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STUDIES IN TENSE, ASPECT AND AUGMENT USE:
AN UNRECOGNIZED (?) TIMELESS
INJUNCTIVE IN EARLY EPIC GREEK.
PART 1: *STATUS QUAESTIONIS* ON THE USE
OF INJUNCTIVE, AUGMENT AND ASPECT.

Keywords: Epic Greek, verbal morpho-syntax, injunctive, augment, tempus-aspect

Abstract

Since West's seminal 1989 article, it has been assumed that there were (only) four instances in epic Greek (Homer, Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns) in which the injunctive (often called an unaugmented indicative in the commentaries) could be interpreted as having a timeless (or omnitemporal) meaning. In an article, divided into two parts, I will argue and show that there could be more of these forms. I will also analyze several other instances in which an injunctive has been transmitted, instances in which it refers to a background action or an event in a remote past. In part 1, I address the interaction and difference in use between the injunctive and the (augmented) indicative in epic Greek, paying special attention to the gnomic aorist, the *similia*, the instances with *τε-épique* and the so-called "Hymnic aorist", explaining why they mostly comprise the augment. Following West 1989 for Greek and Hoffmann 1967 for Vedic, I argue that the injunctives or unaugmented indicatives are not simply metrical variants of the indicative, but have their own distinct meanings and functions, as they are used to "mention" or describe background actions, preserve an old "timeless" meaning or refer to a more remote (and often mythical) past. As some of the instances have an aorist and others a present injunctive, I also take into account the aspectual difference(s) between these forms, discussing scholarship on tense and

aspect in general and Homer in particular. In part 2, I proceed to actual instances and will investigate them for both the use of the injunctive or indicative and for that of the aspectual stem.¹

1. The injunctive and the augment in (epic) Greek

1.1. Summary and brief overview of existing scholarship: highlighting versus mentioning.

Although this article treats the unrecognized injunctive forms (these forms are often called “unaugmented indicatives” in the commentaries), it is nevertheless necessary to discuss the meaning of the augment in epic Greek. However, as this is a topic that has been treated extensively, I do not intend to provide a detailed *status quaestionis* on the issue.²

While many scholars adhere to the theory that in Vedic the injunctive referred to timeless statements and descriptions of a remote or mythical past,³ there is much less agreement regarding Hoffmann’s explanation that it was used to describe and mention

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The title is in homage to the sadly missed Martin Litchfield West.

The timeless injunctive is an element of the research into the augment that has not been addressed in De Decker (2022: 185–355).

² I refer to Bottin (1969: 69–80), De Decker (2015: 241–291, 2022: 313–333, 2023: 21–57) and Willi (2018: 357–416) for a much more detailed discussion.

To improve the readability, I decided to use footnotes when more than two works or authors were referenced.

³ For Vedic this use of the injunctive present was noted by Avery (1885: 330: “The indefinite present (sc. the injunctive) is employed in the statement of general facts unrestricted as to time – such as the attributes of deities, their personal appearance, or their oft-recurring exploits. a true present indicative often occurs coordinated with such forms”. – the underlining is mine), Delbrück (1888: 354–355: “so habe ich mich doch überzeugt, dass der Injunctiv nicht selten (die Stellen s. bei Avery) in dem Sinne des Indicativ Praesentis gebraucht wird, doch so, dass die Beziehung auf die Gegenwart des Sprechenden nicht hervortritt, vielmehr nur in dem Sinne, dass eine Verbalaussage ausgedrückt werden soll, welche sich weder auf die Zukunft, noch auf die Vergangenheit bezieht” – the underlining is mine), Renou (1928: 71–73), Gonda (1956: 33–46), Hoffmann (1967 *passim* but especially 119 and 198: “Injunktiv-Reihen lassen sich, dem Hauptthema des Rg-Veda entsprechend, vor allem bei der Darstellung mythologischer Tatbestände aufzeichnen.” (the underlining is mine)), Strunk (1968: 290–294, 1992, especially 38–40), Euler (1995), Mumm (1995).

Whitney (1879: 193) did not see a difference between the augmented indicative and the unaugmented injunctive (at that time, the form was still referred to as an “improper subjunctive”), whereas Macdonell (1916: 349–350), who also did not always perceive a difference, stated that the injunctive could be described as tenseless and moodless.

A study of the Iranian injunctive is yet to be undertaken.

events,⁴ with opinions differing even more on the interpretations of this mood outside Indic (or Indo-Iranian). It has been argued, or at least implied, that the injunctive in Greek had no specific meaning, that it did not differ semantically from the indicative, that it never existed in Greek and/or that the difference between the forms with and without an augment was simply metrically motivated.⁵ From this, it was concluded that the injunctive did not exist in Proto-Indo-European (PIE), but only in Indo-Iranian.⁶ Research has shown, however, that especially in Hesiod, but also in Homer and the Homeric Hymns, evidence for an existing injunctive can be found and that a difference between the forms with and without an augment (i.e. between an indicative and an injunctive) can be established. Koch (1868, especially 24–32) at a very early stage noted that the augment was used more in speeches than in narrative, unless the speeches contained narrative elements as well, such as Nestor's speech in *Iliad* 1.⁷ Even more fundamental were the researches by Platt (1891) and Drewitt (1912a, 1912b, 1913) who showed that

1. the augment was used with verbal forms that have general validity,
2. verbs with the augment had a present reference,
3. verbs with the augment could be translated with the English present perfect (e.g. in gnomes and *similia*), and
4. the augment was avoided in genuine past contexts.

In his analysis of the augment in Archaic Greek, Bottin (1969: 110–128) confirmed the preference for unaugmented forms in the narrative sections, styling this particular usage as *lo stile narrativo*. Subsequently, Basset (1989) distinguished between *discours* and *récit* (which could in fact be considered a synthesis of the work of Koch and Bottin). For Vedic Sanskrit, Hoffmann (1967, cf. supra) described the use of the unaugmented forms as *erwähnend*, specific to timeless and mythical descriptions (1967: 165–209), contrasting them with the indicative forms, which belonged to the *historische Vergangenheit* (Hoffmann 1967: 145–160). Bakker (1999: 59, 2001: 14–23,

⁴ Hoffmann (1967: 28, 279) used the term “Memorativ” and described the injunctive as having *erwähnende Beschreibung* (1967: 165–209 and also 267 “Zeitstufenlosigkeit und Nicht-Bericht („Erwähnung“) sind demnach der Funktion des Injunktivs eigentümlich”). His analysis was contested by Kiparsky (2005) and Willi (2018: 404–410, as on page 404 he stated with reference to Hoffmann's study: “So, either Vedic has turned upside down the augmentation system it inherited, via Proto-Indo-Iranian, from Proto-Indo-European – or else, more simply, Hoffmann's way of reading the Vedic data is wrong”).

⁵ I refer, *exempli gratia*, to Lazzeroni (1977, 2017, especially 1977: 15 “in larga misura [l'ingiuntivo] è già un doppione dell'indicativo”) and Pelliccia (1985), who both argued that the injunctive did not differ from the indicative in epic Greek.

That the augment was metrically motivated is one of the most common assumptions regarding metrical Greek and I cannot quote every scholar who stated this. See De Decker (2022: 313–315) for a rebuttal.

⁶ Most explicitly it was stated by Kammenhuber (1985: 446–447): “Selbst wenn für das Griechische eine ebenso fundierte Untersuchung zu dessen Injunktiv geschrieben worden wäre wie die Hoffmanns zum vedischen Injunktiv, würde sie schwerlich eine voll entwickelte ur-idg. Injunktiv-Kategorie stützen”. Most recently this was argued in Lundquist, Yates (2018: 2144–2145 – without mentioning Kammenhuber), but they did not discuss the Greek evidence.

⁷ For this, see also De Decker (2017: 96, 136–138).

2005: 123–124), elaborating on the observations made by the scholars mentioned above, argued that the augment marked a completion of the verbal action and a nearness to the speaker, describing it as “a deictic suffix (sic) that marked the completion of the action near the speaker” (the quote is from Bakker 2001: 15, 2005: 147). Along similar lines, Mumm (2004, especially § 8), Bertrand (2006a, 2006b, 2010: 579–588) and Hackstein (2010: 405) described the function of the augment was to add emphasis and pathos. The explanations mentioned above can be combined and summarized as follows: by using the unaugmented form (the injunctive), the speakers and/or narrators describe and mention what has happened, whereas by using augmented forms (the indicatives) they not only relate it, but also state it as a fact and reaffirm its value.⁸

The first to notice the timeless meaning of injunctive use in Hesiod and the Homeric Hymn was West (1989, especially pages 136–137) and he added that the augment was insecure in many of these Hymnic aorists (thus implying that these forms might well have been injunctives as well).

1.2. Illustrations of the distinction “highlighting versus mentioning”

Below, I discuss two examples that clearly show the distinction between emphasized content and a simple description of facts.

(EX.01)

(298) ἢ οὐκ αἴεις οἶον κλέος ἔλλαβε δῖος Ὀρέστης

(299) πάντα ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπους, ἐπεὶ **ἔκτανε** πατροφονῆα,

(300) Αἴγισθον δολόμητιν, ὅς οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα; (*Odyssey* 1,298–300)⁹

‘Certainly you heard what fame shining Orestes acquired among all the humans, as he killed the murderer of his father, Aigisthos with the deceptive mind, who murdered his famous father?’¹⁰

These lines appear in the speech by Pallas Athene, who disguised as Mentor, speaks to Telemakhos and relates how Orestes gained eternal fame for avenging his father Agamemnon and killing Aigisthos, the murderer of his father, and how Telemakhos himself should also start acting bravely. The augmented forms in this passage are all metrically secure and emphasize that Orestes obtained eternal fame for avenging his father Agamemnon, that Telemakhos should display the same degree of courage and that he, Telemakhos, should, therefore, continue to search for his father and defend his household, palace and kingdom.

⁸ Besides Bakker, we find this also stated in the studies by Mumm (2004: § 8 and § 10), Bertrand (2006a, 2006b, 2010: 579–588), De Decker (2016, 2017, 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b, 2021, 2022: 185–335, 2023).

⁹ Generally speaking, metrically secure augmented forms are underlined, metrically secure unaugmented forms (the injunctives) are in boldface, and metrically insecure forms are italicized; when a form is insecure, but transmitted as augmented, it is italicized and underlined and when it is insecure and unaugmented, it is italicized and in boldface. Metrically insecure indicative present forms are also italicized, while metrically secure indicatives are underlined twice (when part of the investigation).

¹⁰ Unless noted otherwise, the translations are my own.

(EX.02)

- (35) ὡς φάτο, χαῖρε δὲ φήμη Ὀδυσσῆος φίλος υἱός,
 (36) οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτι δὴν ἦστο, μενοίνησεν δ' ἀγορεύειν,
 (37) στή δὲ μέση ἀγορῆ: σκήπτρον δὲ οἱ ἔμβαλε χειρὶ
 (38) κήρυξ Πεισήνωρ πεπνυμένα μήδεα εἰδώς. (Odyssey 2,35–38).

'So he spoke. Odysseus' beloved son rejoiced in the speech and did not sit down for long. He considered addressing the assembly and stood up in the middle of it. The herald Peisenor, knowledgeable in astute council, put the sceptre in his hand.'

These lines describe Telemakhos after Aigyptios' speech in the assembly of Ithaka. Aigyptios inquired about his own son and all the other men who had gone on the mission to Troy together with Odysseus. These lines simply provide a transition from one speech to another and do not add anything new. There are, therefore, no augmented forms in this passage and the absence of the augment is guaranteed by the metre in all the forms.

In the next subsection, I will discuss possible alternative explanations for the injunctive in general (Vedic, Greek and Proto-Indo-European) and argue why they cannot account for all the data either. In chapters 3 and 4, I will discuss the alternative explanations specific to epic Greek.

1.3. Alternative scenarios and their shortcomings

1.3.1. *Conjunction reduction*, Kiparsky and the *moodless mood*

The most common alternative scenario to the explanation of the injunctive as *Memorativ* (the term used by Hoffmann) is to interpret the injunctive as a simply moodless mood, or at least as a neutral and unmarked mood, that was initially used in combination with other marked verbal forms and from there expanded to contexts where the meaning was apparent enough that no additional modal or temporal marking was necessary. This was first explicitly described by Kiparsky (1968), who argued that the injunctive is a type of *moodless mood* or the result of a *conjunction reduction* (although *markedness reduction* might have been a more appropriate term), namely that in a series of forms, only the first is marked (in this context augmented), with the others appearing in the unmarked or neutral form (thus unaugmented).¹¹ Kiparsky later (2005) reiterated this statement arguing that Hoffmann's analysis failed to explain why the injunctive was used alongside other moods, mostly the indicative but also the subjunctive and the optative. This observation is correct, but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that this reduction

¹¹ Kiparsky (1968, 2005). See also Hajnal (1990: 54–55, 2016: 447–448), Szemerényi (1996: 265–266), Pagniello (2002: 8–17), García-Ramón (2012a: § B.2), Luraghi (2014), De Decker (2016: 53 and 58–71, 2017: 83–84, 103, 129–134, 2022: 236–241).

This had already been implied by Meillet (1913: 115–116) for Armenian, and by Kuryłowicz (1927: 170) and Renou (1928: 76 “l'injonctif peut figurer, à titre de forme indifférente, avec valeur d'impératif ou d'éventuel, beaucoup plus rarement d'optatif”) for Indo-Iranian.

That the injunctive could sometimes be interpreted as moodless and tenseless had previously been stated by Macdonell (1916: 349–350, cf. supra).

rule has so many exceptions that it cannot be considered a strict rule.¹² A second, and in my opinion much more important, objection is that it cannot explain the use of the injunctive in the timeless contexts. Kiparsky's analysis for Vedic was expanded to Homeric Greek by Lazzeroni (1977, 2017) and particularly by Pelliccia (1985). The latter argued that, in origin, the injunctive existed in Greek as a result of *conjunction reduction*, but was then no longer understood as such and was used as an equivalent to the augmented indicative, based on metrical necessities (Pelliccia 1985: *passim* but especially 15, 31–32, 97–98, 108–109). He supposed that as early as the period when the forms with and without the augment were still able to be differentiated, there must have been contexts where a distinction was not discernible, namely the contexts in which *conjunction reduction* had been applied (1985: 31–35). Subsequently, both forms were felt to be mutually interchangeable and the distinction was lost. The use and absence of the augment was then reinterpreted as poetic licence and a convenient metrical tool,¹³ and, as a result, there were no contexts in which augmented and unaugmented forms had a different meaning.¹⁴ A detailed rebuttal of this argument (especially those by Lazzeroni and Pelliccia) has been undertaken elsewhere,¹⁵ but the main argument against this theory is that, if it were correct, one would expect the distribution of augmented and unaugmented forms to be much more random. In addition, I also want to state, albeit briefly, that the elements adduced above also rule out that the augment was a metrical tool and it is my personal conviction that if the poet(s) wanted to use a certain (augmented or unaugmented) form, they would just have used that form.¹⁶ This is not to say that a certain type of “markedness reduction” did not occur. A better formulation of this rule is based on an observation relating to Armenian by both Meillet (1913: 115–116) and de Lamberterie (2007: 39, 45, 52),¹⁷ in which they stated that verbs that formed a unity¹⁸ used the augment only once (one could call this a reduction rule *avant la lettre*). When we apply this rule to epic Greek, we could state that if the verb forms belong to the same semantic field, such as “becoming night”, “speaking”, “killing”, “saving (one's life)”, or when all the verb forms refer to the same action in its entirety and do not emphasize the individual aspects [as would be the case in descriptions of a *typische Scene* in Arend's (1933) sense], the augment is used only once.

1.3.2. The different uses of the injunctive in Vedic

When addressing the (non-)existence of the injunctive in Greek, one also has to take into account that the injunctive in Vedic has more uses than simply the timeless

¹² This had been noted earlier by Levin (1969), who nevertheless agreed with Kiparsky's theory.

¹³ Pelliccia (1985: 32–33, and also 98: “the Homeric augment can only be explained in terms of metrical licence” – the underlining is mine, cf. *infra*).

¹⁴ Pelliccia (1985: 31) stated “any original syntactic distinction between augmented and unaugmented forms has completely been lost”.

¹⁵ De Decker (2016: 58–71, 2019b: 34–39, 2022: 316–323, 2023: 32–37).

¹⁶ De Decker (2021: 144–145, 2022: 313–315, 2023: 21).

¹⁷ Surprisingly enough, Meillet's analysis was neither discussed nor even quoted in Kiparsky (1968, 2005).

¹⁸ In the words of Meillet (1913: 115) “um zusammenhängende Handlungen zu bezeichnen”.

one. This is correct and, generally speaking, one can distinguish between what is called the modal use of the injunctive (in prohibitions) and in non-modal contexts (where the timeless use would be appropriate). An additional complication is that the Vedic subjunctive can have secondary endings as well, so that it is not always straightforward to distinguish between the injunctive and the subjunctive with secondary endings (as Macdonell 1916: 349 also noted). Moreover, it is often argued that the Greek imperative (which seems to have secondary endings) continues the injunctive.¹⁹ As such, the modal uses of the injunctive do not create difficulties in an analysis of Greek. One would have to assume that the modal and non-modal uses diverged so significantly that they became two different moods and this would then constitute an innovation of Greek when compared to Indo-Iranian, but that is an issue that cannot be addressed here.

1.3.3. Mycenaean and the Vedic injunctive

Another problem with the augment and the injunctive in Greek is the fact that the augment is virtually non-existent in Mycenaean Greek. This fact excludes the assumption that the absence of the augment in Homer and Vedic was a relic from the *Indogermanische Dichtersprache*,²⁰ and also casts doubt on the explanation that the injunctive is timeless or *Memorativ*, but in my opinion this doubt is unfounded. Following Schmitt (1967a) and Panagl (1976: 89), both building on Hoffmann (1967), one could interpret the Mycenaean unaugmented forms as “pragmatically neutral” and as old “mentioning” injunctives in the sense of Hoffmann.²¹ Thus, the unaugmented forms simply mentioned the facts and the augmented forms could be occasional slips by the scribes deviating from the neutral administrative mentioning into the narrative style (Panagl 1999: 491). As such, the absence of the augment in the Mycenaean forms does not need to be interpreted as a *non liquet* (as viewed by Itzès 2004), but can be explained by the distinction *highlighting versus mentioning*.

Finally, it has to be admitted that in spite of what was argued above, some exceptions do remain and occasionally unaugmented forms appear where we would expect augmented and vice versa. As will become clear later on, this is also the case in the use of the injunctive.

2. Gnomic aorist, *similia* and *Hymnic aorist*: Atemporal or not

A fundamental issue is whether we can consider the aorist forms in the gnomes, *similia* and “Hymnic” aorists as real past tense forms or if we should not view them as atemporal. This is not easily answered, as there are two problems: (1) many apparently timeless forms appear in gnomes and *similia*, as well as with *τε-ἐπική*, but they

¹⁹ I refer here e.g. to Delbrück (1897: 367) for Greek against his analyses for Vedic (quoted above).

²⁰ Delbrück (1879: 68), Wackernagel (1942: 1–4), Schmitt (1967b: 32). While the former two could not have known Mycenaean, the latter did and his assumption is thus somewhat surprising.

²¹ This was accepted in Rix (1976: 229) and De Decker (2023: 328).

generally use the augmented aorist and the indicative present, and (2) there are also a number of such augmented aorists in the Homeric Hymns, but they do not seem to be gnomic and do not belong to a *simile*. Below, I discuss both categories briefly and provide facts and figures.

2.1. The gnomic aorist, *similia* and the so-called *τε-épique*

In Homer, timeless statements and generic truths appear in gnomic aorists and *similia*, but while the augment is widely preferred in those instances, the augment is nevertheless sometimes missing. I provide the figures below:

| Gnomic aorist | Augment, secure | Augment, transmitted | No augment, secure | No augment, transmitted |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Iliad</i> | 17 | 25 ²² | 5 | 5 ²³ |
| <i>Odyssey</i> | 9 | 13 ²⁴ | 3 | 3 ²⁵ |
| Overall Homer | 26 | 38 | 8 | 8 |
| <i>Theogony</i> | 8 | 13 ²⁶ | 3 | 4 ²⁷ |
| <i>Works and Days</i> | 15 | 20 ²⁸ | 5 | 5 ²⁹ |
| Overall Hesiod | 23 | 33 | 8 | 9 |
| Overall Homer and Hesiod | 49 | 71 | 16 | 17 |

Table 1: The number of augmented and unaugmented gnomic aorists in Homer and Hesiod

²² The instances are *Iliad* 1,218, 1,279, 2,205, 9,509, 9,509, 9,633, 11,410, 11,410, 13,278 (one could interpret this instance as a simile as well), 13,730, 13,734, 13,734, 14,217, 16,689, 17,32, 17,177, 18,108, 18,309, 19,94, 19,131 (in this instance one can question the gnomic nature, as one could also argue that the fact Zeus sent Ate to the humans and that subsequently she caused problems, is simply an action in the past with relevance to the present, but additionally the fact that Ate caused problems for mankind is a general truth), 19,222, 20,198, 24,525, 24,531.

²³ The instances are *Iliad* 4,320, 9,320, 11,28 (adding the augment against the transmission in this context would require the elision of the dative singular ending in -ι and this is so rare that the unaugmented form can be considered secure, a fact which disagrees with Platt 1891: 220), 17,99 (the absence of the augment is guaranteed by Meyer's Third Metrical Law that prohibits word end at 3a and 5a in the same verse), 24,49.

²⁴ The instances are *Odyssey* 1,216, 6,185, 7,217, 7,217, 8,481, 11,201, 11,433, 14,87, 14,464, 14,466, 19,334, 19,592, 20,85.

²⁵ The instances are *Odyssey* 8,431 (adding the augment against the codices, as suggested by Platt 1891: 218, Wackernagel 1904: 6 and Chantraine 1948: 484, would require an elision and a caesura to coincide and this is very rare, so that the absence of the augment can be considered secure), 14,465, 17,271.

²⁶ The instances are *Theogony* 74, 74, 87, 103, 418, 442, 443, 608, 615, 805, 885, 974, 974.

²⁷ The instances are *Theogony* 447, 512, 601, 602.

²⁸ The instances are *Works and Days* 92, 218, 224, 242, 246, 279, 289, 345, 355, 355, 360, 372, 398, 451, 499, 508, 580, 676, 677.

²⁹ The instances are *Works and Days* 20 (in this instance the present indicative is also transmitted, but the unaugmented gnomic aorist is clearly the *lectio difficilior*, although one cannot exclude that it is an unaugmented imperfect or a present injunctive), 345, 705, 741, 804 (if this one is indeed gnomic).

Related to the gnomes are the *similia*, which also predominantly use the augment.

| <i>Similia</i> | Augment, secure | Augment, transmitted | No augment, secure | No augment, transmitted |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Iliad</i> | 83 | 114 ³⁰ | 11 | 13 ³¹ |
| <i>Odyssey</i> | 14 | 20 ³² | 3 | 4 ³³ |
| Overall | 97 | 134 | 14 | 17 |

Table 2: The number of augmented and unaugmented *similia* in Homer

A category that cannot be separated from the gnomes and *similia*, are the verb forms accompanied by *τε-épique*, a “particle” which is mostly used in the categories mentioned above and that, consequently, appears mostly with an augmented verb form. The figures are

| <i>τε-épique</i> | Augment, secure | Augment, transmitted | No augment, secure | No augment, transmitted |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Iliad</i> | 25 | 36 ³⁴ | 8 | 8 ³⁵ |
| <i>Odyssey</i> | 5 | 8 ³⁶ | 1 | 1 ³⁷ |
| Overall | 30 | 44 | 9 | 9 |

Table 3: The number of augmented and unaugmented verbs with *τε-épique*, in Homer

In only 6 out of the 53 instances of *τε-épique*, there is no gnomic aorist or simile,³⁸ so that the connection between these three categories seems clear.

³⁰ The instances are *Iliad* 2,146, 2,480, 3,10, 3,23, 3,33, 3,34, 3,35, 3,35, 4,143, 4,244, 4,275, 4,279, 4,455, 4,486, 5,88, 5,92, 5,523, 5,555, 5,558, 5,860, 5,902 (the unaugmented verb form would create a spondee in the 5th foot and this is much more uncommon than a dactyl), 7,4, 7,63, 7,210, 8,556, 8,557, 8,558, 9,7, 11,63, 11,86, 11,87 (the unaugmented form would violate Meyer’s Bridge), 11,88, 11,114, 11,115, 11,173, 11,175, 11,475, 11,476, 11,480, 11,481, 11,549, 11,555, 11,558, 11,559, 11,562, 11,562, 12,46, 12,158, 12,279, 12,306, 13,243, 13,300, 13,300, 13,303, 13,303, 13,389, 13,391, 13,492, 14,148, 14,397, 15,272, 15,274, 15,274, 15,275, 15,276, 15,364, 15,581, 15,581, 15,586, 15,626, 15,636, 16,300, 16,352, 16,354, 16,482, 16,484, 16,487, 16,489, 16,753, 16,753, 16,768, 16,823, 16,826, 17,58, 17,58, 17,63, 17,112 (the unaugmented form would create a bipartite hexameter and that is extremely rare, even non-existent), 17,158, 17,283, 17,392, 17,664, 17,676, 17,678, 17,678, 17,729, 17,729, 18,219, 18,321, 21,494, 21,524, 22,94 (the unaugmented form would create a bipartite hexameter), 22,494, 22,495, 22,495, 22,496, 23,712, 23,485 (the unaugmented form would create a word end at the end of the second foot with the second half being long by position, which is very rare, cf. supra), 24,481, 24,759.

³¹ The instances are in *Iliad* 3,4 (adding the augment against the codices as in Platt 1891: 220 and Bakker 2001: 8–9 would create an elision that coincides with a caesura and this is very rare), 4,75, 4,279, 4,483, 5,770, 15,682 (the absence of the augment is guaranteed by Hermann’s Bridge and even Platt 1891: 219 hesitated to add it), 16,633, 16,634 (Janko 1994: 391–392 interpreted both forms as present indicative forms, with West (2000: 128) and Brügger (2018: 281) employing the perfect form), 21,523, 21,524, 23,223 (Platt 1891: 220 argued that the metre prevented the poet from using the augmented form, which is true but does not explain why he did not use an augmented alternative), 23,423 (in this instance and in 21,523 and 524, Platt 1891: 218 argued

2.2. The Hymnic aorist

The issue is further complicated by the fact that there are also augmented aorists in the Homeric Hymns, with aorist forms which describe general truths and the eternal habits of the gods. These aorists have been described as “mythic”,³⁹ “Hymnic” (or “Hymnal”),⁴⁰ “omnitemporal”,⁴¹ “timeless”,⁴² and “gnomic”,⁴³ and while something can be said in favour of each of these terms, none are not entirely suitable. Faulkner preferred to describe these aorists as “omnitemporal”, because they referred to events and actions by divine entities (gods, Nymphs, etc.), events and actions that have always occurred and will always continue to do so, whereas “timeless” means that the notion of time is irrelevant in the description (Faulkner 2005: 66, with reference to Lyons 1979: 679–682). Describing the aorists as “gnomic” is more problematic in the sense that they do not seem to be based on the personal experience of the speakers (Faulkner 2005: 65): individuals have not been able to see the Nymphs dance or the Muses sing at a certain well. As this aorist is common in the Homeric Hymns, a better term would probably be “Hymnic aorist” (cf. supra, as per Strauss-Clay 1989: 27, who used the term *Hymnal*).

2.3. An explanation for the use of the augment

From the discussion above, it becomes clear that the indicative is the preferred verb form in the gnomes, *similia*, *τε-épique*, and, to a lesser extent, in the *Hymnic aorist*, which is somewhat puzzling given that these forms would be “timeless”. This raises

that ἦκε and its compounds were in fact augmented, but the fact that an augmented ἔηκε also exists, makes this less likely, see Monro 1891: 60, Chantraine 1948: 481), 23,693.

³² The instances are *Odyssey* 4,338, 4,535, 5,369, 5,396, 5,397, 5,488, 11,411, 12,254, 12,439, 13,33, 14,63, 16,218, 17,129, 19,206, 21,407, 22,300, 22,388, 22,470, 23,236, 23,238.

³³ The instances are *Odyssey* 4,339, 4,791 17,130 (both instances of ἐφῆκεν, 22,386).

³⁴ The instances are *Iliad* 1,279, 4,244, 4,279, 4,443, 5,88, 5,523, 7,210, 9,509, 9,633, 11,173, 11,410, 11,410, 11,475, 13,391, 13,734, 14,148, 14,204, 14,217, 14,397, 15,581, 15,636, 16,299, 16,583, 16,689, 17,177, 17,283, 17,676, 17,678, 17,678, 17,729, 17,729, 18,309, 19,222, 24,602, 24,616.

³⁵ The instances are *Iliad* 4,279, 4,483, 9,320, 11,28, 15,682, 19,88, 23,223, 23,432.

³⁶ The instances are *Odyssey* 4,535, 5,369, 11,411, 14,63, 16,218, 18,273, 22,300, 22,388.

³⁷ *Odyssey* 22,386.

³⁸ The instances are *Iliad* 4,483, 14,204, 19,88, 24,602, 24,616 and *Odyssey* 18,273.

³⁹ Van Groningen (1948: 56–57), but he considered it to be part of the gnomic aorist (“A vrai dire, cet aoriste ‘mythique’ ne semble qu’être une variante de l’aoriste gnémique”).

⁴⁰ Strauss-Clay (1989: 23–26) used the term “Hymnal”.

⁴¹ Faulkner (2005, especially 64–70), Wakker (2017). Later, Faulkner used “gnomic” and “omnitemporal” interchangeably (see e.g. 2008: 76–77, 86).

⁴² West (1966: 155–156 and 1989 *passim* but especially page 137, where he described the gnomic aorist and the *similia* as “timeless”); Peristerakis (1962) called these aorists *intemporel* in the title of his book, but discussed the gnomic aorist (also outside epic Greek); Strauss-Clay (1989: 27) used the term “timeless” to indicate that the aorists can refer to both unique and eternal appearances, but preferred the term “Hymnal”.

⁴³ Ruijgh (1971: 22–23, 273) did not rule out that they were gnomic, but preferred to treat them as genuine aorists; Rowe (1978: 41) described the aorists in Hesiod’s *prooimion* as gnomic; see also Faulkner (2008: 76–77) and Richardson (2010: 228).

two questions, namely first why the augment is preferred and, second, can one consider these two types of aorists as timeless. This is especially true with regard to the instances with a *τε-épique*, which seems to accentuate the generic meaning, as it describes “un fait permanent” (in Ruijgh’s words).⁴⁴ Originally, it was argued that the indicative was the result of a later generalization:⁴⁵ the injunctive would have been the original form, but as it fell into disuse, it was gradually substituted by the indicative and this process was accelerated by the fact that in some cases, the indicative and injunctive were metrically equivalent.

The explanation for the augment in these contexts is problematic when one starts either from the assumption that it marks pastness or that the passages were of a younger linguistic age, but when one assumes that it is in fact a deictic marker this apparent contradiction disappears and the passages have a clear connection with the present and the audience.⁴⁶ While I cannot discuss the origins of the gnomic aorist at this juncture,⁴⁷ the explanation that this is an extension of the experiential aorist and started as an original past tense seems the most probable (in my opinion). The same is true for the *similia* as they compare what has been said to scenes from everyday life, rather than from a distant past. Again, the link to the speaker and listener is clear. General truths (gnomes) and descriptions of daily life (the *similia*) are what individuals experience and note every single day: they know that a fool only realizes his stupidity after he has done a deed and that even the rich can be hit by misfortune, because they have seen it happen, and, similarly, they have beheld scenes within daily life, such as the felling of trees or the pasturing of cattle. This connection to everyday life is the reason why these two types of aorist have the augment and do not take the injunctive. This is at the same time also the answer to the question as to whether these aorists are timeless or not: they are not timeless, but refer to an event in the past, which is still valid in the present day. As gnomes and *similia* are used to highlight and reinforce what the speaker(s) has/have just argued, the use of the augment is expected. Since the gnomic statements refer to events that the speaker and the listener (might) have already experienced themselves, they are thus not *Zeitstufenlos* but instead very close to the deixis of both the speakers and listeners. As to the question about the use of the augmented gnomic aorist in

⁴⁴ I refer to Ruijgh (1971), the standard work on the issue.

⁴⁵ Brugmann (1890: 185–186, 1892: 1276–1277), Ruijgh (1971: 264–266 without mentioning Brugmann), Pelliccia (1985 *passim* but especially pages 15, 31–32, 97–98, 108–109), Lazzeroni (2017: 38–40).

In the 1900 version of Brugmann’s *Griechische Grammatik*, this explanation was no longer included and in his updated version of the *Grundriss* (Brugmann 1913: 14) he stated that the problem could not be solved (in his words “Auffallend und noch nicht aufgeklärt ist, dass bei Homer, bei dem der Gebrauch des Augments im allgemeinen fakultativ ist, das Augment regelmässig im sogen. gnomischen Aorist auftritt”, words he also used in 1890).

⁴⁶ Platt (1891), Bakker (1999, 2001, 2002), De Decker (2016: 106–111, 2019b: 61–64, 2022: 313–324). I refer also to § 2.

⁴⁷ An overview of the scholarship on (the origin of) the gnomic aorist cannot be undertaken here; the literature on this topic is extensive, but for in-depth discussions on the augment use in the gnomes (with more references and examples), see Platt (1891), Bakker (2001, 2002), Pagniello (2002: 74–84), De Decker (2016: 87–99, 2017: 92–93, 140–141, 2019b: 61–65) and Wakker (2017).

Attic Greek (Rijksbaron 2002: 31–33), this is in my opinion less relevant or probative within the discussion, as by that time the augment had already been grammaticalized and the injunctive no longer existed (but it should be noted that the discussion about the temporal reference of the gnomic aorist has yet to be settled and that even for the Greek of the New Testament some argue that the gnomic aorist preserved its timeless meaning from earlier times). To a certain extent, a similar explanation can be given for the use of the aorist in the so-called *Hymnic aorist*. At first sight, one is inclined to state that this type of verb form should be unaugmented as they *per definitionem* refer to a mythical past or a timeless context, with the divine events and stories being, relatively speaking, far removed from the everyday life of mortal men. It is, however, unnecessary to cast doubt on the use of the augment in these contexts. As the *Homeric Hymns* were in all likelihood recited or sung (at least initially) during the worship of the gods, they described events to which the faithful were drawn (in the literal sense) and indeed felt as if they themselves were present when these events happened. This explains why the augment is specifically employed when the verb forms describe actions that refer to god(desse)s in the *Hymn* and their opponents or relatives.⁴⁸ I would, thus, not argue that these aorists are atemporal, but that they have a “near-deixis”. In the discussion of the analyzed passages, it will become clear why the forms of these passages do not contain the augment, while the augmented forms in the *Hymns* in fact employ an augment, precisely because the former describe a timeless habit against which the main action occurs, with the others (sc. the *Hymnic aorists*) relating the main events. It is thus clear that there is a connection between the text typology (narrative parts, speeches, quasi-eye-witness descriptions) and the use of the injunctive and (past) indicative forms.⁴⁹

In my opinion, the injunctive is not a moodless mood but, in the first place, a mood unmarked for *Zeitstufe*, without explicit temporal reference and not highlighted. In addition, as is the case in Vedic, there is an aspectual distinction between the forms of the same mood, both in the indicative as in the injunctive: while these forms are unmarked for *Zeitstufe*, they are, nevertheless, subject to the same aspectual differences as all the other contexts in (epic) Greek. In the next sections, I address the aspect use of the different forms.

3. Background versus foreground: Augment, aspect, or both?

In this discussion one also has to consider, following especially Rijksbaron (2009: 247), that the background uses of the (alleged injunctive) verb forms are not related to their being in the injunctive, but instead being in the present stem (sc. an unaugmented imperfect). Rijksbaron (2009: 247) even adds “this injunctive use does not

⁴⁸ This explanation goes back to Bakker (2002) for *HH* 4 and De Decker (2019a: 83–91) for *HH* 2, (2019b: 42–43, 61–65) for *HH* 5 and (2021: 210–211) for *HH* 4.

⁴⁹ This issue was brought to my attention by an anonymous reviewer of the journal. Two important studies on the text typology in epic Greek are Janko (1981) and Brioso-Sánchez (1988). I owe the reference to these two works to an anonymous reviewer of the journal.

exist". I would, however, beg to differ and argue that we should distinguish between the choice of the aspect-stem and that of the mood. The indicative is used when the verbal action is not simply descriptive but also entails emphasis, whereas the injunctive simply relates, mentions and describes the context in which the main action occurs. Both moods can be used in the present stem and in the aorist-stem. The difference in the aspectual stem is determined based upon the distinction perfective-imperfective (I will address the aspect later and will also go into greater detail concerning the choice of the aspect stem in each of the passages under discussion). Therefore, an imperfect is used when a durative or non-perfective action is highlighted, whereas an injunctive present ("unaugmented imperfect") is preferred when that same verb form only describes, without particular emphasis, the context in which the main action occurs. The same applies to the forms in the aorist stem with the difference being that the verbal actions refer to perfective or completed actions. The aim of this article is to show that there are in fact several examples of this mood and that some might have been concealed in metrically insecure indicative present forms. The next section investigates in more detail the Greek and Homeric aspect and argues, in agreement with what many have argued, that the basic distinction is one of perfective versus imperfective (and, as I noted before, the aspect will also be discussed in the individual passages).

4. The aspectual issue: Present- versus aorist-stem, imperfect versus aorist

As stated above, a discussion of timeless descriptions should include a consideration of the aspectual choices. Below, I provide a very brief summary of the research into Homeric aspect, arguing that the basic distinction is that of perfective versus imperfective. First, I discuss these concepts and then I provide an overview of the Homeric scholarship.

In the third subchapter, I will illustrate this with examples. When I analyze the timeless passages, I will also discuss the aspect use of the different verb forms.

4.1. Aspect in Homeric Greek: Perfective versus imperfective

The number of studies on tense and aspect is extremely extensive and a detailed discussion is not appropriate.⁵⁰ With regard to the perfective and imperfective, I will use the following definitions by Comrie (which in my opinion are still valid today): "perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation;"⁵¹ "(perfective) will typically denote a single event, seen as an unanalyzed whole, with a well-defined result

⁵⁰ I refer to De Decker (2022: 67–73) for a more detailed discussion and further references on tense and aspect in general.

⁵¹ Comrie (1976: 16), accepted in Bybee et al. (1994: 125–126) and Bhat (1999: 45–49, 58).

or end-state, located in the past. More often than not the event will be punctual, or at least, it will be seen as a single transition from one state to its opposite, the duration of which can be disregarded”.⁵² Actions described by the imperfective can be habitual and continuous (progressive or non-progressive),⁵³ or (“progressive (ongoing at reference time, with dynamic verbs), continuous (progressive, ongoing at reference time, with static and dynamic verbs), habitual (customarily repeated on different occasions), iterative (repeated on a particular occasion), frequentative (habitual, ongoing and frequent) and continuative (ongoing, with the intent of the agent to keep the action going).”⁵⁴ I want to add that the distinction between “frequentative” and “iterative” is also important, as the latter refers to “events repeated on the same occasion”, while the former refers to “events repeated on different occasions” (Bybee et al. 1994: 127; Bhat 1999: 53). In his analysis of the Italian indicative, Bertinetto (1986 *passim*, but especially the schema on page 119, see also Pisaniello 2020: 15–29, especially 22) distinguished between the imperfective with *abituale*, *continuo* and *progressivo* and the perfective with *compiuto* and *aoristico* -> *ingressivo* (I leave the terms in Italian, as an accurate one-to-one translation is not entirely possible).

For my purposes, I follow these analyses and say that imperfectivity is often used in the descriptions of habitual, ongoing and repeated actions (I add a category “repeated”, because not all repeated actions are ongoing and/or habitual, but I will not distinguish so definitively between continuous, continuative and progressive, as Bertinetto and Bybee, Perkins, Pagliuca have done), but that, following Allan (2019) in particular, the reverse is not necessarily true: not all repeated actions are automatically put in the imperfective aspect (this will become clear in the next subsections).

4.2. Homeric aspect

A detailed study of (Homeric) Greek aspect cannot be undertaken in this article,⁵⁵ but I will continue my earlier observations, starting from a combination of what I call the “Vendler-Napoli”-hypothesis, together with the analyses by Comrie and others, quoted in the previous subchapter.⁵⁶ Generally speaking, the distinction between aorist and imperfect is described in terms of the momentaneous and punctual versus the durative (see Buttman 1810: 488–490), but it has never been worded as accurately as by Pott (1833: 57): “der griech. Aorist verhält sich zum Impf. (und Praes.) wie Punct zur Linie” (hence, the description “punctual”). He was certainly not the last to

⁵² Dahl (1985: 78), Bybee and Dahl (1989: 55), Bybee et al. (1994: 54), Bache (1997: 304), Bhat (1999: 45–49, 58).

⁵³ This is the description by Comrie (1976: 24–40), followed in Deo (2006: 48–98) and Dahl (2010: 69–73).

⁵⁴ As Bybee et al. (1994: 125–127) state in more in detail.

⁵⁵ I refer to De Decker (2022: 67–73, ftc a: § 2.2) for a more detailed discussion and more references on tense and aspect in general.

⁵⁶ For a detailed analysis with more references and an analysis of the theories by Hollenbaugh (2018, 2021), I refer to De Decker (2022: 74–833, ftc a: § 2.2).

make this observation, however,⁵⁷ and nowadays the difference between a present and an aorist stem is described more in terms of duration and completion or boundedness (as e.g. in Jacquinod 2017: 686; but also see Buttman 1810: 488–490), or imperfective versus perfective (as e.g. in Van Emde Boas and Huitink 2010: 140–142 and Hettrich 2016: § 1.1; Van Emde Boas et al. 2019, chapter 33).⁵⁸

In her recent treatment of Homeric aspect, Napoli starting point was Vendler's (1957) classification of verbs as *states*, *activities*, *accomplishments* and *achievements*,⁵⁹ with the description of *states* considered as non-dynamic, durative and telic, *activities* as dynamic, durative and non-telic, *accomplishments* as dynamic, durative and telic and *achievements* as dynamic, non-durative and telic (Napoli 2006: 32–47). She applied these classes to the verbs in Homeric Greek and was also able to show that there was a clear correlation between perfectivity (the aorist in this case), telicity and the use of countable, defined and animated direct objects, so that “he killed X” would appear in the aorist while “he killed enemies” would be in the imperfect. To my knowledge, she was one of the first to do so and her analysis has provided important insights, but there is one important observation to make. She considered iterativity also as an individual aspectual category (2006: 31–32), arguing that iterativity was often derivative and not an inflectional category, marked by reduplication or affixation. Accordingly, a speaker can depict the same situation as semelfactive (i.e. occurring only once) or iterative (i.e. continuously recurring under the same circumstances), adding that if one did not interpret iterativity as an aspectual category, it should be considered part of the imperfective aspect.⁶⁰

Research has shown that the aspectual distinctions valid in the “normal” passages apply both to the iterative forms and the “timeless contexts” (gnomes, *similia* and Hymnic passages).⁶¹ While one could expect that the gnomic statements (as they refer to a general truth whose validity is proved to be true on many occasions) and

⁵⁷ Pott's comparison of point to line was quoted, almost *verbatim*, in Aken (1861: 5, “Dauer – Vollendung – Punkt” and especially 15 “Der Aorist bezeichnet häufig den Punkt, auf den sich die Bed”. (sc. Bedeutung) der ganzen Handlung concentrirt, die ἀκμή, Spitze derselben, 1865: 11), Mutzbauer (1893: 11) and Delbrück (1897: 230, quoting Mutzbauer), however, without mentioning Pott's name. See also Bornemann, Risch (1973: 214), also without mention of Pott's name.

⁵⁸ The list of recent treatments of tense and aspect in Greek is obviously much longer.

⁵⁹ Vendler (1957). Vendler's schema has since become the standard starting point for verbal analyses, and in spite of some of the problems that may appear (as discussed in Matthews 1990: 57–60, Bertinetto and Squartini 1995 and Depraetere 1995, the list of criticisms and suggested improvements is considerable, as can be seen in Napoli 2006: 24, footnote 1), this is still a reliable comparative tool (in my opinion).

⁶⁰ I owe the valuable feedback on this point to Valerio Pisaniello (Università degli Studi di Verona and Università degli Studi “G. d'Annunzio” Chieti – Pescara).

⁶¹ For a more detailed analysis, I refer to Allan (2019 *passim*) for a general assessment on aspect in these verb forms. For the speech conclusions, the reader can refer to De Decker (2018) and for speech introductions and conclusions, to De Decker (2022: 65–18 the previous scholarship is discussed on pages 67–83).

The use of aspect with the iterative forms has been treated in Kühner (1835: 77), Stolpe (1849, especially page 45), Curtius (1852: 29, 1880: 406), Tyn (1860), Giacalone-Ramat (1967: 115–116), Wathelet (1973: 401–403), Zerdin (1999: 301, 325–326), Kimball (2014), Allan (2016: 93–94 and 2019), De Decker (ftc a, for the aspect use of the iteratives in the *Iliad*; ftc b, for the aspect use of the iteratives in the *Odyssey*, where more references can be found). The iteratives were

the iterative forms (which by their very name imply that the action occurs on different occasions) would only appear in the present stem, the opposite is true: both the aorist and the present stem appear and the difference is not random but based on the distinctions discussed above (a *Paradebeispiel* of this is the description of the mistreatment of Hektor's corpse by Akhilleus in *Iliad* 24,1–35). At the same time, it has to be admitted that there are passages where the distinction between the two aspectual stems is not always clear (two examples, often quoted in this respect, are *Iliad* 1,454–469 and 24,265–289) and many verbs have an aorist and an imperfect form with the same metrical form, so that one is not always certain about the transmission (and in some cases, both the imperfect and aorist have been transmitted).

4.3. Illustrations of the aspectual distinction

As mentioned before, the special categories such as *gnomes*, *similia* and iteratives preserved the same aspectual distinctions as the “normal” passages in Homer. Below, I will discuss two passages, one that is “normal” and one from the “special” categories, which can serve as evidence for this.⁶²

(EX.03)

- (667) (667) αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἐς Ῥόδον ἴξεν **ἀλώμενος** ἄλγεα **πάσχω**
 (668) (668) τριχθὰ δὲ ῥκηθεν καταφυλαδόν, ἦδ' ἐφίληθεν
 (669) (669) ἐκ Διός, ὅς τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισιν **ἀνάσσει**,
 (670) (670) καὶ σφιν θεσπέσιον πλοῦτον κατέχευε Κρονίων. (*Iliad* 2,667–670)

‘He, however, arrived in Rhodes, wandering around and suffering many hardships. They settled in three divisions (in Rhodes) along tribal lines and were loved by Zeus, he who rules over gods and humans and the son of Kronos provides divinely sanctioned wealth to them.’

This passage appears in the *Catalogue of Ships* and describes how Herakles' son, Tlepolemos, after wandering throughout Greece, eventually gained power over Rhodes and contributed nine vessels to the Greek expedition against Troy. This passage describes how he arrived in Rhodes, how he divided the island among his descendants and how they were loved by Zeus. In addition, Homer states that Zeus, who rules

not included in the analyses of Napoli (2006) nor in Hollenbaugh (2018). Hollenbaugh (2021) treated the iterative forms of the aorist and the imperfect, and discussed passages in which both forms occurred, but did not explicitly state that an aspectual difference could be found between them. Daues (2009) and Miller (2014: 133–134, 334, 352) do not discuss the aspect of the iterative forms, although she (Daues 2009: 87) stated that the interaction of meaning, suffix and aspect is much more complex, as one would expect from her analysis (“Dass das Zusammenspiel von Lexembedeutung, Verbalaspekt und Suffix im Detail viel komplexer ist, als im Rahmen dieses Beitrags dargestellt werden kann, wird freilich eingeräumt”).

The aspect in the *gnomes* and the *similia* has been treated in Rost (1826: 444–446), Buttman and Buttman (1854: 392–393), Franke (1854: 67–68), Moller (1854: 122), Krüger (1859: 91), Goodwin (1890: 47), Monro (1891: 67), Chantraine (1953: 186), Bornemann and Risch (1973: 218–219), Sicking (1991: 36–37), Allan (2016: 93–94 and 2019), De Decker (2016: 94, 2023: 36). This was (surprisingly enough) not noted by Bakker (2002, 2005).

⁶² The present-stem forms under discussion are put in boldface and the aorist forms underlined.

over the human race, provided them with wealth. The form ἴξεν is problematic, but I would consider it aorist nonetheless: it describes the reaching of a goal, namely arriving in Rhodes, and, as such, it has a perfective meaning. The participles ἀλώμενος and πάσχων are in the present stem because they are imperfective and describe the long wandering and ongoing suffering of Tleptolemos. ᾤκηθεν is aorist because it refers to a completed action, namely the structuring and division of Rhodes along tribal lines by the descendants of Herakles' son. The aorist ἐφίληθεν could seem to be problematic at first sight as it is not really a completed action *per se*, but as the action described by ἐφίληθεν belongs to the foundation and establishment of the power of Tleptolemos, the verb is, in fact, part of the description of completed actions and we can, therefore, assume that this form also has a perfective meaning. There are two forms to discuss in more detail with regard to their possible gnomic meaning: ἀνάσσει and κατέχευε. One could argue that κατέχευε was part of a gnomic statement, but one could also argue that it refers to Zeus' support for Tleptolemos and his sons. The latter explanation is more likely. κατέχευε is aorist because the provision of wealth is seen as completed while ἀνάσσει, which is in any case gnomic, is seen as ongoing and imperfective, since Zeus is still ruling over both the human race and the gods.

(EX.04)

(448) (448) Φοῖβε σὺ δ' εἰλίποδας ἔλικας βούς **βουκολέεσκες**

(449) (449) Ἴδης ἐν κνημοῖσι πολυπτύχου ὕληέσσης. (Iliad 21,448–449)

'Phoibos, you were herding the horn-curved cattle, rolling in their gait, in the mountain shoulders of Ida, with many valleys and rich in forests.'

In this passage, Poseidon asks Apollon why he is still supporting the Trojans in spite of the fact that both of them had been cheated by the Trojan Laomedon and had not received due recompense after Poseidon had built the city, constructed the citadel and erected walls around it, and additionally after Apollon had herded his cattle. The lines describe the ongoing activity of the herding of the cattle. βουκολέεσκες is in the present stem not because it is an iterative form, but because it describes an ongoing action and has an imperfective meaning ("continuing to herd your cattle" is an activity verb in the Vendlerian sense).

5. Conclusion

In an article, divided into two parts, I investigate the existence of the timeless injunctive in epic Greek and analyze all the appropriate passages. In part 1, I started by briefly discussing the injunctive and the augment in epic Greek, establishing certain basic rules (built on earlier research), such as the problem of the gnomes, *similia*, the *Hymnic aorist* and *τε-épique*, the comparison with the Vedic injunctive and the problems posed by the absence of the augment in Mycenaean, and finally the role played by the aspectual choices. In general, the injunctive is used to mention what

happened in a narrative (and is therefore the most suitable for background depictions), to narrate events in a more remote and mythical past and for the description of the timeless habits of the gods, whereas the augmented indicative is used to highlight events, either near the speaker and listener, or about the god(s)/goddess(es) to whom the Hymn is dedicated. The absence of the augment in Mycenaean certainly excludes that the use and/or absence of the augment in epic Greek was determined by metrical factors alone, but the distinction, namely mentioning – highlighting, applies to Mycenaean as well, as those texts were mostly written by scribes who simply described without any specific emphasis what happened in the administrative institutions, how much tax was paid and by whom, and who possessed what. The injunctive was the most suitable form in such contexts and there was no need to use the augmented forms. Then, I briefly considered aspect in general, but with a specific focus on epic Greek, and used the distinction perfective versus imperfective as a frame in the discussion and analysis of certain passages in order to exemplify to my arguments (which will be done in part 2).

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