after Homer.

4.19   As a typological parallel, the resurgence of the ASC in post-Homeric Greek resembles the development of the subjunctive with *nē* in the prohibitions of Latin:

In archaic comedy the innovative construction (from an IE perspective) is entirely regular, which uses the imperative with *nē*, whereas in Classical prose the more archaic subjunctive construction was the only regular means of marking prohibition with *nē* (see Wackernagel 1926–8 [2009]:274).

5   Conclusion

In conclusion, I specify the stages of development proposed above, along with the motivation for change at each stage, as follows:

	STAGE	CHANGE	MOTIVATION
I:	PIE	aor. inj. in prohib.	only regular construction
II:	pre-Hom. Gk.	ipv. used in prohib., except in aor.	inj. merges with ind. preterite; inj. prohib. construction opaque;
III:	Hom. Gk.	aor. inj. replaced by sjv.; PIC predominates	μή + modal forms permitted; aor. inj. blocks ipv. in prohib.
IV:	Class. to PClass. Gk.	"resurgence" of ASC	pfv./ipfv. opposition grammaticalized
V:	Med. to Mod. Gk.	sjv. everywhere (no more PIC)	formal similarity of sjv. and ipv.; loss of 3rd pers. ipv.

Table 7: Stages of development of the ASC and PIC into Greek

Appendix

A.1   More ASC/PIC examples lacking a preventive/inhibitive distinction

A.1.1   CLASSICAL GREEK: PREVENTIVE PIC:

(A1)   καὶ **μὴ πρόκαμνε** τόνδε βουκολούμενος / πόνον (Aesch. *Eum.* 78–9).
'**Avoid wearying ahead of time** from brooding on this trial of yours' (cf. Louw 1959:54).

A.1.2   CLASSICAL GREEK: INHIBITIVE ASC:

(A2)   μέν᾽, ὦ τάλαινα· **μὴ τρέσῃς** ἐμὴν χέρα (Eur. *El.* 220; cf. similarly *Med.* 307).
'<u>Stay</u>, o wretched woman; **don't be afraid of** my hand' (i.e., 'fear no longer').
[Cf. the PIC at *Il.* 21.288: Πηλείδη μήτ᾽ ἄρ τι λίην τρέε μήτέ τι τάρβει 'Son of Peleus, don't unduly recoil in any way, nor be at all alarmed'.]

(A3)   **μὴ** <u>νῦν ἔτ᾽</u> **εἴπῃς** μηδέν (Soph. *El.* 324).
'**Speak no** <u>longer</u> any word <u>now</u>' (said to Electra, who has just been speaking).

(A4)   <u>παῦε</u>, **μὴ λέξῃς** <u>πέρα</u>·
μάτην γὰρ ἂν εἴπῃς γε πάντ᾽ εἰρήσεται (Soph. *Phil.* 1275–6).
'<u>Stop</u>, **don't speak** <u>anymore</u>;
for whatever you say will all be said in vain' (said to one already speaking).

(A5)   <u>σίγα</u>, **μὴ μνησικακήσῃς** (Ar. *Lys.* 590).
'<u>Keep quiet!</u> **Don't bring up past injuries!**' [Magistrate to Lysistrata, who has just done so]

A.1.3   ASC AND PIC CONJOINED WITHOUT CLEAR PREVENTIVE/INHIBITIVE CONTRAST:

(A6)   καὶ **μὴ βράδυνε** μηδ᾽ **ἐπιμνησθῇς** <u>ἔτι</u> / Τροίας (Soph. *Phil.* 1400–01).
'And **do not delay**, **nor mention** Troy <u>any longer</u>'.

(A7) **μή** μοι **θάνῃς** σὺ κοινὰ **μηδ᾽** ἃ μὴ ᾽θιγες / **ποιοῦ** σεαυτῆς (Soph. *Ant.* 546–7).
'**Do not die** a death in common with me, **nor make** your own what you have not attained'.

(A8) **μηδ᾽ ἐπιζευχθῇς** στόμα
φήμῃ πονηρᾷ **μηδ᾽ ἐπιγλωσσῶ** κακά (Aesch. *Lib.* 1044–5).
'**Do not yoke** your mouth **to** ill-omened speech, **nor utter** evil forebodings'. [Chorus to Orestes, who has just been talking]

(A9) **μὴ** γυναικὸς ἐν τρόποις ἐμὲ
ἅβρυνε, μηδὲ βαρβάρου φωτὸς δίκην
χαμαιπετὲς βόαμα **προσχάνῃς** ἐμοί,
μηδ᾽ εἵμασι στρώσασ᾽ ἐπίφθονον πόρον
τίθει (Aesch. *Ag.* 918–22).
'**Don't pamper** me in the ways of a woman,
nor in the manner of a barbarian man
belch groveling acclaim at me,
nor put envy upon my path by strewing it with tapestries'. [Agamemnon to Clytemnestra who has just been engaged in these things]

(A10) **μηδὲν** θανάτου μοῖραν **ἐπεύχου**
τοῖσδε βαρυνθείς·
μηδ᾽ εἰς Ἑλένην κότον **ἐκτρέψῃς** (Aesch. *Ag.* 1462–4).
'**By no means invoke** the fate of death upon yourself having been burdened by these matters, **nor direct** your wrath against Helen'. [Clytemnestra to Chorus, who has just been vilifying Helen]

(A11) [Γυνὴ Α:] 'ἀλλ᾽ ἥξω ταχέως νὴ τὼ θεὼ
ὅσον <u>διαπετάσασ᾽</u> ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης μόνον.'
[Λυσιστράτη:] '**μὴ διαπετάννυ, μηδ᾽ ἀπέλθῃς** μηδαμῇ' (Ar. *Lys.* 733).
'[1ˢᵗ Woman:] "But I <u>shall be back</u> at once, by the goddesses!
just as soon as I <u>have stretched</u> (the wool) on my bed"
[Lysistrata:] "You **shall not stretch** it **out**, **nor go off** anywhere!"'

(A12) **μήτε** αὐτοί <u>ποτε</u> ἄνευ πόνου σῖτον **παραθῆσθε μήτε** ἵπποις ἀγυμνάστοις χόρτον **ἐμβάλλετε** (Xen. *Cyrop.* 8.6.12).
'**Don't** <u>ever</u> **have** your food **set before you** without working, **nor send** fodder to your horses unexercised'.

A.1.4 INHIBITIVE USE OF THE PIC (a) AND ASC (b) TO θαυμάζω IN PLATO:

(A13) <u>θαυμάζω</u>, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, καὶ αὐτός.
ἀλλὰ **μὴ θαύμαζ᾽**, ἔφη (Plat. *Sym.* 205b).
'"I <u>am wondering</u> myself," I replied.
"But **you should not wonder** [as you are]," she said'.

(A14) [Μέγιλλος:] παντάπασι τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἡμῖν, ὦ ξένε, διαφαυλίζεις.
[Ἀθηναῖος:] **μὴ θαυμάσῃς**, ὦ Μέγιλλε, ἀλλὰ σύγγνωθί μοι (Plat. *Laws* 7.804).
'[Megillus:] "You have an utterly mean opinion, stranger, of the human race!"
[Athenian:] "**You should not wonder** [as you just have], Megillus, but forgive me."'

A.2 Perfective/imperfective contrast in the PIC and ASC of post-Hom. Gk.

(A15) **μηδὲν** θρασύνου **μηδὲ** τοῖς σαυτοῦ κακοῖς
τὸ θῆλυ συνθεὶς <u>ὧδε</u> πᾶν **μέμψῃ** γένος (Eur. *Hec.* 1183–4).

'**By no means be (so) bold**, **nor** on account of your woes
<u>thus</u> **cast blame on** the whole female gender, having lumped them all together'.
[Both are inhibitive, but the PIC prohibits a state (continuous reading), while the ASC prohibits a punctual event (terminative reading).]

(A16)   'οἴμοι' **μὴ λέγε**, 'ὠτίον ἀλγῶ.' 'οἴμοι' **μὴ λέγε**. καὶ οὐ λέγω ὅτι οὐ δέδοται στενάξαι, ἀλλὰ ἔσωθεν **μὴ στενάξῃς** (Epict. *Disc.* 1.18.19).
'**Don't go saying**, "Argh! I have ear pain." **Don't be accustomed to saying**, "Argh!" Now, I'm not saying that it is forbidden to (ever) groan, but just **don't groan** to your core'.
[Cf. Louw 1959:56.]

Endnote

1. Exact counts are difficult for various reasons. In the subjunctive of all three persons, one must often hesitate between interpretation as a prohibition or as a negative purpose or fearing clause. Further, it is not clear that all subjunctive occurrences included in Table 6 are strictly prohibitive, as some seem rather to express a wish, hope, or dread (e.g., *Il.* 18.8). For these reasons, the figure for the third-person aorist subjunctive is especially approximate, being either 5, 8, or 18 examples depending on how one counts (I have taken the average in Table 6; so too for the first person). Of the second-person present imperative Willmott (2007:100) reports 68 occurrences in the *Iliad* alone. A search on *Perseus under PhiloLogic* for the second-person present imperative within 7 words after μή, μήτε, μηδέ, or μηκέτι returns 120 examples that I have verified as prohibitive (65 of these are from the *Iliad*). Trusting Willmott's (2007:100) count, I assume that about 3 occurrences of the second-person PIC from the *Iliad* have been missed in this search, and I estimate based on relative length of the text that about 2 have been missed in the *Odyssey*, for a total estimate of 125 in Table 6.

Nomenclature and technical abbreviations

1ˢᵗ first person

2ⁿᵈ second person

3ʳᵈ third person

aor. aorist (indicative unless otherwise stated) (name of functional category in Greek)

ASC Aorist Subjunctive Construction: The prohibition built with μή and the aorist subjunctive.

Class. Classical Gk. (c. 500–300 BCE)

Gk. Greek

Hom. Homeric/Archaic Gk. (c. 700–500 BCE)

IE Indo-European

ind. indicative mood (Greek)

inf. infinitive (Greek)

inj. injunctive form of the verb in PIE and Indo-Iranian, consisting of the verb stem plus secondary endings the without augment.

ipfv. imperfective (aspect, gram type, or gram)

ipv. imperarive mood (Greek)

Med. Medieval Gk. (c. 400–1500 CE)

Mod. Modern Gk. (c. 1500 CE–present)

PClass. Post-Classical Gk. (Hellenistic Koine and Roman-Imperial) (c. 300 BCE–400 CE)

pers. grammatical person (first, second, or third)

pf. "perfect-type" uses—namely the resultative, experiential, stative, and (in some cases) universal readings—are available to a particular form at a given linguistic stage.

pfv. perfective (aspect, gram type, or gram)

PIC Present Imperative Construction: The prohibition built with μή and the present imperative.

PIE Proto-Indo-European

pres. present indicative (name of functional category in Greek)

prohib. prohibition (negative directive or command)

sjv. subjunctive mood (Greek)

Skt. Sanskrit

Ved. Vedic Sanskrit

Abbreviations of texts and authors

Acts Book of *Acts of the Apostles* in *NT*

Ag. *Agamemnon* of Aesch.

Ant. *Antigone* of Soph.

Cyrop. *Cyropaedia* of Xen.

Disc. *Discourses* (*Diatribai*) of Epict.

El. *Electra* of Soph.

El. *Electra* of Eur.

Eum. *Eumenides* of Aesch.

Hec. *Hecuba* of Aesch.

Her. *Heracles* of Eur.

Il. *Iliad* of Hom.

Laws *Laws* of Plat.

Lib. *Libation Bearers* of Aesch.

Lys. *Lysistrata* of Ar.

Med. *Medea* of Eur.

NT Greek *New Testament* (PClass. Koine)

Od. *Odyssey* of Hom.

Or. *Orestes* of Eur.

PB *Prometheus Bound* of Aesch.

Phil. *Philoctetes* of Soph.

Sym. *Symposium* of Plat.

Wa. *Wasps* of Ar.

Aesch. Aeschylus (Class., drama)

Ar. Aristophanes (Class., drama)

Epict. Epictetus (PClass. Koine)

Eur. Euripides (Class., drama)

Hom. Homer (Archaic)

Plat. Plato (Class.)

Soph. Sophocles (Class., drama)

Xen. Xenophon (Class.)

Abbreviations

Perseus under PhiloLogic   *See* Dik, Helma, ed. 2018.

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