From state to activity:
The diachrony of Ancient Greek verbs in *-eúō*

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1 Background: AG *-eúō* & the state/event ambiguity

- AG *-eúō* verbs are **denominal** verbs primarily derived from agent(ive)/animate nouns & nouns of profession (Marescotti & Romagno Forthcoming)
- Origin: denominal verbs from [+ANIM,+HUMAN] nouns in *-eús* ≈ 'pseudo-agent' verbs (Bleotu 2019; Xu et al. 2007: "act like *y*")
- Described in the literature as ambiguous between stative and eventive/activity readings (e.g., Schwyzer 1939:732)

(1) *Pémpe dè m' es Troíēn, kaí moi* (...) *epétellen aièn*
send.3SG.IPF PTCL me.ACC to Troy.ACC and me.DAT command.3SG.IPF always
aristeúein *kaì hupeírokhon émmenai állōn*
be.best.PRS.INF and preeminent.ACC be.PRS.INF other.GEN.PL
"He sent me to Troy and charged me to always be the best and to be pre-eminent above all others." (*Il.* 207–8)

Fig. 1: Ancient Greek verbs in *-eúō*

	Verb		Derivational Base		Sem. classification
a.	*arist**eúō***	'be the best'	*arist**eús***	'best man'	AGENT
b.	*basil**eúō***	'be king; rule'	*basil**eús***	'king'	AGENT
c.	*listr**eúō***	'dig with a shovel'	*lístron*	'shovel'	INSTRUMENT
d.	*phut**eúō***	'plant'	*phutón*	'plant'	LOCATUM
e.	*ard**eúō***	'water'	*árdō*	'irrigate'	ACTIVITY VB
f.	*dīn**eúō***	'whirl'	*dínē*	'whirling'	ACTIVITY N
g.	*akh**eúō***	'grieve'	*ákhos*	'grief, pain'	SOURCE
h.	*orphan**eúō***	'rear orphans'	*orphanós*	'orphan'	ARGUMENT
i.	*stratoped**eúō***	'encamp'	*stratópedon*	'camp'	LOCATION
j.	*hagist**eúō***	'perform rites'	*hagisteía*	'rites'	PRODUCT
k.	*orth**eúō***	'set right'	*orthós*	'right'	SCOPE
l.	*nukh**eúō***	'spend the night'	*núks*	'night'	TIME

2 Research questions

- How do *aristeúō*, *basileúō*, etc. differ from *aristeús*, *basileús* ... *eimì*? (copula constr.; cf. Acedo-Matellán 2022)
- Is the stative/eventive ambiguity inherent to the derivational pattern or due to morphosyntactic/-semantic reanalysis?
- Is the stative/eventive ambiguity already present in the earliest attestations of *-eúō* verbs?
- Which diagnostics can we use to disentangle stative and eventive readings in corpus languages?

3 Methods

- Collection, type & token analysis of the Homeric (8th c. BCE) verbs in *-eúō* using the TLG (`https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/`)
- Collection & type analysis of verbs in *-eúō*, 7th–1st c. BCE
- Classification of types based on Marescotti (2024)
- Theoretical framework: Kimian vs. Davidsonian states, individual-level vs. stage-level diagnostics (Dowty 1979; Kratzer 2001; Maienborn 2005, 2007, 2019; Rothmayr 2009)

4 Data

- Homeric verbs in *-eúō* (types): **51**; total occurrences (tokens): **303**
- Homeric *-eúō* verbs derived from agent(ive)/animate nouns or nouns of profession: 27/51
- Other derivational bases (instrument, locatum, ...): 24/51

Fig. 2: Distribution of *-eúō* verbs & their bases per century

cent.	ag.	act.	instr.	lcv.	prod.	sc.	lct.	act. v.	tm.	arg.	sou.
VIII	**31**	7	7	5	3	1	2	1	1	0	2
VII	**11**	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
VI	**36**	6	9	1	4	4	0	2	0	2	0
V	**41**	0	17	6	6	5	5	1	1	4	1
IV	**21**	2	4	0	4	2	0	1	1	0	1

5 Davidsonian (D) vs. Kimian (K) states

- Davidsonian states: spatio-temporal entities with functionally integrated participants, e.g., Engl. *sit*, *stand*, *lie*, *wait*, *gleam* → STAGE-LEVEL (SL)
- Kimian states: abstract objects, exemplify a property P at a holder x and a time t, e.g., Engl. *weigh*, *be intelligent*, *resemble* → INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL (IL)

Fig. 3: Diagnostics for D- vs. K-states & their adaption to AG

	D	K	AG equivalent
PROGRESSIVE	yes	no	—
IMPERATIVE	yes	no	ipv. mood; *mḕ* + inf.
COMPL. OF FORCE/PERSUADE	yes	no	*epitéllō*, *ánōga* 'order'
COMPL. OF "WHAT HAPPENED"	yes	no	*tunkhánō* 'happen'
HABITUAL READING	yes	state	*-ske/o-* (iterative pret.)
PSEUDO-CLEFT CONSTRUCTION	yes	no	(rel.-correl. constructions)
MANNER MOD.	yes	no	*émpedon* 'firmly'
			atrekéōs 'precisely'
LOCATIVE MOD.	yes	no	*autóthi* 'on the spot'
			apáneuthen 'far away'
TEMPORAL MOD.	yes	no	*aeí* 'always', *nûn* 'now'
COMPL. OF PERCEPTION VBS	yes	no	*horáō* 'see'
CLOSED UNDER COMPL.	no	yes	(P & ¬P = K-states)

6 Homeric *-euō* verbs: D. or K. states?

Fig. 4: K./D. states diagnostics applied to Homeric deagentive *-eúō* verbs

MANNER MOD.	4/177
LOCATIVE MOD.	4/177
TEMPORAL MOD.	8/177
COMPL. OF PERCEPTION VBS	1/177
IMPERATIVE	4/177
COMPL. OF FORCE/PERSUADE VBS	9/177
ITERATIVE (*-ske/o-*)	8/177

- Homeric 'deagentive' *-eúō* verbs are Davidsonian states/SL predicates

7 Analysis: Homeric *-euō* verbs and agentivity

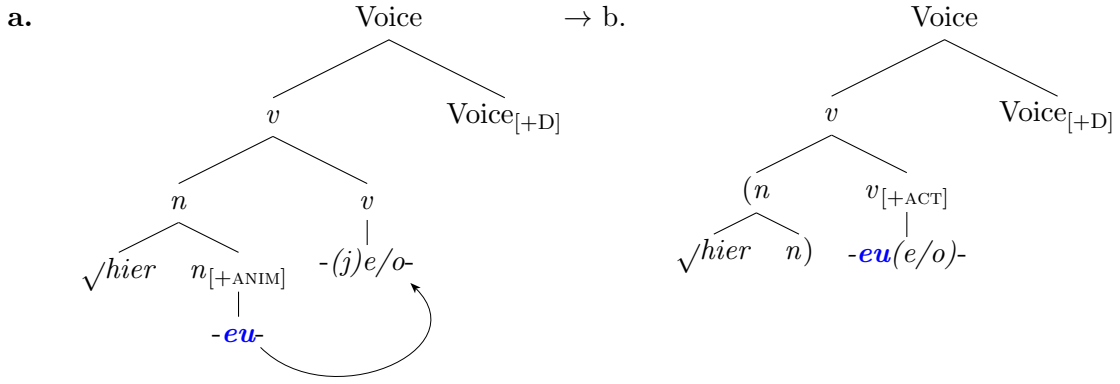
- A group of *-euō* verbs admit direct objects already in Homer, e.g., *hiereúō* 'to sacrifice' (*hiereús* 'priest', *tà hierà* 'offerings'), (2a).
- Of 132 tot. occurrences of these verbs, 64 involve a direct object (THEME/UNDERGOER) → active accomplishment verbs
  - can be **passivized**, (2b)
  - form **agent nouns**: *boul**eú**ō* 'counsel' → *boul**eu**-tḗs* 'counselor'; *ēperop**eú**ō* 'cheat' → *ēperop**eu**-tḗs* 'cheater', *thēr**eú**ō* 'hunt' → *thēr**eu**-tḗs* 'hunter' *toks**eú**ō* 'shoot with a bow' → *toks**eu**-tḗs* 'archer' (only PRODUCT/INSTR vbs)

(2) a. *Kaì ennéa boûs* ***hiéreu-s-en***
and nine oxen.ACC.PL sacrifice-PFV-3SG.ACT
"And he sacrificed nine oxen." (*Il.* 6.174)

b. *Toîsi d' óïs* (...) *en klisíēi* ***hiéreuto***
they.DAT PTCL ram.NOM in hut.DAT sacrifice.PRF.3SG.MID
"A ram (...) lay slaughtered in the hut for them" (*Il.* 24.125)

- **Proposal**: the [+ANIM, +HUMAN] feature associated with nominal *-eu-* was reanalyzed as belonging to the verbalizer → agentive activity verbs (Grestenberger 2023, cf. Fig. 5)
- The new activity verbalizer *-eú-* was then extended to denominal verbs from instrument, product, etc., bases → tr. act./ accomplish. verbs

Fig. 5: Reanalysis of AG nominal *-eu-* in Davidsonian/SL verbs



8 Conclusion

- Homeric -*euō* verbs are 1) Davidsonian states/SL predicates, 2) agentive activity verbs, 3) trans. act./accomplishments
- The features [+ANIM, +HUMAN] of the originally denominal SL verbs were reanalyzed as belonging to vP → activity/accomplishment verbalizer
- This must have happened already before the Homeric stage — an inherent ambiguity of "deagentive"/pseudo-agent verbs?
- Further analysis of -*euō* verbs in the following centuries needed to establish to what extent the original D. state/SL reading was preserved

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