

Title: The use of the modal particle in epic Greek

Abstract (max. 500 words): In my presentation I intend to analyze the use and absence of the modal particle (MP) in Epic Greek. I will first provide a brief overview of existing literature on the subject. Secondly, I will determine my corpus, addressing some morphological problems (such as determining whether a form is a subjunctive aorist or future indicative) and textually disputed instances. Afterwards I will provide facts and figures for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* per type of sentence and per tense and mood.

I will try to show that the use of the MP in Homer is compatible with Allan's 2013 epistemic axis and, therefore, it is missing in wishes, exhortations and purpose clauses, as well as in conditional clauses with the optatives (as they are old clauses of wishing, cf. Lange 1872 and 1873). I will also show that the presence of the MP is also governed by discourse features (and is not random as Willmott 2007:202-210 seemed to imply), as it is mostly used in contexts referring to a specific instance (Delbrück 1871:83-86; Monro 1891:257, 327-329; Kühner & Gerth 1898:208; Chantraine 1953:210-211; Ruijgh 1971:275-302, 1990:80), close to the speaker and referring to an immediate future (Basset 1988, 1989:204 used the term *actualité du locuteur*), whereas it is mostly absent in sentences with undefined subjects, stories in a remote past or future and with repeated actions. This distinction is well visible in the following two examples (Chantraine 1953:211, De Decker 2015:218-219, etc). In both instances the verb refers to a future action of speaking

καὶ δὲ κέ τοι εἴπησι, διοτρεφές, αἴ κ' ἐθέλησθα (Odyssey 4,391).

"And he will tell you (sc. the way), nurtured one by Zeus, if you want to."

καὶ νῦν τις ὄδ' εἴπησι κακώτερος ἀντιβολήσας (Odyssey 6,275).

"And now so a lesser character might speak when he meets us:"

In the first passage, Eidothea pointed out that her father Proteus would answer any question that was asked. As she referred to a specific person, the particle was used. In the second instance, Nausikaa feared that an undefined Phaiakian might see her in company of Odysseus and would chastise her for choosing a foreign husband. The difference in definiteness explains the use and absence of the particle.

Finally, I will show that the use of the MP in subordinate clauses, where it would not be expected (such as purpose clauses or generic conditional or relative clauses with the subjunctive), is either the result of an ongoing grammaticalisation process or of an initial confusion with other subordinate clauses, such as the relative clauses (an idea first hinted at in Weber 1884).

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