

The ending of the PIE 2 sg. middle imperative

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To the student of the IE verb, the forms of the imperative in the daughter languages offer special challenges and rewards. Challenges, because imperatives everywhere are subject to frequently confusing “irregular” developments – sporadic shortenings, as in Eng. *c'mere* (for *come here!*), or Lat. *fac* ‘do!’, *dīc* ‘say!’, *dūc* ‘lead!’ (for expected *face*, *dīce*, *dūce*); sporadic lengthenings, as in Ved. *bhārā* ‘bear!’ (for *bhāra*) or *śraṣat* lit. ‘let him hear’ (ritual cry; for *śroṣat*); and unetymological particle accretions, as in Ved. *gṛhāṇá* ‘seize!’ (i.e., **gṛhā* (< **-gḥ₂*) + *na*) or Lith. *dúok(i)* ‘give!’ (i.e., **duo* + *ki*). But there are compensating rewards. Owing to its functional isolation from other verb forms, the imperative is often the repository of significant archaisms. One need only think, e.g., of Balto-Slavic, where the imperative is the sole surviving reflex of the PIE optative, or of Anatolian, where a handful of “*si*-imperatives” like Hitt. *paḥši* ‘protect!’ are all that remain, in slightly disguised form, of the PIE subjunctive (see below).

Unlike the subjunctive and optative, which had distinct mood signs (**-e/o-* and **-i(é)h₁-*, respectively), the PIE imperative was formally marked only by its endings, which partly overlapped with those of the indicative. In the second person, which alone will concern us here, the active forms are unproblematic. The 2 sg. had a zero ending in thematic stems (cf. **bhére* ‘bear!’, **pṛ(k)ské* ‘ask!’, etc.), and either zero or **-dhí* – presumably with some no longer recoverable difference of style or peremptoriness – in athematic stems (cf. **h₁éi* and **h₁idhí* ‘go!’, **k₁nú* (**-néu?*) and **k₁nudhí* ‘hear!’). There were no choices in the plural or dual, where the imperative endings were simply those of the indicative/injunctive (pl. **bhérete*, **h₁ité*, etc., du. **bhéretom*, **h₁itóm*).

The middle presents a broadly similar picture; here too the plural and dual used the indicative/injunctive endings, while the 2 sg. had an ending of its own. But the form of this latter morpheme is unknown. The individual languages offer a bewildering variety of potential reflexes, the most important of which are tabulated below:¹

BRANCH	PREFORM	APPEARING AS
Indo-Iranian	* <i>-(u)ya</i>	Ved. <i>-sva, -sua</i> ; Av. <i>-y^hha, -huuā, -šuuā</i>
Greek	* <i>-so</i>	Gk. <i>-[σ]o</i>
Anatolian	* <i>-h₂u(-dhi)</i>	Hitt. <i>-(h)hut</i>
Italic	* <i>-so</i>	Lat. <i>-re</i>
Tocharian	* <i>-ār</i>	Toch. A <i>-ār, B -ar</i>
Celtic	* <i>-tiā-?, *-tijo-?</i>	Old Ir. <i>-t(h)e</i>

As even the most seasoned practitioner will observe, this is not an encouraging array of data for an exercise in the comparative method. Indeed, so radically dissimilar are the endings that occupy the 2 sg. middle imperative slot in the daughter languages that the PIE ending that stood in this position can fairly be called the most obscure desinence in the entire PIE verbal system.

Even a difficult body of data, however, can be approached in more and less promising ways. If there was a PIE 2 sg. middle imperative ending at all – and it is hard to see how there could *not* have been – then something of its original form should still be recoverable from the data set above. But how can we tell which of these endings preserve old material and which are completely new? One possible method would be to look for etymological clues, drawing on the fact that the middle had a common inner-IE origin with two other PIE categories, the perfect and the *h₂e*-conjugation.² In this way we might hope to “triangulate” the form of the 2 sg. middle imperative ending from its perfect and *h₂e*-conjugation “cognates” – just as we might, e.g., (correctly) posit a 3 pl. middle ending **-ro* on the strength of the 3 pl. perfect in **(ē)r*. In practice, however, this approach is not helpful. The 2 sg. imperative ending in the perfect was **-dhí* (cf. Ved. *viddhí*, Gk. *ἴσθι* ‘know!’, *ἄνωχθι* ‘order!’, etc.), an import from the active. Nothing of interest can be gathered from the corresponding *h₂e*-conjugation ending, which can provisionally be set up as **-ē*.³

Our only recourse, therefore, is to examine the attested 2 sg. middle imperative endings individually. The most obviously unoriginal member of the set is CToch. **-ār*. Within the overall framework of Tocharian grammar, this

¹ No notice is taken of Armenian, where the 2 sg. middle imperative (e.g., *berir* ‘be carried!’) is historically an active imperative (*-(r < *-dhi)* built to the middle stem (*beri- < *bher-ēje/o-?*)).

² For the definition of this category see Jasanoff (2003, 64 ff. *et passim*).

³ Cf. Jasanoff (2003, 105 ff.). The identification of **-ē* as the ending is based on the conjecture that Ved. *siá* ‘bind!’, *chyá* ‘cut!’, etc. along with Hitt. *tīya* ‘put on!’, were originally the 2 sg. imperatives of *i*-presents **sh₂(e)h₁-i-*, **sk(e)h₂-i-*, **dh(é)h₁-i-*, etc.

ending (cf., e.g., A *ppāšār* ‘protect!’, *pāklār* (= B *pkalar*) ‘bring!’) is simply the active imperative in **-ā* (A *-*, B *-a*; Krause and Thomas’ “class I”) suffixed by the ubiquitous middle marker **-r*.⁴ Nothing about the combination **-ār* is old. The PIE particle **-r*, originally the *hic et nunc* marker of the middle, was clearly *not* part of the formal expression of the imperative in the parent language, as can be seen from its non-appearance in the imperative in the other “*r*-languages” – Hittite (*-(h)hut*), Latin (*-re < *-so*), and Old Irish (*-(h)e*). The **-ā* of the active imperative, like the **-ā-* of the Tocharian subjunctive and preterite, is a generalized stem vowel, ultimately reflecting a vocalized root-final laryngeal.

Gk. *-[σ]o* likewise creates the impression of being unoriginal. At first glance, the agreement of this ending with Lat. *-re* might seem to justify setting up a PIE 2 sg. middle imperative in **-so*. But the value of the Greek : Latin equation is undercut for our present purposes by the fact that *-[σ]o* is also the 2 sg. middle secondary ending in Greek, as it probably once was in Italic as well.⁵ Since, as we have seen, the non-singular second person imperative and secondary endings were identical in PIE (cf., e.g., Gk. 2 pl. act. *-τε*, mid. *-σθε*; 2 du. act. *-τον*, mid. *-σθον*, all with both functions), it would have been a simple matter for the 2 sg. indicative/injunctive ending **-so* to be independently extended to the imperative in two daughter languages, replacing the unknown “real” ending and creating the illusion of a PIE inheritance. The agreement between the two classical languages, while interesting, is not robust enough to build on.

The third ending whose synchronic embeddedness suggests a late origin is Old Ir. *-(h)e*, in Old Irish terms the 2 sg. imperative ending of the deponent inflection. In the synchronic grammar of Old Irish, *-the* [-θ’e] is inseparable from the corresponding deponent present ending *-ther* [-θ’er], from which it differs only in lacking the historical *hic et nunc* particle *-r* (cf. 2 sg. pres. *suidigther* ‘you put’, impv. *suidigthe*, etc.). The detailed history of these forms is obscure. Etymologically, the 2 sg. present ending should have been **-(h)ar* [-θar] < **-tar < *-th₂e + r*, with unpalatalized *-θ-* (cf. Toch. A *-tār*, Hitt. *-(t)ta, -(t)tati, -(t)tari*);⁶ the palatalization seen in *-ther* may have been generalized from the weak *ī*-verbs (Thurneysen’s class A II), where palatali-

⁴ The symbol *ā* in Tocharian transliterations and reconstructions is a notation for [a]. There is no contrastive vowel length in Tocharian.

⁵ The *o*-timbre is recoverable from the ending of OLat. 2 sg. subj. *utarus < *-so + -s*.

⁶ *-(t)ta*, with regular loss of final *-r* after an unstressed vowel, is the phonologically correct form; cf. Yoshida (1990, 117 ff.).

zation was regular in forms that underwent syncope.⁷ Under one hypothetical scenario, the secondary ending corresponding to pre-Irish **-tar* would have been **-tās* (cf. Ved. **-thāh*), a termination independently needed in Old Irish to account for the 2 sg. imperfect ending *-tha* (cf. *no·suidigthea* ‘you would put’, etc.).⁸ If the use of **-tās* was extended to the imperative in pre-Irish times (cf. the discussion of **-so* above), the 2 sg. middle imperative ending would have appeared in Old Irish as **-tha* – not identical with the actual ending *-the*, but similar enough for *-the* to be explainable as an analogical alteration of **-tha* under the influence of the 2 sg. present in *-ther*. Many variants of this picture can be imagined, none of them requiring particular attention here.⁹ For our present purposes the central point is the observation with which we began – that the ending *-the* is too easily generated within its own synchronic system to be of any value as evidence for the form of the 2 sg. middle imperative ending in PIE.

From a purely aprioristic point of view, the 2 sg. middle imperative endings that are likeliest to preserve inherited material are the two that are least amenable to an “internal” explanation, namely, Ilr. **-s(u)ya* and Hitt. *-(h)hūt*. Neither has a credible etymology. Ilr. **-s(u)ya* is sometimes identified with the reflexive pronoun **s(u)ya-* (Ved. *svá-*, etc.), but this is extremely unlikely; PIE was not a language with “reflexive verbs” of the modern Romance, Slavic, and Scandinavian type, and reflexive paraphrases of the middle are almost non-existent in early Indo-Iranian. In Hittite, *-(h)hūt* represents earlier **-(h)hu*, with the imperative particle *-t* (< **-dhi*) added from the verbs in *-nu-*, where it was historically and synchronically regular (cf. 2 sg. impv. *arnut* ‘bring!’ : pres. *arnuzi*, like Ved. *śṛṇuḥi* ‘hear!’ : *śṛṇóti*, etc.). Since no 2 sg. middle imperatives are attested in Luvian, Palaic, or their later congeners, **-(h)hu* is the earliest recoverable version of the 2 sg. middle imperative ending in Anatolian; in the absence of information to the contrary, it can be considered an approximation to the Proto-Anatolian form.

⁷ Just such a generalization of *-ther* for *-thar* (: OW *-tor*) is commonly assumed for the 3 sg. passive; cf. Kortlandt (1981, 131 note 5).

⁸ This, at any rate, seems the least *unlikely* of the various explanations that have been proposed for this ending. A middle origin is suggested by the 3 sg. impf. in *-d* (*no·suidiged*), probably < **-to*.

⁹ Analogical influence could also, of course, have operated in the other direction, with *-the*, the imperative ending, lending its vocalism to *-ther*. If so, a form like *suidigthe* ‘put!’ could even have been of nominal origin (< **-tijom* ‘ponendum est’?).

It is natural to wonder about the relationship, if any, between the **-(h)hu* of the pre-Hittite middle imperative and the second element of the isolated Hittite form *ehu*, the irregular 2 sg. active imperative of *ue-/uwa-* ‘come’ (3 sg. *uezzi* < *u-* + **heiti* ‘goes’). The *-hu* of *ehu* is a displaced preverb ‘hither, her’, functionally if not etymologically equivalent to the *u-* of Hitt. 3 sg. *uezzi* and the *aw-* of Luv. 3 sg. *awiti* ‘comes’.¹⁰ Despite the formal identity of the two *-hu* morphemes,¹¹ it is very doubtful that a particle with the lexical meaning ‘hither’ – and hence with first person deixis – could have been specialized as an imperative marker of the *second* person. *ehu* cannot, therefore, be seen as the etymological “key” to **-(h)hu*, though this does not preclude the possibility that the two **-hu*’s, once in place, might have been secondarily felt to be the same by native speakers (see note 20).

The affinities of pre-Hitt. **-(h)hu*, in my view, were not in fact with *ehu*, but with the corresponding Indo-Iranian ending **-s(u)ya*. The claim of this paper is that the common source of pre-Hitt. **-(h)hu* and Ilr. **-s(u)ya* was a PIE ending **-sh₂(u)yo*.

There was a time in the history of Indo-European scholarship when the reconstruction of a PIE ending with a cluster of three consonants might have seemed contrived or speculative. But the idea that all PIE inflectional and derivational suffixes were phonologically “simple” has long been obsolete; the *coup de grace* to this notion was delivered by Klingenschmitt’s demonstration (1975, 159 ff.) that the present middle participle suffix – the element traditionally reconstructed **-meno-/mono-/mno-* – was actually a PIE formative **-mh₁no-*. In general structure, a 2 sg. **-sh₂yo* with Sievers variant **-sh₂uyo* would comport beautifully with the well-established 2 pl. ending **-dh(u)ye* (or **-dh(u)yo?*),¹² and particularly well with pre-Gk. **-sdh₂ue*, the

¹⁰ Cf. Oettinger (1979, 132) and Melchert (1994 *passim*), who assume that the *u-* of *uezzi* and the *-hu* of *ehu* are simply different morphemes. But attempts have been made to derive them from a common prototype.

¹¹ Or more exactly, their formal *equatability*. The *-b-* of *ehu*, unlike the *-(h)h-* of *-(h)hūt*, is never written double, but **-(h)h-* would regularly have been lenited to *-b-* after the accented root **h₁éi-*.

¹² **-dh(u)ye*, with **-e*, is likelier than **-dh(u)yo*. Favoring **-o* are Hitt. *-(d)duma(ri)* (= Luv. *-tuwari*), and the supposed fact that “*o*-vocalism seems to be general in the middle endings” (thus Sihler 1995, 478). But the Anatolian endings (including *r*-less *-(d)duma*) go back to remade preforms in **-or*, while the alleged association of **-o* with the middle voice holds only for the third person. Speaking for **-e* are Gk. *-σθε*, Toch. A *-c*, and OIr. *-(i)d [-ð]* (the latter two with palatalization), and the principle of the *lectio difficilior*, which favors the less “middle-looking” **-dh(u)ye*.

sigmatized form of the ending seen in Gk. -σθε. The reconstruction $*-sh_2(u)uo$ will ultimately have to be judged by how well or poorly it accounts for the 2 sg. middle imperative endings that constitute our primary data. It cannot, however, be faulted *a priori* on grounds of phonological typology or morpheme structure.

In Indo-Iranian, the treatment of $*-sh_2(u)uo$ would have been completely straightforward. The long Sievers variant would have given $*-suua$ directly, whence Vedic disyllabic *-sua* (*-sua*) and Avestan disyllabic *-huuā* (*-šuuā*). Vedic monosyllabic *-sua* (*-sua*) and YAv. *-ŋha* reflect the short Sievers variant. Here the key phonetic development would have been the simplification of $*-sh_2uo$ to $*-suo$ via “Saussure-Hirt’s Law” – the inner-PIE sound change by which laryngeals were lost in tautosyllabic sequences of the type $*-HRo-$ and $*-oRH-$. In consequence of this rule, every IE language would have inherited the 2 sg. middle imperative ending in two forms – $*-suo$ after light, and $*-sh_2uuo$ after heavy syllables. Both variants are attested in Indo-Iranian. In Anatolian the only variant to survive was $*-sh_2uuo$; it became the source, as we shall see, of pre-Hitt. $*(h)hu$ and Hitt. $-(h)hu[t]$.

The unobvious, but in fact quite natural development of $*-sh_2uuo$ to $*(h)hu$ involved two independent steps, the loss of the final vowel and the loss of the initial $*-s-$. The shortening of $*-sh_2uuo$ to $*(s)h_2u$ was a case of discourse-linked apocope as in Lat. *fac, dīc, dūc*; a more or less exact phonetic parallel can be seen in Tocharian B, where the 2 pl. middle ending (imperative and preterite) is *-i* < $*-dhu$ < $*-dhuu$.¹³ The more remarkable development – the disappearance of the $*-s-$ – must be viewed against the background of another innovation of Hittite, *viz.*, the extraction of the 2 sg. active imperative marker *-i* from earlier $*-si$. Hittite, as is well known, has an imperative ending *-i*, which is associated in a critical set of cases with roots in final *-š-*: cf., e.g., *ēšši* (for $*išši$) ‘perform!’, *karši* ‘cut off!’, *eši* ‘settle!’, and – most common by far – *pašši* ‘protect!’. In Jasanoff (2003, 183) I explained these forms as reanalyzed “*si*-imperatives,” i.e., haplogitized 2 sg. subjunctives of the type familiar from Indo-Iranian (e.g., Ved. *vākṣi* ‘convey!’ < $*uégħ-s-ŋi$; cf. Szemerényi 1966), Celtic (e.g., OIr. *at-ré* ‘arise!’ < $*-reg-s-ŋi$; cf. Jasanoff 1986), and Tocharian (B *pāklyaus*, A *pāklyoṣ* ‘hear!’ < $*klēu-s-ŋi$; cf. Jasanoff 1987, 94–106). From the point of view of a speaker of early Hittite, a form like *pašši* (: 3 sg. pres. *pašša(ri)*) was segmentable as *pašš-i*, with the *-š-* unambiguously assigned to the synchronic root *pašš-* (his-

¹³ Contrasting with Toch. A *-c* < $*-dhu$ or $*-dhe$ – the latter possibly adapted from $*-dhu$ under the influence of the 2 pl. active in $*-te$.

torically a present stem $*peh_2-s-$) and the *-i* interpreted as a desinence. This allowed the *-i* to spread, first to verbs with a similar morphological profile (cf. *iškalli* ‘cut off!’ : 3 sg. *iškallāri*; *šaliki* ‘touch!’ : 3 sg. *šaliga(ri)*), and then more generally (cf., e.g., *hani* ‘draw (water)!’, *kuenni* ‘kill!’, *nāhi* ‘fear!’).¹⁴ A close typological parallel, though on a smaller scale, can be quoted from Vedic Sanskrit, where the historical *si*-imperative *jōṣi* ‘enjoy!’ (< $*jōs-ŋi$; root *juṣ-*) was resegmented *jōṣ-i*, and the resulting “*i*-imperative” was extended to the morphologically parallel roots *yudh-* ‘fight’ (impv. *yódhi*) and *budh-* ‘awake’ (impv. *bódhi*).¹⁵

The process by which the middle imperative ending $*-sh_2uuo/*-šhu[t]$ was replaced by *s*-less $*-h_2uuo/(h)hu[t]$ was parallel to, and partly connected with, the change of $*-si$ to *-i* in the active. One of the commonest 2 sg. middle imperatives in Hittite is *ēšhut* ‘sit (down)!’ (root *ēš-*),¹⁶ a sequence which, taken at face value, would have invited the parsing *ēš-hu[t]* for “correct” *ēš-šhu[t]*. Another highly visible and ambiguous form is *nešhut* ‘turn (intrans.)!’ (later *naišhut*; root *nai-* ‘turn (trans. and intrans.)’), built to the synchronic stem *neš-inaiš-*. *nešhut* is also important in another respect: it is the medial “partner” of a lost active *si*-imperative $*nēši$ ‘turn (trans.)!’, the Hittite counterpart of the Vedic *si*-imperative *nēsi* (: *nī-* ‘lead’) < PIE $*nēiH-s-ŋi$. The relationship of *nešhut* (mid.) to pre-Hitt. $*nēši$ /Ved. *nēsi* (act.) is thus the same as that of medialized *si*-imperatives like Ved. *yákṣva* to *yákṣi* (root *yaj-* ‘sacrifice’), *rāsva* to *rāsi* (: *rā-* ‘bestow’), and – of special interest because of the correlation of voice with transitivity – *mātsva* ‘become intoxicated’ to *mātsi* ‘intoxicate’ (root *mad-*). Pairs of the type *nešhu[t]* : $*nēši$ must have been prominent enough in the early history of Hittite for a back-

¹⁴ This account of the Hittite “*i*-imperative” is contested by Oettinger (2006: 44 f.), who sees the locus of *-i* in the forms *karši* and *huitti* ‘pull!’. He takes these to be the phonologically regular imperatives (< $*-ije$) of the present stems *karšiya-* (beside *karš-*) and *huittiya-* (beside *huett-*, *huitti-*). But it is hardly credible that *karši* and *huitti* go back to preforms in $*-ije$; if they did, *-i* would also occasionally have been found – as it is not – in the imperative of other, more normal verbs in *-iya-*. The stems *karšiya-* and *huittiya-* are anything but normal: *karšiya-* (in the odd spelling *kar-aš-ši-i-iz-zi*) is a hapax beside usual *karš-*; *huittiya-* does not exist at all in Old Hittite, where the relevant stem form is athematic (cf. 3 sg. pret. middle *huittiyati*). Even if the *-i* in these forms could have come from $*-ije$, Oettinger’s theory would fail to account insightfully for the special status of *pašši* or the more general association of the imperative in *-i* with roots and stems in $*-s-$. See further below.

¹⁵ As detailed in Jasanoff (2002).

¹⁶ The meaning is ‘sit down’ with the particle *-za*, ‘sit’ otherwise.

formed transitive *ēši* 'settle!' to be built to *ēšhut* 'sit!'.¹⁷

ēšhut and *nešhut* were not the only Hittite forms that would have supported the resegmentation **-sh₂u_o/ *-šhu[t] → *-s-h₂u_o/ *-š-hu[t]*. The verbs "sit," "stand," and "lie" pattern alike in many languages, including Hittite, where all three are represented by root deponents. Parallel to *ēša(ri)* 'sits' is *kitta(ri)* 'lies' (: PIE **k₁ei-*; cf. Luv. 3 sg. *ziyar*, Ved. *sáye*, Greek κείραι 'id.'). with a 2 sg. imperative that theoretically ought to have been **kišhut* < **k₁ei-sh₂u_o*. In fact, however, *kišhut* is the imperative not of *ki-*, but of another common deponent, *kiš-* 'become' (3 sg. *kiša(ri)*). The verbs *kiš-* and *ki-* were morphological twins, differing only in the presence vs. absence of *-š-* (cf. pres. 3 sg. *kiša* : *kitta* (for **kiya*), 3 pl. *kišanta* : *kianta*, etc.); the parallelism extends even to the 2 pl. imperative, where *kišdumat* 'become!' (with *-š-*) contrasts with (Old Hittite) *kiddumati* 'lie!' (without *-š-*).¹⁸ Against this background, it is almost inconceivable that 2 sg. *kišhu[t]* 'become!' and **kišhu[t]* 'lie!' could have remained homophones. The latter form was evidently remade to **kišhu[t]*,¹⁹ and the pattern of "sit" (*ēš-* : *ēšhu[t]*) and "lie" (*ki-* : **kišhu[t]*) was extended to "stand" (*ar-* : *arhu[t]*, replacing **aršhu[t]*). **-(h)hu[t]*, the *s*-less variant of the ending, was thenceforth free to spread at the expense of older **-šhu[t]*.²⁰

First impressions notwithstanding, then, Hitt. *-(h)hut*, Ved. *-sva*, *-sua*, and Av. *-ṛha*, *-huuā*, etc. can be traced to a common preform **-sh₂(u)u_o*. The hypothesis of a PIE **-sh₂(u)u_o* is easily squared with the facts outside Anato-

¹⁷ *ēši* can thus be described as an *analogical si*-imperative, built on the model of **nēši* and other forms now lost, but not itself haplogogized from a subjunctive in **-s-e-si*.

¹⁸ How far back in time the "twinship" reaches depends, *inter alia*, on the etymology of *kiš-*. LIV (184) compares *kiš-* with OS *kērian* 'turn (tr.)' (: **g₁eis-* or **geis-*), preferring this etymology to a connection with Ved. *ceṣṭati* 'moves' (: **keis-*). Neither comparison is impossible, but neither is compelling.

¹⁹ *kišhut* 'lie!' is apparently unattested, but its existence can hardly be doubted.

²⁰ To be sure, there was one respect in which the propagation of *-(h)hu[t]* in the middle would have been less straightforward than the spread of *-i* in the active. The spread of *-i* did not entail the suppression of an older form in **-š_i*, while the extension of *-(h)hu[t]* to a verb like *iya-* 'march' would have meant the replacement of inherited **iyašhu[t]* (*vel sim.*) by newer *iyahhu[t]*. Yet *-(h)hu[t]* did spread, possibly receiving further impetus from *ehu* 'come!' (see above), which would have added to the acceptable "feel" of *-(h)hu*; and from **wešhut* 'wear!' (: *weš(š)-*), another segmentally ambiguous form of the type of *ēšhut*, *nešhut*, and *kišhut*. It may also have been relevant that in the iteratives in *-ške/a-*, the replacement of a form like **uškašhut* 'look!' by *uškašhut* (*uš-ga-aḥ-hu-ut* KUB XIX 34, etc.) would have provided welcome dissimulatory relief from the awkward sequence [-skasx-].

lian and Indo-Iranian. As we have seen, two of the endings in the other branches, Toch. **-ār* and OIr. *-the*, are best explained at the sub-IE level. The case of Gk. *-[σ]o* and Lat. *-re* < **-so*, however, is more interesting. These endings *are* explainable dialectally (cf. above); this is why they have played so little role in our discussion thus far. But it is significant that both can also easily be taken from **-suo* < **-sh₂u_o*. A change of **-suo* to **-so* can be assumed *gratis* in Latin, since sequences of the type **-Cwo-* gave **-Co-* in all environments in this language (cf. *somnus* 'sleep' < **swopnos* < **swepnos*; *cum* < **com* < **quom*; etc.). In Greek, the situation is more complicated; in thematic and other vowel-final stems, at least, **-swo* would have given Common Greek **-hwo*, with preserved **-w-*. But it is less clear what would have happened in consonantal stems. Here a selective triconsonantal cluster rule – a rule that took, e.g., **dek-swo* to **dek-so* (δέξο 'await!'), with subsequent identification of the new **-so* with the secondary ending – is by no means out of the question. And even in the absence of such a rule, confusion of **-swo* with **-so* could easily have come about through learner error in the acquisition process.²¹

Thus, with four probable reflexes in the daughter languages, **-sh₂(u)u_o* seems as strong a candidate for the 2 sg. middle imperative ending as we are ever likely to find.

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²¹ Many specific environments, especially clusters containing a labial (e.g., **-k^wsw-*) or preceded by a rounded vowel (e.g., **-uksw-*), would have conduced to the mishearing of **-swo* as **-so*. Since the error would have been "useful!" in the sense of yielding a simpler grammar, it would have tended to be perpetuated.

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