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ΜΕΛΛΩ-AUXILIARY VERB CONSTRUCTION IN THE SEPTUAGINT

Anssi VOITILA

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I discuss (i) the verb μέλλω with its infinitival complement in the Septuagint,¹ (ii) examine its uses in Classical and Hellenistic Greek, and (iii) compare Septuagint usage with that of Classical and Hellenistic Greek.

I have looked at all cases of μέλλω + INF (infinitive) in the Septuagint, evaluated them semantically, and compared them to both contemporary and earlier material. The Classical and Hellenistic material was taken from the Liddell-Scott-Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*,² and Magnien,³ and supplemented with data from the Hellenistic authors Menander,⁴ Hyperides, and Polybius, as well as occasional surveys of additional data from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* and the *Duke Database of Documentary Papyri*.⁵

Linguists have often discussed the original meaning of the μέλλω Auxiliary Verb Construction (henceforth AVC), but they have not come to any definite conclusion.⁶ Μέλλω may be characterised as polysemous in nearly the same way that *must* and *can* are in English. It is customary

¹ The 'delay' instances (4 Macc 6:23, 9:1), and the attributive and the arthrous participle instances that indicate futurity instead of past or present (Prov 15:18, Wisd 8:8, 19:1) were excluded from this study.

² Henry Stuart Liddell, *et al.*, *A Greek English Lexicon* (With a revised supplement. Oxford, 1996).

³ Victor Magnien, *Emplois et origines du futur grec* (Paris, 1912).

⁴ Included are only those preserved comedies whose texts we are able to name.

⁵ All of the English translations are based on those in the *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) for Greek literary texts; for the Septuagint, those in *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>) were used, and for the Papyri, those available in the *Duke Database of Documentary Papyri* (<http://papyri.info/>) or my own translations were used. I have adapted these translations to better suit my interpretations.

⁶ According to Markopoulos, it is intention (Theodore Markopoulos, *Future in Greek: From Ancient to Medieval* [Oxford, 2009], p. 22).

in linguistics to distinguish between deontic,⁷ root,⁸ or agent-oriented⁹, on the one hand, and epistemic on the other, when describing the notional features of these modalities. (Deontic, root, or) agent-oriented (henceforth root) modalities

predicate certain conditions on the agent with respect to the completion of the action or event described in the rest of the predicate... [They] may be used as directives for imposing obligations or granting permission (Bybee, *et al.*, *The Evolution of Grammar*, p. 23).

Deontic modality ‘relates to obligation or permission, emanating from an external source,’¹⁰ as in (1) and (2)¹¹:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| (1) John may/can come in now. | (Permission) |
| (2) John must come in now. | (Obligation) |

Palmer notes that ‘Epistemic modality and evidential modality are concerned with the speaker’s attitude to the truth-value or factual status of the proposition.’¹² The following examples¹³ demonstrate different degrees of certainty within epistemic modalities in English:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| (3) John may be in his office. | (Speculative) |
| (4) John must be in his office. | (Deductive) |
| (5) John’ll be in his office. | (Assumptive) |

In (3), the speaker is uncertain whether the proposition is true. The statement in (4) is based on evidence, for example, the lights are on, etc. In (5),

⁷ Frank Robert Palmer, *Mood and Modality* (Cambridge, 1986). In the second edition, Palmer (*Mood and Modality* [Second edition. Cambridge, 2001], pp. 7ff.) distinguishes between ‘propositional modality’ (‘concerned with the speaker’s judgment of the proposition’) and ‘event modality’ (‘concerned with the speaker’s attitude towards a potential future event’). He further divides event modality into deontic (‘conditioning factors are external to the relevant individual’) and dynamic (‘they are internal’) modalities, and propositional modality into epistemic and evidential modalities.

⁸ Jennifer Coates, *The Semantics of the Modal Auxiliaries* (London-Canberra, 1983), pp. 20-22: non-epistemic modality, including deontic and dynamic.

⁹ Joan Bybee and William Pagliuca, ‘Cross-Linguistic Comparison and Development of Grammatical Meaning’ in Jacek Fisiak (ed.), *Historical Semantics Historical Word-Formation* (Berlin:, 1985), pp. 59-83; Joan Bybee, *et al.*, ‘Back to the Future’ in Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Bernd Heine (eds.) *Approaches to Grammaticalization II* (TSL 19:2; Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 17-58, esp. 23-24; Joan Bybee, *et al.*, *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Languages of the World* (Chicago, 1994), pp. 177-179; Bernd Heine, ‘Agent-Oriented vs. Epistemic Modality: Some Observations on German Modals,’ in Joan Bybee and Suzanne Fleischman (eds.), *Modality in Grammar and Discourse* (TSL 32; Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 17-53.

¹⁰ Palmer, *Mood and Modality* [Second edition], p. 9.

¹¹ Palmer, *Mood and Modality* [Second edition], p. 10.

¹² Palmer, *Mood and Modality* [Second edition], p. 24.

¹³ Palmer, *Mood and Modality* [Second edition], p. 25.

the speaker makes an assumption based on general knowledge about John's habits. It is, of course, possible to interpret (4) as an obligation ('his boss has told him to be there'), but in this case, then, it is still being used deontically (deontic probability).

There are two additional dimensions that are closely related to the modal categories we need to characterise the μέλλω + INF instances in our material more fully. The first is volitionality. By volitionality, we mean that there is an 'element of will,' a force (henceforth **F**) that is working towards the realisation of an action indicated in the proposition, or something or someone that '[has] an interest in an action to be performed.'¹⁴ Root modality involves such a force: in (1) and (2), it is the speaker. In contrast, the epistemic cases in (3)-(5) do not contain **F**; that is, they are non-volitional. The truth condition of the propositions does not depend on anybody's will.

The second dimension concerns speaker- and event-oriented modality. Speaker-oriented modality is related to the speaker's own modal judgment of the speech situation, whereas with event-oriented modalities, the modal judgment is independent of the speaker and the present speech situation.¹⁵ These two dimensions are gradable (that is, 'more or less'): volitional and non-volitional are two poles of one dimension, as are speaker-orientedness and event-orientedness. I shall return to this question in my discussion of the various meanings of μέλλω.

STATISTICS

In his recent monograph on the expression of future meanings in Greek, Markopoulos deals with the AVC¹⁶ μέλλω + INF as a part of his study on 'the notional category "Future" as manifested in three future-referring "periphrases" in Greek,' from Ancient to late Medieval Greek.¹⁷ Markopoulos utilises only material of the middle- and low-register texts, since this corpus evidences the linguistic change that is underway in spoken

¹⁴ Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar* (London, 1977 [1924]), pp. 313-321, esp. 319-321; Heine, 'Agent-Oriented,' 29; Palmer, *Mood and Modality* [Second edition], p. 8; Heiko Narrog, 'Modality, Mood, and Change of Modal Meanings: A New Perspective,' *Cognitive Linguistics* 16-4 (2005), pp. 677-731, esp. 683-685.

¹⁵ Narrog, 'Modality, Mood, and Change,' p. 685.

¹⁶ He prefers the term 'Auxiliary Verb Construction' to 'periphrasis' (Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, pp. 11-13).

¹⁷ Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, p. 1. The others are έχω 'have' + INF and (ἐ)θέλω 'wish/will' + INF.

language, while the higher-register, standard texts are written in an artificial and archaising Atticistic language. Thus, he also studies Septuagint as a part of his material from the Hellenistic-Roman period, although he never cites or discusses it in his book.

There are 37 occurrences of μέλλω with an infinitival complement, that is, with an AVC, in the Septuagint. Sixteen of them are found in translated books (including the book of Judith [Jdt], 1 Macc, and the letter of Jeremiah [EpJer]), as shown in **Table 1**:

Gen 2	Exod 1	Jdt 1	1 Macc 1	Ps 1	Iob 3	Is 5	Jer 1	EpJer (Bar 6) 1
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Table 1: AVCs in Translated Texts.

Twenty-two instances occur in books originally composed in Greek, as shown in **Table 2**:

2 Macc 11	4 Macc 7	Wis 4
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Table 2: AVCs in Greek-language texts.

The μέλλω-AVCs are relatively more common in the original compositions. The reason for this is very simple: in Hebrew, there is no direct counterpart to μέλλω + INF, and when the translators used it, they had to render one Hebrew form with two Greek verbs, which is not a very common mode of translation in the Septuagint.¹⁸ Therefore, we may conclude that AVCs were a part of the translators' everyday Greek usage and that, sometimes, the translators considered their usual equivalents for translating future-referring and/or modal Hebrew forms and expressions – generally the Future or the Subjunctive – to be inadequate.

Next, in **Table 3**, I repeat the statistics given by Markopoulos, supplemented with the figures from the Septuagint: the frequency of the different forms of μέλλω, as instantiated in three centuries and in papyri or non-papyri. Note that the figures for the 3rd century BCE non-papyri seem to be almost the same as those for the Septuagint. Thus, it is almost certain that Markopoulos' non-papyri material consists of all of the Septuagintal books, as if they all come from the 3rd century BCE, although most of them were first produced in the 1st or 2nd century BCE.

¹⁸ On auxiliary and INF complements, see Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen, *Die Infinitive in der Septuaginta* (AASF 132,1; Helsinki, 1965), pp. 121, 134-139.

	LXX	4 th -C. BCE	4 th -3 rd	3 rd NON-PAP.	PAPYRI
PRES	13	124	31	15	15
IMPF	3	111	6	3	4
PART	18	214	32	18	6
INF	1	23	4	1	2
SUBJ	1	39	7	2	–

Table 3: Forms of μέλλω over three centuries. PRES = Present Indicative, IMPF = Imperfect Indicative; PART = Participle; INF = Infinitive; SUBJ = Subjunctive; all non-indicative verbal forms are present.

Table 4 gives a statistical overview of the position of infinitive complements in relation to μέλλω, that is, whether they were pre- or post-verbal. The ellipsis signifies that there is intervening material that separates the verb and its complement.

	LXX	4 th C. BCE	4 th -3 rd	3 rd NON-PAP.	PAPYRI
V + INF	18	260	40	19	13
INF + V	4	53	17	4	6
V ... INF	14	184	13	14	9
INF ... V	2	13	6	2	–

Table 4: Linear order of μέλλω + INF.

The pre- or post-verbal position of the infinitive varies, and it is not uncommon to find it separated from its verbal head. It is generally accepted that the close bondedness of the verb and its infinitival complement, as well as its diminished flexibility, indicates a more advanced stage in the verb's development into auxiliary status, that is, its grammaticalisation.¹⁹ This means that μέλλω + INF was still in its initial phase of grammaticalisation,²⁰ although post-verbal position right after the verbal head is clearly the most common construction with the AVC (and this is increasing, with the

¹⁹ See Christian Lehmann, *Thoughts on Grammaticalization* (Arbeitspapiere des Seminars für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Erfurt 9; Second, revised edition; Erfurt, 2002, pp. 131-143 (online <http://www.db-thueringen.de/servlets/DerivateServlet/Derivate-2058/ASSidUE09.pdf>); Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, p. 26, and Narrog, 'Modality, Mood, and Change,' pp. 708-710.

²⁰ Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, pp. 25-28, 52. The other properties of μέλλω that point to this are: it is almost fully inflectional (occurring in present, imperfect, and occasionally also in aorist tenses; it has personal, modal, and nominal inflection, sometimes used in middle voice), it accepts negation, and it may appear in interrogatives.

relative frequency of V + INF at 43.4% in the 5th century, 39.7% in the 5th/4th; 51% in the 4th; 52.6% in the 4th/3rd; and, in the following centuries, 62.2%).²¹ In this respect, there is no significant difference between translated books and those originally composed in Greek (except that the corpus is larger in the former), nor between papyri and Septuagint.

THE INFINITIVAL COMPLEMENT OF ΜΕΛΛΩ

The only significant difference in the use of the infinitive is shown in **Table 5**. While the FUT(ure).INF is still widely used as a complement of μέλλω in the 4th century BCE texts, this use has almost disappeared by the Hellenistic period and in the Septuagint. At the same time, the use of the AOR(ist).INF, at least in papyri, seems to have increased. However, we cannot assert that the AOR.INF has replaced the FUT.INF in the Septuagint. Because the PRES.INF so clearly dominates in the statistics, it seems more likely that it has taken FUT.INF's place.²²

	LXX	4 th -C. BCE	4 th -3 rd	3 rd NON-PAP.	PAPYRI
PRES	33	277	63	33	16
FUT	1	222	12	1	2
AOR	4	12	1	5	10

Table 5: Type of infinitival complement of μέλλω.

It is generally thought that the use of tenses with the INF reflects imperfective (PRES.INF) or perfective (the event seen as a complete whole) (AOR.INF) aspects.²³ It seems rather difficult, however, to apply aspectual differences to the INF complementing μέλλω, as illustrated in (6)-(8).

²¹ Statistics from Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, pp. 27, 52.

²² This is due to the overall retreat of the infinitive as a category in Greek, with the FUT.INF being the first to be lost (Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, p. 54). Some evidence for the close connection between AOR and FUT.INF may be found in Exod 4:12, where AOR.INF λαλήσαι is used, while, when Philo cites the phrase in *Who is the Heir* (25), he uses FUT.INF λαλήσειν.

²³ Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament* (Studies in Biblical Greek 1; New York-Bern-Frankfurt-Paris, 1989), pp. 366-391; Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 390-402; C.J. Ruijgh, 'Review of S.E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament*,' *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995), pp. 352-366; Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, pp. 28-33.

- (6) ἤκουσαν γὰρ ὅτι ἐκεῖ μέλλει ἄριστῶν (PRES.INF) (Gen 43:25) ‘for they had heard that he was going to eat lunch there.’
- (7) καὶ συμβιβάσω σε ὃ μέλλεις λαλῆσαι (AOR.INF) (Exod 4:12) ‘and I will instruct you what you should speak.’
- (8) καὶ μέλλων ἀποθνήσκειν (PRES.INF) ἔφη (2 Macc 7:18) ‘And when he was about to die, he said...’

Example (8), in particular, is clearly perfective; (6) may have imperfective reading, while (7) must refer to what is to be spoken in the future: thus, it has a (complexive) perfective reading. It seems that these interpretations are more based on lexical meaning (that is, telic verbs tend to be interpreted as denoting a completed action, like ‘to die’) than on actual aspectual differences in the language.

C.J. Ruijgh²⁴ argues that in classical usage, μέλλω + PRES.INF denotes ‘le futur relatif immédiat’; μέλλω + FUT.INF denotes ‘le futur relatif neutre’; and μέλλω + AOR.INF denotes that ‘le moment de la réalisation future est imprédictible.’ In Hellenistic times, the FUT.INF gradually falls out of use, replaced by AOR.INF. This is a broader tendency, and includes other verbs as well. Markopoulos explains this phenomenon in a similar manner: the AOR.INF continued to denote perfective value, while the PRES.INF could be used for both perfective and imperfective.²⁵ Nevertheless, the predilection for AOR.INF is not supported in the Septuagint data (**Table 5**). The data collected from Menander and Hypereides offer no examples of AOR.INF, either: the PRES.INF predominates (Menander: 19 PRES.INF; Hypereides: 2 FUT.INF, 6 PRES.INF). In the Septuagint, all four AOR.INFs have perfective meaning as well (AOR.INF: Exod 4:12; 2 Macc 14:41; Isa 15:7; 59:5).

Achard²⁶ has proposed that ‘the loosening of the constraints on the infinitival complement correlates with a subjectification of the modal force’ in French. This may also be why the infinitive accepts more variation in the use of aspectual forms in Greek. Subjectification, or the embedding of speaker attitudes, is a universal tendency in semantic change.²⁷

²⁴ Ruijgh, ‘Review of S.E. Porter,’ pp. 362-363.

²⁵ That is, it was ‘neutralized with respect to aspect,’ Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, p. 31.

²⁶ Michel Achard, *Representation of Cognitive Structures* (Cognitive Linguistics Research 11; Berlin, 1998), pp. 166, 159-172.

²⁷ Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Richard B. Dasher, *Regularity in Semantic Change* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics; Cambridge, 2005), pp. 89-99.

DEONTIC MEANING OF THE AUXILIARY VERB CONSTRUCTION

According to Markopoulos,²⁸ the deontic meaning of μέλλω is a new one that developed no earlier than the 1st century CE. Although there are only a few occurrences, the Septuagint and other evidence from earlier texts show that this was not necessarily the case.²⁹ In (9) and (10), taken from Magnien³⁰ and Markopoulos,³¹ respectively, μέλλω + INF encodes obligation. Two more instances may be found in *P.Michael*, 17 (2nd-3rd century CE) and *P.Oxy.*, 113 (2nd century CE).³²

- (9) Καὶ πῶς, ὃ μακάριε, εἰπεῖν τὸν Σωκράτη, οὐ μέλλω ἀπορεῖν καὶ ἐγὼ καὶ ἄλλος ὅστισοῦν, μέλλων (PRES.PART) λέξειν (FUT.INF) μετὰ καλὸν οὔτω καὶ παντοδαπὸν λόγον ῥηθέντα; (Plato, *Symposium* 198.b.2) ‘Why, my dear friend, said S., must not I or anyone be in a strait who has to speak after he has heard such a rich and varied discourse?’
- (10) καὶ περὶ τοῦ βορρᾶ εἰ μέλλει (PRES.IND) ποτίζεσθαι (PASS.PRES. INF) μελῆσάτω σοι περὶ ἀγροῦ (*POslo*, 155 / 2nd century CE) ‘and for the north [field], if it needs to be watered, take care of it’

In (9) and (10), μέλλω + INF expresses event-oriented modality; the judgment is not bound only to the given speech situation nor to its actual participants. In (10), what needs to be done is solely dependent upon the physical conditions in the field (where **F** = laws of nature [more loosely, the writer]), which is out of the reach of the speech participants. In (9), however, the first-person singular subject is animate ([10]’s subject is inanimate), and the fact that the given speech situation, which functions as a sort of speech participant in the Ground through the narrative, operates as the source of the obligation to speak (**F** = conventions of the symposium; in a symposium, one is obligated to respond to one’s interlocutor) makes (9) less event-oriented than (10).

In addition, there are two interesting occurrences in which μέλλω + INF seems to be used deontically, shown in (11) and (12).

- (11) εἰρήσεταιί τοι, καὶ θαυεῖν (AOR.INF) μέλλω (PRES.IND) διπλῆι (Euripides, *Ion* 760) ‘I will tell you, even if I should die twice over.’

²⁸ *Future in Greek*, p. 48.

²⁹ I will not go into this matter more deeply here, for I have treated this question more extensively elsewhere (Anssi Voitila, ‘Deontic meaning of the auxiliary verb construction μέλλω + INF. in the Septuagint and Hellenistic Greek’, *Glotta* 89 (2013), pp. 242–252).

³⁰ *Emplois et origines*, p. 102.

³¹ Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, p. 48.

³² Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, p. 48.

- (12) καὶ ἢ ἀφιετέ με ἢ μή, ὡς ἐμοῦ οὐκ ἂν ποιήσαντος ἄλλα, οὐδ' εἰ μέλλω (PRES.IND) πολλάκις τεθνάναι (PERF.INF) (Plato, *Apolog.* 30 c) 'either acquit me, or not, knowing that I shall not change my conduct, even if I should die many times over.'

The core meaning of the AVC seems to be 'I should die,' but here it is used in a concessive clause and, consequently, acquires a contrary-to-fact (irrealis) interpretation: 'even if I should die x times.' The F is the same law that has condemned the speaker to death in both texts, but now it is in a hypothetical world. The modal judgment is linked to unreal conditions outside the speaker or speech situation; thus, these uses are event-oriented.

Two instances of deontic μέλλω + INF appear in the Septuagint as well, as in (13).

- (13) ἐσκίρτων δὲ τὰ παιδιά ἐν αὐτῇ· εἶπεν δέ Εἰ οὕτως μοι μέλλει (PRES.IND) γίνεσθαι (PRES.INF) ἵνα τί μοι τοῦτο; ἐπορεύθη δὲ πυθέσθαι παρὰ κυρίου (Gen 25:22) 'And the children were cavorting within her, and she said, "If it has to happen like this with me, why do I have this?"' Then she went to inquire of the Lord.'

Example (13) shares similarities with Markopoulos' examples: the verb μέλλει has an inanimate subject. Thus, the intention reading is excluded. The instance is volitional: there is some kind of law of fate, nature, or God working as an F here.

The translator interpreted Rebecca's utterance as a complaint: Rebecca refers to the fact that her extended barrenness, which has been long and difficult for her, has ended with pregnancy, which is a happy thing. But now the pregnancy is not proceeding without additional hardships, and she asks why it has to happen like this. The AVC here is event-oriented: the judgment is not bound to the given speech situation, nor to its actual participants, but only to Rebecca's past experiences and to her knowledge of 'the law' in question.

- (14) καὶ νῦν πορεύου καὶ ἐγὼ ἀνοίξω τὸ στόμα σου καὶ συμβιβάσω σε ὃ μέλλεις (PRES.IND) λαλῆσαι (AOR.INF) (*yiqtol*) (Exod 4:12) 'And now go, and I will open your mouth and instruct you what you need to/should speak.'

In (14), the agent of the AVC is not in control of the realisation of the action that the speaker (that is, God) is referring to. Thus, God does not mean to state a mere future fact, nor is He pointing to Moses' intention. Moses will not speak his own words, but will be given the words that will be suitable in a future situation. These words are words he has an obligation to deliver; thus, this μέλλεις has a deontic meaning. It is volitional:

the F is God. Furthermore, the AVC may be considered event-oriented, since, although God-speaker is going to give the words to Moses, He himself is not their instigator; the instigator will be the future situation in which the words will need to be uttered.

INTENTION/WILLINGNESS

Μέλλω + INF expresses intention or willingness of the subject – the difference is a subtle one – ,³³ is volitional and has a conscious animate subject. Its object is an event in the future. By speaking of somebody's intention or will, the speaker/narrator expresses his/her modal judgment of the matter; these cases are then speaker-oriented. Particularly first-person μέλλω + INF, when the subject is also the speaker, has a root modal meaning: it reports the existence of internal volitional (intention or will) conditions in an animate agent.³⁴ Consider (15) and (16), taken from Hellenistic Greek literature:

- (15) μου τὸν λόγον ὃ ἄνδρες δικασταὶ ἀκούσατε, ὃν μέλλω (PRES.IND) λέγειν (PRES.INF) ὑμῖν (Hyperides, *Pro Euxenippo* [col. 18] 23) 'Will you please listen, gentlemen of the jury, to the account which I am going to give you.'
- (16) μέλλω (PRES.IND) γὰρ ποεῖν (PRES.INF) τοὺς γάμους, ἄνδρες, καταπιὼν τὴν χολήν (Menander, *Samia* 444-5) 'For, gentlemen, I mean to conduct this marriage, swallowing my anger.'

In (15), and in (18) below, μέλλω seems to state the obvious, that is, the immediate future event or the speaker's willingness to speak – Hyperides is already giving his speech for the defence of Euxenippus. In a pragmatic sense, with μέλλω + INF, the orator shows his commitment to speaking and assures the interlocutor/reader that his words are worth hearing/reading.³⁵ In comparison to (16), the intention meaning seems more to the point, since (i) the speaker is determined to organise the wedding, although he expresses his reluctance to do so, (ii) the wedding preparations are already underway, and (iii) the preparations remain an intention, as the wedding mentioned here will never take place.

³³ Coates (*The Semantics*, p. 173), discussing English *will*, considers the difference between the two meanings to be the focus. *will*=‘willingness’ focuses on the state of mind, and *will*=‘intention’ on the future event.

³⁴ Bybee, *et al.*, *The Evolution of Grammar*, p. 178.

³⁵ See also, Polybius' Histories Book 9.36.7: τί δὲ μέλλω (PRES.IND) λέγειν (PRES.INF); 'This is what I have to say.'

In the Septuagint, there are two occurrences of the first-person singular μέλλω, shown in (17) and (18) – in (17) with negation – and two first-person plurals (2 Macc 1:18 [= (19)] and 2:16).

- (17) οὐ μέλλω (PRES.IND) τύραννε πρὸς τὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀρετῆς βασι-
νισμὸν [παραιτεῖσθαι (PRES.INF)]³⁶ (4 Macc 11:2) ‘Tyrant, I have
no intention to/I will not beg to be excused from torture for the sake
of virtue.’
- (18) φιλοσοφώτατον λόγον ἐπιδείκνυσθαι (PRES.INF) μέλλων
(PRES.PART) ... συμβουλεύσαμι ἂν ὑμῖν ὀρθῶς ... (4 Macc 1:1)
‘Since I intend to/will discuss an eminently philosophical subject...
I would duly advise you...’

A root sense interpretation, or negative refusal, is invited in (17), which we may paraphrase as ‘I do not intend to beg’ or ‘I refuse to beg.’ In (18), we encounter an example of formulaic introductory AVC similar to Hyperides’ defence in (15); we get a of a paraphrase ‘I commit to...’

The first-person plural subject in (19) and 2 Macc 2:16 also promotes an inducement reading: the writer encourages his readers to celebrate the Hanukkah festival by asserting that the writer’s community is going to do so.

- (19) μέλλοντες (PRES.PART.) ἄγειν (PRES.INF.) ἐν τῷ Χασελευ πέμπτη
καὶ εἰκάδι τὸν καθαρισμόν τοῦ ἱεροῦ δέον ἠγησάμεθα διασαφή-
σαι ὑμῖν (2 Macc 1:18) ‘Since we intend to celebrate the purification
of the temple on the twenty-fifth of Cheseleu, we thought it necessary
to notify you.’

The speaker/narrator/writer has no access to the mind of any other discourse participant. Therefore, the root sense of intention/willingness μέλλω exhibits gradience: it moves towards epistemicity as the verb’s subject shifts to the second and third person. In addition, the interrogative structures used (*wh*- and yes/no-questions) are easily interpreted as conveying epistemic modality.³⁷ At the same time, the degree of volitionality decreases as the speaker is distanced from the **F** (see **Figure 2**, which demonstrates how this is translated into ‘space’ in a semantic map).³⁸

³⁶ For this reading, I am indebted to Robert Hiebert (p.c.), who is currently preparing the Göttingen edition of the book.

³⁷ Narrog, ‘Modality, Mood, and Change,’ pp. 679-680; Jessi Elana Aaron, ‘Pushing the Envelope: Looking beyond the Variable Context,’ *Language Variation and Change* 22.1 (2010), p. 23.

³⁸ On this concept, see Johan van der Auwera and Vladimir A. Plungian, ‘Modality’s Semantic Map,’ *Linguistic Typology* 2 (1998), pp. 79-124, and Martin Haspelmath, ‘The Geometry of Grammatical Meaning: Semantic Maps and Cross-Linguistic Comparison,’ in Michael Tomasello (ed.), *The New Psychology of Language*. Vol. II (Mahwah, 2003), pp. 211-242.

It does not come as a surprise that the second-person μέλλω + INF most frequently appears in interrogative structures: the speaker is likely to inquire about the intentions of his/her interlocutor(s). Most of the occurrences in Menander's comedies fall into this category (*Sam.* 287, 676, 690, 692; *Asp.* 215, 258; *Dysc.* 216, 564, 590). In contrast, Hyperides' speeches attest to three second-person plural instances in which μέλλω + INF refers a jury's vote, which is a regular part of the juridical process (περὶ τῆς ψήφου ἧς ὑμεῖς μέλλετε [PRES.IND] φέρειν [PRES.INF] 'concerning the vote you are about/going to give' *Eux.* 40 and *Phill.* 15b, 2). Such a construction may have a prediction, that is, epistemic, reading, or it may be interpreted as inducement.

In the Septuagint, there are two instances (2 Macc 7:2, Job 26:2), in (20).³⁹ Both, albeit questions, also serve as inducements. Example (20) is intended to mean 'stop the torturing and proceed to what you intend to do anyway.'

- (20) Τί μέλλεις (PRES.IND.) ἐρωτᾶν (PRES.INF.) καὶ μανθάνειν (PRES.INF.) ἡμῶν; (2 Macc 7:2) 'What do you intend to ask and learn from us?'⁴⁰

In (6), which is repeated here as (21) for convenience, μέλλει ἀριστᾶν is presented not so much as an objective statement of the agent's intentions as a report of a personal belief/attitude of an anonymous third party who has passed it on to Joseph's brothers (introduced by ἤκουσαν 'they had heard that'). Thus, its modal meaning leans more towards epistemic modality.

- (21) ἤκουσαν γὰρ ὅτι ἐκεῖ μέλλει (PRES.IND) ἀριστᾶν (PRES.INF) (yiqtol) (Gen 43:25) 'for they had heard that he was going to eat lunch there.'

This is also the case in (22) and in Jdt 10:12.

- (22) καὶ ἐπέγνω Τρύφων ὅτι ... καὶ ὅτι συνάπτειν (PRES.INF) αὐτῷ μέλλει (PRES.IND) πόλεμον (1 Macc 13:14) 'And Tryfon learned that ... and that he was about to join battle with him.'

The factuality of (22) is marked as undetermined by the use of the third-person μέλλει. The brothers and the reader are not in the position to

³⁹ Exod 4:12 is different and has already been covered above.

⁴⁰ CF. μέλλων (PRES.PART) σ' ἐρωτᾶν (PRES.INF) ἦνικ' ἐξήντλεις στρατῶν γόους ἀφήσω (Eur. *Suppl.* 838) 'I meant to question you when you were venting your lamentations to the army, but I will let it pass.' εἰσι δὲ πάντες οἱ τοιοῦδε τῶν λόγων παρὰ τὸ συμβεβηκός· 'ἄρ' οἶδας ὃ μέλλω (PRES.IND) σε ἐρωτᾶν (PRES.INF);' (Aristoteles, *Soph. elenc.* 1.24) 'All arguments such as the following depend upon Accident. "Do you know what I am going to ask you?"'

verify the subject’s intentions.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the subordinate clause has illocutionary force, making the AVC a subjectification device: the writer/speaker brings the reader/addressee into the text such that the reader/addressee becomes one of the speech participants (the use of the Present tense in narration in the ὅτι-clause.)^{42, 43}

The intention/willingness use of the auxiliary is rather common in the Septuagint. Other instances are to be found in 2 Macc 2:22, 14:41; 4 Macc 12:15; Job 3:8, 19:25; and Wis 14:1.

PREDICTION (FUTURE REFERENCE)

We noted earlier how the realisation of the intended/wanted event already refers to the future. In fact, on the basis of data collected from 75 languages, Bybee *et al.*⁴⁴ have argued that all future-referring constructions have passed through a semantic stage of intention meaning.⁴⁵ When the construction is used with inanimate subjects, the intention reading is not

⁴¹ In this respect, similar examples are attested in Polybius: διαδοθείσης δὲ τῆς φήμης ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ διότι μέλλει (PRES.IND) διὰ τινῶν ἐλῶν ἄγειν (PRES.INF) αὐτοὺς ὁ στρατηγός (Polyb. 3.78.8) ‘When the news spread in the camp that that the general was going to lead them,’ and τῆς δ’ ἐπιστολῆς διασαφούςσης ὅτι μέλλει (PRES.IND) Κλεομένης..., ἐπανίστασθαι (PRES.INF) τοῖς τοῦ βασιλέως πράγμασιν (Polyb. 5.38.5) ‘and as the letter stated that Cleomenes, ..., intended to revolt against the king,....’

⁴² Raphael Kühner and Bernhard Gerth, *Ausführliche Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache* (II:1-2 Satzlehre ; Dritte Auflage; Hannover-Leipzig, 1898-1904), § 550 Anm.1-3; Anssi Voitila, *Présent et imparfait de l’indicatif dans le Pentateuque Grec* (Publications de la Société d’Exégèse de Finlande 79; Helsinki-Göttingen, 2001), pp. 72-73.

⁴³ It is noteworthy that subjectification (see note 27), as a cross-linguistically typical semantic change, may be seen in effect here in Greek, where the more objective, narrative-embedded, infinitival or participial structures that follow verbs that indicate saying or perception as their verbal heads are increasingly replaced by this kind of ὅτι- ‘that’ or similar clauses (Edwin Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit* [Band 2:1 Satzlehre. Berlin, 1926], pp. 296ff.; G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* [London-New York, 2007], pp. 92-96) of more subjective meaning.

⁴⁴ ‘Back to the Future,’ pp. 26-29, and *The Evolution of Grammar*, p. 254.

⁴⁵ See also Shana Poplack and Elisabete Malvar (‘Elucidating the Transition Period in Linguistic Change,’ *Probus* 19:1 [2007], pp. 121-169) on Portuguese and Aaron (‘Pushing the Envelope,’ pp. 1-36) on Spanish. The so-called FUTAGES, or pathways to future (Bybee *et al.*, ‘Back to the Future,’ pp. 26-33; Bybee, *et al.*, *The Evolution of Grammar*, pp. 253-266):

desire					probability
	>	intention	>	future	>
obligation					imperative
ability	>	root possibility	>	future	>
					possibility

available anymore, and the volitionality of the modal diminishes. Markopoulos views this as a development in Classical period.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the second- and third-person instances, in which intention is not so clearly visible, invite the prediction reading by inference or conversational implicature.⁴⁷ The infinitive complement may also occur in the passive voice, which distances the reader from the actual agent (μέλλει τινος στερεῖσθαι ‘he is to be deprived of something’), or the lexical meaning of the infinitive may be one that does not generally allow an intention reading, although the subject may be animate (for example, μέλλω ἀποθνήσκειν ‘I am about to die’), as in (23).⁴⁸

- (23) Κύρος μὲν δοκέων οἱ Δαρεῖον ἐπιβουλεύειν ἔλεγε τάδε· τῷ δὲ ὁ δαίμων προέφαινε ὡς αὐτὸς μὲν τελευτήσειν (FUT.INF) αὐτοῦ ταύτη μέλλοι (PRES.OPT), ἡ δὲ βασιληίη αὐτοῦ περιχωρεοί ἐς Δαρεῖον. (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.210) ‘Cyrus said this, thinking that Darius was plotting against him; but in fact, heaven was showing him that he himself was to die in the land where he was and Darius inherit his kingdom.’

In (24), the general has to learn about his situation just because he is not fully in control of what or whom he will meet.

- (24) κάλλιστον δὲ οὖν τὸ γινώσκειν αὐτὸν..., πρὸς δὲ τούτοις, δι’ ὧν μέλλει (PRES.IND) καὶ μεθ’ ὧν πράττειν (PRES.INF). (Polyb. 9.14.2) ‘It is of course far best for a general to be himself acquainted...as well as with the people by whose agency and in concert with whom he is going to act.’

⁴⁶ Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, p. 21. Agentivity (or animacy) is an operating factor mentioned in several studies when a grammatical form is spreading to new contexts and uses; see Paul J. Hopper and Elizabeth Closs Traugott, *Grammaticalization* (Second edition; Cambridge, 2003), pp. 104-106; in connexion with the generalisation of grammatical function, Poplack and Malvar, ‘Elucidating the Transition Period,’ Jessi Elana Aaron, *Variation and change in Spanish future temporal expression* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico, 2006), and Aaron, ‘Pushing the Envelope.’ Aaron (*Variation and change*, pp. 43-45, 145) shows how Spanish future *ir a* + INF spread from animate to inanimate subjects, with the result that the intention meaning was bleached. With animate subjects, predictive meaning is still there.

⁴⁷ This is also true with English *will*; see Traugott and Dasher, *Regularity in Semantic Change*, p. 223; see also Bybee *et al.*, ‘Back to the Future,’ pp. 26-29 and Bybee, *et al.*, *The Evolution of Grammar*, p. 254.

⁴⁸ The μέλλω + INF AVC as a future-tense periphrasis is rare in Ptolemaic papyri (Mayser, *Grammatik der griechischen Papyri*, p. 226), even though all of his examples may have an intention/willingness interpretation as well (P.Par. 43.2; P.Petr. II.40.16; P.Par. 62.4). P.Rev.L. 50.8: ἐὰν δὲ τινες εισάγωσι πλέον οὐ μέλλουσιν (PRES.IND) ἀνηλώσ<ε>ιν (AOR.INF) ἕκαστος[τὴν]κατὰ σῶμα ἡμερῶν τριῶν ‘Any persons who import more than they need to consume each one per person for three days.’ On the Greek Pentateuch, see Trevor V. Evans, *Verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch* (Oxford, 2001), p. 227. For statistics on all of the AVCs, see Markopoulos, *Future in Greek*, pp. 48-49.

Consider the following from the Septuagint.

- (25) οἱ δὴ ὄρωντες τοὺς ἀστέρας ἀναγγειλάτωσάν σοι τί μέλλει (PRES.IND) ἐπὶ σὲ ἔρχεσθαι (PRES.INF) (*yiqtol*) (Isa 47:13) ‘those who watch the stars, let them declare to you what shall come upon you.’
- (26) εἰκὼν τοῦ μέλλοντος (PRES.PART) αὐτοὺς διαδέχεσθαι (PRES.INF) σκότους (Wisd 17:20) ‘an image of the darkness that was determined to receive them.’
- (27) οὐ προσδεχόμενος τὴν παρὰ τοῦ παντοκράτορος μέλλουσεν (PRES.PART) παρακολουθήσειν (FUT.INF) ἐπ’ αὐτῷ δίκην (2 Macc 8:11) ‘He was not expecting the judgment from the almighty that was about to overtake him.’

In (25)-(27), the subject is inanimate, and therefore not in control of the event indicated by the infinitive, even though in (27) the subject δίκη ‘justice’ functions as a sort of metaphoric agent that represents God and His divine justice. All of these instances are non-volitional, so the intention meaning is eliminated. It is more likely that the AVC encodes an expected future,⁴⁹ that is, the speaker’s personal conviction that the event will certainly take place.

APPARENT IMMINENCE

Μέλλω + INF has an ‘apparent imminence’ meaning as early as in Homer. By this I mean that the event as a whole, or its completion, has not yet taken place at the moment of speech, but it is already in progress. The sentence is independent of the actual speech situation and the hearer/addressee: the AVC occurs in a narration (as in [30]) or a report (as in [29]). The apparent imminence μέλλω + INF is event-oriented and non-volitional. These properties are present in the following examples. In the case of (28), an intention reading is allowed as well: the agent is a conscious, animate being completely in control of the action.⁵⁰

- (28) κᾶτα μέλλοντος (PRES.PART) λαβεῖν (AOR.INF) αὐτοῦ κύων ἀρπάσασα φεύγοι (Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 1159) ‘and the moment that he is about to stretch his hand to help himself, may a dog seize it and run off with it.’

⁴⁹ ‘Expected future’ refers to events that are expected to occur in the near future, Bybee, *et al.*, *The Evolution of Grammar*, pp. 249f. Note, ‘the sense...appears to be attributable to the presence of temporal expressions which locate the event in the future,’ p. 251.

⁵⁰ Further examples: ἦνίκα ἤμελλον (IMPF.IND) κοιμηθῆναι (AOR.INF), ἔγραψα ἐπιστόλια β (P.Cair.Goodsp. 3/Chr.Wilck. 50: iii BCE) ‘When I was about to go to bed, I wrote 2 letters’; [ἔμελλον] (IMPF.IND) δὲ ἀποδρᾶς ἐλθεῖν (AOR.INF.) πρὸς σὲ [-ca.-] [-] [-ca.-?] [-] ηνὸ-δωρος ἐκόλυσε με (P.Cair.Zen. 59080: 257 BCE) ‘I was about to run away and go to you [- -] Zenodoros prevented me (from doing so).’

- (29) τῆ δ' ὄη ἐστὶ τοῦ μετοπώρου μετὰ τὴν φυλλοβολίαν εὐθὺς λιπαρά τις καὶ ὥσπερ ἐπωδηκυῖα, καθαπερανεὶ μέλλουσα (PRES.PART) βλαστάνειν (PRES.INF), καὶ διαμένει τὸν χειμῶνα μέχρι τοῦ ἤρος (Theophr., *Hist.Plant.* 3.5.5) 'The service-tree of late autumn after it has shed its leaves is resinous and like swollen up, as if it is about to burst into leaves and remains through the winter until the spring.'
- (30) Ἐκτορα δῖον ἔτετμεν ἀδελφεὸν εὖτ' ἄρ' ἔμελλε (IMPF.IND) στρέψεσθ' (PRES.INF) ἐκ χάριος ὅθι ἦ ὀάριζε γυναικί (Iliad 6.515) 'Speedily then he overtook divine Hector, his brother, even as he was about to turn back from the place where he had dallied with his wife.'

This use of the auxiliary is also rather common in 2 and 4 Maccabees: it appears as an introduction to a speech or to another deed of a martyr who is about to die (2 Macc 6:30, 7:18, 4 Macc 6:26, 8:27⁵¹, 10:9; 17:1 [IMPF]). The lexical meaning of the INF is non-agentive and is often in the passive voice, for example, 'to die,' 'to become,' 'to faint,' or 'to be tortured.'

- (31) μέλλων (PRES.PART) δὲ ἀποθνήσκειν (PRES.INF) ἔφη (4 Macc 10:9) 'When he was about to die, he said'⁵²

This phrase narrates the martyrdom of the third of seven brothers. The intention reading is excluded; the experiencer surely does not intend to die. His death is caused by others. This is non-volitional. If compared with 4 Macc 12:15, the interpretation is different. Here, the subject actually longs for his own death. Yet the subject of the willingness in (31) is not the speaker/writer who is making this statement. Furthermore, the speech situation is distanced from the speaker/writer and the hearer: the auxiliary is used with event-oriented modality.

The realisation of the apparent imminence construction is, however, not used to present a coming event as a fact; therefore, this meaning is still modal. This becomes obvious when we consider instances in which the apparently imminent event is never actually realised, like in (32), 2 Macc 3:18 and 13:10.

- (32) ἐλεῆσαι δὲ καὶ τὴν καταφθειρομένην πόλιν καὶ μέλλουσαν (PRES.PART) ἰσόπεδον γίνεσθαι (MIDD.PRES.INF) καὶ τῶν καταβοώντων πρὸς αὐτὸν αἰμάτων εἰσακοῦσαι (2 Macc 8:3) '(They implored the Lord...) to have mercy on the city that was being destroyed and about to be levelled to the ground and hearken to the blood that cried out to him.'

⁵¹ In this example, the subject is about to be tortured.

⁵² ἀνὴρ γεωργός μέλλων (PRES.PART) τελευτᾶν (PRES.INF) ... ἔφη· (Aesopus et Aesopica, *Fabulae* 42) 'When a farmer was about to die ... he said.'

The unrealised imminence reading is still non-volitional and refers to conditions external to the speaker/writer and to the agent, but it is no longer as high on the scale of event-orientedness as the previous instances of apparent imminence. The realisation of the predicated event is still – in the temporal sequence of the text, that is in the reader’s/text’s ‘present moment’ – only a possibility in the minds of those who experience the events depicted in the text. The speaker/writer makes the addressee/reader participate in the distress of the events narrated. The use of AVC is speaker-oriented, and, thus, more subjectively motivated.

If we believe, as Narrog does concerning the Old Japanese *-be-si* modal marker,⁵³ that the apparent imminence meaning is also the source meaning through which μέλλω started out extending to deontic, possibility, and intention meanings, it would be tempting to posit the unrealised imminence cases as the point at which the possibility meaning developed. Thus, we may not only paraphrase (32) as ‘the city was about to be levelled,’ but also as ‘it seemed at that moment in the text that the city was going to be levelled’ or ‘it was a possibility at the moment in the text that....’

PROBABILITY/POSSIBILITY

According to the Liddell-Scott-Jones, μέλλω + INF indicates ‘estimated certainty or strong probability.’ However, it is often rather difficult to decide what the intended degree of certainty is. The ambiguity of such interpretation is instantiated in (33) and (34), from Magnien and the Liddell-Scott-Jones, respectively.

- (33) μέλλεις (PRES.IND) δὲ σὺ ἴδμεναι (PERF.INF) (*Odyss.* 4.200) ‘And you may have known him.’ (epistemic possibility)
 (34) μέλλω (PRES.IND) ποῦ ἀπεχθέσθαι (PRES.INF) Διὶ πατρὶ (*Iliad* 21.83) ‘I must surely be hateful to father Zeus.’ (epistemic/logical necessity)

In (33), the speaker either presumes that it is possible that the addressee knows his father, based solely on the fame of his father (‘him’) or, though less likely, deduces from his father’s fame that the speaker must have known him. The Loeb edition translates this as ‘and you may have known him,’ the Liddell-Scott-Jones as ‘doubtless thou knowest him,’ and Magnien as

⁵³ Heiko Narrog, ‘Modality and Grammaticalization in Japanese,’ *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 8 (2007), pp. 269-294, esp. 277-278.

‘(il est à presumer que tu le sais) tu dois le savoir.’ By way of contrast, (34) translates what the speaker has deduced from the hardships he has undergone. It seems that we are dealing with a continuum of meaning, like English *must* in Coates.⁵⁴ Moreover, the degree of speaker-orientedness of these cases is dependant upon whether the modal judgment is based on the speaker’s beliefs or on some law or custom. If the epistemic necessity/deontic probability propositions are true because there is some law of logic that makes them an obligation (in 2 Macc 13:10, the deduction obeys the law of fame, and in 2 Macc 3:18, it may be seen as following the divine order of the universe), these propositions draw closer to deonticity, in that they are also volitional (F being these laws) and, thus, more event-oriented. Consequently, it is possible that the epistemic necessity/deontic probability modal meaning arises from the older deontic meaning.⁵⁵

In Hellenistic Greek, I have found an interesting occurrence of μέλλω + INF with a strong deontic probability meaning, as illustrated in (35). The speaker presents his case as certain: he has concluded from the known facts that this is what must happen if the addressee is going to proceed as indicated. That the speaker has placed the AVC in a conditional clause highlights the very personal nature of his claim and conclusion, and puts the AVC high on the scale of speaker-orientation.

- (35) εἰ δὲ τοῦτον καταλαβὼν φρουρᾶ, πάσας ἀπολλύναι (PRES.INF) μέλλεις (PRES.IND) τὰς κροπόλεις καὶ τὴν φρουράν (Polyb. 7.12.6) ‘But if by seizing and garrisoning it you are sure to lose all other citadels and the garrison...’

In the Septuagint, this meaning appears in subordinate or interrogative structures. As noted earlier, questions often mark the factuality of a proposition as undetermined.⁵⁶

- (36) ἀλλ’ ἔστιν αὐτῷ φροντίς οὐχ ὅτι μέλλει (PRES.IND) κάμνειν (PRES.INF) (Wisd 15:9) ‘But his concern is not that his health may fail/he must die.’

⁵⁴ *The Semantics*, pp. 34-35; Narrog, ‘Modality, Mood, and Change,’ p. 687.

⁵⁵ This metonymic process, based on contiguity, is in line with Traugott and König’s (Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Ekkehard König, ‘The Semantics-Pragmatics of Grammaticalization Revisited,’ in Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Bernd Heine (eds.), *Approaches to Grammaticalization I* (TSL 19:1; Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 189-218, esp. 209) view of English *must* and its development from root to epistemic meanings; see also Tanja Mortelmans, ‘Modality in Cognitive Linguistics,’ in Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuyckens (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 867-889, esp. 876.

⁵⁶ Narrog, ‘Modality, Mood, and Change,’ p. 679.

- (37) μή και οὕτως μέλλει (PRES.IND) σωθῆναι (AOR.INF); ἐπάξω γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν φάραγγα Ἄραβας και λήμψονται αὐτήν (Isa 15:7) ‘Will she be saved? For I will bring Arabs to the ravine and they will take her?’

In (36), the intention and the prediction readings are clearly eliminated. The AVC encodes either epistemic possibility – we may paraphrase this as ‘it is possible that he is falling ill’ – or epistemic necessity, inferred from the conclusion that, in the end, everyone dies (κάμνειν, in a euphemistic sense). Both (37) and (Isa 28:24) are direct questions to which a negative answer is anticipated. From the translator’s point of view, the verbal construction indicates epistemic necessity, which is the only possible conclusion: ‘it must be impossible that x does y.’

In all of these instances, the AVC is clearly non-volitional and speaker-oriented: the writer is the speaker (he even speaks in first person in [37]) and uses Present tense, and the addressee is the reader (in dynamic relation). Thus, the text forms its own speech situation; though the speaker does not address the second person, he introduces a third figure as a prototypical person who is only present in the speech situation in psychological terms.

An interesting case appears in (38). Here, the past-tense form of the auxiliary distances the speaker and the addressee from the actual event, which already belongs to the past. The construction is not deontic. It is volitional to the extent that God wanted to give the law to his nation, but this fact is explicated nowhere in the text. It is not a ‘directive,’ either, because (i) the addressee is God himself and (ii) it is in the past tense. Therefore, it is most reasonable to take the construction as expressing the speaker’s personal conviction that what happened to Israel was actually part of God’s good plan. The use of the AVC comes close to (34). Thus, the AVC in (38) has a modal meaning of epistemic necessity/deontic probability.

- (38) δι’ ὧν ἠμελλεν (IMPF.IND) τὸ ἄφθαρτον νόμου φῶς τῷ αἰῶνι δίδοσθαι (PRES.INF) (Wisd 18:4) ‘Through whom the incorruptible light of the law was to be given to the world.’

CONCLUSION

In this article, I hope to have been able to demonstrate that the μέλλω-AVC was used in the Septuagint as it was used anywhere else in its contemporary Greek-speaking environment. It is not common in translated books because it does not have direct equivalents in the source language.

As Markopoulos has demonstrated for the papyri of the Hellenistic-Roman times, and as I have found for Menander and Hyperides, the Septuagint shows the same predilection for PRES.INF as the complement of μέλλω instead of FUT.INF of the Classical period. Nevertheless, I have not noticed any increase in the usage of the AOR.INF in the Septuagint, as was apparently the case in the papyri.

Furthermore, I have posited several meanings for Greek μέλλω-AVC, which also appear in the Septuagint. The most frequent meanings in Ancient Greek, as well as in the Septuagint, are intention/willingness ‘to be going to/intend,’ prediction ‘will,’ and apparent imminence ‘to be about to’; a little less frequent is deontic probability/(epistemic possibility) ‘must’/‘may’; deontic ‘should, have to, need’ is rare. This discussion has shown that there are not always clear-cut boundaries between these meanings, but that they are gradient. Moreover, μέλλω-AVC has both event-oriented and speaker-oriented, as well as volitional and non-volitional, uses. In this light, the semantic properties of the verb construction lend themselves very well to presentation on a semantic map. The maps in **Figures 1** and **2** are only tentative, based solely on the textual material presented in this article and on the cross-linguistic study of modality in languages of the world.⁵⁷

Figure 1 depicts connections through lines between meanings/uses of μέλλω. Note that the spatial distance in this semantic map does not necessarily correlate to semantic adjacency/remoteness. The first line, with intention meaning as the focus, represents the main line and the majority of uses in my data, while deontic instances are rare. The relationship between these has been covered earlier in this article.

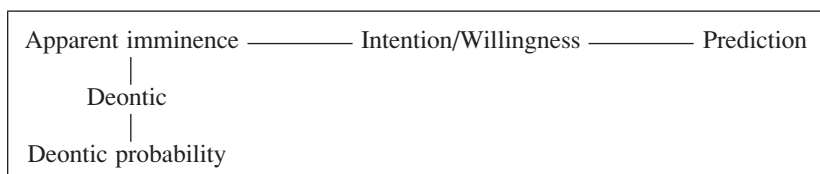


Fig. 1: Semantic map of μέλλω.

Figure 2 depicts the semantic mapping of the AVC as a spatial representation⁵⁸ in which smaller or bigger spatial distance represents the degree

⁵⁷ In particular, Bybee, *et al.* ‘Back to the Future,’ and *The Evolution of Grammar*; Traugott and Dasher, *Regularity in Semantic Change*; Narrog, ‘Modality, Mood, and Change,’ and Narrog ‘Modality and grammaticalization,’ pp. 277-278.

⁵⁸ See Narrog, ‘Modality, Mood, and Change,’ pp. 693-696.

of semantic adjacency or remoteness. In this two-dimensional space, the vertical axis shows the degree of speaker- vs. event-orientedness, while the horizontal line represents the degree of volitionality. This ‘semantic space’ also makes it possible to perceive the semantic overlap and/or gradience of these properties. In the map, the deontic probability reading should be considered less speaker-oriented and more volitional than the epistemic probability meaning, as discussed. Narrog argues that the diachronic path of modals does not so often go from root to epistemic modality as from event-oriented to speaker-oriented modality. This is represented in the vertical axis, in which the speaker-oriented directionality of the development is placed so that it represents an upward movement. The arrows demonstrate the direction of the diachronic development of the modal μέλλω. We are also able to perceive the path from non-volitional (apparent imminence) to volitional (deontic and intention/willingness) and back to non-volitional (intention/willingness, prediction, epistemic possibility/probability) modal meaning.

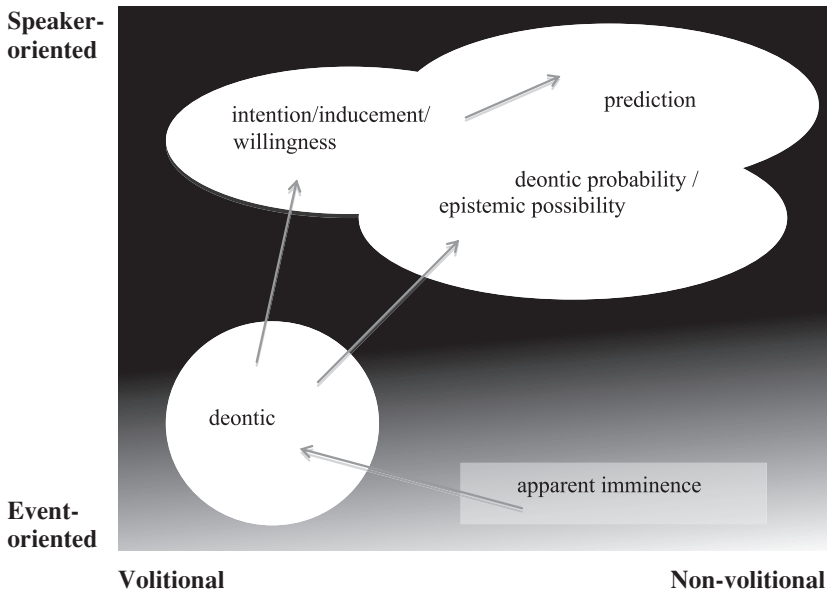


Fig. 2: Fitting in μέλλω + INF.

Now, both maps should be considered with care: not every instance or all the texts available are covered in this study, and all of these meanings are already attested in the earliest phases of Greek (except for prediction),

particularly the oldest use (according to **Figure 2**), apparent imminence, which is relatively common from Homer to the Papyri of the Hellenistic period. On the contrary, the deontic meaning is rare through all of these periods ('Archaic,' Classical, and Hellenistic). The newness of the prediction modal meaning makes it reasonable to posit that the deontic probability/epistemic possibility readings already attested in the earliest texts originated from the deontic meaning in the map in **Figure 2**.

I have demonstrated the polysemous character of the μέλλω-AVC and explained it as the result of a diachronic development that has parallels in other languages. I believe that the apparent imminence reading as the 'original meaning' of the μέλλω-AVC is justifiable because it explains the other meanings and contains, or rather anticipates, these other meanings. Also, I have shown that, once again, the Septuagint, albeit a translation for the most part, has proven itself an important corpus of texts for the study of Hellenistic Greek and a witness of the linguistic developments of the language. The μέλλω-AVC has no direct equivalent in the source text, but the translators used it, which shows both their talent as translators as well as the presence of this modal marker as part of their everyday Greek usage. This is a most suitable ending to my study, since Professor Anneli Aejmelaeus, to whom we offer this jubilee volume, has paved the way for these sorts of studies in her earlier translation technical studies on the Septuagint. Moreover, I would like to use this opportunity to warmly congratulate her on her sixty-fifth birthday.