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A Suggestion on the Development of the Greek Optative

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his enemies with his own fate, terrible as he knows it to be? From his own lips would not such a coupling of himself, even in doom, with those whom he loathes, jar upon us? Besides, how feeble and frigid after that outburst (*κακούς... ξυναρπάσειαν*) and with how sudden a fall, like an arrow dropping to earth in mid flight, would come the conclusion *ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἔμε!* The Furies need not be asked to 'see' the ruin which their own hands are even now bringing *ἄν* pass. And does not the dying passion of Ajax require from the gods some doom even more terrible than his own for his undoers?

The brief imprecation *καί σφας... ξυναρπάσειαν*, followed by the abrupt and even more bitter one, *ὥσπερ... ὀλοίατο*, is not only far stronger but also more in harmony with the deep resentment of Ajax against those who, he feels, have driven him to his death.

No! the four lines hang together. If the first two are to be rejected, so must the last two.

Not only is this last speech of Ajax's weakened by the loss of these lines but its connection is destroyed. To omit 839-842 makes Ajax pass at once from saying that 'his life is blasted by the Atridae,' of whom he says not a word, to the prayer to the Furies to glut their wrath on the whole army. It seems to me a psychological impossibility that Ajax should thus pass at once from the mere mention of the Atridae and their work to the curse on all his fellow-soldiers. Without the passionate and vindictive outburst in ll. 839-842 to lead up to it and excuse it, that curse becomes only

a weak and meaningless ferocity. I venture to think that Sophocles could not have so written.

Were we to omit 839-842 and accept the second invocation to the 'Erinyes swift and vengeful' immediately following the first to the 'Erinyes far-striding and dread,' to my feeling the address to the Sun would then follow the imprecation too abruptly. In fact, would not some expansion of the prayer, *μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ* be necessary to preserve the balance of the speech?

It is worth noting that Professor Campbell who rejects these lines in his edition and still thinks them unguanine, writes to me that he considers them 'spirited' and has 'often felt tempted to defend them.'

Both in language, in structure and in the whole colour of the style these lines are, I venture to think, thoroughly Sophoclean. Moreover, they are in harmony with Ajax's character;—noble, even too sensitive to his own honour and the shame of his downfall, yet unforgiving to his foes and deaf to friends entreating, he knows and tastes the full horror of his end yet moves unfaltering towards it. These words might come from the heart of the Ajax of the Nekuia who, when the other ghosts crowded round Ulysses, 'alone stood aloof, being still angry because of the victory' and even after Ulysses' noble appeal to him, still 'answered never a word but passed on to Erebus after the other spirits of the dead.'

JOHN MASSON.

A SUGGESTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEK OPTATIVE.

THE term 'potential' as applied to the optative with *ἄν* is elastic, not to say vague. Strictly speaking, one may venture to think, it should be applied only to that phase of the optative with *ἄν* which is equivalent to the optative of *δυνασθαι* with *ἄν* and the infinitive of the verb in question (*λύοιμι ἄν* = *δυναίμην ἄν λύειν*). Besides this the optative with *ἄν* has often a plain desiderative, or inclinative force, being then equivalent to the optative of *βούλεσθαι* (or *ἐθέλειν*) with *ἄν* and the infinitive of the verb in question, or to itself plus *ἥδεως* (*λύοιμι ἄν* = *βουλοίμην ἄν* *λύειν*, or *ἥδεως ἄν λύοιμι*). In other cases

is emphasised, and the optative may be termed 'conditional' or 'contingent.' This use seems readily derivable from the desiderative, or inclinational, use. (Cf. Eng. 'would.') The optative of polite request (*λέγοις ἄν*) seems to have similar affinities, though it differs from the optative of inclination, in that the inclination or desire is that of the speaker, not that of the subject of the verbal form. The change from the first to the second person, as well as linguistic parsimony, is responsible for this shift. Thus *λέγοις ἄν* = *βουλοίμην ἄν* *σε λέγειν*, or *καθ' ἥδονην ἄν μοι λέγοις*. (One thinks here of Sophocles *Ant.* 70, where

δομένης would certainly be an improvement on ἡδέως, though ἡδέως may be from Sophocles' hand.)

These several uses of the optative with ἄν, which correspond to older optatives without ἄν (οὐ-optatives) in the same senses, are, I venture to think, derivable from certain uses of the μή-optative. This does not, of course, imply dissent from the view that the differentiation of the μή-optative and the οὐ-optative in Greek is proethnic; it means merely that one can trace the process of differentiation in Greek forms alone. (See my remarks on the subjunctive and optative in 'Some Remarks on the Moods of Will in Greek,' *Trans. Am. Philol. Assoc.* xxvi. [1895], *Proceedings of Special Session*, 1894, pp. l.-lx.)

The precative use of the optative may well be taken as its most primitive use. It will appear on a moment's consideration that this use belongs primarily to only two persons, the first and the third. Thus, λάβοιμι (μὴ λάβοιμι) = δός μοι λαβεῖν (δός μοι μὴ λαβεῖν) and λάβοι (μὴ λάβοι) = δός (μοι) αὐτὸν λαβεῖν (μὴ λαβεῖν). Thus prayer for oneself and prayer for another are expressed.

The answer to such prayers may conceivably be expressed by λάβοις (οὐ λάβοις) = δίδωμί σοι λαβεῖν (οὐ δίδωμί σοι λαβεῖν) and

λάβοι (οὐ λάβοι). The reflex (the answer to the prayer as reported by the recipient of such answer) would take the forms λάβοιμι (οὐ λάβοιμι) and λάβοι (οὐ λάβοι), or in the latter case, if addressed to the person for whom the prayer had been offered, λάβοις (οὐ λάβοις).

The desiderative use of the optative—λύοιμι (οὐ λύοιμι) = βούλομαι (οὐ βούλομαι) λύειν—will naturally appear (like the future) in all persons. (The peculiar turn given to the second person of the ἄν-optative has been discussed above). Here we have the origin of the optative of inclination in what might be called a secularised prayer.

The reflex of the precative mentioned above—λάβοιμι (οὐ λάβοιμι)—may be regarded as an expression of ability (or inability). Thus λάβοιμι (οὐ λάβοιμι) = δύναμαι λαβεῖν (οὐ δύναμαι λαβεῖν). Here we have the potential optative in the narrower sense indicated above.

The former βουλοίμην (ἄν) λαβεῖν = λάβοιμι (ἄν) and δυναίμην (ἄν) λαβεῖν = λάβοιμι ἄν, instead of βούλομαι λαβεῖν and δύναμαι λαβεῖν show a natural assimilation. In Attic Greek βούλομαι λαβεῖν and δύναμαι λαβεῖν represent rather λήψομαι.

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ON THE MS. TRADITION OF AETNA.

Extracts on Aetna, D'Orv. x. 1, 6, 6, p. 40.

P. 36 *Cornelii Seueri Aetna* in m. Apollonius apud Philostrate. l. v.

ib. 7 *properent* in m. *properant*.

p. 37, 2 *adversum* in m. *aversum*.

p. 38 *deletur*, nota marg. *victor*.

p. 41, 8 *vicula* in m. *vincla*.

p. 44, 9 *imbres* in m. *yris*.

ib. 20 *jacent* in m. *lutent*.

ib. 25 *nunc* in m. *tot*.

ib. 26 *magna* in m. *magis*. (Gyr.)

p. 45, 3 *taceant* in m. *iaceant*.

ib. 7 *dignissima* in m. *ditissima*.

ib. 10 *caussae* in m. *curae*.

ib. 11 *et dolia* in m. *ut dolia*. (Gyr.)

ib. 16 *occulto* in m. *occultum*.

ib. 18 *animumque* in m. *animosque*. (Gyr.)

ib. 20 *euerimus* in m. *euerimus*.

ib. 26 *concrecant* in m. *cur crescant*.

p. 46, 5 *una* in m. *unda*.

ib. 6 *curas* in m. *auras*.

p. 48, 16 *aut aquilone*, &c., in m. Virgil.

p. 49, 20 *vera* in m. *sera*.

ib. 22 *robore* in m. *robora*. (Le Clerc.)

ib. 26 *et potes*, &c., in m. Plautus.

p. 50, 17 *iacet* in m. *iacens*.

ib. 22 *dicitur*, &c., in m. *superest*.

ib. 23 *extincta super*: *testisque Neapolim*.

Corrigitur: *extin super testisque cta*: ~~testis superque~~ *Neapolin*.

p. 51, 27 *et tuto* in m. *e tuto*. (Scal.)

p. 52, 4 *sopita et* in m. *scobis iis*.

ib. 15 *curtis* in m. *curvis*. (D'Orv.)

p. 53, 4 *cunctis* in m. *unco*.

ib. 15 *ubi certo* in m. *certo sibi*.

ib. 18 *partam* in m. *formam*.

ib. 19 *tenet* in m. *tener*.

ib. 21 *vultu perdidit igneis* in marg. *vultum perdidit igni*. (igne Scal.)

p. 54, 2 *et ibi* in marg. *igni*. (ab igni Scal.)

ib. 7. *plumbi* in m. *plumbum*. (Le Clerc.)