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Kortlandt, F.H.H.

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The Aeolic Optative

FREDERIK KORTLANDT

1. Despite considerable effort which has been spent on a variety of possible solutions to the problem (cf especially Thomas 1957 and Forbes 1958, with a survey of the earlier literature), the origin of the so-called Aeolic optative has not been clarified. "Le problème reste posé" (Chantraine 1967: 266).¹ I think that the absence of a convincing solution is the consequence of an imperfect understanding of the original, Proto-Indo-European state of affairs. In the following I intend to discuss a few points which, though relevant to the problem, have not received sufficient attention and to present an alternative solution.

2. Proto-Indo-European verbal paradigms could have either fixed or mobile stress. When the stress was fixed, as in the sigmatic aorist and the thematic flexion, the optative suffix was $*-iH_1-$, followed by the personal endings with no vowel intervening.

sg	1st	$-suH_1m$	$-ouH_1m$
	2nd	$-suH_1s$	ouH_1s
	3rd	siH_1t	$-ouH_1t$
pl	1st	$-suH_1me$	ouH_1me
	2nd	siH_1te	ouH_1te
	3rd	siH_1nt	$-ouH_1nt$

Outside these two categories, I find no trace of an original paradigm with fixed stress in Greek. When the stress was mobile, the optative suffix was $*-ieH_1-$ in the singular and $*-iH_1-$ in the plural of the active voice, and $*-iH_1-$ in the middle voice. The stress was on the ending in the 1st and 2nd pl. forms of the mobile paradigms, and evidently also in the sg forms of the middle voice, but not in the 3rd pl forms, where a number of indications point to original root stress.

First of all, the 3rd pl active ending of the Vedic optative is $-ur$, not $-an$. The ending $-ur$ is found in root presents with fixed stress, e.g. inj. *taksur* of *taksati* 'they fashion', in reduplicated imperfects, e.g. *ádadhur* of *dádhati* 'they put', in the sigmatic aorist, which has $-sur$, and in root aorists of roots in a laryngeal, e.g.

¹ Cf Chantraine's footnote "On mesurera dans ces articles l'extrême complication de toutes les solutions proposées." Rix's conception of " $-u/ü$ umgebildet () zu $-e/ä/e-$ mit den Ind -Ausgangen und Dissimilation $-ü > -e/ä$), nur als Variante in der 2 3 Sg 3 Pl" (1976: 233) stretches the imagination and does not explain the distribution of the e grade. Cf also Risch (1982: 328, fn 29) "Nicht eindeutig geklärt ist noch immer die Herkunft des sog 'aolischen' Optativs, z. B. $\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\xi\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma, -\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon, -\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu$ "

ádhur 'they put', i. e. in all those athematic forms where the stress is either on the root or on a preceding syllable. It follows that *-ur* replaces earlier **-at* from syllabic **-nt*.

Secondly, the agreement between Latin *velint*, Gothic *wileina*, and Old Church Slavic *velětb*, which are all related to English *will*, suggests that the optative paradigm from which these forms are derived had an *e*-grade in the root. The oldest paradigm of the Slavic compound stem *do-vělje-* 'suffice', which has a reduced grade in the root and is evidently based on the 3rd sg. form in **-ieH₁t*, has an irregular 3rd pl. form *dovělětb*, which must be derived from **-i(H₁)nt*. The same alternation is found in *xošte-* < **-tye-* 'want', 3rd pl. *xotětb*. It points to an original paradigm **ulieH₁t*, **ueliH₁nt*.

Thirdly, the Vedic optative of the type *dheyām* 'I may put' requires an explanation. This form cannot have replaced **dheya(m)* < **dheH₁iH₁m* or **dhāyām* < **dheH₁ieH₁m* because neither of these forms is attested in the material while both are supported by other paradigms and would not therefore easily be lost, cf. *gamēyam*, *gamés* beside *gamyās* of *gam-* 'go'. This suggests that the full grade of the root **dheH₁-* and the full grade of the suffix **-ieH₁-* were taken from different forms of the same paradigm, which means that the stress alternated between the root and the suffix. Since the suffix had full grade in the singular, the obvious source of the full grade root vowel is the 3rd pl. form *dheyur*, which is the expected reflex of **dheH₁iH₁nt*. This analysis is supported by the fact that forms of the type *dheyām* are trisyllabic in the Rgveda.

On the basis of these considerations, I arrive at the following reconstruction of PIE. paradigms for the present optative of the root **H₁ei-* 'go' and the aorist optative of the root **dheH₁-* 'put':

sg.	1st	<i>H₁ieH₁m</i>	<i>dhH₁ieH₁m</i>
	2nd	<i>H₁ieH₁s</i>	<i>dhH₁ieH₁s</i>
	3rd	<i>H₁ieH₁t</i>	<i>dhH₁ieH₁t</i>
pl.	1st	<i>H₁iH₁me</i>	<i>dhH₁iH₁me</i>
	2nd	<i>H₁iH₁te</i>	<i>dhH₁iH₁te</i>
	3rd	<i>H₁eiH₁nt</i>	<i>dheH₁iH₁nt</i>

In the middle voice, which will not be discussed here, I also assume full grade of the root in the 3rd pl. form and zero grade elsewhere (cf. Kortlandt 1987, sections 10 and 15).

3. What is the expected development of the reconstructed paradigms in Greek? This question hinges on the development of the laryngeals. In the position after a vowel and before a consonant, the laryngeals were apparently lost at an early stage with compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel, cf. especially *μείζ* < **mēns* < **meH₁ns* 'month', where the accent points to an original monosyllable, and similarly acc. pl. *-ᾶς*, *-ᾶνς* < **-āns* < **-eH₂ns*, acc. sg. *-ᾶν* < **-ām* < **-eH₂m*, also acc. sg. *-ῶν* < **-uHm*, acc. pl. *-ῶς* < **-uHns*, but acc. sg. *-yan* on the analogy of nom. sg. *-ya* < **-iH₂*, where the vocalization of the word-final laryngeal

is regular.² Thus, I assume that the phonetic reflex of 1st sg $*-siH_1m$ and 3rd pl $*-siH_1nt$ should be $*s\bar{i}n$.

In the thematic flexion, $*oiH_1-$ yielded $*ovy$ (or $*oyy$) with vocalization of the following nasal in Arc $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$ 'I may drive out' and Hom $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron$ 'they may follow'. Before the nonsyllabic consonant of the endings $*-s$, $*t$, $*-me$, $*te$, the sequence $*ovy-$ was evidently reduced to $*oi$ (or $*oy-$).³ It is clear from the 3rd sg form in $-oi$ that the assimilation of the laryngeal to the preceding semivowel was anterior to the loss of final $*t$ because the laryngeal would otherwise have been vocalized to yield $-\epsilon$, as it was in $\delta\sigma\sigma\epsilon < *H_3ek^w\iota H_1$ '(pair of) eyes'. However, the circumflex ending of $\kappa\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\iota$ 'he may order', where the accent was not retracted to the initial syllable, points to a disyllabic ending $*-oy\bar{i}$ or $*-oi$, suggesting that the assimilation of the laryngeal was anterior to the rise of a distinction between $*i$ and $*y$. Thus, we arrive at the following relative chronology: (1) assimilation of a laryngeal before a final consonant (cluster) to a preceding (semi)vowel, (2) vocalization of the syllabic nasals and loss of final $*-t$, (3) reduction of $*-oi\bar{n}$ to $*-oi$ before a consonant, (4) rise of an opposition between $*i$ and $*y$, (5) loss of the laryngeals in antevocalic and intervocalic position.

The laryngeals of $*H_1i-$ and $*dhH_1-$ were lost after the vocalization of the following $*i$, cf. especially $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\omicron\nu < *H_1e-pH_3i\omicron m$ 'I drank'.⁴ In intervocalic position, the laryngeals were retained longer than elsewhere, as is clear from the circumflex tone which reflects the original disyllabic character of the resulting long vowels and diphthongs. This leads us to the following reconstruction of Proto-Greek paradigms

² Prof Ruijgh draws my attention to $\gamma\lambda\omega\chi\iota\varsigma$ 'point', which is based on the original acc sg form $*glokhin$ of $\gamma\lambda\acute{\omega}\sigma\sigma\alpha < *iH_2$ 'tongue'.

³ The e grade of $\delta\epsilon\alpha\tau\omicron$ 'he seemed' suggests that this form represents an original stative $*deuH_2\omicron$, cf. $\kappa\epsilon\bar{\iota}\tau\alpha\iota$ 'he lies', $\alpha\rho\epsilon\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota$ 'he hangs', 3rd pl $*deiH_2\epsilon\bar{n}\tau\omicron$ (replacing earlier $*ro$), cf. Hittite $k\bar{r}i\bar{t}a(r\bar{i})$ 'he lies', $k\bar{v}y\bar{a}n\bar{t}a(r\bar{i})$ 'they lie'. The 3rd pl ending $*\epsilon\bar{n}\tau\omicron$ was regular in the middle root aorist, e.g. Skt $k\bar{r}a\bar{n}t\bar{a}$ 'they made', $r\bar{a}n\bar{t}\bar{a}$ 'they went' (cf. Kortlandt 1987: 220), also $\vartheta\epsilon\bar{n}\tau\omicron < *dhH_1\epsilon\bar{n}\tau\omicron$ 'they put'.

⁴ Cf. also $*i\alpha < *sH_2ieH_2$ 'strap' (Ruijgh 1967: 205) and $\delta\gamma\iota\eta\varsigma < *g^wH_3ies$ 'healthy', $\beta\iota\omicron\varsigma < *g^w\iota H_3\omicron s < *g^wH_3i\upsilon\omicron s$ 'life', $\acute{\epsilon}\beta\iota\omega\bar{n} < *g^w\iota H_3eH_1m < *g^wH_3iueH_1m$ 'I lived' (cf. SCr $z\bar{i}v\bar{y}e\bar{t}$, OPr $g\bar{w}i\bar{t}$), $\beta\epsilon\omicron\mu\alpha\iota < *g^w\iota H_3\omicron mH_2$ 'I will live' where the $*w$ apparently inhibited the palatalization of the preceding labiovelar. The word $\zeta\omega\omicron\varsigma < *g^w\gamma\omicron\omega\omicron s$ 'alive' and its derivatives contain a secondary full grade which replaces the original zero grade of $*g^w\iota\omega\omicron s < *g^wH_3i\upsilon\omicron s$, Skt $g\bar{i}v\bar{a}s$, where the Balto-Slavic and Celtic evidence shows that the laryngeal preceded the $*i$, e.g. Latvian $dz\bar{v}vs$ (with broken tone reflecting preservation of final stress), Welsh $by\bar{w}$ (with a short root vowel), cf. Kortlandt 1975, Appendix C. The verb $\lambda\omicron\epsilon\omega < *loweso$ adopted the root vowel of $\lambda\omicron\omega < *lowo$ 'I wash', which replaces athematic $*loumi < *leH_3umi$, where the phonetic loss of $*H_3$ before $*u$ in such forms as 3rd pl $*iH_3u\epsilon\bar{n}\tau\omicron$ led to confusion with the paradigm of $\lambda\omega\omega$ 'I loosen'. The root vowel of $\lambda\omega\omega$ cannot represent a vocalized laryngeal because in that case there would be no motivation for the rise of the secondary full grade which is attested in Myc $rew\bar{v}o\bar{r}o\bar{k}o\bar{w}o$, metathesized in Hom $\lambda\omicron\epsilon\tau\rho\chi\omicron\omicron\varsigma$ 'bath-pourer'. The rise of $*lewo$ may be due to the influence of the quasi-synonymous root $*khew$ 'pour', as Prof Ruijgh suggests to me. Note that $\tau\alpha\nu\alpha\omicron\varsigma < *tnH_2\epsilon\upsilon\omicron s$ and $\Pi\lambda\alpha\tau\alpha\iota\alpha < *pl\bar{i}H_2\epsilon\upsilon\bar{i}H_2$ are no counter-examples to the loss of a laryngeal before a vocalized semivowel, cf. also Breton $\bar{t}a\bar{n}a\bar{w}o\bar{s} < *tanawos$ 'thin'.

sg.	1st	-sīn	-oīya	iyēn	thiēn
	2nd	-sīs	-ois	iyēs	thiēs
	3rd	-sī	-oī	iyē	thiē
pl.	1st	-sīme	-oīme	īīme	thīīme
	2nd	-sīte	-oīte	īīte	thīīte
	3rd	-sīn	-oīya(n)	eyīn	theīn

The disyllabic character of **theīn* is still preserved in τῖθεῖεν < **tītheī-en* 'they may put', where the accent was not retracted to the initial syllable, cf. δύναιο, δύναισθε 'you may be able', which replace earlier **dunīso*, **dunīsthe*.

4. The 3rd pl. ending **-sīn*, which was homophonous with 1st sg. **-sīn*, was now replaced by **-seīn* on the analogy of **theīn*, the ending of which was also found in the passive aorist and in the paradigm of ἴημι 'let go'. This is the origin of the Aeolic optative.

The ending **-seīn* was subsequently replaced by **-seīyan* on the analogy of the thematic ending **-oīyan*. This replacement accounts for the retraction of the accent in λύσειαν 'they may loosen' in accordance with the limitation law, as compared with τῖθεῖεν. The ending **-seīyan* then gave rise to the 3rd sg. ending **-seīye* on the analogy of the indicative, cf. ἔλυσε, ἔλυσαν 'he, they loosened', also 2nd sg. **-seīyas*. In the 1st and 2nd pl. forms, however, the model of ἐλύσαμεν, ἐλύσατε yielded λύσαιμεν, λύσαιτε on the analogy of the thematic endings. The latter analogy did not work in the 3rd sg. form, where the indicative ending was -ε. Thus, the distribution of -αι- and -ει- is ultimately based on the spread of **-ei-* from the 3rd pl. form on the one hand and the absence of -α- from the 3rd sg. indicative form on the other.

In the thematic flexion, the isolated 1st sg. ending **-ya* was replaced by the usual athematic ending **-mi*, e.g. λύοιμι 'I may loosen', which then gave rise to the analogical form λύσαιμι. The substitution of -εν for **-an* in the 3rd pl. ending must have taken place at a time when **-en* < **-ent* had not yet been replaced by -ον, -αν or -σαν in the indicative, as in Hom. ζεύγνυον, ζεύγνυσαν 'they yoked', ἦιον 'they went', Skt. *āyan* < **-H₁ient*.

In the original paradigm with mobile stress, the full grade of the 3rd pl. form spread to the other forms of the paradigm, e.g. τῖθειης, τῖθειτε < **tītheiyēs*, **tītheīte* 'you may put'. This development is analogous to the rise of Skt. *dheyām*. The 3rd pl. ending **-īn* was replaced by **-īyen* on the basis of the indicative paradigm, e.g. τῖθεῖεν < **tītheīyen*, also Delphi περιειεν < **-i-eīyen* 'they may go round', Hom. ἰείη < **i-eīyē* 'he may go'. Similarly, εἰδέειη, εἰδέειεν < **weideiyē*, **weideīyen* 'he, they may know' represent **widieH₁t* (Skt. *vidyāt*), **weidiH₁nt* (with original full grade in the root) plus **-eī-* from **theīn* and 3rd pl. -εν < **-ent*.

The Cretan forms δικακσιε 'he may judge', κοσμησιε 'he may arrange' (Dreros), Φερκσιεν 'they may perform', διαλυσιαν 'they may dissolve' (Gortyn) are apparently built on the zero grade of the suffix **-s-iH₁-*. It is highly improbable that the singular forms represent **-yē-* because there is no trace of the full grade suffix in the sigmatic aorist, which had fixed stress from the outset. These forms rather represent a variety of the Aeolic optative with generalization of the zero grade **-ī-* instead of the 3rd pl. vocalism **-eī-*. The endings -σιε, -σιαν suggest that

we have to reconstruct a real Aeolic optative (-σειε, -σειαν) with *-i- not yet replaced by -αι- in the 1st and 2nd person forms and subsequently generalized throughout the paradigm. The form *Ἐερκσειεν* adopted -εν from the other optative paradigms, and the eventual substitution of -αι- for *-i- is clear from the forms *Ἐερκσαι* 'he may perform', *ρηκσαιεν* 'they may break' (Gortyn). It appears that Cretan lagged behind in a development of the optative which was the same as in the other dialects.

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