

ON THE SEMANTIC INTERPRETATION OF PASSIVE IMPERATIVE SENTENCES: A CASE OF "VOLUNTARY" INTERFERENCE BETWEEN ANCIENT GREEK AND LATIN IN LATIN GRAMMARIANS

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The paper analyses passages from the works of two Latin grammarians, which in the author's opinion have been incorrectly analysed by modern linguists and historians of Latin. Both logical lucubration and interlinguistic comparison with Greek mark the *ductus* of argumentations of Latin grammarians in these passages: in their opinion, an exhortative sentence like *aperta sit porta* could be compared with a Greek construction like ἡνεώχθω ἡ πύλη, in which the verbal form really is a passive perfect imperative. *Aperta sit*, on the other hand, was a perfect subjunctive, which in the sentence *aperta sit porta* should actually mean "*let the door have been opened*", since the perfect meant the past in Latin, while in Greek the perfect imperative meant the command of speaker that an action be brought to an end. To solve this problem, Latin grammarians used pseudo-logical argumentations. We recognize in the form *aperta sit*, which has been variously explained by grammarians, a neo-formation of the passive present subjunctive, for in Late Latin the synthetic forms of the passive diathesis such as **aperiatur* had been substituted by analytic same such as *aperta sit* on account of the phenomenon called "*Tempusverschlebung* of Passive Diathesis".

I. THE LINGUISTIC DATA: THE EVIDENCE OF LATIN GRAMMARIANS.

Although ancient Latin and Greek grammarians can hardly be evaluated by the same criteria as modern linguists, they possessed, nevertheless, great expertise and skill in their own languages. This is particularly true as regards logic, Aristotle having established a rigorous system¹ which, however, actually predated him considerably, starting with Pre-Socratic philosophers.

It is an established fact that Latin grammarians of the Imperial Age – those who worked in the period going from the 1st to the 6th century

A.D. – considered their Greek predecessors, especially the Alexandrians (Coseriu, 1969, ch. 11: 113-122; Frede, 1977, 1978), as an absolute model, and, receiving linguistic ideas and theories from their Greek teachers, almost inevitably ended up by seeing particular features of the Greek language in their own. This, however, is an “ethnocentric trap” which a number of modern linguists have also fallen into.²

The main problem for Latin grammarians was both translating Greek concepts and suitably adapting them to Latin, thereby forcing explanations which were exhaustive for a specific linguistic structure – or for a part of it –, and transferring them concisely to another. An example of this is the interpretation of the Neo-Latin form for the analytic passive present, e.g. **amatus est*, that is “he is loved”, instead of the synthetic form with the identical meaning *amatur*, the normative form in Classical Latin; in fact, in Classical Latin, the normative form *amatus est* had the function to indicate both the perfect aspect and the preterit tense, that is “he has been loved” and “he was loved”.

This last fact involved some semantic difficulty, since the perfect, which in proto-Indo-European had the point of temporal reference in the present (Szemerényi, 1970, ch. IX, §. 4.3. d): 274-275; ch. IX, §. 4.4.5: 286-288), basically means the *state acquired in the present of an action completed in the past*, and therefore contains in itself two temporal values. In Latin the problem arose when one wanted to distinguish the aspectual factor of the perfect from the bare temporal meaning of the preterit, Latin no longer possessing a form like, e. g., the Greek aorist, since in the prehistoric period it had merged with the perfect (Ernout, 1953³, §. 267: 187; §. 285: 197-198; Pisani, 1950, §. 503: 267-268; §. 510: 271-272).

To solve this problem, a process occurred called *Tempusverschiebung* of the Passive Diathesis in Late Latin (Väänänen, 1967,³ §. 298: 137-138): practically, the status of affairs in Classical Latin middle-passive perfect form was that of Table 1., whereas in the Late Latin system there was a new state of affairs (De Martino, 1995, §. VII: 282-306), Table 2.

	PERFECTUM						PRAETERITUM				
	<i>ama</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-us</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>-t</i>	=	<i>ama</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-us</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>-t</i>
ASPECT:	[perfect]		Ø				[perfect]		Ø		
TENSE:	Ø		[present]			↔ ≠	[past]		Ø		

Table 1. Localization of aspect-temporal features in middle-passive perfect indicative form in Classical Latin.

	PRAESENS					PRAETERITUM				
	<i>ama</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-us</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>-t</i> ↔ ≠	<i>ama</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-us</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>-it</i>
ASPECT:		Ø		Ø			Ø		Ø	
TENSE:		Ø		[present]			Ø		[past]	

Table 2. Localization of aspect-temporal features in middle-passive perfect indicative form in Late Latin.

As may be noticed, there was the “maximal differentiation” (Martinet, 1955, §. 2.30: 62) of distinctive features, even if this happened to the detriment of the aspectual characteristic [perfect] (Väänänen, 1967³ *loc.cit.*; Lausberg, 1956, §. 864-865: 224-226). Historical linguists are well aware that this change did not happen all at once, with the disappearance of the old form and the immediate substitution of the new one; it is normal in the evolution of languages that the old forms continue to co-exist with the new ones, even for a considerable period. There is the possibility, that is, of a “diasystem” (Weinreich, 1953, ch. 4.7: 106-110) in which the different morphemes can be marked by sociolinguistic features (Labov, 1973, ch. 9: 260-325) and so on, (see Fig. 1 where 1 stands for the Classical Latin System and 2 for the Late Latin System).

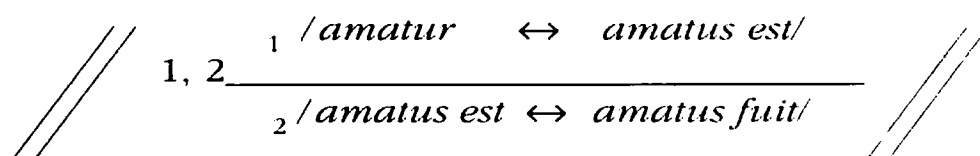


Fig. 1. Diasystem as regards the middle-passive diathesis in Late Latin.

At this stage, the problem was that the same form was performing two functions, which, in this specific case, were used to express a temporal opposition, that is / [present] ↔ [past] /: that means that “neutralization” (Trubetzkoy, 1939, ch. III. §. 2 B: 70 ff.; Martinet, 1968) could occur in the middle-passive diathesis, with considerable repercussions on the whole Latin verbal system (De Martino, 1995, §. IV. 2.: 225).

Unfortunately, Latin grammarians, while having a remarkable *Sprachgeföhle*, were not conscious of changes in their own language: or, at least, they attempted to force the mass of data available from contemporary Latin speech acts within the framework of the Classical system, with easily-imaginable consequences.

I would like briefly to examine a particularly thorny problem for which Latin grammarians found a most ingenious *quasi*-solution. This is

far from being a mere *kuriosum*, revealing, I believe, a considerable amount of information about the semantic patterns of Latin which could be of some use to scholars of synchronic linguistics, too, besides Latinists or historical linguists.

Let us return to *Tempusverschiebung* of (Neo-)Latin passive diathesis: how would Latin grammarians be able to explain this morphological change according their models~"bias", i.e. the Classical Latin system and the teachings of their Greek colleagues?

The solution is to be found, I believe, in passages of the works of two late Latin grammarians, respectively Priscianus (6th century A. C.) and Macrobius (*circa* late 4th or early 5th century A.C.).³

Two passages of Priscianus' monumental Latin grammar are extremely interesting. The first is from the 8th book of *Institutiones* (Keil, 1870, II: 406, 15-27; 407, 1-9):

- 1) *Imperativus vero praesens et futurum naturali quidam necessitate videtur posse accipere; ea etenim imperamus, quae statim in praesenti volumus fieri sine aliqua dilatione. Nec solum enim illi, qui nondum coepit, imperantes utimur praesenti tempore, sed etiam illi, qui coepit et in ipso actu est, ut permaneat in eodem, ut, si quis ei, qui coepit versum legere, dicat 'lege usque ad finem'. Apud Graecos etiam praeteriti temporis sunt imperativa, quamvis ipsa quoque ad futuri temporis sensum pertineant, ut ἡνεώχθω ἢ πύλη, 'aperta sit porta'; videmur enim imperare, ut in futuro tempore sit praeteritum, ut si dicam 'aperi nunc portam, ut crastino sit aperta'. Ergo nos quoque possumus in passivis vel in aliis passivam declinationem habentibus uti praeterito tempore imperativi, coniungentes participium praeteriti cum verbo imperativo praesentis vel futuri temporis, ut 'amatus sit' vel 'esto' πεφιλήσθω, 'doctus sit' vel 'esto' δεδιδάχθω, 'clausus sit' vel 'esto' κεκλείσθω. Quod autem vim praeteriti habet huiuscemodi constructio, ostendunt subiunctiva praeteriti perfecti, quae similiter proferuntur in passiva declinatione, ut 'amatus sim sis sit'. Ergo si 'amatus sit' in subiunctivo praeteriti est temporis, bene etiam in imperativo praeteriti temporis potest accipi, quippe cum etiam in praesenti tempore imperativi tertia persona similis est in omni coniugatione tertiae personae subiunctivi, ut 'amet, doceat, legat', 'ametur, doceatur, legatur'; et in passivis quidem vel similibus hoc possumus dicere, in activis vero vel neutris nullo modo, nisi participia praeteriti habeant.*

the English translation reads:

- 2) "To tell the truth, the imperative seems to be able to accept only the present and the future tense, almost by necessity; in fact we order things which we want to be done immediately in present time, without any

temporal delay. Indeed, we use the present tense not only to give orders to someone who has not yet begun to undertake the action, but also to someone who has begun and is in the process of the action, in order to persist in it [bringing to the end], as if one were to say to someone beginning to read a verse, '*lege usque ad finem*' ("read up to the end"). The Greeks also possess past imperatives, though these, too, refer to a future meaning, e.g. ἡνεώχθω ἢ πύλη '*aperta sit porta*' ("*let the door have been opened!"); in fact, it seems as if we are ordering that in a future time there be the preterit, as if I wanted to say '*aperi nunc porta, ut crastino sit aperta*' ("*open the door now, so that tomorrow it has been opened"). Therefore, we can also use the preterit tense of the imperative in passive forms and in other forms which take the passive conjugation, joining the participle of the preterit to the verb in the present or future imperative, e.g. '*amatus sit*' or '*esto*' πεφιλήσθω ("*let him have been loved!"), '*doctus sit*' or '*esto*' δεδιδάχθω ("*let him have been learned"), '*clausus sit*' or '*esto*' κεκλείσθω ("*let him have been closed"). But that a construction like this has the locutive force of the preterit is demonstrated by the subjunctive perfect preterits, which likewise are expressed in a passive conjugation, '*amatus sim sis sit*' ("*let me, you, him, have been loved!"). Therefore, if '*amatus sit*' ("*let him have been loved!"), in the subjunctive mood, belongs to the preterit tense, it can also be considered as belonging to the preterit tense in the imperative mood, since in the present imperative too the third person is identical to the third person of the imperative in every conjugation, like '*amet, doceat, legat*' ("let him love, let him teach, let him read"), '*ametur, doceatur, legatur*' ("let him be loved, let him be learned, let him be read"); and if this can be asserted about passive forms or similar, it certainly does not hold for active forms or the 'neuter' ones, unless they have the preterit participle."

The second one is from the 18th book (Keil, 1870, III: 238, 12-26):

- 3) *Inveniuntur tamen auctores et indicativis et optativis et subiunctivis usi pro imperativis, quomodo supra ostendimus. Et Graeci quidem habent imperativa praeteriti temporis, nos autem in activis vel neutralibus verbis penitus ea habere non possumus, in passivo vero et omnibus, quae habent participia praeteriti temporis, per circonlocutionem possumus habere, ut 'doctus es' vel 'esto', δεδίδαξο, 'doctus sit' vel 'esto', δεδιδάχθω; 'ornatus es' vel 'esto', κεκόσμησο, 'ornatus sit' vel 'esto', κεκοσμήσθω. 'ornati sint' vel 'sunto', κεκοσμήσθωσαν. Similiter 'veneratus sit' vel 'esto'; 'placatus sit' vel 'esto, clausus sit' vel 'esto, secutus sit' vel 'esto'; et per omnes sic personas 'secuti simus, sitis, sint' imperative dicta inveniuntur, cum sint praeteriti temporis: sed hanc vim habent, ut imperemus, ut in futuro sint transacta, ut si dicam 'clausa sit mox fenestra', impero, ut statim claudatur et mox sit clausa, vel si dicam 'post horam primam finitam sit iuratus' ostendo me imperare, ut iuret ante horam primam finitam.*

the English translation is:

- 4) Nevertheless, there exist authors who use both the indicative and the optative and the subjunctive mood instead of the imperative, as demonstrated above. On the other hand, Greeks also have a number of imperative forms in the preterit tense, which we are totally unable to have in active diathesis or in neutral verbs, whereas, in passive diathesis and in all verbs having the participles of the preterit tense, we can have preterit imperatives by periphrastic constructions, such as '*doctus es*' or '*esto*' δεδίδαξο ("*have been learned"), '*doctus sit*' or '*esto*', δεδιδάχθω ("*let him have been learned"); '*ornatus es*' or '*esto*', κεκόσμησο ("*have been decorated"), '*ornati sit*' or '*esto*', κεκοσμήσθω, ("*let him have been decorated!"), '*ornati sint*' or '*sunto*', κεκοσμήσθωσαν ("*let them have been decorated"). Likewise '*veneratus sit*' or '*esto*' ("*let him have had/ been revered!"); '*placatus sit*' or '*esto*' ("*let him have been placated!"); '*clausus sit*' or '*esto*' ("*let him have been closed!"), '*secutus sit*' or '*esto*' ("*let him have had/been⁴ followed!"); and so on, so that all persons, '*secuti simus, sitis, sint*', ("*let us, you, them have had/been followed!") are found expressed with the imperative value, while belonging to the preterit tense: but if I were to say '*clausa sit mox fenestra*' ("*let the window have been closed!"), I command that it now be closed and by now has been closed, or if I were to say '*post horam primam finitam sit iuratus*' ("*let him have sworn after the end of the first hour!"), I show I am commanding that he swear before the end of the first hour."

II. THE PERIPHRASTIC "PERFECT" IMPERATIVE FORM: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

Both passages are of considerable interest, but it is the first which gives us more information of a linguistic nature, where Priscianus analyses the construction of the passive "perfect" imperative.

This last, he states, is composed of the perfect participle plus the copula in the form of either the present or future imperative: the first fact to recognize is that the grammarian considers the exhortative subjunctive *sit* as well as the present imperative.

On the other hand, the subjunctive with an exhortative value substituted forms lacking the present imperative: by comparison with the other verbal forms cited as example in the second passage, a whole conjugation of "perfect" imperative can be restored, see Table 3.

1 st pers. sing	<i>doctus</i>	<i>*sim</i>		
2 nd pers. sing	<i>doctus</i>	<i>es</i>	or	<i>esto</i>
3 rd pers. sing	<i>doctus</i>	<i>sit</i>	or	<i>esto</i>
1 st pers. plur	<i>docti</i>	<i>*simus</i>		
2 nd pers. plur	<i>docti</i>	<i>este</i>	or	<i>estote</i>
3 rd pers. plur	<i>docti</i>	<i>sint</i>	or	<i>sunto</i>

Table 3. Conjugation of periphrastic form of "perfect" imperative

This periphrastic neo-formation which Priscianus termed the "*perfect*" imperative, usefully filled a gap in the Latin verb system, namely, the absence of an autonomous form of the middle-passive *future* imperative (Bergh, 1975).

It is notable that until the Republican Age no such form existed, generally being expressed by an active one: thus Cato in the *Agricultura* 5, 6, writes *opsequito* and in 96, 2 *utito*.

The Latin grammarian Diomedes was aware of this use (Keil, 1870, I: 339):

- 5) *Nonnulli veterum etiam activo tempus futurum imperativo modo ex verbis quoque passivae declinationis usurpaverunt, ut Tullius in dialogis de republica 'nitito', cum 'nitor' sit positio verbi.*
- 6) "A not inconsiderable number of the ancients also used the future tense of active diathesis in the middle-passive conjugation, as Marcus Tullius Cicero does in the dialogue of *Republica* with '*nitito*', while '*nitor*' is the verbal form."

Only in a later period was the middle-passive mark *-r* added to the active forms, and it must particularly be remembered that a common form with mark *-mino* existed for the 2nd and the 3rd singular person of the passive future imperative, tokens of which are especially to be found in the Republican Age (Ernout, 1953, §. 249: 170; Lindsay, 1894, ch. VIII, §. 60: 519; Leumann, 1963-1965, §. 233: 323-324).⁵

On the other hand, the form of the future imperative itself was rarely used, being limited to particular registers, such as that of legal or religious contexts (Szantyr & Hofmann, 1963-1965, §. 188, p. 340-341).

However, these morphemes of the middle-passive future imperative were never fully absorbed into the Latin language, and by the Imperial Age had fallen into disuse (Ernout, 1953, §. 248-249: 169-170), a fact which was in no way to affect the Latin verbal system, although a gap

was to appear within the “diathesis opposition”, since the relative active forms⁶ continued to exist (see Table 4).

2 nd pers.sing.	<i>ama</i>	-to		*-r or	<i>ama</i>	-min	-o
3 rd pers.sing.	<i>ama</i>	-to		*-r or	<i>ama</i>	-min	-o
2 nd pers.plur.	<i>ama</i>	-to	-te				
3 rd pers.plur.	<i>ama-n</i>	-to		*-r			
TENSE		[f u t u r e]					[f u t u r e]
MODALITY		[imperative]					[imperative]
DIATHESIS				[passive]		[passive]	

Table 4. Scheme of Latin middle-passive future imperative.

Hence, a periphrastic construction formed by the future imperative morpheme of *esse*, “be”, was used, i.e. *esto* (2nd- 3rd sing.), *estote*, *sunto* plus the perfect participle of the verb in question. We have some evidence of these constructions in Suetonius, *Vitae, Caes.* 32; *iacta alea esto*;⁷ in Ovid, *Metam.*, 6, 138: *lex eadem poenae . . . dicta tuo generi serisque nepotibus esto*; 4, 154: *estote rogati*; and in Livy, 22, 10, 4: *probe factum esto*; however, it was also possible to find constructions with the present imperative of *esse*: Ovid, *Tristia*, 1, 3, 34: *este salutati*; *Fasti*, 1, 513: *este bonis avibus vis natoque mihique* (Kühner-Stegmann, 1962, §. 41, d: 165).

This type of construction, suitable for expressing the middle-passive future imperative, is not often cited in the handbooks of historical grammar of Latin,⁸ despite having existed in the language, a point which deserves due consideration.

The second person plural plus the auxiliary verb in the present imperative is not mentioned by Priscianus, but one deduces that it existed upon the basis of the form of the 2nd singular; the grammarian cites no case of the imperative form in the 1st person singular and plural, but from the sentence of the second passage on the lines 20-21: *et per omnes sic personas* ‘secuti **simus**, sitis, sint’ *imperative dicta inveniuntur*, we infer that the 1st person of the plural could exist, thereby deducing that the 1st singular might equally be used.

As can be seen from the form’s conjugation, unlike other moods it did not possess its own morphemes, and therefore was comparable neither with the present imperative of both diathesis — that is the active or middle-passive ones —, nor with the future imperative of the active diathesis: i.e. it was very badly “integrated” morph (Martinet, 1955, § 3.21: 79-80; §. 6.15: 184) within the Latin verbal system, as is typical of innovations in the early stage of their emergence.⁹

To quantify, then: five out of six persons, i.e. the near totality of conjugations, had one form which was identical to many other morphemes already existent in the Latin verbal system: i.e. the 1st persons of the singular and the plural and the 3rd persons of the singular and the plural were identical to respective persons of the (middle-) passive perfect subjunctive, and the 2nd of the singular was similar to the corresponding person of the perfect indicative.

In theory, this fact had relatively effect on the balance of the system of the Latin middle-passive diathesis: in fact, if two morphemes express and carry out different functions, the formal identity would not have to be an obstacle for the maintenance of their differentiation within the structure of a language.¹⁰

However, as far as we can deduce from the passages mentioned above, the functional “confusion” between these two morphemes did indeed happen: according to Priscianus —as he explains in the second passage— if the form *amatus sit* belonged to the subjunctive mood with the meaning of the past tense (*praeteritum*), the imperative, too, would have the strength (*vim*), i.e. the *function* to indicate past time.

This equivalence is illustrated in the following syllogism: if the forms of the present subjunctive (active: *amet*, *doceat*, *legat*; passive: *ametur*, *doceatur*, *legatur*) could express the meaning of “imperative”, then the forms of the past could also express the same meaning.

We then infer that what connected these two forms, the perfect subjunctive and the future imperative, and then caused their confusion, was the “exhortative” value of the subjunctive.

But the “exhortative” subjunctive was used in Latin only and exclusively in the form of the present: is the syllogism of Priscianus, then, *strictly logical*? What did the grammarian *really* want to say?

III. DATA ANALYSIS IN RRG FRAMEWORK.¹¹

It is impossible to believe that Priscianus referred to a command form called the “negative imperative”, employing the 2nd person of the perfect subjunctive preceded by the particle *ne*: in the first place, because all other persons of the passive future imperative would then have no explanation, and because the perfect subjunctive was used with an “aoristic”, or timeless, function, and only for a negative order.

Indeed, the Latin language possessed a way of using the subjunctive as “jussive in the past”, considered suitable for expressing a command in the past: but the fact that the tenses used for such a purpose were the imperfect and, more rarely, the pluperfect, tells us that the subjunctive in

this case expressed the unreality, or better, the lack of realization of a fact which could happen, and then one desired, that is one “ordered”, at the moment of elocution, that it would have to happen in past time (Ernout & Thomas, 1959, §. 252: 235).

Above all, both the negative imperative “*ne* + perfect subjunctive”, and the “jussive in the past” could be employed in the active form as much as in the passive form: but Priscianus explicitly outlines that the periphrastic future imperative, precisely in this capacity, belonged exclusively to the middle-passive diathesis.¹²

Let us analyse how Priscianus himself interpreted this imperative construction, on the basis of a number of useful criteria.

In the first passage, Priscianus cites as example the sentence *aperta sit porta* with the Greek translation ἡνεώχθω ἡ πύλη. The grammarian interprets it as follows: in this sentence it is evident that there is a past time in the future (*enim videmur, ut in futuro tempore sit praeteritum*); one would thereby deduce that Priscianus considered this form as a kind of “anterior future” in the imperative mood, that is a morpheme with which one ordered that something had already happened as regards a point of temporal reference in the future: but the paraphrase of the above sentence hardly leads us to take this hypothesis seriously into consideration.

Priscianus comments on *aperta sit porta*, stating that it basically means “*open the door *now*, so that *tomorrow* it has been opened!”, that is with a Logical Structure (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997, § 3.2.2: 102-129; Dowty, 1979) as follows:

- 7) ***[nunc** <_{IF} IMP <_{TNS} PRES <_{ASP} IMPERF [**do'** (x, Ø) CAUSE [BECOME **opened'** (porta)]]>>>] & [**crastino** <_{STA} SUBJ <_{TNS} PAST <_{ASP} PERF [BECOME **opened'** (porta)]]>>>].

where the argument structure of the sentence is that of Fig. 2.

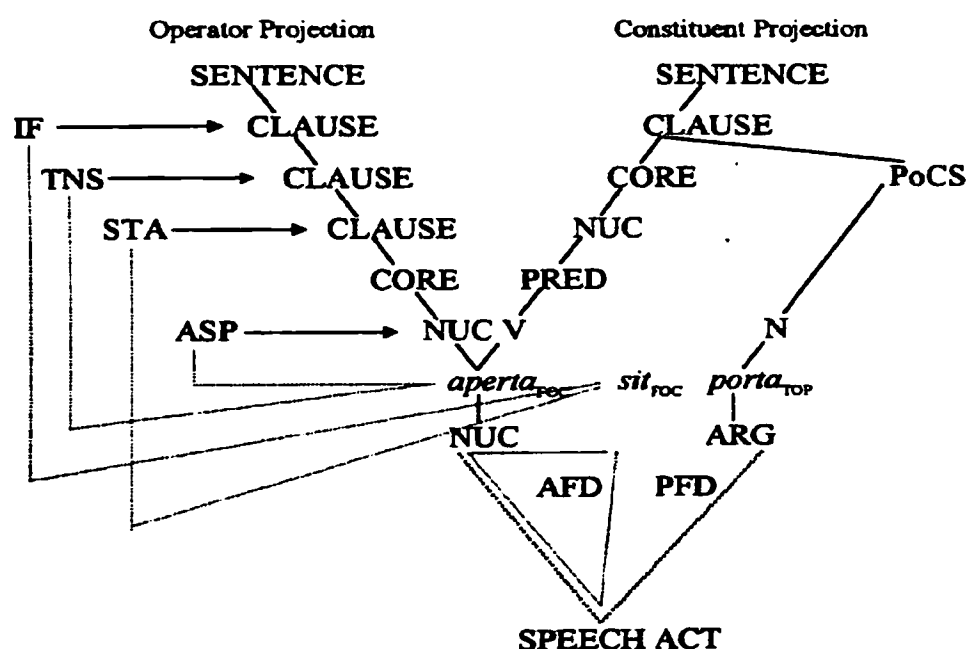


Fig. 2. Constituent Structure of the Latin imperative sentence *aperta sit porta* according to the interpretation of grammarian Priscianus.

An interpretation of the kind is clearly unacceptable, however: no order can be expressed for an action developed in past time, because no control exists over the action, which is non-modifiable by virtue of already being completed. The semantic value of the temporal adverb *crastino*, that is “tomorrow”, clashes with the past time of the passive perfect subjunctive of the *subordinate* consecutive proposition *ut...sit aperta*: it is as if we were to translate the sentence “*let the door have been opened!”, clearly unacceptable for the above-mentioned reasons.

In reality, the Logical Structure of the *main* proposition *aperta sit porta* could *only* be the following:

- 8) $\langle_{\text{IF}} \text{SUBJ} \langle_{\text{TNS}} \text{PRES} \langle_{\text{ASP}} \text{IMPERF} [\text{do'} (x, \emptyset) \text{CAUSE} [\text{BECOME} \text{opened'} (porta)] >>>.$

which instead corresponds to the form of the passive present subjunctive, **aperiatur porta*.

Is it feasible that Priscianus did not notice this very evident linguistic contradiction?

The suspicion thus arises that the choice of a verb with the “telic” (Garey, 1957, Vendler, 1967: 102) or resultative *Aktionsart*, like *aperire*,

“open”, was far from random, given, too, that his example in the second passage is *clausa sit mox fenestra*, with a telic verb *claudere* “close”.

The comment sentence *aperi nunc portam ut crastino sit aperta* must be interpreted: “open now the door, so that tomorrow it *be* (= *remain*) opened”, in which the passive perfect subjunctive *ut...sit aperta* has an aspectual value of *acquired present status*.

Only with the support of the interference of the resultative *Aktionsart* upon the aspect does this kind of sentence assume an acceptable meaning; only with this device in Latin could the value of acquired status be “imposed” on a perfect subjunctive placed in a subordinated proposition like (*ut*) *aperta sit*. This is impossible, however, in a main sentence with an imperative value such as *aperta sit porta*, since both the semantic *stative* value of the passive perfect of a verb with the resultative *Aktionsart* like *aperire*, and the past tense exclude the imperative function. Indeed, the concepts of “stative” and “imperative” cancelled each other out for this reason: the imperative expresses a command, a *voluntas* (“will”) of the subject in order that a given action be made or happen, thereby implying that those ordered to act by the subject have the power or possibility to modify reality according to their intentions.

In sum, in its use of the imperative mood, Latin implies that the recipients of the order were in “control” of their actions. No control, however, can be made upon a state, the concept of “stative” implying the logical consequence according to which a given status of affairs is as such by itself, in which the subject is PATIENT¹³ of a status, irregardless of anyone’s will, and, hence, is modifiable by no one.

Let us take as example a phraseological verb with the stative *Aktionsarts*, such as “be old”, in the imperative form “*be old!”. This, of course, would have no acceptable meaning, since being old is a state consequent upon physical decline, independent of human will.

A Logical Structure like the following would not be possible:

$$9) \quad * \langle_{IF} IMP \text{ be' } (x, [\text{old'}]) \rangle$$

↑

UNDERGOER¹⁴

Or, to take another example: if an English person were to speak the sentence “that the door be closed!”, there would be no problem of interpretation, the hearer necessarily interpreting the sentence as the equivalent of “let someone close the door”, because the order would be directed towards someone unknown who would perform the act of closing the door, that is,

10) <_{IF}IMP<_{TNS}PRES<_{ASP}IMPERF[do' (x)] CAUSE [BECOME [closed' (door)]]>>>

 ACTOR UNDERGOER

The fact is that the aspectual value of the perfect, i.e. the “meaning” of an action completed in the past whose consequence is a state in the present, is basically similar to that of both “state” and “accomplishment” *Aktionsart*.¹⁵

“State”, “activity”, “accomplishment” and “achievement” can be analysed by traits [$\pm$ static], [$\pm$ telic], [$\pm$ punctual] in the following manner (Dowty, 1979; Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997, §. 3.2.1: 93):

STATE	[+static] [-telic] [-punctual]
ACTIVITY	[-static] [-telic] [-punctual]
ACCOMPLISHMENT	[-static] [+telic] [-punctual]
ACHIEVEMENT	[-static] [+telic] [+punctual]

Table 5. Binary decompositions of the Aktionsarts.

and the Latin perfect in this manner:

	“perfect”	
	↙	↘
	<i>perfectum</i>	<i>praeteritum</i>
ASPECT	[+ static]	[- static]
ASPECT	[+ telic]	[+ telic]
ASPECT	[- punctual]	[- punctual]
TENSE	[+ present]	[+ past]

Table 6. Binary decomposition of “perfect”Aspect.

As we see, the aspectual traits [$\pm$ static] are in complementary distribution in the morpheme of the Latin perfect and both positive and negative features were predictable from the temporal traits, namely [+present] and [+past]. The perfect possessed a telic aspect, i.e. it expressed an action at its end, completed (Anderson, 1982), “telic” coming from the Ancient Greek τελικός meaning “which has an end (τέλος)” (Boisacq, 1916: 952; Chantraine, 1977, IV, 1 (R- Y)) and the Alexandrian grammarians called the Greek perfect (παρακείμενος or ἐνεστῶς) συντελικός, the

Latin translation of which is, precisely, *perfectum*, “completed” (Tusa Massaro, 1993; Waanders, 1983, ch. XII, §. 220: 223).

The following correlations or equivalences could, then, be made: in the case of the “*perfectum* present”, it would be:

$$11) <_{\text{TNS}} \text{PRES} <_{\text{ASP}} \text{PERF} [\text{opened}' (\text{porta}, \emptyset)]>> \equiv$$

$\swarrow \quad \searrow$

$$12) <_{\text{TNS}} \text{PRES} <_{\text{ASP}} [+static] \text{BECOME} [\text{opened}' (\text{porta}, \emptyset)]>>$$

whereas, in the case of the *praeteritum*, it would be:

$$13) <_{\text{TNS}} \text{PAST} <_{\text{ASP}} \text{PERF} [\text{opened}' (\text{porta}, \emptyset)]>> \equiv$$

$\downarrow$

$$14) <_{\text{TNS}} \text{PAST} \text{BECOME} [\text{opened}' (\text{porta}, \emptyset)]>$$

And if the equivalence [-static] = [+dynamic] and the relative opposite one [+static] = [-dynamic] were assumed,¹⁶ then it would be possible to continue in this way, creating a series of relations between “achievement” and “aorist”, and between “activity” and “imperfect”, i.e.:

$$15) <_{\text{ASP}} \text{IMPERF} [\text{predicate}' (x, y)]> \text{and } <_{\text{ASP}} \text{AOR} [\text{predicate}' (x, y)]>$$

$\equiv \downarrow \quad \quad \quad \equiv \downarrow$

$$16) \quad \text{do}' [\text{predicate}' (x, y)] \text{ and } \text{INGRESSIVE} [\text{predicate}' x, y)],$$

since the aorist was a ‘perfective’ aspect συντελικόν (Tusa Massaro, 1993), that is [+telic], but also [+punctual] (Comrie, 1976, §. 1.1.1: 17-22; §. 5.1.2: 97-98).

To return to Priscianus, however, since it is impossible to combine the “stative” value of the Latin perfect with the imperative mood, we must deduce that *aperta sit* was in reality a **morpheme of passive present**, that is the Vulgar Latin neo-formation of analytic passive which replaced the former synthetic *aperiatur*, according to the *Tempusverschiebung* of the Passive Diathesis in Late Latin, this morphological evolution effecting changes in grammatical functions as illustrated in Table 2, while the structure of the sentence *aperta sit porta* was that of Fig. 3. This, then, was Priscianus’s rather neat “semantic device”: by using the notion of the perfect with the temporal value of the present, he was *almost* able to explain the neo-Latin innovation of the analytic passive present, adducing in evidence the Greek perfect imperative, which had the morphology of the perfect but, by its nature, referred to an activity developing in the present or future.

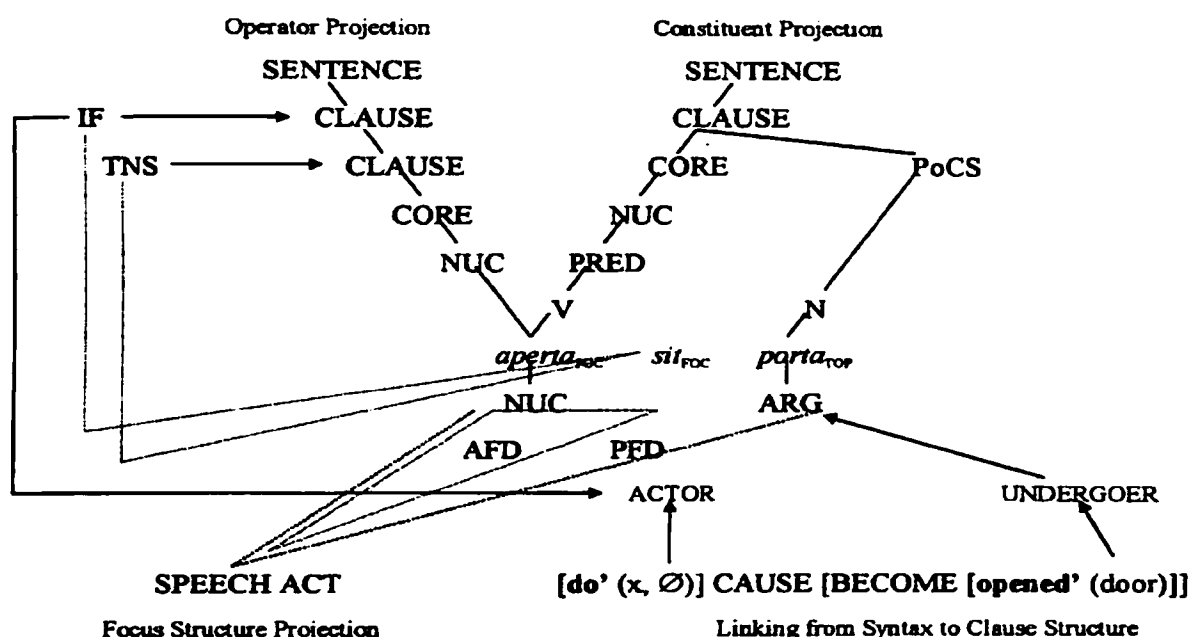


Fig. 3. Argumental structure of the Latin imperative sentence *aperita sit porta*.

On the other hand, his behaviour is perfectly understandable: he was a Latin speaker who tended not to use—or who probably no longer used—the Latin morpheme of the perfect with the aspectual value of “acquired state”, his system being temporally marked.

Nevertheless, he had to explain a construction having the same form of the *perfectum praeteritum*, but that indicated either the present or the future, but certainly not the past, and which, as an imperative, was not interpreted as a morpheme expressing an acquired state.

Since, however, this imperative construction was identical to the perfect subjunctive in most of its conjugation, the term of “subjunctive” in this construction was confirmed and supported by the “exhortative” value of the subjunctive itself: practically, Priscianus noted that some forms of the perfect like *amatus sit*, *doctus sit*, *lectus sit*, *aperitus sit* semantically resembled those of the present: *ametur*, *doceatur*, *legatur*, *aperiatur*, that is “let him be loved, let him be taught (=learn), let him be read, let him be opened!”, that is, he found that in the middle-passive diathesis a neutralization of the opposition between *perfectum praeteritum* and *imperfectum praesens* took place. Thus the concept of the past in this imperative construction needed to be reintroduced through logical reasoning, supported by two facts: first, by giving a number of Latin verbs with the telic *Aktionsart*, like *aperire* “open”, *claudere* “close”, etc.

as examples, and second, by the evidence of the existence of the middle-passive perfect imperative in Greek.

We recognize, however, that the logical *ductus* of the sentences cited as examples by Priscianus is totally incorrect. In *clausa sit mox fenestra*, he is again “playing” with the semantic ambiguity of the adverb *mox*, which was the same as that of the adverb *modo*, indicating either a present time in connection with verbs in the present tense, or a time minimally anterior to the present, i.e. the past, in connection with verbs in the past tense: the above-mentioned sentence would then mean “let the window be closed now!”, but its interpretation as *impero, ut statim claudatur et mox sit clausa*, can mean nothing but “I command that it now be opened and that (hence) it has *by now* been closed”.

The last sentence similarly has a “pseudo-logical” interpretation of the kind.

According to Priscianus, *post horam primam finitam sit iuratus*, that is, properly, “*let him have sworn *after* the end of the first hour!”, would mean *ostendo me imperare, ut iuret ante horam finitam*, that is “I show I am commanding that he swear *before* the end of the first hour”, which contradicts the given translation of the Latin imperative sentence: but in order to ascribe the latter meaning to the sentence, it must be understood as “let him be already *as sworn* after the end of the first hour!” where in reality *iuratus sit* is not a perfect form of verb *iuror*, but a nexus of an adjective plus the verb *esse* “be”, that is a nominal predicate.¹⁷

IV. THE SOURCE OF PRISCIANUS AND MACROBIUS: THE Περὶ Συντάξεως OF APOLLONIUS DYSCOLUS AND ASPECTUAL VALUE IN THE GREEK MIDDLE PASSIVE IMPERATIVE.

An additional fact is that, as regards Priscianus’ second argument in support of his reasoning, several important questions arise: if the value of the “imperative” and of the “stative” — the latter being a feature of the perfect — were mutually exclusive in Latin, could a “perfect” imperative exist in Greek? In a word, is Priscianus’ quotation and interpretation of Greek data correct? The answer would be *logically* no.

It is therefore necessary to try to understand how it was possible for Greek to have a “perfect imperative” as well as an “aorist imperative”.

The source of Priscianus is the Περὶ Συντάξεως of Apollonius Dyscolus, who treats the imperative tense in chapters 101-102 (Uhlig-Schneider, 1878-1910, II, II/III: 357, 11-15; 358, 1-13):

- 17) 101. Τὸ αὐτὸ ἄπορον μέτεισι καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ προστακτικά. Πάλιν γὰρ τὰ οὐ γενόμενα προστάσσεται, καὶ ἀληθὲς ὅτι τὰ παρωχημένα γέγονεν. Καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐ χρὴ παρωχημένου χρόνου προστακτικὸν παραλαμβάνειν. καὶ ἔστιν γε πάλιν ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων ταῦτον φάναι, ὥς τὸ πρῶτον διαφέρει τὸ κλειέσθω ἢ θύρα τοῦ κεκλείσθω, καθὸ ἢ μὲν κατὰ τὸν ἐνεστώτα ἐκφορὰ ὑπαγορεύει τὴν ὑπόγυον πρόσταξιν, ὅπερ ἐνεστώτος τοῦ παρατεινομένου ἦν ἴδιον, τό γε μὴν κεκλείσθω τὴν ἔκπαλαι ὀφείλουσαν διάθεσιν γενέσθαι. 102. Ἀλλὰ καὶ εἵπομεν ὥς ἂ μὲν προστάσσεται αὐτῶν εἰς παράτασιν. ὁ γὰρ ἀποφαινόμενος οὕτως, γράφε, σάρου, σκάπτε, ἐν παράτασει τῆς διαθέσεως τὴν πρόσταξιν ποιεῖται, ὥς ἔχει καὶ τὸ
 βάλλ'οὕτως, αἶ κέν τι φόως Δαναοῖσι γένηαι | Θ 282 |
 φησὶ γὰρ τῷ πολέμῳ καταγίνου εἰς τὸ
 βάλλειν. ὃ γε μὴν λέγων κατὰ τὴν τοῦ παρωχημένου προφορὰν γράψον, σκάψον, οὐ μόνον τὸ μὴ γινόμενον προστάσσεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ γινόμενον ἐν παρατάσει ἀπαγορεύει, εἶγε καὶ τοῖς γράφουσιν ἐν πλείονι χρόνῳ προσφωνοῦμεν τὸ γράψον, τοιοῦτόν τι φάσκοντες, μὴ ἐμμένειν τῇ παρατάσει, ἀνύσαι δὲ τὸ γράφειν.
- 18) 101. "For the imperatives, too, the same difficulties exist. Here too it commands the execution of fact which has not happened; it is clear that what is "past" has "happened"; and, for the same reason, an imperative of past time must not be used. The point also must be made about these; first, κλειέσθω ἢ θύρα is different from κεκλείσθω because the form which expresses the present tense serves to indicate a command shortly to be executed, that would be typical of the present imperfect [not completed, that is, in duration], whereas κεκλείσθω expresses, as regards the other form, that an action (= "disposition") should have been completed some considerable time previously. 102. But, second, we also said that one uses some forms of commands in reference to duration. In fact, anyone explaining him/herself as follows: "continue to write!", "continue to sweep!", "continue to dig!" gives a command for the continuance of an action (= "disposition"), as is also the case in: *hit thus again, and you may be splendid light to the Greeks* Il. VIII. 232: in fact he [Agamemnon] says: "in the battle, remain in the action of hitting, that is, continue to hit!". In fact, anyone using the past form to communicate: "write now!", and "dig at once!", not only orders a non-existent action, but also forbids that this same action be carried out in duration, as in the case in which we order "write at once!" to addressees used to taking too long to write, and intending to communicate, more or less, not that they should remain in duration of the action, but, *tout court*, to be quick in writing."

According to Apollonius Dyscolus, the difference amongst the forms of imperative in Greek was of the aspectual kind: since the present imperative had the trait [imperfect], the order that one gave by this morpheme was that of remaining in the development of a given action;

by using the aorist imperative, on the other hand, its specific trait [+punctual] meant that the speaker was virtually stating that he did not want to express the development of the action, which clearly was logically impossible. In reality, what he meant was that a determinate action should be ended without delay or waste of time, that is, that the time or realization of the action were to be contracted as much as possible, almost down to a moment.¹⁸

This is Apollonius Dyscolus' point in ch. 102 with regard to different functions of the forms of the present imperative and the aorist imperative, although the aspect concerning us, namely, his reasons for the use of the form of perfect imperative, is explained in paragraph 101. Priscianus, it would seem, was a careless reader of his source. In actual fact Apollonius Dyscolus had already stated what it is generally logical to assert with regard to the imperative, that is, a command cannot be expressed about a fact that has already happened in past time.

The difference between the imperative forms of the present κλειέσθω and the perfect κεκλείσθω, is again all of an aspectual nature, a fact that Priscianus knew very well. In fact, in the first passage (Keil, 1870, II: 406, lines 15-20), he expounds precisely what the Greek perfect imperative was required to express, that is *Nec solum enim illi, qui nondum coepit, imperantes utimur praesenti tempore, sed etiam illi, qui coepit et in ipso actu est, ut permaneat in eodem, ut, si quis ei, qui coepit versum legere, dicat 'lege usque ad finem': "Indeed, we use the present tense not only to give orders to someone who has not yet begun to undertake the action, but also to one who has begun and is in the very development of the action, in order to persist in it, as if one were to say to someone beginning to read a verse, 'read up to the end!'".*

Oddly, however, he did not consider the "perfective" aspectual value of the perfect imperative as a *quasi*-"extension" of the action towards the future, i.e. towards the temporal place where the action had to end.

There is thus a clear "distortion" of the aspectual value towards a temporal perspective, because, shortly after this passage, Priscianus had to interpret a verbal morpheme with the *function* of the *future* imperative, but that also possessed the *form* of *perfect* subjunctive.

If the misunderstanding about the Greek source had stopped here, Priscianus' "mistake" would have been relatively small. A far bigger one was made when he analysed the Latin form of the middle-passive future imperative *as similarly indicating past time*, although no meaning can be inferred from the passage of Apollonius Dyscolus' Grammar.

Even if the last sentence in Apollonius' passage is somewhat ambiguous, because it could be conceptualised as past time, and thus

seen as a contradiction, the meaning is however clear: in the present imperative one ordered that the action of closing the door be carried out, then the action was looked at in its development, in its “imperfection”, whereas in the perfect imperative, one ordered that the action of closing be brought to an end, where the action was considered particularly in its conclusion, that is in its “perfection”.

The final sentence, which Apollonius needed to explain the function of the perfect imperative in Greek, is ambiguous only because it expresses the psychological motivation that would guide a speaker wanting to use the perfect imperative. To a Greek speaker ascertaining that an action of any kind, like the closing of the door, was not yet brought to an end, this would seem like delaying the end of the action itself, whereas the action had necessarily been completed some time previously; hence the necessity of employing the perfect imperative, which was consonant with the command that the action be finally performed: in sum, it was not enough to say κλειέσθω ἡ θύρα, i.e. “let the door **get** closed!”, but κεκλείσθω ἡ θύρα, that is “let the closing of the door **be ended**!”.¹⁹

Practically, the Logical Structures of the sentences quoted by Apollonius Dyscolus were:

- 19) $\langle_{\text{IF}} \text{IMP} \langle_{\text{ASP}} \text{PERF} [\text{do}' (x, \emptyset)] \text{ CAUSE} [\text{BECOME} \text{closed}' (\theta\acute{\upsilon}\rho\alpha)] \rangle \rangle$

- 20) $\langle_{\text{IF}} \text{IMP} \langle_{\text{ASP}} \text{IMPERF} [\text{do}' (x, \emptyset)] \text{ CAUSE} [\text{BECOME} \text{closed}' (\theta\acute{\upsilon}\rho\alpha)] \rangle \rangle$


which, according to the discussion above, are equivalent to:

- 21) $\langle_{\text{IF}} \text{IMP} [\text{BECOME} [\text{do}' (x, \emptyset)] \text{ CAUSE} [\text{BECOME} \text{closed}' (\theta\acute{\upsilon}\rho\alpha)]] \rangle$
 22) $\langle_{\text{IF}} \text{IMP} [\text{do}' (x, \emptyset)] \text{ CAUSE} [\text{BECOME} \text{closed}' (\theta\acute{\upsilon}\rho\alpha)] \rangle$,

where there could be this interpretation, following the grammarians,

- 23) $\text{BECOME} [\text{do}' (x, y)] = \text{end to...}, \text{complete to...}, \text{etc.}$
 24) $[\text{do}' (x, y)] = \text{continue to...}, \text{etc.}$

These sentences are of course totally acceptable because the Greek speaker meant to indicate a command by which the state of the door being closed should come about, but which was addressed to the ACTOR,

who, in this case, was considered in any case existent, albeit unknown. The sentences would otherwise be equally nonsensical.

Obviously, the temporal value of the past had to be completely lacking in meaning. This was possible in Greek, since aspectual features were more important than temporal ones in the economy of the Greek verbal system, exactly the opposite of Latin, where the contrast of the temporal values in the verbal system played a greater role than that one played by the aspectual values (De Martino, 1995, §. VII: 299).

Evidently, Priscianus either did not understand or did not want to understand the last sentence in the Apollonius Dyscolus passage, with the end result that he believed Dyscolus to be referring to the past tense as regards the perfect imperative.

Another Latin grammarian, Macrobius, who lived in the late 4th or early 5th century A. D., came nearer to the 'letter', but not to the substance, of Apollonius Dyscolus' text, as he demonstrates in the passage of the *De differentiis et societatis Graeci Latinique verbi* (Keil, 1870, V: 618, 32 ff.):

- 25) *Latini non aestimaverunt ullum praeteritum imperativo dandum, quia imperaturquid, ut aut nunc aut in posterum fiat: ideo praesenti et futuro in modi huius declinatione contenti sunt. Graeci introspecta sollertius iubendi natura animadvertunt posse comprehendere praecepto tempus elabsum, ut est ἡ θύρα κεκλείσθω, quod aliud est qua ἡ θύρα κλείσθω (sic). Nam κλείσθω cum dico, ostendo hactenus patuisse; cum vero dico κεκλείσθω, hoc impero, ut claudendi officium iam sit peractum. Quod et latinitas iubendum novit, cum περιφραστικῶς dicit ostium clausum sit.*
- 26) "Latin people did not believe any past tense should be attributed to the imperative, because one commands that something is done either now or in the future: therefore they were satisfied with the present and the future tense in the conjugation of this mood. Greek people, having investigated the nature of commanding with much more skill, realized that the past tense can be included in the command, as demonstrates ἡ θύρα κεκλείσθω, which means anything but ἡ θύρα κλείσθω. In fact, when I say κλείσθω, I show that until this moment, the door was open; but when I say κεκλείσθω, I command that the duty of closing "has already been carried out". And that had to be ordered, as the Latin language also acknowledges when it says περιφραστικῶς: "let the door have been closed!".

From Macrobius' passage the origin of Priscianus' "misunderstanding" of Apollonius Dyscolus' text becomes clear. Here the last sentence contains an infinitive proposition, precisely τὴν ἑκπαλαι ὀφείλουσαν διάθεσιν, which would correspond to the passive periphrastic same, the well-known

construction which expressed the necessity of carrying out a given action; its Latin translation should be **iamdudum (rem) peragendam (=perficiendam) fuisse*.

But, in this case, ὀφείλουσαν in connection with the verb in the aorist infinitive form γενέσθαι, which replaced εἶμι, turns out to be in reality a conjunct participle: the true morphological and semantic centre of the phrase is hence the participle.

In the Greek language, especially in the Homeric dialect but also frequently in the Attic one, the periphrasis formed by ὄφελον "I should" plus the aorist infinitive of a given verb indicated regret about an action that could not be carried out, but that one would want to have been carried out:²⁰ that was what the Greek grammarian really intended as psychological motivation which was the cause of the employment of the perfect imperative.

Then, Priscianus did not acknowledge Apollonius Dyscolus' reasons for employing here this particular form of expressive *nuance* of "irrealis in the past": he must have understood the participle ὀφείλουσαν as the morpheme expressing the lack of carrying out of an action that had to happen by the agency of speaker's "command" at the moment of elocution, and not as the morpheme indicating the blame of the same speaker for the observation of the failure to complete the action, which is what Dyscolus actually meant.

Certainly, Priscianus, because of this misunderstanding, considered the form of the Greek perfect imperative as well as of subjunctive of the "irrealis" in its use as "jussive in the past", a value that he could then also recognize in the Latin construction of the middle-passive future imperative, having eliminated the meaning of "irrealis".

For a more concise analysis of this, see the logical-deductive" scheme in Fig. 4.

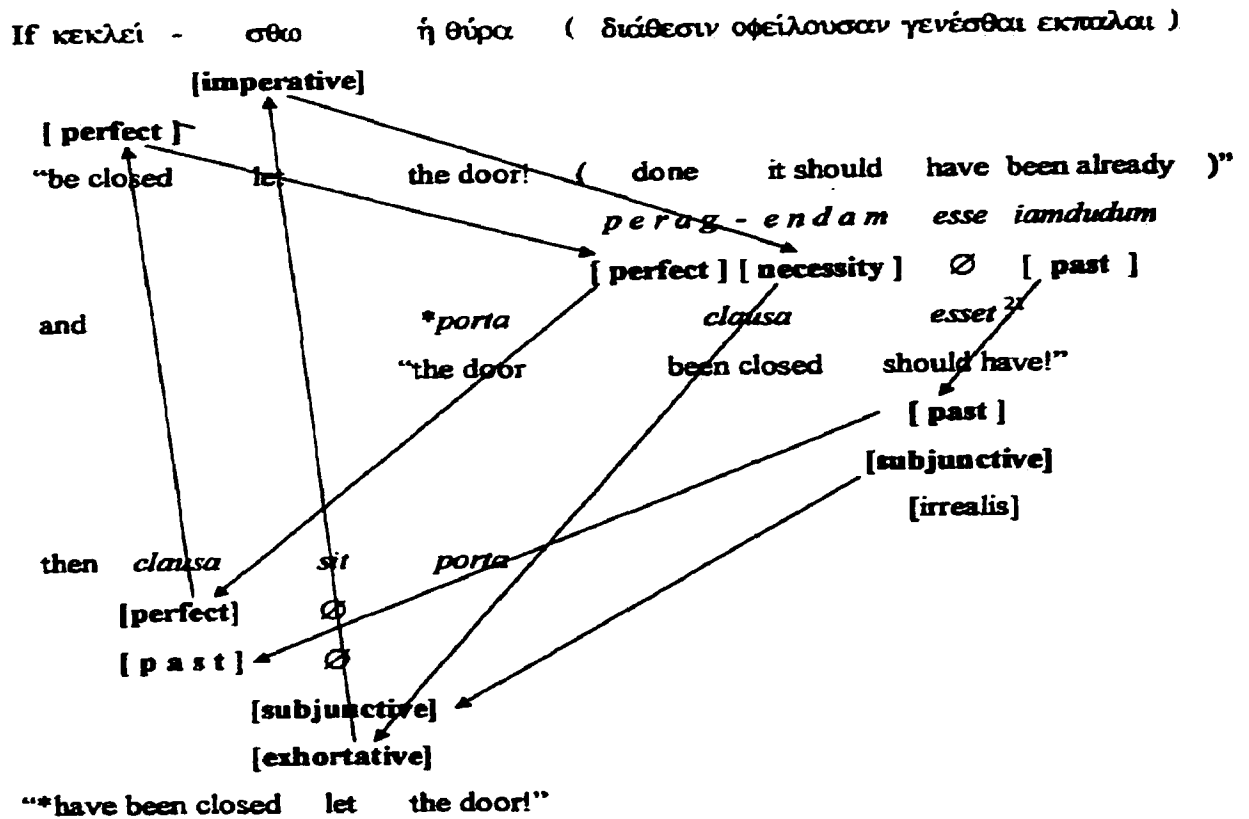


Fig. 4. Philological-inferential scheme of Macrobius' passage in Keil, 1870, V, 618, p. 32, ff.

It is clear that the Latin grammarians Priscianus and Macrobius took Apollonius Dyscolus' comment as their starting point to explain his reason for using the perfect imperative: the Latin translation of this sentence presented a passive periphrastic form which is precisely what they needed to create περιφραστικῶς the Latin form of the "perfect imperative".

In practical terms, Priscianus did as well as Macrobius, who understood ὀφείλουσαν as having the same meaning of *officium claudendi* "the necessity of closing", and διάθεσιν γενέσθαι as having the same meaning of *peractum* (= *perfectum*) *sit*: in this way Macrobius translated *two distinct* Greek morphemes, διάθεσιν γενέσθαι, with a Latin periphrastic construction, which was *a single* morpheme, *peractum sit*, that is the passive subjunctive perfect form of *perago*.

V. CONCLUSION.

After reviewing the analysis and known facts, I find a number of conclusions to be inevitable: would Priscianus and Macrobius misinterpret their Greek source, and would they then, on the basis of this “mistake”, would they draw an argument of linguistic comparison, or voluntarily distort Apollonius Dyscolus’ text simply to give a “normative” explanation, that is, to set up within the Latin verbal system a construction like that of the periphrastic middle-passive “future” imperative, which, in form and function, created problems for the system itself?²²

It is difficult to give a definitive answer. I would be tempted to accept the second hypothesis, although the “wilfulness” behind the misunderstanding then sheds rather a bad light on Priscianus’ scientific deontology.

A third hypothesis exists, consonant with the second, but less negative. Since Priscianus utilized a type of linguistic system which needed to stress temporal value in the verbal structure, we might adduce that he tended unconsciously to allow himself to find what he was looking for, and was inclined to see in the words of his main source evidence to support what his “linguistic competence” of the Latin language already dictated to him, or, in a rather more colloquial register, to confirm his hunch.

On the other hand, for a grammarian, the ‘paradox’ of equivalence such a *doctus sit = doceatur*, was formidable and apparently without solution. It is worth noting that only Priscianus dealt at any length with the periphrastic construction of the middle-passive present subjunctive with an exhortative value, whereas, apart from Macrobius’ brief hints, all the other grammarians were silent on this point. But this construction was not an “invention” of Priscianus’, nor was it an innovation of a very late age: epigraphic evidence points to its existing as early as the 1st century B. C.

Priscianus probably believed he had found a satisfying explanation of the ‘paradox’; he therefore decided to record the existence of this neo-formation, since he had by then “reformulated” it according to the rules of the Latin language, thereby doing us an enormous service.

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NOTES

I would like to thank Robert Van Valin for his comments on an earlier form of this paper. Obviously, the responsibility for any claims and any errors of my analysis is mine alone.

1. See *The Categories; On Interpretation* (Cook, 1938). For an historical overview on Logic and Grammar, see Kretzmann-Kenny-Pinborg (1982).

2. This is the accusation generally levelled at Prof. Noam Chomsky by his enemies, (Martinet, 1985 [ital. transl. (1988), §. 2.13: 22-23]).

3. As far as I am aware from my own bibliographic research, the passages of grammatical works I examine had never been taken into account by linguists and the historians of the Latin language, at least, as "probative" of element of evidence of a linguistic status of romance type: in a certain sense, mine seems to be a "rediscovery."

4. I wrote "been followed" because Priscianus himself (with Gellius) quotes a form *sequeo*, *sequare*; an infinitive *sequi* with passive value can be found in *Rhet. ad Herennium*, 3, 5; *idem* the previous form of *venero/veneror*.

5. See *progredimino* in Plautus, *Pseud.*, 859, and *fruimino* C.I.L. I. 19932 (*Sententia Minuciorum*, 117 B.C.). There is evidence of grammarians indicating -minor as suffix of the 2nd pers. plur. of the middle-passive future imperative, not least Priscianus himself (Keil, 1870, 456, p. 4-6): *Secunda vero persona a secunda indicativi mutatione i finalis in or fit, ut amamini amaminor, docemini doceminor, legimini legiminor, audimini audiminor*. But there are many doubts that this suffix was original: in fact it seems to be a "reinterpretation" of the suffix of the 2nd pers. sing. -mino with the addition of the passive morpheme -r, an hypercorrection made on the basis of the 2nd pers. plur. of the middle-passive present imperative or indicative -mini, as the words of Priscianus himself show (Madvig, 1875: 239).

6. The present imperative appears to have been the bare verbal theme, as in English, as the 2nd pers. sing. shows: *ama* "love!", *fac* "do!", etc., to which the suffix -te was added in order to shape the 2nd pers. plur., and to which then were added -re and -mini in order to shape the relative middle-passive forms. The origin of the morpheme indicating the future was no different: to the bare verbal theme the suffix *-tod was added, which in reality was a pronominal morpheme of neuter gender, no longer autonomous in Latin, although still recognizable in other pronouns, like *is-tud* "that", as the comparison with the other relative languages show, e. g. *sansk. ta-* "that" and *gr. to-* "the". This pronoun was frozen in the ablative case and meant, more or less, "after that", thereby giving to the command a meaning of posteriority towards a point of temporal reference: hence the emergence of a "future" meaning. This is evident from some sentences of Plautus, *Merc.* 770: *cras petito; dabitur. Nunc abi* "Come to ask it tomorrow; it will be given. Now, go away", and *Pseud.* 647: *tu epistulam hanc a me accipe atque illi dato* "Take now this letter from me and after give it to him". To this theme of the future imperative, suited to both the 2nd and the 3rd of the singular person, the suffix -te was added to form the 2nd pers. plur., whereas for the creation of the 3rd pers. plur. there would be an analogic osmosis with the relative suffix of the present indicative -nt, see Szemerényi (1953; 1970, ch. IX, 2. 5. b): 230-231).

7. Generally, the well-known form of this phrase is *alea iacta est*, but some codes report the future imperative.

8. Kühner-Stegmann considers such a form as a "passive perfect imperative" without explaining what this denomination means. Sommer (1948, §. 365: 587) attributes the same wording to the imperative of *memini*, that is *memento* and *mementote*, but he absolutely makes no mention of the periphrastic future imperative. As for the rest, I found no mention of this imperative construction in any historical handbook, both of old and of more recent time, including the above-mentioned monograph of Bergh, which under certain aspects can be considered exhaustive; nor is it quoted in Risselada (1993: 134-135). Since I believe this periphrastic neoformation to be extremely important for an understanding of the evolutive processes of the Latin verbal system, this absence of attention by the scholars seems to me a considerable omission. For a general discussion of Latin expressions indicating command, see the classic essay by Löfstedt (1966).

9. For a discussion of the documentation of this neoformation in Late Latin, see De Martino (1995): the earliest evidence dates from the 1st century B. C., in an inscription found in Rome and belonging to *Tabellae Defixionum* (Jeanneret, 1918: 146): *Seic Rhodine apud M. Licinium Faustum mortua sit*, 139. 3-5; *Seic Rhodine apud M. Licinium accepta sit*, *ibid.*, 9-10, but generally they are later: cf. the *Opus Agriculturae* of Palladius, who lived in the late 4th or early 5th century A.D. (Svennung, 1935: 456-457); also worth noting is the *vexata quaestio* about the value of *auditus sit* found in two sentences of *Peregrinatio Aeternae*, whether it must to be interpreted already as a normal analytic present passive or not (pro: Anglade, 1905: 85, Meister, 1909: 365; contra: Muller, 1924: 82-23). In the texts of the 8th century A. D. the form of the analytic passive present subjunctive is very frequent (Pei, 1932: especially 257-258). See also Ch. 2: The Grammar of the Latin Subjunctive by A. D. Scaglione (1970).

10. In fact the two constructs were different, since they carried out different functions within the Latin verbal system, practically:

doceatur	⇔	doctus sit ¹
[p r e s e n t]		[p a s t]
[p a s s i v e]		[p a s s i v e]
[subjunctive]		[subjunctive]
⚡		⚡
doceto	⇔	doctus sit ²
[f u t u r e]		[p r e s e n t]
[a c t i v e]		[p a s s i v e]
[imperative]		[subjunctive]
		[exhortative]

11. For a general account of the Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), see Foley & Van Valin (1984), Van Valin (ed. 1993: 1-164), Van Valin & LaPolla (1997).

12. Practically, Priscianus forbade that a sentence like **clausurit portam* (which would be finally the active form of *clausa sit porta*) be said in Latin, although it is actually more obvious and logical to believe the existence of such a sentence, since in Latin a similar construction was employed to express a prohibition, generally in the 2nd person, that is *ne clausurit portam*, but also, by analogic extension, in the 3rd.: Plautus, *Men.*, 994, *cave quisquam...vostum flocci fecerit*; Horatius, *Sat.*, 1, 2, 57, *nil fuerit mi, inquit, cum uxoribus umquam alienis*; other evidence in Sallustius, *Bell. Jugurt.*, 85, 47 and Livy, 9, 9, 9.

13. PATIENT is a “deep case”, in Fillmore’s terminology (1968): about the reanalysis of the semantic roles in the RRG’s framework, see Van Valin & LaPolla (1997).

14. As well as ACTOR, UNDERGOER is a “macrorole”, that is a sort of “semantic archirole” subsuming a number of semantic roles which have in common a certain degree of “patienthood” (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997, §. 4.1: 139-147).

15. The difference between Aktionsart and aspect is substantially this: the Aktionsart lexicalizes the above-mentioned features, referring to the semantic content of a verb, whereas the aspect grammaticalizes them, (Comrie, 1976, §. 2.2.: 44. n. 1; Galton, 1984). Comrie (1976, §. 0.2: 7. n. 4) calls this semantic value ‘inherent aspect’, Lyons (1977) ‘aspectual character’: the term Aktionsart is used explicitly by Platzack (1979).

16. For a functional interpretation of the verbal aspect, see Dik (1989), where the non-progressive or stative aspect is defined as [- dynamic]. For the situation in Latin, see Pinkster (1990, ch. 11: 214-242).

17. The subjunctive perfect form *iuratus sit* of deponent verb *iuro* was virtually equivalent to the correspondent form *iuraverit* of *iuro*: cf. the important evidence of the grammarian Diomedes (Keil, 1870, I: 402, 14-15): “Apud Turpilium comoedia nobili cuius titulus Demetrius legimus *iurata sum* perfecto infinitivo dictum: *iuvenis est qui consulit, meretrix respondet ‘non sum iurata’ pro sane quod est ‘iurasti? non iuravi’*”; for other tokens of the subjunctive perfect of *iuro*, see Cicero, *De Invent. Rhet.*, 2, 121: *lex, in quam iurati sitis*; 2, 126: *iudici demonstrandum est quid iuratus sit, quid sequi debeat*.

18. Curiously, the semantic difference between the present and aorist imperative, as well as that one between the aorist and perfect imperative, has not been acknowledged despite the progress in Greek linguistics. In fact even though the old handbooks (Riemann & Goelzer, 1897: 280-281; 311-313) singled out this difference on the basis of aspectual criteria, later handbooks claiming to be equally exhaustive seem to have confused ideas on the subject. For example, in Rijksbaron (1984, ch. 16, 1-2: 43-47) the author asserts that the difference between the present and aorist imperative would consist of the fact that “When someone is ordered to carry out an action which is not being carried out, the present imperative emphasizes the process, the course of the action...The aorist imperative, on the other hand, emphasizes the completion of the action”, where there is no mention of the existence of morpheme of the perfect imperative. It seems in fact that “modern” scholars attributed to the aorist imperative morpheme certain functions and meanings that were peculiar to that of the perfect imperative: cf. Donovan (1895, July: especially 289-291); Kieckers (1909); Amigues (1977); Householder (1981: 191-192); Lallot (1997: 240-241, vol. I, especially note 240, vol. II). This is deducible from Bakker (1966: 36-37), in his extensive study regarding the aspectual differences between the present and aorist imperative in prayer formulas from Homer to modern Greek: “According to Apollonius Dyscolus the aorist stem may also be used in such a situation. He states that someone performing an action in a dawdling way can be urged to bring it to a conclusion by means of an aorist imperative. The aorist imperative may give the impression of meaning “stop being busy and bring this action to a conclusion” exactly because the person to whom it is directed is trying to perform the action ordered. The reason that the speaker does not connect the existing situation (someone is performing or at least is supposed to be performing) with the action ordered is therefore a negative one. For if the speaker used the present imperative in such a case, he would indicate that he wants the hearer to go on performing or to begin performing the action ordered. The aorist only means that “it must

be done"". It seems very strange that Apollonius Dyscolus meant that with the use of the aorist imperative one could order to bring to an end an action already undertaken: in that case, it is difficult to perceive the functional and semantic difference from the perfect imperative morpheme. In reality, the convictions both of Bakker and of Rijksbaron (regarding the latter, see his affirmation (p. 44, n. 1): "According to ancient grammarians the aorist imperative may, in the case of an action which is already being carried out, be used, meaning "bring the action to an end""") derive from an erroneous interpretation of Poutsma (1928: 4) concerning passage 357, 4-5 and 8-12 of Apollonius Dyscolus, which Poutsma translated thus: "Hij die zich aldus uitlaat: γράφε, σάρου, σκάπτε beveelt dit met dien verstande, dat er παράτασις, moet zijn van de uitvoering. Hij echter die zegt: γράψον, σκάψον, beveelt niet allen hetgeen niet gedaan is (of: wordt), maar verbiedt ook, dat het gedaan wordt met παράτασις. Hen immers die wat lang doen over het schrijven, voegen we toe: γράψον; waarmee we zo iets bedoelen als: dat ze niet moeten volharden in die παράτασις, maar het schrijven ten einde brengen". The self-evident nature of the translation of ἀνύσαι δὲ τὸ γράφειν with "het schrijven ten einde brengen", that is "bring to an end, to completion the writing", derives from a certain captiousness of the meaning of this construction: the verb ἀνύω means as a rule "carry out, bring to an end", but can assume also the meaning of "be quick", with which the idea of speedy would be marked in carrying out an action, see, e. g. Aristophanes, *Pluto*, 607: οὐ μέλλειν χρή σ', ἀλλ' ἀνύειν "do not be lingering, but be quick"; this meaning was normal in constructions where this verb was connected with a predicative participle, in 413: ἀνυε πράττων "be quick to do". Hence Apollonius Dyscolus meant that by the aorist imperative, a person, before beginning act, was ordered to be quick in carrying out a given action, almost as if he had to reduce the time of executing the action down to a moment: and that by aspectual trait [+ punctual] of aorist, the grammarian in no way meant that by the aorist imperative the person who was already carrying out the action was ordered to bring it to completion, because this was the specific function of the perfect imperative, as my text explains.

19. In Greek, the perfect imperative, besides expressing the will that an action was brought to completion (κέκτησο "own!"), could indicate, especially in the 3rd pers. sing. of passive diathesis, that an argument had to be considered by then as treated in detail (πέπαισο "stop at once!"): see Isokrates, *Panegy.* περὶ τῶν ιδίων ταῦτά μοι προειρήσθω. The forms of the perfect imperative were as a rule passive, but the forms of the active diathesis were not infrequent in the Classical period too, especially those belonging to the perfects with present value, like τέθναθι, τεθνάτω, ἔσταθι, ἐστάτω, δέδιθι, ἴσθι, ἴστω, etc. In the tragedians there are forms like ἄνωγε, γέγωνε, that is "say, announce", whereas in Aristophanes forms like κεκράγετε, κεξήνετε are found, evidence confirmed also by Erodianus; in a later period other forms are also found, but which are not to be considered as classical, such as ἐπανατεταλκέτω in Aristotle and βεβηκέτω, ἀκηκοέτω in Lucianus. For a detailed account of the use of the imperative in Greek, see Riemann-Goelzer (1897, ch. I, §. 262: 280, No. 2). It is worth noting that the only other Indo-European language which had this aspectual opposition "aorist-perfect-imperfect" working in the imperative mood was Sanskrit, and it would be interesting to check if Sanskrit also had the same meaning of the Greek aspectual opposition: logically, it should be so; items for the perfect imperative forms are, e. g., mumoktu, nunottu, titigdhī (doubtely); cikriḍasva; for more information, see Renou (1930, ch. 336 C, note) and MacDonell (twenty items in *Veda*, §. 490: 361-362). In actual fact, it seems that a sort of "perfect" imperative exists, or maybe existed, in English too, according to the opinion of Jespersen (1924, ch. XIX: 261-262): "A notional imperative necessarily has relation to future time. Where, as in Latin, there are two tenses in the imperative referring either to the immediate future or to some indefinite time in the future, and the so-called future imperative being used chiefly with regard to

some specially indicated time. A "perfect imperative" also refers to future time, the use of the perfect being a stylistic trick to indicate how rapidly the speaker wants his command executed: be gone! When we say Have done! we mean the same thing as "Stop at once!" or "Don't go on!" but this is expressed circuitously: "let that which you have already done (said) be enough."

20. This verb in Greek became, with this function, a kind of *utinam*; the fact that the participle ὀφείλουσαν is present but not aorist, that is ὀφέλουσαν, would not significantly change the meaning because the value of irrealis is expressed above all by the aorist infinitive, which corresponds to the rule in Greek. For more information on this, see Humbert (1960³, ch. 176: 112, Remarque), who quotes two very instructive phrases on the subject: G 428 ἤλυθες ἐκ πολέμου ὥς ὠφελος αὐτόθ' ὀλέσθαι that is "Here you are coming back from the war: you should have found the death over there!", and Euripides, *Medea*, 1, εἴθ' ὠφελ' Ἀργεῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος, that is "If only Heaven had caused the Argo ship not to land!".

21. The imperfect subjunctive form *clauderetur* could also be used without difference of meaning and function (Ernout & Thomas, loc. cit.).

22. Macrobius too was well aware of the specific "perfective" value of the Greek perfect imperative, and, in an other passage of the *De Diff.* (Keil, 1870, V, 640: 14, ff.) tried to attribute this function also to the construction of the middle-passive future imperative, very obviously contradicting himself as regards the passage quoted in the text: "item qui dicit ἡ δίκη τεμνέσθω, litem adhuc in conflictu esse demonstrat; qui vero dicit ἡ δίκη τετμήσθω, tanta vi iubet, ut iam velit esse negotium terminatum. Quod et latinitas, quamvis circumloquendo, non tamen respuit, cum dicat 'ostium clausum sit', 'pugna commissa sit', 'lis terminata sit'. Quibus omnibus quam conficiendi celeritatem exigimus demonstratur. In this case, Macrobius draws a paradoxically more "proper" comparison between the Greek tense and the Latin one, because he excludes the temporal value of the past; it is worth noting that, unlike Priscianus, Macrobius does not say that *sit* was an allomorph of *esto* in the Latin construction of the "perfect" imperative: this is because the "copula" in the future imperative would invalidated the attribution of the perfective value to the construction itself, whereas the employing of the "copula" only in the present subjunctive would involve a form of the perfect subjunctive of middle-passive diathesis.

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