

## **ASPECTUAL CHOICE IN GREEK IMPERATIVES: A CORPUS-BASED REVIEW OF EXISTING THEORIES \***

*Résumé.* — Cet article vise à évaluer plusieurs théories sur l'utilisation aspectuelle des impératifs grecs en s'appuyant sur des données extraites à la fois de la recherche typologique linguistique et des corpus grecs classiques annotés. Le contraste entre les impératifs aoristes (AS) et les impératifs présents (PS) a été expliqué en faisant appel à la théorie aspectuelle générale (commandes AS « perfectives » vs. commandes PS « imperfectives »), à la notion d'échelle focale (commandes AS « focalisées » vs. commandes PS « topiques ») et au contexte pragmatique (commandes AS « polies » vs. commandes PS « directes »). Les données du corpus et les données comparatives suggèrent que l'aspect grammatical ainsi que les facteurs contextuels jouent un rôle important dans le choix de l'aspect, bien que dans ce dernier cas la « politesse » soit une explication trop large.

*Abstract.* — This paper aims at evaluating several theories on the aspectual use of Greek imperatives by relying on data retrieved from both cross-linguistic typological research and linguistically annotated Classical Greek corpora. The contrast between aorist stem (AS) and present stem imperatives (PS) has been explained in terms of general aspectual theory ('perfective' AS vs. 'imperfective' PS commands), genericity ('specific' AS vs. 'general' PS commands), focal scale ('focal' AS vs. 'topical' PS commands) and pragmatic usage context ('polite' AS vs. 'direct' PS commands). Both corpus data and cross-linguistic evidence suggest that grammatical aspect as well as contextual factors play an important role in the choice of aspect, although in the latter case 'politeness' might be too broad an explanation.

### **1. Introduction: aims, methodology and restrictions**

[I]n all research done on the aspects of the Greek verb the imperative appears to have caused the greatest trouble. (W. F. BAKKER [1966], p. 31.)

Fifty years after W. F. Bakker published his book *The Greek Imperative*, the use of aspect in the imperative mood is still one of the most puzzling issues in Greek syntax (cf. also C. L. A. BARY [2009], p. 175). Most

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\* The authors are happy to acknowledge, with sincere thanks, the helpful remarks made by Lambert Isebaert and Herman Seldeslachts. Reuben Pitts was so kind to correct the English of this paper. In addition, many thanks are due to Victoria Dabo and Paul Pietquin.

high school and university students are taught that Present Stem (PS) is used for a ‘general command’, viz. an order to be carried out in all circumstances. Aorist Stem (AS) is taken to express a ‘specific command’. Hence one would use PS in Ποίει τοῦτο ‘Do this habitually’ and Μηδενὶ πονηρῷ πράγματι σνηγόρει ‘Do not defend a bad case’, whereas AS appears in specific commands such as Ποίησον τοῦτο ‘Simply do this’ and Σὺ πρῶτος ἀπόφηναι γνώμην ‘Be the first to make known your opinion’ (W. W. GOODWIN [1900], p. 272; C. VAN DE VORST & A. GEERBAERT [1912]). This distinction is made in the majority of Greek academic reference grammars. To what extent can the semantics of a ‘general command’ vs. ‘specific command’ be connected to the imperfective vs. perfective aspect as denoted by PS and AS in moods other than the imperative? And does this principle survive confrontation with the Greek data? This paper seeks to critically evaluate several theories by bringing in both *cross-linguistic* and *larger corpus data*.

*Cross-linguistic* typological research reveals that the problem of imperative forms marked for aspect is certainly not strictly confined to Ancient Greek. A convincing majority of the world’s languages have a grammatically marked second person imperative, whereas about half of the world’s languages make a grammatical distinction between perfective and imperfective aspect. Hence, a considerable number of languages have both an imperative second person form and a perfective-imperfective distinction (see §2). This raises the question as to how aspectual distinctions manifest themselves in the imperative mood – a problem that so far has attracted only limited attention. Revealingly, the imperative mood is not even mentioned once with regard to aspect in *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect* (R. I. BINNICK [2012]). Our paper will, however, benefit from recent work undertaken by A. Y. AIKHENVALD (2010) and J. VAN DER AUWERA *et al.* (2009), both of which do pay due attention to the dynamic interplay between aspect and imperative mood from a cross-linguistic perspective.

We will also measure existing theories on Ancient Greek aspect against *linguistic data* extracted from three corpora, viz. the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* [TLG], the *Perseus under PhiloLogic* corpus [*PuPh*], and *The Perseus Ancient Greek Dependency Treebanks* [*AGDT*]<sup>1</sup>. When used for linguistic research, each of these corpora has its own strengths and limitations (see F. BOSCHETTI [2014] and D. HAUG [2014] for an overview of recent developments in corpus and computational linguistics applied to

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1. See <http://tlg.uci.edu>, <http://perseus.uchicago.edu> and <http://nlp.perseus.tufts.edu/syntax/treebank/> respectively. The *Perseus Treebanks* have been examined by making use of a special tool developed by Alek Keersmaekers (see <http://www.pedalion.org>). For a similar initiative, based on a smaller set of texts, see <http://iliados.com>.

Greek). Whereas the TLG comprises the entire body of Ancient Greek literature relying on the best text editions, the *AGDT* corpus contains only a limited set of texts based on older text editions. However, the texts in *AGDT* are fully syntactically annotated, whereas the possibilities for conducting linguistic research in the TLG are very limited. The *PuPh* corpus, containing about 200 texts, lies somewhere in between. It has been designed for scholars interested in Greek and Latin linguistics, who according to its makers “should work on making more evidence-based and quantitative claims than are found in much of the current literature”<sup>2</sup>. Although it allows its users to conduct lemmatized lexical and morphological searches, the results retrieved are not entirely free of errors and omissions. It is therefore not our aim to proceed in a predominantly quantitative way. Making use of corpora – primarily of *PuPh* – will, in the first place, allow us to find new examples confirming or contradicting existing theories.

Our study mainly focuses on second person imperatives (particularly in the singular) in PS and AS expressing (positive) commands in classical Ionic-Attic authors. The perfect stem, which is hardly used in the imperative except in defective formations<sup>3</sup>, will not be discussed. Nor will we deal in depth with third person imperatives (which often fulfill different functions; cf. C. DENIZOT [2011], p. 154-162), with prohibitions (see below, 2), or with other grammatical forms expressing commands (such as infinitives, future questions, and second person optative forms). We draw entirely on existing translations to render the Greek fragments used in this paper, so as to prevent us from reading too much into the data.

## 2. The cross-linguistic and the Greek data

The map designed by J. VAN DER AUWERA *et al.* (2013) shows that out of 547 languages 425 languages, or 78%, have a grammatically marked second person imperative. The aspectual distinction is grammatically marked in about 45% of the world’s languages, if the map of Ö. DAHL & V. VELUPILLAI (2013) exhibiting 222 languages is representative. Overlaying the first map onto the other results in 151 languages for which presence/absence of both features are given:

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2. <http://perseus.uchicago.edu/about.html>.

3. According to C. DENIZOT (2011), p. 217, only 2.7% of all imperatives are used in the perfect stem. Much depends on whether very frequent forms such as ἴσθι (οἶδα, defective) and μέμνησο (μυμνήσκω) are regarded as clear-cut examples of perfect imperatives. An unambiguous example of an imperative perfect is a form such as πεποιήσο.

Features?	Examples	n=151	%
No imperative; No aspect	Thai, Ewe	26	17%
Imperative; No aspect	Tamil, Finnish, German	54	36%
Imperative; Aspect	Turkish, Persian, Mixtek, Basque, Spanish	58	38%
No imperative; Aspect	Mandarin, Georgian	13	9%

**Table 1: Grammatical aspect and imperatives in WALS**

Hence, these figures suggest that half of the languages that have imperatives do make the distinction between imperfective and perfective aspect. Conversely, in hardly one fifth of the languages that have a grammatically marked aspect a morphologically marked imperative is lacking. However, these figures do not automatically imply that languages in which both features are present (38% in the corpus of **Table 1**) are always forced to make a choice between a perfective and an imperfective imperative. A. Y. AIKHENVALD (2010), p. 155, has pointed out that the interplay between aspect and imperative in these languages is of such a nature that aspectual differences in the imperative tend to be less crystallized than in the other moods. Reconciling the typologies developed by J. VAN DER AUWERA *et al.* (2009) and S. MAUCK (2005), p. 23-25, we can basically distinguish three strategies followed by languages in which both aspect and imperative are grammatically marked:

1. some languages have both perfective and imperfective imperatives: speakers are forced to make an aspectual choice;
2. some languages restrict the use of aspect in the imperative: an imperative is e.g. always perfective, and has no imperfective formations or vice versa;
3. some languages only have aspect-neutral imperatives.

An example of the last type is Yucatek Maya, whose aspectual suffixes cannot be combined with the imperative suffixes, both of which occupy the same slot (J. VAN DER AUWERA *et al.* [2009], p. 97). English can be seen as representative of quite a few languages in which aspectual distinctions made in declaratives disappear in a unified imperative mood. English ‘progressive’ imperatives such as “Don’t be telling me what to do <sup>4</sup>” are rare

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4. This 2012 example was retrieved from the Corpus of Contemporary American English, <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca>, for other examples, see A. Y. AIKHENVALD (2010), p. 67; M. JARY & M. KISSINE (2014), p. 262-263; S. MAUCK (2005), p. 24.

to the point of being considered ungrammatical by many native speakers (including S. MAUCK [2005], p. 24). In Ancient Greek, conversely, for each non-defective verb an imperative can be formed both in AS and in PS (and – to a lesser extent – in the perfect stem). Moreover, the endings of the imperative in AS largely differ from the set of endings of PS. In other words, speakers of Ancient Greek always had to make an aspectual choice when forming imperatives, and it is likely to assume that they had semantic or pragmatic motives to prefer AS over PS or vice versa in each specific situation.

The distribution between AS and PS imperatives in Greek is as follows:

	Corpus	AS	PS	PerfS
S. E. CONTI (2009), p. 6	Classical poetry and prose <sup>5</sup>	39% (228)	59% (342)	2% (10)
C. DENIZOT (2011), p. 217	Archaic and classical poetry and prose <sup>6</sup>	39.2%	58%	2.7%
<i>AGDT</i>	Archaic, classical and post-classical poetry and prose <sup>7</sup>	41% (1211)	54% (1576)	5% (138)
J. D. FANTIN (2010), p. 88	New Testament	47% (764)	52% (864)	0,2% (4)

**Table 2: Distribution of aspectual stems in the imperative**

J. L. BOYER (1987), p. 41, offers figures similar to those of J. D. FANTIN (2010) and concludes that the number of PS imperatives in New Testament Greek is higher than in other Greek writings. Yet the opposite seems to be true, if one looks at the calculations of S. E. CONTI (2009) and C. DENIZOT (2011), whose corpora are based on classical writings. All figures given in **Table 2** thus suggest that in Greek the ‘imperfective’ PS imperative is more frequent than the ‘perfective’ AS imperative. This is not in line with the observation of J. VAN DER AUWERA (2009), p. 100, that from a typological perspective the most typical imperative is perfective.

5. Herodotus, book 1; Aristophanes’ *Frogs* and *Thesmophoriazusae*; Plato’s *Symposium*; Demosthenes’ *Oration on the crown*.

6. Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Herodotus, Lysias, Aristophanes, Plato.

7. See [https://perseusdl.github.io/treebank\\_data/](https://perseusdl.github.io/treebank_data/) for a survey of the authors and works included.

It is important to note that the aspectual distinctions expressed in positive commands need not necessarily correspond to the ones made in prohibitions (A. Y. AIKHENVALD [2010], p. 167-168; 181-185). This is noteworthy in the case of Classical Greek, which also makes a formal distinction between commands (expressed in the imperative mood, either PS or AS) and prohibitions (expressed either in the imperative mood in PS or in the subjunctive mood in AS, both preceded by μή)<sup>8</sup>. In many studies on the Greek imperative, prohibitions are treated similarly to positive commands<sup>9</sup>, but data from several languages reveal that this need not be the case (A. Y. AIKHENVALD [2010], p. 165). This is why this paper focuses on positive commands.

Based on a manually corrected query in *PuPh*, the following table shows the frequency of AS and PS in the second person singular<sup>10</sup> imperative for 20 frequent verbs, and, by means of comparison, the frequency of the imperfect and aorist tense in the indicative (verbs in the perfect stem were excluded when calculating the percentages).

	% PS (imp.)	% PS (ind. impf.)	% AS (imp.)	% AS (ind. aor.)
θαρσέω	99% (120)	53% (58)	1% (1)	47% (51)
χωρέω	98% (49)	83% (234)	2% (1)	17% (47)
ἡγέομαι	91% (42)	72% (521)	9% (4)	28% (203)
πειράω	91% (89)	78% (225)	9% (9)	22% (62)
καλέω	87% (138)	62% (503)	13% (21)	38% (313)
νομίζω	86% (37)	75% (338)	14% (6)	25% (115)
ὀράω	83% (173)	28% (459)	17% (35)	72% (1181)
ἔάω	79% (153)	55% (186)	21% (40)	45% (151)
ποιέω	68% (89)	35% (1394)	32% (41)	65% (2584)
σκοπέω	68% (195)	66% (79)	32% (90)	34% (40)
λέγω <sup>11</sup>	55% (639)	33% (2028)	45% (518)	67% (4178)

8. There are some very rare exceptions of prohibitions with an AS imperative, e.g. Μὴ ψευδοῦν (Aristoph., *Thes.*, 870), cf. C. DENIZOT (2011), p. 280-283.

9. See for instance the following comment by W. F. BAKKER (1966), p. 16: “Kieckers [...] left out of account the negative imperative and the adhortative-prohibitive subjunctive. I shall not follow him in this respect, since the close relation between command and prohibition is undeniable.”

10. Only singular imperatives were included, given that it is for *PuPh* much more difficult to disambiguate between the second person plural imperative and indicative.

11. As to the opposition between λέγε and εἰπέ, A.-M. CHANET (1994), p. 3, raises the following question: [*p*]eut-on vraiment parler d'un verbe, et d'une opposition purement aspectuelle entre λέγε et εἰπέ ?

φράζω	51% (85)	38% (58)	49% (82)	62% (96)
ἀκούω	50% (83)	20% (185)	50% (83)	80% (763)
παύω	33% (30)	14% (43)	67% (62)	86% (269)
ἀποκρίνω	20% (16)	9% (39)	80% (63)	91% (413)
ἀναγιγνώσκω	14% (23)	40% (52)	86% (140)	60% (79)
δείκνυμι	10% (8)	12% (57)	90% (72)	88% (430)
δίδωμι	6% (11)	19% (310)	94% (185)	81% (1364)
ἀφίημι	4% (3)	27% (93)	96% (64)	73% (251)
λαμβάνω	4% (10)	14% (184)	96% (232)	86% (1125)
<b>(average)</b>	<b>53% (1993)</b>	<b>42% (7046)</b>	<b>47% (1749)</b>	<b>58% (13715)</b>

**Table 3: Use of AS and PS in the imperative, in comparison with the indicative imperfect and indicative aorist**

**Table 3** suggests that the distribution of AS/PS imperatives at least partly depends on the semantics of the verb, which will be elaborated upon below.

Relying on the *PuPh*-corpus, we have investigated whether certain words turn up more frequently in combination with an AS imperative than with a PS imperative, or vice versa. **Table 4** summarizes the most noteworthy collocational patterns (without intervening words).

	PS	AS
imperative + δῆ	7,3% [425]	2,5% [105]
imperative + (δὲ) μοι	2,1% [125]	8,6% [359]
μοι + imperative	2,1% [120]	4,7% [195]
imperative + μ(ε)	0,7% [43]	2,0% [85]
imperative + μόνον	0,5% [30]	0,04% [2]
imperative + νυν	1,9% [109]	0,6% [26]
imperative + τοίνυν	1,1% [63]	0,4% [18]
σύ (δὲ) + imperative	0,7% [41]	1,3% [56]
imperative + γάρ	1,4% [81]	0,8% [32]

**Table 4: Collocational patterns with PS (n=5851) and with AS (n=4184)**<sup>12</sup>

12. All differences between PS and AS are statistically significant with a  $\chi^2$ -test ( $p < 0,01$  in all cases).

Such differences certainly deserve further investigation. Furthermore, a query in *PuPh* reveals that only in about a quarter of the instances in which two imperatives (2 sing.) closely follow each other (with a maximum of three intervening words) the imperatives have a different aspect stem. This holds for both poetry and prose. This suggests that there is a certain tendency to harmonize aspect choice. 84% of AS imperatives are followed by another AS imperative in such circumstances.

In addition, there is a clear correlation between aspectual choice and object use: while the *AGDT* contains 1349 (54%) PS commands and 1128 (46%) AS commands, the distribution becomes more balanced when only imperatives with an accusative object are considered (395, or 49% PS vs. 408, or 51% AS). The effect becomes even stronger when only singular (47%, or 274 PS vs. 53%, or 312 AS) or definite objects [personal pronouns or nouns with an article] are considered (44%, or 82 PS vs. 56%, or 104 AS). The use of (definite) objects is often claimed to influence telicity (see section 3.1.3; cf. H. DE SWART [2012], p. 754).

### 3. Explaining the distribution in AS/PS imperatives

What principles underlie classical Greek authors' choice for either AS or PS when formulating a command? J. HUMBERT (1960), p. 177, admitted that in some cases *la différence entre le présent et l'aoriste* [imperative] *fini par devenir imperceptible, du moins pour nous*<sup>13</sup>. There are two main theories overall to account for the aspectual distinctions made in the Ancient Greek imperative mood. On the one hand, a number of scholars have attempted to relate the choice between PS and AS in the imperative to general aspectual categories also present in other moods. We will style these theories 'referential', as the aspect stem of the imperative is believed to throw light on the "internal temporal constituency" (B. COMRIE [1976], p. 3) of the state of affairs, be it as determined by the semantic load of the verb itself ('actionality' or lexical aspect) or as perceived by the speaker (grammatical aspect). Other scholars have almost entirely abandoned the idea that the aspect stem of the imperative has anything to do with lexical or grammatical aspect, instead suggesting that imperative aspect fulfils either pragmatic or social functions. In what follows, we will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these theories by measuring them against cross-linguistic as well as against Ancient Greek data. It is, however, worthwhile to note in advance that none of the theories we will present can as yet adequately explain every single use of PS and AS in the imperative.

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13. See also L. A. POST (1938), p. 31, who states that aspect theory "comes near to giving a complete account of the uses of tenses in all Greek moods except the imperative".



### 3.1. *Explaining AS or PS in terms of grammatical and/or lexical aspect*

#### 3.1.1. *Grammatical aspect*

A number of scholars, including E. CRESPO *et al.* (2003), p. 265, and L. MELAZZO (2014), have argued that aspectual distinctions in the imperative mood should be treated in the same way as aspectual distinctions in the other moods. It would go far beyond the scope of this paper to discuss all views put forward to explain the general distinction between PS and AS. It is widely believed that the Ancient Greek distinction between PS and AS squares with the basic distinction made in other languages that have grammatically marked aspect, viz. imperfective versus perfective aspect<sup>14</sup>. With PS (imperfective aspect), “one looks at the internal structure of the state of affairs and as a consequence any constitutive events and processes are seen as incomplete” (J. VAN DER AUWERA *et al.* [2009], p. 93). The perfective aspect [AS in Ancient Greek], in contrast, implies a ‘bird’s-eye’ view of the state of affairs: the action is seen as a whole and is regarded as complete.

So, for instance, A. RIJKSBARON (2002), p. 44, explains the aspectual distinction in the imperative in terms of non-completed versus completed commands. PS imperative is more specifically used “in order to command someone to proceed with a state of affairs which he was carrying out already” (A. RIJKSBARON [2002], p. 44) or to “emphasize [...] the process, the course of the state of affair, either relative to other state of affairs, or in ‘absolute’ use” (A. RIJKSBARON [2002], p. 45). AS imperative, on the other hand, emphasizes “the completion of the state of affair” (A. RIJKSBARON [2002], p. 45). S. E. CONTI (2009), p. 5-6, explains aspect choice of the imperative in similar terms. Such an account is in line with the cross-linguistic observations made by A. Y. AIKHENVALD (2010), p. 104-105, that imperatives often have the same aspectual distinctions as non-imperatives (although they are often extended to imperative-specific meanings, see 3.2.2).

A ‘continuative’ use of PS is well-attested in Ancient Greek: apart from the examples given in A. RIJKSBARON (2002), p. 44-45, one can also mention Eur., *Cyc.*, 161 *χάλα τὸν ἀσκὸν μόνον* ‘just keep pouring the sack [of wine]’, Hdt., 5, 40, 2 *σὺ δὲ ταῦτη τε πάντα ὅσα νῦν παρέχεις πάρεχε* ‘Keep on giving to her everything that you now give to her’ and Soph., *Ich.*, 207-208 *ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς σὺ ταῦθ’ ὅπη θέλεις ζήτει* ‘Keep on looking for them wherever you want’. Nevertheless, approaching aspect in imperatives exclusively

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14. Alternative terms that are in use to denote the opposition between imperfective and perfective aspect include durative - punctual; uncompleted - completed; undetermined - determined; continuative - non-continuative (see C. DENIZOT [2011], p. 221).

in terms of the perfective-imperfective opposition leads to considerable problems in many cases. Take, for example, the following lines from Aristophanes's *Thesmophoriazusae*:

- [1] E. [...] ἀλλ' ἰμάτιον γούν χρῆσον ἡμῖν τουτοῖ  
καὶ στρόφιον· οὐ γὰρ ταῦτά γ' ὥς οὐκ ἔστ' ἐρεῖς.  
A. Λ α μ β ἄ ν ε τ ε καὶ χρῆσθ'· οὐ φθονῶ. (Aristoph., *Thes.*, 250-252.)  
E. [...] but at any rate lend me a tunic and a belt. You cannot say you have not got them.  
A. *Take* them and use them as you like; I consent. (Transl. E. O'Neill.)

It is difficult to imagine why the 'imperfective' form is used in such a clearly demarcated action as λαμβάνετε. Hence, it is quite probable that other factors are needed to explain the choice of aspect in this example (we will come back to this command, as well as to the other imperatives occurring in this passage, in section 3.2.3).

There are quite a few other instances in which the aspectual choice is difficult to explain in terms of boundedness. For instance, we would not expect PS to occur with an adverb such as τελέως 'completely':

- [2] Ὡς οὖν θεμιτὸν καὶ ἐμοὶ ἀγαθῷ ἀνδρὶ γενέσθαι διηγοῦ τελέως τὰ σὰ ἔργα (Xen., *Ec.*, 11, 6.)  
Assume, therefore, that it is possible for me to be a good man, and *give me a complete account* of your occupations (Transl. W. Heinemann.)

As τελέως normally signals the completion of the action, PS seems inappropriate here<sup>15</sup>. With verbs such as πείθω, PS often conveys the fact that the end-point of an action was not reached (the so-called 'conative' use of PS) (A. RIJKSBARON [2002], p. 16-17). The only classical Greek example of an active second person imperative of πείθω in *PuPh* is in Plato:

- [3] Φ. Τούτων δεῖ τῶν λόγων, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ δεῦρο αὐτοὺς παράγων ἐξέταζε τί καὶ πῶς λέγουσιν.  
Σ. Πάρτε δῆ, θρέμματα γενναῖα, καλλίπαιδά τε Φαῖδρον πείθετε ὥς ἐὰν μὴ ἰκανῶς φιλοσοφήσῃ, οὐδὲ ἰκανός ποτε λέγειν ἔσται περὶ οὐδενός.  
(Plat., *Phaedrus*, 260f.)  
Ph. We have need of these arguments, Socrates. Bring them here and examine their words and their meaning.  
S. Come here, then, noble creatures, and *persuade* the fair young Phaedrus that unless he pay proper attention to philosophy he will never be able to speak properly about anything. (Transl. J. Burnet.)

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15. Note, though, that this is the only example we have of τελέως with an imperative (wether present or aorist). In comparison, we only found one example of τελέως modifying an imperfect indicative (in the meaning of 'completely') when searched with a maximal distance of 3 words: Str. 12.3.36 οἱ δ' ἐμπορικοὶ καὶ στρατιωτικοὶ τελέως ἐξάνηλίσκοντο "Merchants and soldiers were completely ruined". In this case τελέως is probably used as an emphasizer.

A conative interpretation of the imperative *πειθετε* is hard to maintain here. Socrates does not doubt his hypothesis that knowledge of the truth is needed to persuade, nor is Phaedrus unwilling to believe so (as is clear from his reaction *τούτων δεῖ τῶν λόγων*). In other words, the end-point of the action is important<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, the following example is also difficult to explain in terms of grammatical aspect:

- [4] [...] ἀλλ' ἂ δίκαι' ἐγνώκατε, ταῦτα φυλάξατε καὶ μνημονεύετε, ἕως ἂν ψηφίσηθε, ἵν' εὐορκον θῆσθε τὴν ψῆφον κατὰ τῶν τὰ πονηρὰ συμβουλευόντων. (Dem., 20, 167.)

[...] but *hold fast* to what you are convinced is just, and *bear it in mind* until you vote, so that true to your oaths you may cast your votes against the counsels of the wicked. (Transl. C. A. and J. H. Vince.)

In this case, we see a sudden ‘shift’ from AS to PS, even though the two commands do not seem to differ in their degree of boundedness. Both have a ‘continuative’ meaning – they could have aptly been translated as ‘keep holding fast’ and ‘keep bearing in mind’ – and this is why we would have expected PS in both cases (although an inchoative interpretation of *φυλάττω* could be defended; cf. 3.1.3). Such shifts in aspect are not uncommon, as will be shown below.

From the above examples we can conclude that aspectual theories developed for the indicative mood pose considerable problems when applied to the imperative. Consequently, many reference grammars have developed mood-specific accounts to understand the distinction between PS and AS in the imperative.

### 3.1.2. General and specific commands

Most reference grammars argue that imperatives in PS denote general commands, used for expressing moral regulations and general rules of conduct, whereas specific commands, signaled by AS-stems, have to be carried out only in a particular situation and not in broader terms (see e.g. B. M. FANNING [1990], p. 327-328). Although the imperative’s aspect is thus accorded a semantic value deviating from its semantics in the other moods, most authors overtly link the general/specific command theory to the use of aspect in other moods of Ancient Greek and to linguistic theory on aspect in general<sup>17</sup>.

16. C. M. J. SICKING (1991b), p. 141-145, also stresses the subjectivity of assigning the conative label to certain uses of PS, by showing an example of an imperative verb which he believes to be conative in meaning but which is nevertheless in AS.

17. See e.g. R. KÜHNER & B. GERTH (1966), p. 189: AS is used for *Aufforderungen* [...], *die sich auf einen bestimmten eben vorliegenden Einzelfall beziehen, wenn die*

A look at the data confirms that PS is the stem regularly used for expressing general commands. In Isocrates' speech *To Demonicus*, for instance, the speaker gives moral regulations that young men should observe. He therefore often uses general commands, all of which are expressed in PS:

- [5] Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ἐὺ σέβει τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς, μὴ μόνον θύων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ὄρκοις ἐμμένων· [...] τίμα τὸ δαίμονιον αἰεὶ μὲν, μάλιστα δὲ μετὰ τῆς πόλεως· [...] τοιοῦτος γίγνου περι τοὺς γονεῖς, οἴους ἂν εὖξαιο περι σεαυτὸν γενέσθαι τοὺς σεαυτοῦ παῖδας· ἄσκει τῶν περι τὸ σῶμα γυμνασίων μὴ τὰ πρὸς τὴν ῥώμην ἀλλὰ τὰ πρὸς τὴν ὑγίειαν· (Isoc., 1, 13-14.)

First of all, then, *show devotion* to the gods, not merely by doing sacrifice, but also by keeping your vows; [...] Do *honor* to the divine power at all times, but especially on occasions of public worship; [...] *Conduct* yourself toward your parents as you would have your children conduct themselves toward you. *Train* your body, not by the exercises which conduce to strength, but by those which conduce to health. (Transl. G. Norlin.)

The moral regulations (70 in total) do not contain one single AS imperative. In fact, AS is found only very rarely in such cases<sup>18</sup>. There is, of course, this famous Delphic maxim:

- [6] Γνῶθι σαυτόν. (*Protag.*, 343b.)  
Know yourself.

It is, however, not difficult to find a variant in PS<sup>19</sup>.

- [7] Γίγνωσκε σαυτόν (*Aeschyl.*, *P.V.*, 309.)  
Know yourself.

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*Handlung als eine abgeschlossene mit einem Blick überschaut wird*, while PS is used for *allgemeinen Vorschriften*, *sodann überall da, wo der Verlauf, die Dauer, die Art der Ausführung in den Vordergrund tritt, auf den wirklichen Abschluss aber keine Rücksicht genommen wird*. See also J. HUMBERT (1960), p. 178. C. R. CAMPBELL (2008), p. 81, considers specific instruction as a “pragmatic implicature of perfective aspect”. See *ibid.* for a discussion of supporters and critics of this theory.

18. W. F. BAKKER (1966), p. 34-35, lists some examples of general commands using AS, but these are all uses of the infinitive (‘pro imperativo’) or subjunctive (in prohibitions). B. M. FANNING (1990), p. 358-363, p. 366-370, cites some examples of general commands with AS in the New Testament, for instance Luke 12:33: Πωλήσατε τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ὑμῶν καὶ δότε ἐλεημοσύνην “*Sell* your possessions and *give* the money away” (Transl. J. B. Phillips).

19. B. L. GILDERSLEEVE (1900), p. 303, explains the difference in terms of completeness-incompleteness (see 3.1.1.), by translating the PS in example [7] as “Learn, strive, to know thyself” and AS as “Come to a knowledge of thyself.”

Menander's (and partly Pseudo-Menander's) *Monostichoi* are famous for their moral lessons. The prevalence of PS in the imperatives is unmistakable, although again there are some counterexamples<sup>20</sup>, including

[8] Νίκησον ὀργὴν τῷ λογίζεσθαι καλῶς. (Men., *Mon.*, 381.)

[9] Γαμῆν δὲ μέλλων βλέπον εἰς τοὺς γείτονας. (Men., *Mon.*, 103.)

[10] Λάβε πρόνοιαν τοῦ προσήκοντος βίου. (Men., *Mon.*, 331.)

It is however safe to say that commands of a moral or general nature are regularly expressed in PS. Revealingly, the adverb *αἰ* is sometimes used with a second person PS-imperative, but the *PuPH*-corpus did not return one single example with a second person AS-imperative.

Nevertheless, general commands occupy only a minor place in classical Greek texts, as most commands given are of a specific nature. This is difficult to square with the general prevalence of PS in the imperative. When we turn to the Greek data, it turns out that PS stems often serve to express specific commands, and it is especially this feature which makes a unified account of the use of imperative PS so difficult (A.-M. CHANET [1994], p. 1). A puzzling example is the PS-command *ἀναγίνωσκε τὴν μαρτυρίαν* or *ἀναγίνωσκε τὸν νόμον* in rhetorical texts, next to the more frequent form *ἀνάγνωθι*. This command in imperative PS could not be more specific, because it needs to be executed at one singular occasion. There is no doubt who has to do the reading (viz. the clerk). Furthermore, the object of the verb is often explicitly mentioned<sup>21</sup>.

Another interesting example is the popular and frequent expression *βάλλε* [or *φεῦγε*, *ἔρρε*, *ἄπαγε*] *ἐς κόρακας* ('Go to hell'). In almost all cases where the verb is expressed, one finds PS, despite the very specific nature of this command<sup>22</sup>. There are ample examples in classical Greek of specific commands expressed in PS (see e.g. all examples of PS given in the previous section). One can conclude that the overwhelming majority of general commands are expressed in PS, but that specific commands can be expressed either in AS or PS<sup>23</sup>.

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20. C. R. CAMPBELL (2008), p. 87-88, and B. M. FANNING (1990), p. 369-370, call this use of the aorist the 'summary implicature' and the 'constative use' respectively.

21. According to S. AMIGUES (1977), p. 233, the PS form *ἀναγίνωσκε* is used when the execution of the order is specifically focused on. See also Y. DUHOUX (2000), p. 247.

22. Examples of AS are extremely rare. The TLG corpus reveals that Julius Pollux *Gramm.*; *Onomasticon*, 10, 44 has *βάλ' ἐς κόρακας* and that Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 66, 11, 3 has *ἐς κόρακας ἄπελθε*.

23. C. R. CAMPBELL (2008), p. 94, claims that specific instruction in PS mainly occurs with verbs belonging to the "same lexical types that typically form historical presents when in the indicative mood: verbs of propulsion and verbs that introduce

### 3.1.3. *The impact of lexical aspect on aspect choice*

Elaborating on the difference between a specific and a general command, J. HUMBERT (1960) distinguishes several criteria that would allow one to come to grips with the difference between those two types of command. He proposes a distinction between a ‘determined’ AS and an ‘undetermined’ PS. The criterion of ‘determinacy’ is based both on the extent to which the object of the imperative is determined (i.e. is it expressed or otherwise implied, or is no object implied), and the extent to which the action itself is determined. In doing so, he seems to acknowledge by intuition the relevance of ‘lexical aspect’ (*Aktionsart*, actionality). Recent research has emphasized the influence exerted by lexical aspect upon the choice between perfective and imperfective aspect in several languages (see for instance H. DE SWART [2012], p. 766). In this respect, it is especially relevant to make a distinction between telic states of affairs (states of affairs with a natural end point; e.g. “to eat an apple”) and atelic states of affairs (states of affairs that have no such natural end point; e.g. “to walk in the park”, “to eat apples”). Telic states of affairs, which are inherently bounded, are especially compatible with perfective aspect for this reason – the reverse holds for atelic states of affairs and imperfective aspect. Hence the use of grammatical aspect often determines whether a given predicate is interpreted as (a)telic: verbs that are typically interpreted as telic will often be atelic in PS (e.g. the so-called ‘iterative’ use of PS), while the reverse is also true for verbs that are typically interpreted as atelic (e.g. the ‘inchoative’ use of AS)<sup>24</sup>. However, there need not necessarily be a one-to-one correspondence between lexical and grammatical aspect: in ἐβασίλευσε ἔτηα δωδέκα (Hdt., 1, 16, 1), for instance, AS is used with an atelic state of affairs. The choice of aspect is nevertheless appropriate, because the action is contextually bounded by the phrase ἔτηα δωδέκα, which indicates a limited time period.

**Table 3**, surveying the frequency of PS and AS in the imperative of a set of verbs, clearly confirms the correlation between the grammatical and the lexical aspect. Typically telic commands such as “take!” and “show!” are predominantly expressed in AS, whereas typically atelic commands such as “consider (this)!” are almost always expressed in PS. M. NAPOLI (2006), p. 214, for Homeric Greek, and S. E. CONTI (2009), p. 13, come to similar

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discourse”. He offers the following examples: ἐγείρεσθε, φέρετε, λέγε, λαλεῖτε. This is, however, not entirely in line with the data presented in **Table 3**.

24. This point of view is compatible with recent cognitive studies in verbal aspect: see for instance W. CROFT (2013). In contrast with other approaches to aspect in Ancient Greek, we stress the potential of each verb to be construed both as telic and atelic.

findings. It is interesting to note that the most frequent aspectual stem of any given verb also tends to be the shortest one. The perfective aspect of the Greek telic verb ‘to take’ and ‘to show’ is denoted by AS λαβ- and δειξ(α)-, both of which forms are shorter than the corresponding imperfective aspect (viz. PS λαμβαν- and δεικνυ-). We would therefore expect shorter imperative formations to prevail in Greek. This expectation seems to be met by the data and is in line with the cross-linguistic finding that imperatives tend to be formally simple constructions<sup>25</sup>. This is why it is not implausible that speakers of Greek generally made use of the most simple aspect stem for expressing commands. Unlike in a language such as English<sup>26</sup>, there are no general rules about the morphological complexity of the different aspect stems. For some verbs, AS is more complex than PS, and for other verbs, the reverse is true. This often depends on the *Aktionsart*.

Nevertheless, given that telicity is a property of the whole predicate rather than of individual verbs (see e.g. the telic predicate ‘eat an apple’ vs. the atelic ‘eat apples’), plenty of verbs can express both *Aktionsarten*. Hence, there are some verbs (see **Table 3**) showing no clear preference for either of the stems: this is for instance the case with ἀκούω (51% PS, 49% AS) and λέγω (57% PS, 43% AS). In the case of ἀκούω, the explanation is straightforward: both a telic (i.e. ‘to hear suddenly’) and an atelic meaning (i.e. ‘to hear/listen to’) is easily available (M. NAPOLI [2006], p. 158). With regard to λέγω and other verbs of communication, M. NAPOLI (2006), p. 177-178, points out that they also occur quite frequently in PS in other moods. She refers to a study of E. HEDIN (2000), p. 257-258, who argues that in Russian and Modern Greek the imperfective aspect for verbs of communication is used to focus on the content of the utterance and its source rather than the act of uttering itself (see also A.-M. CHANET [1994]). The presence of a (definite) object is often claimed to affect the telicity of a given predicate. This might explain why AS imperatives, more often than PS imperatives, have a direct object.

Moreover, for some verbs the dominant aspectual stem of the imperative differs from that of other moods such as the indicative. This is for instance the case with ὀράω (84% PS in the imperative, 28% in the indicative) and ποιέω (73% PS in the imperative, 35% in the indicative). For ὀράω, this

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25. J. VAN DER AUWERA *et al.* (2009), p. 100-101, specify that imperatives “are often limited to second persons, they have limited tense options, and they often lack agreement morphology. From that point of view, one would expect imperatives to be aspectually simple too”.

26. In English, the progressive form is always morphosyntactically more complex than the base (non-progressive) form. This may explain why the English imperatives use the bare stem; cf. J. VAN DER AUWERA *et al.* (2009), p. 101.

can probably be explained by the fact that the telic meaning ‘to see suddenly’ is probably more prevalent in the indicative – we can, for instance, see a man passing by, but cannot command someone to do so (the same applies to the verb ἀκούω mentioned above)<sup>27</sup>. For ποιέω, we would expect the typical use of the verb in the imperative to be telic (a command to carry out something), so the prevalence of PS is much harder to explain – perhaps the shortness of PS ποίει vs. AS ποίησον can be a contributing factor (see above). The same explanation can be advanced for the verb καλέω.

The remainder of this section will investigate the intersection of telicity and grammatical aspect in more detail: do differences in telicity impact on the choice between AS and PS in the imperative? An important test to check the telicity of a given predicate is to combine it with an adverbial of duration, which requires the predicate to be atelic (M. NAPOLI [2006], p. 70). Hence in the following cases all imperatives are atelic (some of them are iterative, when the verb typically refers to singular actions), while the grammatical aspect varies:

- [11] Τὸ γὰρ “ἄλλοθι δὲ μηδαμοῦ” ὅ τι ἐστίν, ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν λέγε· οὐ γὰρ ἀποδείξεις ὡς ἔννομα γέγραφεν. (Aeschin., 3, 48.)  
For you may spend the whole day in explaining [lit. ‘say the whole day’] the meaning of the words “and nowhere else”; you will never show that his motion is lawful. (Transl. C. D. Adams.)
- [12] Ἐπὶν δὲ καύσης, φακούς καὶ ὀρόβους ἐψησας ἐν ὕδατι, τρίψας λείους, κατὰ πᾶσιν ἡμέραις ἢ ἑξ ἡμέραις· (Hipp., Haem., 2.)  
When you have performed the burning, boil lentils and tares, finely triturerated in water, and *apply as a cataplasm* for five or six days. (Transl. F. Adams.)
- [13] Λαβὲ δὴ τὰς μαρτυρίας καὶ ἀνάγνωθ’ αὐτοῖς πάσας ἐφεξῆς. (Dem., 28,10.)  
Take the depositions and *read* them all in turn to the jury (Transl. A. T. Murray.)
- [14] Σὺ δὲ λαβὼν τὴν ναῦν πρῶτον μὲν τὸν ὑπὲρ σεαυτοῦ χρόνον τριηράρχησον, τοὺς ἕξ μῆνας (Dem., 50, 39.)  
But do you take over the ship, and first *serve as trierarch* for your term, the six months. (Transl. A. T. Murray.)
- [15] Γένεσθε δὴ μοι μικρὸν χρόνον τὴν διάνοιαν μὴ ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ, καὶ νομίσασθε ὅραν [...] (Aeschin., 3, 153.)  
I ask you to imagine for a little time [lit. ‘be for a little time in thought’] that you are not in the court-room, but in the theater, and to imagine [...] (Transl. C. D. Adams.)

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27. Some idiomatic patterns also contribute to the higher frequency of PS in the imperative: the expression ὄρα μὴ ‘Take care not to X’ already accounts for 11% (21/189) of PS imperatives of this verb in *PuPh*.



As the lexical aspect of those imperatives is always the same (viz. atelic), we would expect them to differ in their degree of boundedness (i.e. grammatical aspect). For instance, in [13] and [14] ἐφεξῆς and τοὺς ἐξ μῆνας refer to clearly demarcated time periods, which is probably why AS is used. Then again, in [11] and [12], the time period is also specified by the adverbials ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν and πέντε ἢ ἐξ ἡμέρας. Perhaps PS is used because the exact duration of the time period is less important, but then example [15], in which the time period is equally vague, is difficult to explain<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, adverbials similar to the ones in [13] and [14] also appear with PS:

- [16] Χωρεῖτ' ἐφεξῆς, ὡς ἔταξεν ὁ ξένος,  
 δμῶες, φέροντες ἐνάλια κτερίσματα. (Eur., *Hel.*, 1390-1391.)  
*Advance* in order, servants, as the stranger directed, bearing the funeral gifts  
 for the sea. (Transl. E. P. Coleridge.)
- [17] Νῦν δ', εἰ μένειν δεῖ, μίμν' ἐφ' ἡμέραν μίαν. (Eur., *Med.*, 355.)  
 Now *stay*, if stay you must, for one more day. (Transl. D. Kosacs.)

Verbs typically denoting states may take a contextually established telic meaning in the aorist when referring to the entry-point into this state (the so-called 'inchoative' use of the aorist). We would expect that this telic use is especially prevalent in the imperative: after all, the command that someone should be in a state that they were not previously in necessarily involves the transition point into this state. This hypothesis is clearly consistent with the Greek data: in the imperative, verbs such as θαρσέω and σιωπάω are most often used with such an inchoative meaning (respectively 'take courage' and 'shut up'). However, such an inchoative meaning occurs independently of the aspectual stem that is used: **Table 3** reveals that AS is very infrequent with verbs such as θαρσέω, ἡγέομαι and νομίζω (even less so than in the indicative). Once again, the 'shortness' of θάρσει, ἡγοῦ, νόμιζε (vs. θάρσησον, ἡγησαι, νόμισον) might be contributing to the dominance of PS. It is hardly possible to detect semantic differences with PS in the rare instances where those verbs appear in AS:

- [18] 'Θάρσησον,' εἶπεν, ὃ βασιλεῦ, μηδέ σε συγγεῖτω τὸ παρὸν ὡς ἀνήκεστον [...]' (J., *AJ*, 20, 58-59.)  
 "Take courage, O king! nor be disturbed at thy present calamity, as if it were incurable (...)" (Transl. W. Whiston.)

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28. According to M. NAPOLI (2006), p. 81, in Homeric Greek adverbials of duration are regularly used with PS to stress the fact that an action has continued during a certain period of time before another action begins; however, she does not provide a clear explanation how the semantics of AS would contrast with this (note, though, that AS was quite infrequent with adverbials of duration in Homeric Greek, cf. M. NAPOLI [2006], p. 78).

- [19] Θάρασεε, Γύγη, καὶ μὴ φοβεῖ μήτε ἐμέ, ὥς σεο πειρώμενος λέγω λόγον τόνδε (Hdt., 1, 9, 1.)  
*Courage, Gyges! Do not be afraid of me, that I say this to test you* (Transl. A. D. Godley.)

In other words, the difference between those two commands seems difficult to explain in purely semantic terms.

Considering the unmistakable correlation between the use of AS imperatives and telic states of affairs on the one hand and the use of PS imperatives and atelic states of affairs on the other, we can safely say that referential factors certainly impact the choice of aspect. However, there are certainly some cases in which a perfective/imperfective distinction is difficult to defend. In the following section, we will explore some alternative explanations for those cases.

### 3.2. *Socio-pragmatic explanations*

Several scholars have attempted to do away with these unsolved problems by seeking explanations for aspectual distinctions outside the domain of aspectuality proper. That is to say that the formal aspectual markers are considered to (additionally) denote other functions than referential ones. Ancient Greek aspect in the imperative is said to have acquired pragmatic overtones. The first theory to be discussed is pragmatic in that aspectual distinctions can serve to fore- and background constituents in the information structure. The pragmatic character of the second theory resides in the assumption that aspectual contrasts can also be used to make a contrast in politeness or tentativeness.

#### 3.2.1. *Information-structural factors: AS as a focalizer*

In a 1991 two-part article, C. M. J. Sicking has argued that AS is often used for ‘focal’ means. This implies that a verb expressed in AS would be “a verbal constituent which performs an *independent informative function*” (C. M. J. SICKING [1991a], p. 38), thus denoting an action that has high relevancy for the discourse. It can be pointed out that other scholars have defended a similar system for the Russian imperative, although C. M. J. Sicking himself did not provide a cross-linguistic framework so as to substantiate his theory<sup>29</sup>. He came to this conclusion by discussing a number of passages in Ancient Greek texts in which the same verb is first used in AS and subsequently in PS. Whenever a verb is mentioned for the

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29. See, e.g., WIEMER (2008), p. 405: *Als Quintessenz darf man ansehen, daß im unnegierten Imperativ ipf. Verben dann gewählt werden, wenn der Sprecher voraussetzt, daß die betreffende Handlung sich bereits von selbst versteht, [...], pf. Verben hingegen dann, wenn der Sprecher meint, dies nicht voraussetzen zu können und die jeweilige Situation in diesem Sinne neu bzw. unerwartet ist.*

second time, its information value, in C. M. J. Sicking's line of reasoning, is limited, which is why PS is primarily used the second time (C. M. J. SICKING [1991a], p. 27ff.).

Although C. M. J. Sicking's pragmatic approach to aspect in Ancient Greek applied to all moods, the imperative occupies an important role in his theory. In this mood, AS is used for a command in which "[the] verb informs the person addressed as to *what* is expected of him or her" (C. M. J. SICKING [1991b], p. 156). Conversely, PS is used "when there can be no doubt as to *what* action the person addressed is supposed to be taking" (C. M. J. SICKING [1991b], p. 157). A well-known example used by C. M. J. Sicking to underpin his views is found in Aristophanes's *Frogs*:

- [20] Δ. Καὶ λαβομένω τὸ ῥῆμ' ἐκάτερος εἶπα τ ο ν ,  
καὶ μὴ μεθῆσθον, πρὶν ἂν ἐγὼ σφῶν κοκκύσω.  
A.,E. Ἐχόμεθα.  
Δ. Τοῦπος νῦν λέγε τ ο ν ἐς τὸν σταθμόν. (Aristoph., *Frogs*, 1379-1381.)  
D. Now, each of you grab hold and *speak* a verse, and don't let go till I yell "Cuckoo!"  
A.,E. We are holding on.  
D. Now *recite* the line into the scales. (Transl. M. Dillon.)

Following C. M. J. Sicking's train of thought, one would expect a reiterated command to be in PS, as it is no longer conveying any new information<sup>30</sup>.

Many of C. M. J. Sicking's examples are indeed based on such alternations of AS and PS in one and the same passage. The Greek corpus data, however, also reveal some cases in which the same imperative verb is first used in PS and subsequently followed by the same verb in AS. C. M. J. SICKING himself (1991b), p. 163-164, tries to explain one of these cases, albeit in a rather speculative, and thus not entirely convincing, fashion. Quite a few examples of this phenomenon seem to at least partly undermine C. M. J. Sicking's account. In example [21] the PS λέγε is followed by the nearly synonymous AS φράσον. This form could be regarded as a metrical alternative for εἶπέ, which would not have fitted into the metre (λέγε and φράζε, both PS, would not have caused any metrical problem).

- [21] O. Ποῖον λόγον; λ έ γ ' αὐθις, ὡς μάλλον μάθω.  
T. Οὐχὶ ξυνηκας πρόσθεν; ἢ ἴκπειρά λέγων;  
O. Οὐχ ὥστε γ' εἶπεῖν γνωστόν· ἀλλ' αὐθις φ ρ ά σ ο ν. (Soph., *OI*, 359-361.)

30. W. F. BAKKER's explanation (1966), p. 44, for the switch from AS to PS in this passage – and in other contexts – is somewhat similar. AS can be regarded as a simple instruction, whereas the use of PS signals the need to execute the command already given in AS (see above).

- O. What did you say? *Speak* again, so I may learn it better.  
 T. Did you not understand before, or are you talking to test me?  
 O. I cannot say I understood fully. *Tell* me again. (Transl. R. Jebb.)

If one considers the ‘information load’ of both commands, λέγ’ αἴθις might be in PS because the command is to be expected from the preceding question ποῖον λόγον, but φράσον is certainly not more ‘new’ than the first command, as it simply repeats it. This sentence, therefore, is difficult to square with C. M. J. Sicking’s theory of aspect. The following example is also problematic:

- [22] “Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι, ἔφη, ἀριστᾶτε ἰόντες· ὑμεῖς δέ, ὦ Καδοῦσοι, πρῶτον μὲν ἀπελθόντες ἄρχοντα ὑμῶν αὐτῶν ἔλεσθε ἥπερ ὑμῖν νόμος, ὅστις ὑμῶν ἐπιμελήσεται σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ σὺν ἡμῖν, ἂν τι προσδέησθε· ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἔλησθε, πέμψατε πρὸς ἐμὲ τὸν αἰρεθέντα καὶ ἀριστήσατε.” (Xen., *Cyrop.*, 5, 4, 22.)

“The rest of you, therefore, *go to luncheon*. But you, Cadusians, *go* first and elect from your own number according to your custom a new general, who shall look out for your interests with the help of the gods and of us, if you have any need of our help as well; and when you have made your choice, send the man you have elected to me.” (Transl. W. Miller.)

With regard to the first occurrence of ἀριστάω, the use of PS is compatible with C. M. J. Sicking’s theory, as Cyrus had already been talking about eating in the preceding paragraph. Hence, the command does not convey much new information. The second occurrence of the same verb in AS is much more problematic, as it is basically the same command, but issued to a different group. The presence of πρῶτον makes clear that this command could not have come as a surprise. If one group is supposed to carry out a command immediately, and the second group is asked to do something else before, it is quite obvious that they are supposed to execute the same order as the first group *afterwards*. Miller, incidentally, did not even translate the second imperative ἀριστήσατε, thus unwittingly but strikingly illustrating the fact that this instruction was clear enough from the context<sup>31</sup>.

In Ar., *Ach.*, 1097-1142, Lamachus is barking several commands at his slave. C. M. J. Sicking claims that Lamachus in this passage makes use of

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31. Contrast this with the example discussed in C. M. J. SICKING (1991a), p. 29. C. M. J. Sicking there asserts that the low informational value of PS is demonstrated by the fact that it can be omitted in the translation. Example [22] proves that similar examples can be found for AS. But note that W. F. Bakker’s explanation, which is partly similar to C. M. J. Sicking’s line of reasoning (see fn. 30), would still work here. The first use of ἀριστάω in PS is a direct command, while the second use in AS is of a rather instructional nature, as the Cadusians should carry out this action only after performing several other actions.

AS in order to give his orders “in the most peremptory way possible” (C. M. J. SICKING [1991b], p. 166). Remarkably enough, the very same passage is analysed in a completely different way by Yves DUHOUX ([2000], p. 249-251, without knowing C. M. J. Sicking’s work), who claims that the unexpected use of AS underlines the grotesqueness of Lamachus’s orders (Y. DUHOUX [2000], p. 251). The following section will discuss the social theories developed by Y. Duhoux and earlier scholars and measure them against the Greek data.

### 3.2.2. *Social factors: AS as a marker for polite commands*

In several languages, such as Russian, the imperfective imperative is sometimes said to be more polite than the perfective imperative, which is regarded as more ‘direct’ than the imperfective (A. Y. AIKHENVALD [2010], p. 104; 127). However, there are also a few languages, including Hup, a Brazilian Makú language, in which the perfective imperative is considered to be more polite. Maybe a ‘durative’ imperative is felt to be more of a burden on the hearer (A. Y. AIKHENVALD [2010], p. 221-222). In any case, it is beyond doubt that the use of aspect can be extended to denote social distinctions.

As early as 1903, F. W. Mozley observed that in Biblical Greek PS imperative is common in pleas. However, when pleading to the gods, only AS imperative was used (as reported by E. KIECKERS [1909], p. 10). After analyzing pleas of five categories (gods to gods, gods to humans, humans to gods, humans to humans, warriors to their horses) in Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, E. KIECKERS (1909) discovered that the use of AS also prevailed in pleas from humans to the gods in classical Greek poets. Elaborating on F. W. Mozley and E. Kieckers and concentrating on the use of aspect in prayers and pleas in general (both from humans to gods and humans to humans), W. F. BAKKER (1966) reached the conclusion that a speaker in a plea to a god makes use of AS to express the idea that he is in a situation outside his own control and he wants to place everything in the god’s control (W. F. BAKKER [1966], p. 100-101). However, PS imperative is used if the wish the speaker wants the god to fulfil is of an emotional or urgent rather than a formal character (W. F. BAKKER [1966], p. 54-55). Between humans, PS is more frequently used when someone is giving a command to a subordinate (W. F. BAKKER [1966], p. 59). And when a PS imperative follows an AS imperative of the same verb, AS is often more ‘instructional’, whereas the more direct PS gives the signal to carry out the action of the imperative (W. F. BAKKER [1966], p. 43-44). AS is the default aspectual stem in more ‘formal’ supplications, while PS is used when the command is uttered under intense

emotional conditions, for instance when the speaker is fighting for his or her life (W. F. BAKKER [1966], p. 100-107).

After making a distinction between the ‘durative’ PS imperative and the ‘punctual’ AS imperative, Y. DUHOUX (2000) is also concerned with several pragmatic or social factors that can motivate the use of either aspectual stem in the imperative. He argues, partly relying on diachronic arguments<sup>32</sup>, that PS is often used to emphasize the command (*mise en relief*; Y. DUHOUX [2000], p. 248), while AS is used for a more neutral command (*neutre*; Y. DUHOUX [2000], p. 216, see also Y. DUHOUX [2000], p. 173)<sup>33</sup>. As a consequence, someone at the lower end of the social scale tends to address a superior in AS in such a way as to convey politeness (see R. J. WATTS [2003]), while in the reverse situation PS is more often used (Y. DUHOUX [2000], p. 173). The emphatic force of PS can imply impatience or reinforce a previous order (Y. DUHOUX [2000], p. 248). Furthermore, in prohibitions, PS can sound more vivid than the subjunctive AS, or even rude (Y. DUHOUX [2000], p. 216). It is interesting to find that Y. Duhoux and C. M. J. Sicking defend almost entirely opposite stances. Broadly speaking, both assign emphatic force to one of the two stems in the imperative, but while C. M. J. Sicking states that it is AS that has a ‘focus’ function, for Y. Duhoux it is PS that is more emphatic.

Let us at this point revisit some previous examples. In the case of βάλλε ἐς κόρακαζ (see 3.1.2), we would of course expect the less polite form, and this is why the use of PS is not surprising. As to the difference between AS and PS in [18] and [19], notice that the first command is uttered in a relation of mutual respect between two kings, while the second one sounds much more authoritative (in this case a king is addressing his servant). If these examples seem to be fairly persuasive at first, example [20] poses more problems. Are we to assume that Dionysus might have lost his temper, which prompts him to repeat the directive in PS? There are however no real clues substantiating Dionysus’ sudden impatience.

We will further explore the social hypothesis with reference to Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*. It is well-known how Oedipus turned from ‘hero’ to ‘zero’. Once Oedipus discovers his true nature, his world view is shat-

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32. More specifically, Y. Duhoux sees the use of an aorist subjunctive for a prohibition as a secondary development (based on its low frequency in Homer), and argues that only PS was originally used for a prohibition because of its ‘forcefulness’. For an overview, see Y. DUHOUX (2000), p. 208-220.

33. L. A. POST (1938) makes basically a similar distinction between a more ‘authoritative’ present and a more ‘polite’ aorist in the imperative. More recently, J. LALLOT (2000), p. 64, came to the conclusion that the AS imperative of the verb ἀποκρίνεσθαι in Plato has a ‘protocol’ function.

tered to pieces. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*, he begs Creon, whom he had previously falsely accused of collaborating with a non-existent enemy, to fulfil his last wish, viz. to banish him from his homeland.

- [23] Πρὸς θεῶν, ἐπεὶ περ ἐλπίδος μ' ἀπέσπασας,  
 ἄριστος ἐλθὼν πρὸς κάκιστον ἄνδρ' ἐμέ,  
 π ι θ ο ὦ τί μοι πρὸς σοῦ γὰρ οὐδ' ἐμοῦ φράσω. (Soph., *OT*, 1434-1436.)

For the gods' love – since you have done a gentle violence to my prediction and come in a spirit so noble to me, a man most vile – *grant me a favor*: I will speak for your own good, not mine. (Transl. R. Jebb.)

Needless to say, this context does not call for a command that sounds 'authoritative', which might explain the use of AS in this example. Oedipus also explicitly alludes to the mutual difference in social (or at least moral) status between Creon and himself (see v. 1435). Moreover, it is interesting to note that the proportion of AS imperatives used by Oedipus (when compared to PS) seems to increase after he has learnt his origins (from verse 1186 onwards): before v. 1186, Oedipus uses 9 AS and 14 PS commands, while after v. 1186, 11 AS and only 5 PS commands are used. Admittedly, this might be simply due to chance, as the total number of imperatives is quite small<sup>34</sup>. In a way, however, the increase of AS could have a stylistic effect: Oedipus, being utterly crushed by the actions he committed, resorts to AS instead of the authoritative PS he predominantly used in the first part. Sophocles' play might also offer an example of how urgency can explain the switch from AS to PS.

- [24] I. Πρὸς θεῶν δ ἰ δ α ξ ο ν κάμ', ἄναξ, ὅτου ποτὲ  
 μῆνιν τοσὴνδε πράγματος στήσας ἔχεις.  
 O. Ἐρῶ· σὲ γὰρ τῶνδ' ἐς πλεόν, γύναι, σέβω·  
 Κρέοντος, οἳά μοι βεβουλευκῶς ἔχει.  
 I. Λέγ', εἰ σαφῶς τὸ νεῖκος ἐγκαλῶν ἐρεῖς. (Soph., *OT*, 698-702.)  
 I. In the name of the gods, *tell* me, king, the reason that you have conceived this steadfast wrath.  
 O. That I will do, for I honor you, lady, above these men. Creon is the cause, and the plots he has laid against me.  
 I. Come, *tell* me how the argument began. (Transl. R. Jebb.)

As Iocaste has already asked several times for the reason of Oedipus's anger, it is quite probable that the use of PS λέγ', after Oedipus has still not responded to the AS command δίδαξον, expresses a degree of impatience. Interestingly, in Russian, impatience is often cited as a factor in switching from the perfective to the imperfective imperative (J. FORSYTH [1970], p. 208; WADE [2011], p. 311; see also below).

34. A  $\chi^2$ -test returns a *p* value of 0.14, i.e. there is a 14% chance that the differences between the two parts are caused by random variation.

Assuming that PS expresses a more direct (impatient, urgent) and AS a less direct (and thus more polite) command, we would expect them to flourish in certain contexts. Speaking of urgency, for instance, it is worth examining the use of the imperative of the verb *σπεύδω*. In the *PuPh*-corpus, *σπεύδω* is used 12 times in the imperative with PS and 5 times with AS. Indeed, PS does seem to occur mainly in pressing contexts, as in the following example:

- [25] “Ἄνδρες, ἐμοὶ μὲν ἐνθάδε καλὸν ἀποθανεῖν· ὑμεῖς δὲ πρὶν συμμαίξαι τοῖς πολεμίοις σ π ε ὕ δ ε τ ε εἰς τὴν σωτηρίαν.” (Xen., *Hell.*, 4, 8, 38.)

“Gentlemen, it is honourable for me to die here, but do you *hurry* to safety before coming to close engagement with the enemy.” (Transl. C. L. Brownson.)

In the following example AS is used:

- [26] Ἔσται μεγάλης ἔριδος τις ἀγών.  
 Ἄλλ’ ὡς δύνασαι, Τεῦκρε, ταχύνας  
 σ π ε ὕ σ ο ν κοῖλην κάπετόν τιν’ ἰδεῖν  
 τῷδ’ ἐνθα βροτοῖς τὸν ἀεὶμνηστον  
 τάφον εὐρώεντα καθέξει. (Soph., *Aj.*, 1163-1167.)

A trial of this great discord will soon come about. But you, Teucer, with all the speed you can muster, *be quick* to seek a hollow grave for Ajax, where he shall establish his dank tomb, a constant memorial for mortals. (Transl. R. Jebb.)

In contrast to the previous command, however, the imperative *σπεῦσον* is a formal instruction rather than an emotional command uttered under pressing circumstances; Teucer, for instance, does not react immediately after the order is given to him. However, AS can occasionally occur in pressing circumstances, for instance in the following example:

- [27] Ἴὼ ἰὼ παῖ, βᾶθι βᾶθ’, εἴτ’ ἄκρα,  
 περὶ γυάλ’ ἐναλίῳ Ποσειδωνίῳ θεῷ, τυγχάνεις  
 βοῦθυτον ἐστὶαν ἀγίζων, ἰκοῦ.  
 Ὁ γὰρ ξένος σε καὶ πόλισμα καὶ φίλους ἐπαξιῶ  
 δικαίαν χάριν παρασχεῖν παθών.  
 Σ π ε ὕ σ ο ν ἄϊσσ’, ὦναξ. (Soph., *OC*, 1491-1499.)

Hurry, my son, come to us! If you chance to be in the glade sacrificing an ox to the sea-god Poseidon, then come! For the stranger thinks you worthy, you and your city and your friends, to receive just return for benefits. *Hasten* quickly, lord! (Transl. R. Jebb.)

In this case, the collocation ὦναξ might have influenced the use of the more ‘polite’ AS.



If the ‘polite’ AS turns out to be regularly used in supplications not only of humans to the gods (see W. F. BAKKER [1966]), but also of people asking a favor from their superiors, we would be inclined to think that parenthetical δέομαι, ικετεύω or λίσσομαι (‘I beg you’) and ἀντιβολῶ, ἀντιάζω or ἰκνέομαι (‘I approach [you] as suppliant’) should preferentially be collocated with AS imperatives. This expectation is very clearly met by the Greek data. Whereas there are plenty occurrences with the AS imperative, collocations of parenthetical verbs of begging with PS imperatives are rare<sup>35</sup>. In addition, it struck us that little children, who are supposed to be obedient to their parents, always seem to make use of AS imperatives when addressing their parents (in 6/9 cases) or other adults (in the other cases)<sup>36</sup>. One example – note the use of ἀντιάζω – runs as follows:

[28] Ὑπάκουσον ἄκουσον, ὦ μήτερ, ἀντιάζω (Eur., *Alc.*, 399-400.)  
*Listen to me, Mother, listen, I implore you* (Transl. D. Kovacs.)

In some of the results an AS imperative is used, of which the PS equivalent is very infrequent (μέτεξ, twice in Herodotus; ἄνεξ). However, the other examples are all verbs which are also often used in PS (viz. λέγω, φυλάσσω, ἀναπειθω, ἀκούω, ἀρήγω).

There are still quite a few problems with a social theory. The following example is especially revealing:

[29] Στειχέτω τις ὡς τάχος,  
 ἐλθὼν δὲ θάκουσ τούδ’ ἴν’ οἰωνοσκοπεῖ  
 μοχλοῖς τριάντου κἀνά τρεψον ἔμπαλιν (Eur., *Ba.*, 346-348.)

Let someone go quickly to the seat where he watches the flights of birds, upset and overturn it with levers, *turning* everything *upside down* (Transl. T. A. Buckley.)

It is very remarkable that king Pentheus, who is obviously furious, makes use of ‘polite’ AS here. Explaining aspect in terms of politeness is also problematic once sudden shifts in aspect occur. Needless to say, one

35. See e.g. ταύτας, αἰτῶ σε καὶ δέομαι, **δός** μοι (Dem., 19, 195); δέομαι δέ σου, **ἐπίτρεψόν** μοι λαλῆσαι πρὸς τὸν λαόν (NT Acts, 21, 39); ὦ δαιμόνιε **πρόσελεθε**· δέομαι γάρ τί σου (Ar., *Ran.*, 40). In total we found 37 AS imperatives and only 8 PS imperatives. If we compare this to the general distribution of second person imperatives in *PuPh*, a  $\chi^2$  test returns a value of  $p < 0.0001$ .

36. We made use of the search option “SubDiv Objects” in *PuPh*, enabling us to limit the search to the lines spoken by specific age and gender categories. In all imperatives uttered by children (Παιδίον, Παῖς <Λαμάχου>, Παῖς, Παῖς Α, παῖς Κροίσου) AS was used: εἴπ’ (Aristoph., *Peace*, 118), εἰπέ (Aristoph., *Peace*, 1279), φύλαξαι (Aristoph., *Wasps*, 248), ὑπάκουσον ἄκουσον (Eur., *Alc.*, 399), ἄνεξ (Eur., *Andr.*, 532), ἀρήξαι (Eur., *Med.*, 1276), μέτεξ (Hdt., 1, 37, 3), ἀνάπεισον (Hdt., 1, 37, 3), μέτεξ (Hdt., 1, 39, 2). Again, the total of number of imperatives is very small, so this might simply be due to chance.

would expect that two commands addressed to one and the same person in the same sentence are marked with the same degree of politeness. Again, we can provide the following example:

[30] [...] ἀλλ' ἂ δίκαι' ἐγνώκατε, ταῦτα φυλάξατε καὶ μνημονεύετε, ἕως ἄν ψηφίσησθε, ἵν' εὖορκον θῆσθε τὴν ψηφον κατὰ τῶν τὰ πονηρὰ συμβουλευόντων. (Dem., 20, 167.)

[...] but *hold fast* to what you are convinced is just, and *bear it in mind* until you vote, so that true to your oaths you may cast your votes against the counsels of the wicked. (Transl. C. A. and J. H. Vince.)

The shift from AS to PS in example (30 [=4]) is difficult to explain both in referential terms and in socio-pragmatic terms. The aspectual problems from a referential point of view have already been discussed in 3.1.1 (although an inchoative interpretation, as we suggested, might be possible). Neither φυλάξατε nor μνημονεύετε seems to convey a higher degree of information. Finally, as these two commands are addressed to the same persons in a simple relationship of coordination, one could not argue that there is a difference in politeness.

Moreover, if we look at other languages in which pragmatic factors influence the choice of aspect in imperatives, we can see that the above view certainly needs to be nuanced. Firstly, referential and pragmatic factors are often entangled in the imperative: in the Amazonian Hup language, for instance, the perfective suffix can only express politeness when a perfective meaning is possible (i.e. not in commands with open-ended duration) (P. EPPS [2008], p. 547). Secondly, even in languages with polite perfectives, this pragmatic function can be extended to contexts which are not necessarily polite: in *Tukang Besi* (an Austronesian language), the perfective suffix can not only mitigate the force of the imperative but also express exasperation (M. DONOHUE [1999], p. 453). Finally and most importantly, pragmatic functions in the imperative need not necessarily respond to a single overarching label such as 'politeness'. While in Russian either of the two aspectual forms is sometimes claimed to express politeness in the imperative (see A. MAZON [1914] for the imperfective and V. V. VINOGRADOV [1947] for the perfective form), the actual usages of both aspectual stems show a much less heterogeneous picture: the imperfective form can express impatience but also appear in polite invitations, for instance, whereas the perfective form can be used in requests as well as in orders (J. FORSYTH [1970], p. 194-219; V. LEHMANN [1989], p. 80-82).

The case of Russian is in fact especially interesting, since in quite a few pragmatic contexts the same aspectual choice seems to be preferred both in Russian and in Ancient Greek. We already mentioned moral regulations and

contexts of urgency, in which both Russian and Ancient Greek prefer the imperfective form (see A. TIMBERLAKE [2004], p. 374, T. WADE [2011], p. 310 for moral regulations in Russian and J. FORSYTH [1970], p. 210, V. LEHMANN [1989], p. 78, T. WADE [2011], p. 311 for urgency). When swearing, Russian frequently uses the imperfective form (J. FORSYTH [1970], p. 211), while the same holds for Greek (see 3.1.2). Regarding supplications, J. FORSYTH (1970), p. 202, remarks that in Russian the perfective form recognizes “a certain (psychological) distance between the utterance and the actual performance of the action (the latter depending on the hearer’s response)”, hence making it ideal for commands in which the speaker is at the hearer’s mercy. In addition, the Russian perfective form can also be used in requests, while the imperfective form can give permission to do something (J. FORSYTH [1970], p. 202; V. LEHMANN [1989], p. 78).

From this perspective, the following example from Aristophanes’s *Thesmophoriazusae* is especially interesting (given in reduced form in 3.1.1, example [1]):

- [31] E. Ἀγάθων σὺ μέντοι ξυροφορεῖς ἐκάστοτε,  
 χ ρ ἦ σ ό ν τί νυν ἡμῖν ξυρόν.  
 A. Αὐτὸς λ ά μ β α ν ε ἐντεῦθεν ἐκ τῆς ξυροδόκης.  
 [...]  
 E. Ἀγάθων, ἐπειδὴ σαυτὸν ἐπιδοῦναι φθονεῖς,  
 ἀλλ’ ἰμάτιον γούν χ ρ ἦ σ ο ν ἡμῖν τουτοῖ  
 καὶ στρόφιον· οὐ γάρ ταυτά γ’ ὡς οὐκ ἔστ’ ἐρεῖς.  
 A. Λ α μ β ά ν ε τ ε καὶ χ ρ ἦ σ θ ῑ οὐ φθονῶ. (Aristoph., *Thes.*, 218-221;  
 249-252.)  
 E. Agathon, you always have razors about you; *lend* me one.  
 A. *Take* it yourself, there, out of that case.  
 [...]  
 E. Agathon, you refuse to devote yourself to helping me; but at any rate  
*lend* me a tunic and a belt. You cannot say you have not got them.  
 A. *Take* them and *use* them as you like; I consent. (Transl. E. O’Neill.)

This example corresponds very well with the use of aspect in Russian: when asking for permission, AS is used (twice χρῆσον), while PS is used when giving permission (λαμβάνε, λαμβάνετε, χρῆσθ’ – note the rare use of PS with λαμβάνω!).

Another interesting context in which PS occurs is the so-called ‘concessive’ imperative (C. DENIZOT [2011], p. 258-261), i.e. an ironic jibe that the speaker does not actually want to be carried out. Such ‘concessive’ impera-

tives occur quite often <sup>37</sup> in *Oedipus Tyrannus* and all are used in PS – see for instance the following example:

[32] Πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ Κρέοντα καὶ τοῦμόν στόμα  
 π ρ ο π η λ ά κ ι ζ ε · σοῦ γάρ οὐκ ἔστιν βροτῶν  
 κάκιον ὅστις ἐκτριβήσεταιί ποτε. (Soph., *OT*, 426-428.)

Therefore *heap your scorn* upon Creon and upon my message: for no man will ever be crushed more miserably than you. (Transl. R. Jebb.)

Again, in Russian, the imperfective form is also preferred in such contexts (J. FORSYTH [1970], p. 213) <sup>38</sup>. Of course, the pragmatic contexts in which the different aspectual stems occur are not exactly the same in Ancient Greek as in Russian. For instance, in Russian the perfective is preferred in authoritative commands (T. WADE [2011], p. 312), while this does not seem to be the case in Greek. It seems, however, safe to state that a comparative study with Russian can shed some interesting light on the use of aspect in the Greek imperative.

#### 4. Conclusions: Bridging referential and socio-pragmatic explanations

Our research, like Plato's early dialogues, ends in *ἀπορία*. Nevertheless, we hope to have obtained at least some corpus-based results. The often-made claim that PS imperative is only used for general commands definitely needs further qualification, as both PS and AS imperatives are used in specific commands. The data in section 3.1 clearly show that aspectual choice in the imperative is largely dependent on the semantics of the verb. As for the social-pragmatic theories, the paper has shown that there are many counterexamples to C. M. J. SICKING'S (1991a/b) theory that AS has focus function: PS also frequently appears in emphatic contexts (cf. Y. DUHOUX [2000]). A social perspective, in which AS can be interpreted as a politeness marker, seems to be more promising. Nevertheless, a cross-linguistic investigation shows that reducing pragmatic factors exclusively to politeness is likely a simplification. This suggests that a more fine-grained classification of pragmatic factors in the imperative is needed, starting from the actual contexts in which a particular aspectual stem is dominant (such as the dominance of AS in pleas and of PS in moral regulations). We have also revealed some collocational patterns, some of which deserve further investigation.

37. Aside from example [32] also θυμοῦ (v. 344), ὀνειδίς (v. 441) and ἐκμάνθαν' (v. 576).

38. See also example [11] above and Soph., *Ant.*, 1168-1169 (π λ ο ύ τ ε ι τ ε γάρ κατ' οἶκον, εἰ βούλει, μέγα / καὶ ζῆ τύραννον σχῆμι' ἔχων) for other examples. In some cases, however, AS also occurs in such contexts: see Aristoph., *Lys.*, 365 (ἄ ψ α ι μόνον Στρατυλλίδος τῷ δακτύλῳ προσελθών).

An important problem remains: how can we link referential and pragmatic factors, both of which seem to play a role in determining the aspect of imperatives? Some scholars have tried to find ways to bridge both explanatory models. In a rather metaphysical explanation, E. Kieckers suggests that in pleas from humans directed to gods the preference of AS, denoting completion, can be accounted for as it is appropriate for ‘finite’ humans addressing the infinite world of the gods<sup>39</sup>. According to W. F. BAKKER (1966), p. 111, PS is used to create a link between the order and the immediate discourse context, while AS, in contrast, has a distancing effect, making it appropriate in supplications. Comparative evidence from Russian may also be considered, for which it is sometimes claimed that imperfective imperatives refer to actions that obviously need to be carried out, while perfective imperatives are more ‘unexpected’ (cf. WIEMER [2008], p. 405), not unlike C. M. J. Sicking’s explanation for Ancient Greek. None of these explanations seem conclusive to us, however, when confronted with the Greek data. Perhaps it would make more sense to study the diachronic evolution of each particular context (i.e. pleas, contexts of urgency, ironic jibes, requests, moral regulations etc.) instead of trying to find a single overarching explanation for each of these cases (cf. the treatment of J. FORSYTH [1970] of the Russian imperative).

Needless to say, there is much room to broaden the scope of this field of research, for instance by investigating the use of aspect in prohibitions (see H. TONNET [1994]) as well as the formations expressing commands other than the imperative mood, such as the infinitive ‘pro imperativo’ and the optative for a polite command<sup>40</sup>. Also the evolution of aspect use in the imperative over time needs to be taken into account (H. TONNET [1994]). Further investigation in the diachronic development of the aspectual stems in the imperative as well as a more thorough comparative study with

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39. [...] *der perfektive Aorist ist in der Regel die Aktionsart, in der der endlich beschränkte Mensch die unendliche Gottheit anrufen darf. Das Verhältnis, in dem sich die ὠκόμοροι ἄνδρες zu den θεοὶ αἰὲν ἕδοντες fühlen, konnte syntaktisch kaum besser veranschaulicht werden* (E. KIECKERS [1909], p. 17).

40. One might even consider the whole field of deontic modality, as it has already been argued that pragmatic factors could also affect infinitives after deontic modal auxiliaries such as βούλομαι (L. A. POST [1938], p. 34-35), wishes in the optative (W. F. BAKKER [1966], p. 117) and indicative aorists with a performative function (M. LLOYD [1999]).

Russian might shed light on these cases. Before settling this issue, it is imperative to do much more work <sup>41</sup>.

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41. See in this respect Y. DUHOUX (2000), p. 164: *La sélection de l'aspect dépend de toute une série d'éléments rattachables à quatre domaines différents: la conjugaison grecque; le verbe lui-même; le contexte; le sujet parlant. Contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait croire, les facteurs intervenant dans ce choix sont loin d'avoir tous identifiés. D'autre part, leurs interactions n'ont virtuellement jamais été étudiées.*

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