A critical review and comparison of two new, posthumously published, Odyssey-editions

Revisão crítica e comparativa de duas novas edições da Odisseia

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Abstract

In this article, I will compare two new, posthumously published, *Odyssey*-editions, that by Martin West (2017) and Helmut Van Thiel (2021). I cannot delve into every issue in detail (discussing every linguistic peculiarity underlying each editorial choice would be tantamount to rewriting the *Grammaire homérique* or to reediting the text myself), nor is it possible to reference each and every work on the problems discussed here. I therefore only sparingly refer to other works and editions (there are obviously also other useful editions, commentaries, articles and grammars dealing with (epic) Greek, but citing them all would make the article surpass the acceptable limits). I first summarise both editors' guiding principles, make some general observations on the differences between the editions, and then discuss some differing passages in more detail: the augment and more specifically its absence or presence, 1 instance of a verse that was missing and/or added (depending on the standpoint one takes) in the manuscripts, 3 instances in which 2 different metrically equivalent speech introduction formulae were both attested in

the manuscripts, 2 observations on how the oldest alphabet could have influenced or obscured the exact mood or aspect, a passage in which one verb form was twice attested both in the aorist and in the imperfect, 2 instances in which two different moods were transmitted and that could shed some noteworthy new light on the historical syntax of Greek (and in which West and Van Thiel differed), and finally 2 passages in which the modal particle was used in a rather unexpected manner.[1]

Keywords: textual criticism, Homeric Greek, historical morpho-syntax of the Greek verb.

Resumo

Neste artigo estabelece-se uma comparação entre duas edições da *Odisseia* publicadas por Martin West (2017) e Helmut Van Thiel (2021). Ciente da impossibilidade de tratar cada questão de forma detalhada (discutir cada peculiaridade linguística ou salientar cada opção editorial poderia redundar numa tentativa de reescrever a *Grammaire homérique* ou de reeditar o próprio texto homérico), reconheço também a inviabilidade de concitar toda a produção bibliográfica existente. Assim, abordarei parcimoniosamente alguns trabalhos e edições, sabendo, porém, que existem outras edições, comentários, artigos e gramáticas consignados ao épico grego. No entanto, ao trazê-los à colação arriscaria tornar este artigo demasiado extenso.

Num primeiro momento, sintetizo os critérios editoriais que pautam as duas edições, teço algumas observações gerais sobre aquilo que as distingue e discuto um conjunto seletivo de passagens divergentes mais pormenorizadamente: o caso de um verso que estava em falta e/ou foi acrescentado (dependendo da decisão tomada) nos manuscritos; três casos nos quais a introdução de duas expressões metricamente equivalentes foram atestadas nos manuscritos; duas observações que incidem sobre o modo através do qual o alfabeto mais antigo pode ter influenciado ou tornado opaco o modo ou o aspeto; uma passagem em que uma forma verbal foi atestada duas vezes tanto no aoristo quanto no imperfeito; dois casos em que se transmitiram dois modos diferentes, que poderiam lançar nova luz sobre a sintaxe histórica do grego (ponto em que West e Van Thiel divergiram) e, por fim, duas passagens nas quais a partícula modal foi usada de uma maneira um tanto ou quanto inesperada.

Palavras-chave: crítica textual, Grego homérico, morfossintaxe histórica do verbo grego.

1. General editorial principles regarding metre and morphology

Van Thiel refrained from changing the text to introduce older and "more correct" linguistic forms and ascribed much more weight to the transmission and the readings of the papyri and the majority of the manuscripts. In his opinion the ultimate goal of the editor should be to reconstruct the oldest written text as we might have and not the most accurate and linguistically archaic version:[2] "Und die erste Niederschrift, *nicht eine sprachgeschichtlich erschlossene Form*, ist der früheste Text, der in einer kritischen Ausgabe bestenfalls rekonstruiert werden kann".[3] He also pointed out that the transmission was often irregular and could sometimes display different variants in similar passages. He decided not to mark these variations in every instance, nor when the variants were due to obvious errors in the transmission.[4] In deciding on which variant to choose the deciding factors for him were the quality and the number of the manuscripts and papyri, and not so much the metrical and grammatical rules. To this he added that he refrained from unifying a variant in each instance: if a certain formula had an augmented form in passage A, but in passage B most codices had the unaugmented variant (or vice versa), he would decide on a case by case basis. Noteworthy is also his approach towards the Alexandrinian scholars Aristarkhos, Aristophanes of Byzantion and Zenodotos: he did not consider their editions and comments as evidence of lost textual editions and traditions, but as modern scholars whose conjectures have to be tested against the transmitted text. Finally, he decided to leave out variants in the apparatus if they were, in his opinion, the fruit of clear errors, but he also stated that he would not quote what he called *common orthographic fluctuations*, and although the existence of these variants could have implications for the evolution of the epic language, such as the attestations of aorist subjunctive and future indicative or short-vowel subjunctive, he considered these alternations to be the product of chance: "I also do not note other common orthographic fluctuations that could possibly have grammatical significance, *but which as a rule are purely coincidental.*"[5]

The problems with West's *Odyssey* edition are (unfortunately) the same as that of the *Iliad*, and although I do not want to dwell on the

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[2] Van Thiel 2021: ix, xxvii.

[3] Van Thiel 2021: ix (highlighting is mine).

[4] Van Thiel 2021: xxxii-xxxiii.

[5] Van Thiel 2021: xxxii-xxxiii (highlighting is mine).

polemics that that edition caused, I would nevertheless like to point out several shortcomings and/or inconsistencies. West[6] started his book by stating that in his opinion the *Odyssey* could have been composed in Attika or Euboia, and that for that reason many Atticisms (or forms analysed as such) should not be removed from the text, for they could very well be genuine after all. In reality, however, there are nevertheless some significant differences between West's editorial approach and his actual textual choices he changed κρείσσων into κρέσσων (this might seem irrelevant, as the alphabet in which the text was written down dated from before 403/2 BC and did not yet distinguish between H, E and the spurious diphthong EI). The same applies to the accentuation, but as accents were probably only introduced by Aristophanes in II BC, I leave the issue out of the discussion here (but there is no reason to deviate from the accentuation of the majority of the manuscripts).

A second issue involves the contractions. Although some of the contractions are metrically guaranteed and thus to be accepted as part of the epic language (which West admitted himself,[7] — an example is μετεφώνει in 18,35 where the metre only allows the contracted form, against the uncontracted μετεφώνεε in 8,201),[8] West nevertheless decided to "uncontract" forms from the nominal and verbal contraction, whenever possible: he changed the diphthong -ευ- as a result of a contraction into -εο- when the metre allowed it and the diphthongs -ευ# and -ει# into -ε' and -ε', when they were the result of contractions and were shortened in hiatus. Occasionally this even created the co-occurrence of an elision and a caesura, something he himself (1982: 10,36) considered rare (though not impossible). Sometimes, he even inserted the elision of a short diphthong before a caesura, as in *Odyssey* 1,254 where he changed, following Payne Knight,[9] the transmitted δεύη into the uncontracted δεύε' with elision of -αι, which is even rarer than an elision at a caesura. At the same time, however, West did not rewrite the instances of the so-called *diekstasis*, which is the "decontraction" of contracted forms with the short variant of

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[6] West 2017: vii.

[7] West 2017: xvii.

[8] La Roche 1869: 19, 97-98; Hackstein 2011: 31, 40; Wachter 2012: 72; Monro 1891: 55, and Chantraine 1948: 39-40 discussed the metrical necessity to use contracted forms and accepted their existence as well, but did not discuss this specific instance.

[9] West 2017: 13, following Payne Knight 1820: 298.

the long contracted vowel or spurious diphthong preceding it:[10] in the epic texts we find the contracted form of the type ὁρῶσι, but also the form with *diekstasis* ὁρόωσι in which the contracted -ω- (from -άουσι) is preceded by a short -o-. At the same time, however, uncontracted forms such as ναιετάουσα are also transmitted. While some editors decided to remove all these instances and restore the uncontracted forms, West did not, which is the right course of action in my opinion, but somewhat contradictory given the fact that he decided to "decontract" other contracted forms (in my opinion the existence of *diekstasis* proves that the contracted forms were already part of the language of the poets at the time of the creation of the poems).

A third problem is the ablaut of the verbal forms. West consistently restored the *e*-grade in the sigmatic aorist forms of verbs such as (ἀν) οίγνυμι, φθίνω, τίνω and μείγνυμι, writing ἀνόειξε, ὤειξε, ἔφθεισα, ἔτεισα and ἔμειξα, against the transmitted ἀνέῳξε, ὤιξε, ἔφθισα, ἔτισα and ἔμιξα. From a comparative standpoint these forms are indeed the oldest, but it cannot be ruled out that during a (possibly even quite early) stage of the language secondary ablaut and/or an analogical restoration (or extension) of the vocalism of the present stem occurred. A possible parallel is the perfect form πέφευγα with the vocalism -ευ- from the present φεύγω. If one were consistent in reconstructing the oldest ablaut paradigms, one would have to change πέφευγα into *πέφουγα (which would have been the expected form, if we assume that the active perfect had the *o*-grade in the singular), and yet this change has not been suggested. In this respect, Van Thiel's decision to preserve the transmitted text is much more laudable.[11]

A fourth issue is the ending in -ῃσι: in the third person singular subjunctive ending West[12] changed the transmitted -ῃσι into -ησι because of the presence of the ending -ησι in the Nestor Cup (VIII BC), but the transmitted ending can be defended, when one assumes that the original ending was -ῃ (via Kiparsky-Rix's Law),[13] and later recharacterised by the ending -σι for the third person (a similar evolution can be seen in the

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[10] I cannot address the possible origin(s) of this phenomenon here, as that would require an article on its own. See Wackernagel (1878: 259-276), Monro 1891: 51-54 and Schwyzer 1939: 104-10 (with bibliography on the matter) for a critical survey of the different suggestions, and a synthesis in Chantraine & Casevitz 2013: 77-84.

[11] Van Thiel 2021: xxvii.

[12] West 1998: xxx.

[13] Kiparsky 1967 argued that the third person singular ending -ει regularly continued the PIE *-*eti*. See also Rix 1992: 251.

second person ending -ησθα, a combination from -ης and -(σ)θα, which West left untouched).

A fifth issue involves the ending of the genitive of the o-stems. While the original ending might very well have been *-o-o*, there is very little, if any, direct evidence for this ending in the manuscripts (to my knowledge this ending has never been transmitted in any of the manuscripts or papyri). One should therefore be very hesitant in restoring -oo for the transmitted -oυ or even for the -ooυ when that ending is followed by two consonants.

Van Thiel's approach to all these issues is much more restrained and more faithful to the transmission, only exceptionally deviating from the readings of the manuscripts, because, as was stated already above, the first goal of an editor should be to start from the text as the manuscripts brought it to us and therefore a transmitted reading should always be preserved if it can be defended. To this approach we can only nod in agreement.

2. The augment

More thorny and controversial in both editions is the decision to print an augmented or an unaugmented verb form. Van Thiel maintained a cautious approach here, but argued that the choice should be based on the number of the manuscripts that had a specific reading and the quality of the respective manuscripts. West, however, was much more "change--prone", although sometimes deviated from his argumentation applied in the *Iliad*-edition. In his *Iliad*-edition[14] he removed it in the pluperfect form ἤδει, which he changed into εἴδει to restore the metrical effect of the digamma, but he retracted that change in his *Odyssey*-edition.[15] As ἤδει could be interpreted as a contraction of ἠείδει (a form that is in fact attested and that has the augment ἠ before the *w*-sound), it is indeed more cautious to preserve the contracted form. Reversely, he[16] reintroduced the augment in the short diphthong ευ-, arguing that, since in later Greek verbs starting with a diphthong were no longer augmented, this absence in epic Greek was unoriginal and that the augment had to be restored (he was not consistent, however, as he "forgot" to add the augment ἐπευφήμησαν in *Iliad* 1,22). This is a strange argument, because if this argument were true,

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[14] West1998: xxxiii.
[15] West 2017: xxiii.
[16] West 1998: xxvii, 2001: 30.

should one not also change βασιλεύς into βασιληύς? Similarly, he argued
that the augment needed to be added in all instances of the verb ἕλκω,
but he recanted this in his *Odyssey*-edition, removing the augments in *all*
instances.[17] For this verb, Van Thiel[18] argued against an augment in this
verb, when it occupied the position under the ictus, as overlength was to be
avoided. It seems, however, that the augment use with this verb followed
at least in the manuscripts a certain set of rules: the augment seems to be
missing at the beginning of the verse and when it was followed by a clitic.
It must be admitted that these issues do not affect the metre and that they
would not have had any effect on the earliest written version either. There
is one metrical context for which the augmented form has nevertheless
preference and that is when ἕλκε and εἷλκε both have been transmitted
and when the first syllable of the verb is not under the verse ictus. As was
shown by Meillet, a syllable long by position is much less common when
it is not under the ictus.[19]

    More problematic in my opinion are the editorial choices (only a
selection) by West and Van Thiel to prefer

    the unaugmented ὅσσον τε γέγωνε over ὅσσον τ' ἐγέγωνε in *Odyssey*
5,400 and 9,473, although the unaugmented form violates Hermann's Bridge
(γέγωνε is a thematic pluperfect form here and not a perfect); moreover,
neither even mentioned the augmented variants in the apparatus; [20]
    the unaugmented καὶ μύθοισι κέκαστο in 7,157 over the variant
καὶ μύθοις ἐκέκαστο,[21] as the unaugmented καὶ μύθοισι κέκαστο violates
Meyer's First Law (this law states that a word starting in the first foot of
the hexameter should not end at the trochee of the second foot - enclitics
count as part of the preceding word), the augmented variant is correct;

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[17] West 2017: xx.

[18] Van Thiel 2021: xxvi.

[19] Meillet (1910: 43). This is also visible in the metrical bridges of Gerhard-Hilberg-
-Meyer, which state that a word that starts in the first foot of the hexameter should not end
at the end of the second foot with a spondee that has the second long half foot with position
length and that of Gerhard-Wernicke, which state that the fourth foot should not have word
end with a word that ends in a syllable long by position.

[20] For *Odyssey* 5,400, see West (2017: 116), Van Thiel (2021: 75) and for 9,473, West
(2017: 196), Van Thiel (2021: 125). For the variants see Ludwich 1889: 125 for 5,400 and
page 216 for 9,473.

[21] West 2017: 142, Van Thiel (2021: 91 - he did not even mention the unaugmented
variant in the apparatus).

the unaugmented θήλειαι δὲ μέμηκον in 9,439 over the augmented θήλειαι δ᾿ ἐμέμηκον,[22] which is attested in most manuscripts have and does not violate Meyer's First Law;

the augmented form κῦμ᾿ ἐκάλυψεν in 5,435 over the (also transmitted) unaugmented κῦμα κάλυψε,[23] in spite of the fact that the augmented form violates Meyer's Third Law (this law states that there should not be word end at the positions 3a and 5a in the same hexameter).

3. Variant formulae transmitted in the same context

In two instances both ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα and ἔπεα πτερόεντ᾿ ἀγόρευε(ν) have been transmitted, and in one case ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων and ἔπεα πτερόεντ᾿ ἀγόρευον. Both editors opted for the instances with ἀγόρευε(ν) and ἀγόρευον.[24]

τοῦ ὅ γ᾿ ἐπιμνησθεὶς ἔπεα πτερόεντ᾿ ἀγόρευεν / ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα: (*Odyssey* 4,189).
Remembering him, he spoke winged words:
ἀγχοῦ δ᾿ ἱστάμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντ᾿ ἀγόρευε / ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα: (*Odyssey* 17,349).
Standing close, he spoke winged words:

and in the plural

οἱ δ᾿ ἀπαμειβόμενοι ἔπεα πτερόεντ᾿ ἀγόρευον / ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων: (*Odyssey* 9,409).
They answered and spoke winged words:

At first sight one would be inclined to say that, since the formulae ἔπεα πτερόεντ᾿ ἀγόρευεν and ἔπεα πτερόεντ᾿ ἀγόρευον violate Meyer's Third Law, mentioned above, ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα and ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων would be preferred, but upon closer inspection the issue is not that straightforward.[25] In the first two instances, the formula ἔπεα πτερόεντα

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[22] West 2017: 194, Van Thiel 2021: 124.

[23] West 2017: 118, Van Thiel 2021: 76.

[24] West 2017: 70, 193, 366 and Van Thiel 2021: 45, 123, 239.

[25] For a detailed comparison between these formulae see Kelly 2007: 144 and De Decker 2015: 140-141.

προσηύδα has indeed preference, because (1) the other formula violates Meyer's Third Law, (2) at the end of the verse a word with the form ◡ – ◡ or ◡ – – was preferred (a rule that was already known to Aristarkhos), (3) προσηύδα is an older (and probably Aeolic) verb form and (4) ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευεν is also used to address large groups, which ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα can never do. As such, ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα has preference in my opinion. For ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων the situation is different. First, προσηύδων is a younger creation based on the reinterpretation of προσηύδα as a contracted imperfect form from the -αω-type and not as an athematic Aeolic verb form.[26] Second, ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων is only attested once (as 3rd person plural form) besides the instance here (*Odyssey* 10,418). As ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα was never used in a speech conclusion and never with large groups (which compounds with προσ- never do), another formula had to be used in those instances and that was ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευε(ν) and in the plural ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευον, which had the notion of "speaking in the assembly". Given that ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευεν and ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα were metrically equivalent, and since προσηύδα was reinterpreted as a contract imperfect, a new imperfect προσηύδων and a formula ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων was created. Taking into account the differences between these two formulae,[27] I would therefore agree with West and Van Thiel in their choice for ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευον, but would prefer ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα in the two other instances.

4. Missing or added verses

In several passages some manuscripts attest a verse that could seem superfluous and/or the product of a later addition, but which is not entirely out of place could be explained. This is often the case for speech introductions, especially when the *verbum dicendi* introducing the speech is not a genuine *verbum dicendi*, but one of the more conspicuous types, such as a *verbum inhibendi, monstrandi* or even a *verbum affectuum*. I discuss one instance.

(111) ἡδὺ γελώοντες καὶ δεικανόωντ' ἐπέεσσι:
(111a) ὧδε δέ τις εἴπεσκε νέων ὑπερηνορεόντων: (*Odyssey* 18,111-111a).

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[26] Schwyzer (1939: 740), Chantraine (1948: 356). The alleged Aeolic inflection of the *verba contracta* cannot be discussed in this short article.

[27] Kelly 2007: 144, De Decker 2015: 140-141.

Laughing sweetly, they greeted him with words and so one of the arrogant
youngsters would say:

These two lines describe the introduction to the laudatory and jubilant
speeches by the suitors addressed to Odysseus after he had knocked down
the beggar Iros in the battle of the beggars in Book 18. It has been argued
that verse 111a is unnecessary in the context, because the verb δεικανόωντ᾽
already marked the introduction and assume that verse 111a has been added by
one or more copyists.[28] West did not print it,[29] while Van Thiel accepted it.[30] I
agree with Van Thiel because (a) the use of so-called "double introductions"
(the use of two or more *verba dicendi* in one single introduction) is very
common in Homer,[31] (b) that especially in case of speech introductions with
a verb in the plural and a verb that is not a *verbum dicendi sensu stricto* or a
verbum affectuum a verse such as ὧδε δέ τις εἴπεσκε νέων ὑπερηνορεόντων
or ὧδε δέ τις εἴπεσκεν ἰδὼν εἰς οὐρανὸν εὐρύν is often attested: examples
are *Iliad* 7,200-201 and *Odyssey* 2,323-325, 4,768-769, 13,165-167, 17,481-
482, 18,71-72, 18,399-400, 21,360-361, and (c) that the speech conclusion
of speech introductions in the plural is also often (but not always) ὣς ἄρα
τις εἴπεσκε … ("And so one would have spoken"), so that the appearance
of an introduction with a single verb form following one with a verb form
in the plural here should not raise suspicion.[32]

5. Aspect and mood related to the (oldest) alphabet

The choice of printing one form or the other is often based on mor-
phological and syntactic arguments, but in some instances the alphabet also
plays a role. One of those issues is the existence of short vowel subjunctive
forms for the present subjunctive of the thematic verbs. While the subjunc-
tive forms with a short vowel are accepted for the sigmatic and thematic

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[28] Russo, Fernández-Galiano & Heubeck 1992: 53.

[29] West 2017: 381.

[30] Van Thiel 2021: xxxi, 250.

[31] The term "double introduction" is used to refer to those introductions, in which a
finite form of a verb of speaking is combined with a finite verb form of another verb of
speaking, answering, shouting, insulting, restraining or any type of *verba affectuum*. In most
cases, there was initially a semantic difference, but gradually it disappeared and in many
introductions the distinction was no longer discernible (Heubeck & Hoekstra 1989: 162).

[32] For this use, see De Decker 2022: 45-49, 138-139, 309-312.

aorists and for the present subjunctives of the athematic verbs, there is no agreement on this for the thematic forms.[33] One of such forms is ναυτίλλεται, 4,672 - printed by Van Thiel,[34] for which West printed ναυτίλεται, the subjunctive aorist to remove the short vowel subjunctive form of the thematic conjugation, although the present form suits the context more.[35] Elsewhere, in *Iliad* 1,67, West had acted in a similar manner, removing βούλεται and changing it into βούλητ', a conjecture by Payne Knight.[36] The change is in my opinion unnecessary, as one could also assume an analogical levelling in two directions for epic Greek: just as athematic verb forms could take the long vowel subjunctive forms from the thematic ones, thematic verbs could take the short vowel from the athematic and the sigmatic aorist forms. Moreover, when we decide to change the transmitted short-vowel present subjunctives of the thematic verbs, we remove a linguistic peculiarity from the text. One could state that this discussion is irrelevant, as Homer would have written ΝΑΥΤΙΛΕΤΑΙ with one Λ anyway.

The difference between subjunctive and optative forms is often difficult to make and especially in the forms of the root aorist and the passive aorists (both in -θην and in -ην) some subjunctive and optative forms have the same metrical form and would have been written (almost) the same in the old alphabet, examples are θείη and θήη, δοίη and δώη or φανείη and φανήη. While it makes no metrical difference, the choice should be based on semantic and syntactic criteria.

6. Aspect choices without influence of the alphabet

In one passage we find a verb form that appears twice and, in both instances, it is transmitted in the imperfect and in the aorist.

(434) τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε γυνὴ καὶ ἀμείβετο / ἀμείψατο μύθῳ·
(435) εἴη κεν καὶ τοῦτ', εἴ μοι ἐθέλοιτέ γε, ναῦται,

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[33] The grammars by Monro 1891: 71, and Chantraine 1948: 454-458, 1964: 259, de facto denied the existence of short vowel subjunctive forms in the present thematic stem; also Rix (1992: 230) limited short vowel subjunctive forms to athematic primary stems and non-Attic non-present forms. Brugmann 1900: 333 and Schwyzer 1939: 790-791 discussed the problem and previous scholarship on the issue, but did not take a stance themselves.

[34] Van Thiel 2021: 58.

[35] West 2017: 91.

[36] West 1998: 8 based on Payne Knight 1820: 69.

(436) ὅρκῳ πιστωθῆναι ἀπήμονά μ' οἴκαδ' ἀπάξειν.
(437) ὣς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀπώμνυον ὡς ἐκέλευεν.
(438) αὐτὰρ ἐπεί ῥ' ὅμοσάν τε τελεύτησάν τε τὸν ὅρκον,
(439) τοῖς δ' αὖτις μετέειπε γυνὴ καὶ ἀμείβετο / ἀμείψατο μύθῳ: (*Odyssey* 15,434-439).

The woman addressed him and spoke back with a word: "That could happen, if you, sailors, were willing to swear an oath that you will bring me home unharmed. she spoke so and they swore as she had asked. When they had sworn and finished the oath, she addressed the group and spoke back with a word:

This passage is taken from Eumaios' account of his own life. When asked by Odysseus (disguised as a beggar) how he (E) became a servant in Laertes' and Odysseus' courtyard, Eumaios explained how he was taken by a Phoenician servant woman who abducted him from his father's house. That woman was beguiled by Phoenician merchants to do so and the lines here describe how she engaged in a conversation with those merchants, telling them that she will do what they asked for, but that she requests they swear that they will leave her unharmed and guarantee that she can in fact return home safely. Both introductions are so-called "double introductions" and in both instances the imperfect ἀμείβετο and the aorist ἀμείψατο have been transmitted. The aorist ἀμείψατο is rare (it is only attested twice, unaugmented in in *Iliad* 4,403 and augmented 23,542) and noting that there was no difference between the aorist and the imperfect, Riggsby therefore suggested to amend the form ἀμείψατο in *Iliad* 4,403 into the imperfect ἀμείβετο (he did not discuss the augmented ἠμείψατ' in *Iliad* 23,542).[37] In my opinion, however, there *is* a difference: the aorist of this verb is used when the character was immediately rebuked.[38] When we take a closer look at the aorist instances in the *Iliad*, we note that in *Iliad* 4,403 Sthenelos verbally attacks Agamemnon, but is rebuked by Diomedes, while in *Iliad* 23,542 Antilokhos voiced his protests against Akhilleus' decision to grant the price for the chariot race to Menelaos. Both Sthenelos and Antilokhos are relatively minor characters, do not appear often and are never involved in long conversations. The use of the aorist confirms the finiteness of their interventions. Building on this, we can address the issue of the aorist and imperfect in this passage too. As these lines are the only ones where the

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[37] Riggsby 1992: 107.
[38] See De Decker 2015: 204-205, but the variants of this passage were not discussed there.

Phoenician servant-woman appeared, an imperfect seems less suited and I would therefore, against both editors,[39] opt for the aorist form.[40] A reviewer asked if additional examples of such uses of the aorist could be found but the two examples quoted above and the two disputed forms, occurring in the same passage, are the only aorist forms attested in speech introductions with this verb. This rare use is an additional element in favour of printing the aorist forms in this passage *quia lectio difficilior potior*.

7. The use of the moods without influence of the alphabet

In this subchapter, I would address two instances in which West and Van Thiel differ in choosing between either the optative or subjunctive and the indicative, and that provide important insights into the historical syntax of (epic) Greek. I start with the instance of the optative versus the indicative.

(128) καί νύ κε δή ἐτάνυσσε / τανύσειε βίη τὸ τέταρτον ἀνέλκων,
(129) ἀλλ᾽ Ὀδυσεὺς ἀνένευε καὶ ἔσχεθεν ἱέμενόν περ. (*Odyssey* 21,128-129).

And now he would have strung the bow stretching it for the fourth time, but Odysseus nodded in disagreement and restrained him, although he would have wanted (to shoot it).

Here, both the optative τανύσειε and the indicative ἐτάνυσσε have been transmitted, but the optative (chosen by West)[41] has preference over the indicative (chosen by Van Thiel).[42] First, the use of the optative to refer to unreal contexts (with or without the notion of the past) is a syntactic archaism. Throughout the history of the Greek language, the optative was replaced by the indicative in unreal descriptions referring to the past, because the indicative was more suited to convey the past notion.[43] It is

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[39] West 2017: 328-329 and Van Thiel 2021: 213.

[40] De Decker 2022: 102-103.

[41] West 2017: 440.

[42] Van Thiel 2021: 290.

[43] See, among others, Brugmann 1900: 513-514, Chantraine & Casevitz 2015: 258-262. The issue of the optative with unreal meaning and its coexistence with the indicative in the same contexts is a complicated one and I cannot discuss it in detail here. I refer to De Decker (2021: 138-170, 2022: 389-425) for a more detailed analysis with a detailed discussion of previous scholarship.

therefore the *lectio difficilior*. Second, if we adopt the indicative ἐτάνυσσε, we would need to explain how and why it had been replaced by the optative τανύσειε during the transmission (as this use of the optative had become rare in Attic Greek and that mood gradually started dying out as of III BC, it is much more likely that a copyist would have replaced the optative by an indicative than vice versa). The reverse is much more likely, namely that the optative was replaced by an indicative, because the speakers felt that the optative did not sufficiently clearly express the notion of the past and the unreal. I now proceed to the one where the subjunctive and the indicative have both been transmitted.

δείδω μὴ δὴ πάντα θεὰ νημερτέα εἶπεν / εἴπῃ (*Odyssey* 5,300).

I fear that the goddess has told everything flawlessly.

In this line most manuscripts have the subjunctive εἴπῃ and only a few the indicative εἶπεν, but yet, with the exception of West,[44] most editors chose the indicative.[45] In my opinion the subjunctive has preference. First, it would be difficult to explain how the subjunctive could have replaced the indicative during the transmission. Second, there was a tendency in Greek (already present in Homeric Greek but much more active in Classical and Post-Classical Greek) to start using the indicative in modal contexts (in remotely possible and unreal clauses, both main and subordinate, in iterative contexts, both in main and subordinate clauses, after *verba curandi* and *verba timendi*) where there was a clear reference to the past and to avoid ambiguity as to the temporal reference, and gradually the indicative became the rule in these contexts. As such, the use of the subjunctive is a syntactic archaism. This had been suggested already by Monro,[46] arguing that the use of the indicative in these contexts was due to the tendency of Homeric and later Greek to expand the use of the (past) indicative into contexts with a past reference to avoid temporal ambiguity and that by Delbrück,[47] stating that the subjunctive was the original and normal mood in this construction, but that the indicative was used when the past meaning needed to be emphasised. Third, as the use of the subjunctive is an archaism, it is the *lectio difficilior*.

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[44] West 2017: 112.

[45] I mention only Ludwich 1891: 118 and Van Thiel 2021: 180.

[46] Monro 1891: 293-295, 324-325.

[47] Delbrück 1900: 291-292.

8. The modal particle

I now proceed to discussing two instances in which the modal was attested with an indicative in a context where we would not expect it according to the rules of Attic grammar.

(276) τίς δ' ὅδε Ναυσικάᾳ ἕπεται καλός τε μέγας τε
(277) ξεῖνος; ποῦ δέ μιν εὗρε; πόσις νύ οἱ ἔσσεται αὐτῇ.
(278) ἦ τινά που πλαγχθέντα κομίσσατο ἧς ἀπὸ νηὸς
(279) ἀνδρῶν τηλεδαπῶν, ἐπεὶ οὔ τινες ἐγγύθεν εἰσίν:
(280) ἦ τίς οἱ εὐξαμένῃ πολυάρητος θεὸς ἦλθεν
(281) οὐρανόθεν καταβάς, ἕξει δέ μιν ἤματα πάντα.
(282) βέλτερον, εἰ καὐτή / εἰ κ᾽ αὐτή / εἴ κ᾽ αὐτή περ ἐποιχομένη πόσιν εὗρεν
(283) ἄλλοθεν: ἦ γὰρ τούσδε γ᾽ ἀτιμάζει κατὰ δῆμον
(284) Φαίηκας, τοί μιν μνῶνται πολέες τε καὶ ἐσθλοί. (*Odyssey* 6,276-284).

Who is that handsome and tall stranger following Nausikaa? Where did she find him? He then will be her husband. Or has she brought home someone from the men living far from here who was wandering from his ship, since there are no men nearby (to marry)? Or has an often-beseeched god come down from the heavens to and gone to her after she prayed for it? He will have her forever. (Indeed,) it would be better if she found a husband going elsewhere. For she despises the Phaiakians among the people, who woo her in large numbers and from noble descent.

These lines are pronounced by Nausikaa who explains to Odysseus why he should not accompany her to the city. She describes an imaginary conversation between anonymous Phaiakians who would chastise her for either having prayed to a god to become her husband or for having chosen a foreign husband while spurning the local young noblemen. The problem here is the choice between the different variants, εἰ καὐτή / εἰ κ᾽ αὐτή / εἴ κ᾽ αὐτή. The occurrence of an indicative or injunctive with a modal particle in a conditional clause is extremely rare in Homer and in Greek in general. West chose the reading εἴ κ᾽ αὐτή and referred to *Iliad* 23,526 as a possible parallel passage.[48] εἴ κ᾽ αὐτή is clearly the *lectio difficilior* and contains a very rare instance of a counterfactual indicative in a conditional clause with a modal particle: as far as I could judge, this would be the only instance

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[48] West 2017: 133, with reference to Kühner & Gerth 1904: 483 and Schwyzer & Debrunner 1950: 686.

of that construction in the *Odyssey* and even if one interprets εὗρεν as hiding an older optative (εὕροι, cf. the discussion above), the preference for the modal particle is the *lectio difficilior* as this construction is still relatively uncommon. As a consequence, εἴ κ' αὐτή should have preference over καὐτή. As West correctly pointed out, there is only one example of a modal indicative with a modal particle in a conditional clause in the *Iliad,* namely *Iliad* 23,526.

The other issue where the modal particle poses problems is the one below.

(261) καὶ γὰρ Τρῶάς φασι μαχητὰς ἔμμεναι ἄνδρας,
(262) ἠμὲν ἀκοντιστὰς ἠδὲ ῥυτῆρας ὀϊστῶν
(263) ἵππων τ' ὠκυπόδων ἐπιβήτορας, οἵ κε / οἵ τε τάχιστα
(264) ἔκριναν / κρίνειαν μέγα νεῖκος ὁμοιΐου πτολέμοιο. (*Odyssey* 18,261-264).

Woman, I do not think that all the Akhaians with the well-designed shinpads will reach home unharmed. they say that the Trojans are (brave) fighters, spear-throwers, shooters of arrows and riders of swift-footed horses, which *could decide / decide / could have decided / decided* very quickly the great battlefield of the deadlocked war.

Penelope quoted here the words of Odysseus upon his departure to Troy. He stated that he doubted very much that all Akhaians would return safely, as the Trojans had a reputation of being very brave fighters, good in throwing spears and shooting arrows, and being equipped with fast horses that could decide a battle. According to all manuscripts the form ἔκριναν is constructed with a modal particle in a relative clause. The exact construction and its meaning are highly debated, as ἔκριναν could be interpreted as a gnomic aorist, a potential or a potential of the past. If it is a gnomic aorist, the presence of the modal particle poses problems, because the instances of a modal particle in a gnome are extremely rare. For that reason, Hermann and Monro proposed to read οἵ τε instead of οἵ κε,[49] which Chantraine and West adopted,[50] against Van Thiel, who accepted the transmitted text.[51] If it is a potential, the use of the indicative is unusual, and therefore Barnes suggested to correct ἔκριναν into κρίνειαν.[52] The question is whether a

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[49] Hermann 1831: 21, Monro 1891: 294.
[50] Chantraine 1953: 241, West 2017: 387.
[51] Van Thiel 2021: 254.
[52] Barnes 1711: 481.

gnomic aorist and a modal particle are in fact incompatible: if it were to be
used in a gnome, it could not have modal meaning as the gnome is stated as
a fact and as a result, the particle would have to indicate repetition. There
are similar passages, where an indicative and a modal particle co-occur (as
in *Iliad* 13,729-734 and in *Odyssey* 10,80-86, 14,56-71) in gnomic and/
or iterative contexts. A potential of the past would surprise, because at the
moment of speaking, Odysseus still assumes that the Trojan horses (in my
opinion Homer might have intended a pun on the Trojan Horse here) are
still able to decide battles in favour of the Trojans, and at the moment of
his words, Troy has not fallen yet. Ruijgh suggested to accept Monro's (sic)
correction,[53] but suspected that this instance was a contamination between a
gnomic aorist and a potential, and this explanation should deserve serious
consideration: as the constructions for the potential and counterfactual are
oscillating between optative and indicative in epic Greek, (see above), it
cannot be excluded that there would have been confusion and contamination.
In my opinion there are therefore no compelling reasons to change either
the particle or the mood.

Conclusion

When we conclude the investigation into the two editions, we find
that the main problem with West's edition is that it (too) often prefers
restoring (unattested) older linguistic forms (especially regarding the
morphology), thus deviating from what has been transmitted and at the
same these changes are not consistent, as some linguistic innovations are
corrected, whereas others are not. As far as the syntax is concerned, West
sometimes preserves noteworthy archaisms, often lost in other editions (such
as the optative and subjunctive with past tense reference). It is true that
the transmission of the Homeric poems is notoriously problematic and the
precise form and the exact date of the first written version might possibly
never be determined, but the text should always attempt to be as close
as possible to what the poet might have written. In this respect, I follow

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[53] Ruijgh 1971: 432.

Almost all scholars (including Chantraine 1953: 241, West 2017: 387 and Van Thiel
2021: 254) stated that Monro was the one who corrected it, and forgot that it was actually
Hermann who had already addressed the issue. Surprisingly enough, this correction was
not mentioned in Ludwich 1891: 168.

the editorial principles as outlined by Van Thiel. There is one important shortcoming in his edition, however, and that is in my opinion the apparatus as often variants have not been mentioned. He stated that he would not quote them if they were clearly the result of errors but especially in cases of the use of the augment, tense and/or a certain mood, it would be very beneficial having all the variants (a criticism he himself accepted but which he justified by calling the variations *purely coincidental*). In spite of this criticism and because of the overall quality of Van Thiel's edition and his cautious approach with respect to the textual transmission, his edition can be used without problems. Unfortunately, this cannot be stated as such for the edition by Martin West. Although nobody can have any doubts about Martin Litchfield West's erudition, his profound philological and linguistic knowledge of Indo-European, Homer, epic Greek and the history of the Greek language, his editorial approaches often deviate too much from what has been transmitted. Moreover, given that West's editions (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*) are used as textual basis for the new *Basel Kommentar*, it is necessary to point out that these commentaries should be used with caution and never without checking the text and apparatus as can be found in Van Thiel and Ludwich. Personally, I would advise students to use Van Thiel's *Odyssey* edition rather than the one by West.

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