

PAPERS.

The Optative Mode in Hellenistic Greek.

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BEFORE inquiring to what extent and for what purposes the optative mode is used in *Hellenistic* Greek, it is proper to ascertain its use in other Greek writings. And here we may remark that this mode plays a most important part in all the classic Greek writers from Homer to Plutarch; and while the subjunctive mode has four tenses, the present, perfect, and the two aorists, the optative has five, the imperfect, pluperfect,¹ the two aorists, and the future.

The optative mode in classic Greek is used to express a supposition, possibility, purpose, wish, a mild command, and indirect discourse. But this wide use of the mode became greatly contracted in the degeneracy of the language, and has entirely disappeared from modern Greek.

Xenophon, in his first Book of Anabasis, consisting of about thirty-seven pages, uses the optative mode *one hundred and three times*, while Arrian (about A.D. 150) in the first twenty pages of his Expedition of Alexander the Great, uses the optative *nineteen times*, and Philostratus in the first twenty pages of his Life of Apollonius of Tyana (written in the first part of the *third century*) has the optative mode *forty-two times*. On the other hand, the historian Polybius (who flourished in the second century B.C.) in the second book of his history, making about *seventy-four pages*, uses the optative only *thirty-three times*.

Leaving these heathen authors, let us examine those Christian writers called *Apostolical Fathers*, respecting their use of this mode. We begin with Clement of Rome. In his *Epistle to the Corin-*

¹ We prefer thus to call these two tenses instead of designating them as *present* and *perfect*.

*thians*¹ (written probably about A.D. 85), containing about *twenty-eight* pages octavo, he uses the optative mode only *six* times — four of them as *imperatives* or *prayers*, once in the sense *should*, and once after *ἵνα* to indicate a purpose preceded by the first aorist indicative (Address; sec. xxxiii.; xl.; xliii.; xlv.; lviii.). In sec. xxxix. are two optatives in quotations from the Old Testament. The *Epistle of Barnabas*, written probably in the last part of the *first* century, contains about seventeen pages, but makes use of the optative *twice* only, viz.: Μὴ γένοιτο, sec. vi. 13; and δῶν (sec. xxi. 5), both expressing a prayer or wish. The *Epistle of Polycarp* to the Philippians, belonging to the first part of the second century, and making five or six pages, uses the optative *four* times, namely: πληθυνθείη (in the Address); Δῶν (sec. xi. 4); Δῶν and οἰκοδομήσαι (sec. xii.); all expressing a prayer or wish.

The *Epistle to Diognetus*, written in the last part of the first century, or in the beginning of the second, making eight or nine pages, uses the optative mode *eleven* times (ii. 3, 4, 10; iii. 3, 4; iv. 5; vii. 2, 3; viii. 3). None of these express a wish.

The teaching of the Twelve Apostles, probably belonging to the same age, and making about ten pages, contains the optative mode in one instance, ῥυθθείητε, *may ye be delivered* from (sec. 5).

The *Epistles of Ignatius*, consisting of twenty or twenty-five pages, use the optative mode in *sixteen* instances always as a wish or prayer. Justin Martyr in his First Apology (about A.D. 139), containing fifty-six pages, employs the optative mode *thirteen* times, but only once in the sense of an imperative when explaining the meaning of Ἀμὴν as γένοιτο, *let it be done*.

In the Shepherd of Hermas (about A.D. 140), consisting of about sixty-three large octavo pages, the optative mode is found but *once*, εἰ μὴ λάβωι, *if he do not receive* (Sim. ix. 12, 4).

The Account of the Martyrdom of Polycarp (written about A.D. 160), containing about eleven octavo pages, the optative mode occurs *seven* times, as a prayer (Address; xiv. 2; xvii. 3); as indirect quotation (εἰη, ix. 2); as interrogative, indicating affirmation with μή (ii. 2); as a supposition (ii. 4); as an end or purpose after ἵνα (vi. 2).

We now proceed to the discussion of the optative mode in *Hellenistic* Greek, the special subject of our paper, and begin with the

¹ We use the edition of the Apostolical Fathers (except Justin Martyr) published by Gebhardt, Harnack, and Zahn.

Greek version of the Old Testament, the LXX. (executed between B.C. 280-150), and take, as fair samples of this version, Genesis, Isaiah, and Proverbs. We begin with Genesis. In this Book we find the optative mode used in the following passages: Πλατύναι (1st aor. 3d sing.), *Let God enlarge* (ix. 27); Κρίναι, *Let God judge* (xvi. 5); Καθὰ ἂν ἀρέσκοι, *Just as it might please* (xix. 8); Τί ἂν εἶη τοῦτο, *What would this be* (xxiii. 15)? Δῶν, *May God give thee* (xxvii. 28); Εὐλογῆσαι . . . ἀυξήσαι . . . πληθύναι . . . δῶν (all aor. 3d sing.), *May God bless . . . increase . . . multiply . . . give thee* (xxviii. 3, 4); Ἐπίδοι, *May he look upon* (xxx. 49); Κρίναι, *May God judge* (ver. 53); Ἐν ἴδοι, *As one might see* (xxxiii. 10); Εὑροίμι, *Might I find or Let me find* (xxxiv. 11); Δῶν, *May God give* (xl. 13); Ἐλεῆσαι, *Let him have pity* (ver. 28); Μὴ γένοιτο, *Let it not be* (xliv. 7); Πῶς ἂν κλέψαιμεν, *How could we steal* (ver. 8)? Μὴ γένοιτο (ver. 17); Εὐλογῆσαι . . . πληθυνθείσαν, *Let him bless . . . and let them be multiplied* (xlviii. 16); Ποιῆσαι, *Let him make* (ver. 20); Ἐλθοι . . . ἐρίσαι, *Let not my soul come . . . and let not my heart contend* (xlix. 6); Ἀινέσαισαν (3d plu. 1st aor.), *Let thy brethren praise thee* (ver. 8).

In these *twenty-four* instances (all that we can find in Genesis) the optative mode expresses a wish or prayer in every instance except *four*.

In Isaiah we find the following optatives: Μὴ εὐφρανθείητε, *May ye not be delighted* (xiv. 29); Διέλθοι, *When the hurricane passes through* (xxi. 1); γένοιτο, *Let it be* (xxv. 1); Μὴ εὐφρανθείητε, *May ye not be delighted* (xxviii. 22); Εἰσακούσαι, *Let the Lord thy God hear the words* (xxxvii. 4); Ἐπιλάβοιτο, *If a woman should forget* (xlix. 15); Ἀνεύγκαισαν, *Let the children of Israel bring* (lxvi. 20).

It is thus seen that there are but *seven* instances of the optative in Isaiah, although the Book is nearly the same size as Genesis.

The Book of Proverbs contains but *six* instances of the optative, viz.: ὑπολείπειτο, *Let him leave it* (xi. 26); Πῶς ἂν νοήσαι, *How could a mortal think* (xx. 24)? Εἴ τις καταπίοι, *If any one should drink down* (xxiii. 7); Ἐκκόψαισαν . . . καταφάγοισαν, *Let ravens pick it out . . . and let the eagle's brood devour it* (xxiv. 52); Εἰ φράσσοι . . . καὶ λυμαινοίτο, *If one should hedge up . . . and destroy* (xxv. 26).

We proceed in the next place to examine the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament respecting the optative mode. The *Wisdom of the Son of Sirach*—written in the second or third century before Christ in Hebrew, and forty or fifty years later translated into Greek—contains about forty-four pages. In this work we find the follow-

ing *twelve* instances of the optative: Πῶς ἂν εὔροις, *How couldst thou find* (xxv. 3); Ἐπιπέσοι, *May the lot of the sinner fall upon her* (ver. 19); Μεγαλυνθείης, *Mayest thou be magnified* (xxxiii. 4); Ἐύρουσαν (2d aor.), *Let them find* (ver. 11); Ἐμπέσοι, *Let him fall into* (xxxviii. 15); Δῶη, *May he give* (xlv. 26); Εἶη, *Let it be* (xlvi. 11); Ἀναθάλοι, *May their bones bloom afresh* (ver. 12); Ἀναθάλοι,¹ *May the bones of the twelve prophets bloom afresh* (xlix. 10); Δῶη, *May he give* (l. 23); Εὐφρανθείη . . . μὴ αἰσχυνθείητε, *May your soul be delighted . . . and may ye be not ashamed* (li. 29). In every instance but one, the optative expresses a wish or prayer.

The *Wisdom of Solomon*, consisting of about sixteen pages, contains the optative in one instance, namely, Δῶη, *May God grant* (vii. 15). The *Book of Tobit*, consisting of about twelve pages, has the optative mode in *twelve* instances, viz.: Μὴ ἴδοιμεν, *May we not see* (iii. 9); Εὐλογήσαισαν, *Let them bless* (iii. 11); Ὡς ὑπάρχοι, *as it may belong to thee, i.e., according to what thou hast* (iv. 8); Ἐλθοις, *Mayest thou go* (v. 14); Εὐδοκωθήητε, *May ye be prospered* (ver. 17); Φθάσαι, *Let it not come to*; Γένοιτο, *Let it be* (ver. 19); Δῶη, *Let him give* (vii. 17); Ἀκούσαμι . . . ἀποκαταστήσαι . . . δῶη, *May I hear . . . may he restore . . . and may he give* (x. 12); Ἐλθοις, *Mayest thou go* (xi. 16).

The *Book of Judith* contains nineteen pages, and has the optative mode in the following *eight* instances: Κρίναι, *Let God judge* (vii. 24); Δῶη . . . τελειώσαι, *May God give . . . and may he accomplish* (x. 8); Ποιῆσαι, *May God perform*; Γένοιτο, γένοιτο, *Let it be done, let it be done* (xiii. 20); Εὐδοκῆσαι, *May God be well pleased*; Γένοιτο, *Let it be so* (xv. 10). The *Book of Baruch*, consisting of six pages, has no optative; but the *Epistle of Jeremiah*, containing seventy-two verses, has a single optative, Κληθείησαν, *Could be called* (ver. 29).

1 Esdras contains about nineteen pages, but has not a single passage in which the optative is used.

The first two books of Maccabees make sixty-eight pages, and contain the following optatives: Γένοιτο, *May it be . . .*; Μακρυνθείη, *Let it be far away* (1 Mac. viii. 23); Μὴ γένοιτο, *May it not be* (ix. 10); Μὴ μοι γένοιτο, *May it not be to me* (xiii. 5); Μέλοι, *That it may be a concern* (xiv. 42); Μέλοι, with the same meaning (ver. 43); Ἀγαθοποιῆσαι, *May he do you good . . .*; Μνησθείη . . . δῶη . . . διανοίξαι . . . ποιῆσαι . . . ἐπακούσαι . . . καταλαγείη . . . μὴ ἐγκαταλίποι, *May he remember . . . give . . . open . . . make . . . listen to . . . be*

¹ This passage is probably spurious.

reconciled . . . and not leave you (2 Mac. i. 2-5). He asked Ποῖός τις εἶη ἐπιτήδειος, *What sort of a person was suitable* (indirect quotation) (iii. 37). He abused Onias ὡς αὐτός τε εἶη τὸν Ἡλιόδωρον ἐπισσεικῶς, *On the ground that he had attacked Heliodorus* (iv. 1) ; Εἶη ἄν, *would be* (xi. 28) ; *Ἄν κριθεῖη, *would be decided* (xv. 21).

3 Maccabees contains *thirteen* pages, but has no optative mode.

In the story of Susanna, the optative mode does not occur ; but it is found *five* times in the prayer of Azariah, viz. : Μὴ παραδώης, *Do not give us up* (ver. 10) ; προσδεχθείμεν, *May we be accepted* (ver. 15) ; Ἐντραπήσαν . . . κατασχυνθείσαν . . . συντριβείη, *Let them be put to shame . . . be disgraced . . . and let their power be crushed* (vers. 19, 20). The hymn of the three Hebrew children has no optative, but it is found once in the story of Bel and the Dragon, viz. : Μὴ εἴποιτε, *If you do not tell me* (ver. 8).¹

We shall in the next place inquire to what extent Philo and Josephus use the optative mode.

The first of these writers, a philosophic Jew of Alexandria (born B.C. 20), makes a quite frequent use of the optative mode in his works. Taking up the first volume of these writings, we find that in the first twenty pages he uses the optative *sixteen* times. In two of these instances the optatives form a protasis and an apodosis, making a hypothetical period, just as we often find in Attic Greek. In the first twenty pages of his sixth volume, he uses the optative *eight* times, two of which are quotations from Plato.

Josephus (born A.D. 37), whose vernacular was Aramaic, in his Greek writings makes frequent use of the optative mode. In the first twenty pages of the sixteenth Book of his Antiquities, he employs it *twenty-five* times ; and in the first twenty pages of the fifth Book of The Jewish Wars, he uses this mode *seventeen* times.² None of these instances in Philo and Josephus express a prayer or command.

The Optative Mode in New Testament Greek.

In discussing this part of our subject, we will give all the instances of the use of the optative mode that we can find in Westcott and Hort's edition of the Greek Testament.

In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark we find no passage in which

¹ In this investigation we have used Tischendorf's edition of the LXX. and Apocrypha.

² Josephus uses the hypothetical period with the optative both in *protasis* and *apodosis*. Vol. V. 254.

the optative occurs. The Gospel of Luke, however, has the optative in *eleven* instances, as follows: She was troubled at the remark, and was considering *ποταπός εἶη ὁ ἀσπασμὸς οὗτος*, what this salutation *was* (i. 29). Here *εἶη* is the optative of indirect discourse. *Γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα σου*, *Let it be to me according to thy word*, the optative expressing a wish (ver. 38). They beckoned to his father, *τὸ τί ἂν θέλοι καλεῖσθαι αὐτό*, what *he would wish* it (the child) to be called (ver. 62). While the people were in expectation and all were considering in their minds *μή ποτε αὐτὸς εἶη ὁ χριστός*, whether perhaps he *was* the Christ (iii. 16); optative of uncertainty. And they conversed together about *τί ἂν ποιήσαιεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ*, what *they should do* to Jesus; optative of deliberation (vi. 11). They asked him *τίς αὐτῆ εἶη ἡ παραβολή*, what this parable *was*; indirect discourse (viii. 9). There arose a dispute among them, *τὸ τίς ἂν εἶη μείζων αὐτῶν*, who of them *would be* greater (ix. 46). And having called one of the servants, he inquired *τί ἂν εἶη ταῦτα*, what these things *could* (or *might*) *be* (xv. 26). This is the reading of B; but ~~⌘~~ A omit the *ἂν*, which Tischendorf follows. Then the optative would be indirect discourse, and the rendering should be, What these things *were*. Tregelles agrees with Westcott and Hort. He inquired, *τί εἶη τοῦτο*, what this thing *was* (xviii. 36); indirect discourse. Having heard (these things), they said, *μὴ γένοιτο*, *let it not be* so (xx. 16). And they began to question each other, *τὸ τίς ἄρα εἶη ἐξ αὐτῶν*, who then it *was* of them (xxii. 23); indirect discourse.

In the Gospel according to John we do not find a single passage in which the optative mode is used. This is presumptive proof that its author was a Palestinian Jew.

The Acts of the Apostles.

In this Book the optative mode occurs *seventeen* times in the following passages: When the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were in doubt concerning them, *τί ἂν γένοιτο τοῦτο*, what this *would* (prove) *to be* (v. 24). *Τὸ ἀργύριόν σου σὺν σοὶ εἶη εἰς ἀπώλειαν*, *Let thy money be* (go) with thee to perdition (viii. 20). He said, *Πῶς γὰρ ἂν δυναίμην*, For how *could* I *be able* unless, etc. (viii. 31); the interrogative with the optative to express impossibility. But when Peter doubted in himself, *τί ἂν εἶη τὸ ὄραμα*, what the vision *would be*, i.e., *what might be its intent* (x. 17). Searching the Scriptures daily, *εἰ ἔχοι ταῦτα οὕτως*, if these things *were* so (xvii. 11); optative of indirect discourse. Some were saying, *Τί ἂν θέλοι . . . λέγειν*, what *would* this babbling *wish* to say

(ver. 18). To seek God, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὔροιεν, if perchance they *should grope after* him and *find* him (ver. 27); optative expressing a supposition. Ἐσπευδεν γὰρ εἰ δυνατόν εἶη αὐτῷ, For he was making haste, if it *were* possible for him (xx. 16). Ἐπυνθάνετο τίς εἶη, He inquired who he *was* (xxi. 33); indirect discourse. Who ought to have been present before thee and to have accused me, εἴ τι ἔχοιεν πρὸς ἐμέ, if they *had* anything against me (xxiv. 19); indirect discourse. Before the accused, Ἐχοι τοὺς κατηγοροὺς τόπον τε ἀπολογίας λάβοι περὶ τοῦ ἐγκλήματος, *Have* the accusers face to face and *have* an opportunity for a defence concerning the charge (xxv. 16); optative of indirect discourse. I, being in doubt, inquired, εἰ βούλοιο πορεύεσθαι, if he *was willing* to go to Jerusalem (ver. 20); indirect discourse. Paul said, Εὐξαίμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ, *I could wish* to God, etc. (xxvi. 29). The most of them advised that they should put to sea from that point, εἴ πως δύναιτο . . . παραχειμάσαι, if they *were able* in any way to winter in Phœnicia, etc. (xxvii. 12). A bay into which they were deliberating, εἰ δύναιτο ἐκσῶσαι τὸ πλοῖον, if they should be able to save the ship (ver. 39).

In the *Epistle of James*, we find no instance of the optative mode.

In the *First Epistle of Peter*, we find *three* passages in which the optative mode is used, viz.: Πληθυνθείη, *Let* grace and peace *be multiplied* (i. 2); Ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχετε, But even if *ye should suffer*; optative protasis (iii. 14); Εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, If the will of God *should desire* it (ver. 17).

In the *Second Epistle of Peter*, we find the optative in one instance, viz.: Πληθυνθείη, *Let* grace and peace *be multiplied* (i. 2).

In the *Epistles of John*, no optative occurs, but this mode is found in one instance in Jude, Πληθυνθείη, *Let be multiplied* (ver. 2).

The Epistles of Paul.

In the *Epistle to the Romans*, the phrase Μὴ γένοιτο, *May it not be*, let it not happen, occurs *ten* times, namely: in iii. 4, 6, 31; vi. 2, 15; vii. 7, 13; ix. 14; xi. 1, 11. He also uses Δόη, *May* God *grant* (xv. 5); and Πληρώσαι, *May* God *fill* you (ver. 13). In the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, the optative is found in *three* instances, namely: Μὴ γένοιτο, *May it not be* (vi. 15); and Εἰ τύχοι, *If it should happen*, perchance (xiv. 10; xv. 37). 2 Corinthians contains no optative.

In the *Epistle to the Galatians*, we find the optative, Μὴ γένοιτο, used *three* times, namely: in ii. 17; iii. 21; vi. 14.

In the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, the optative occurs once, Δόη, That *he may give*, after ἵνα preceded by a prayer (i. 17).

In the *Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians*, the optative does not occur. In the *First Epistle to the Thessalonians*, the optative occurs *five* times, namely: Κατευθύναι . . . πλεονάζσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι, *May our Lord Jesus direct . . . may the Lord increase, and make you abound* (iii. 11, 12); Ἀγιάσαι . . . τηρηθεῖν, *May God sanctify you . . . and may your spirit and soul and body be kept* (v. 23).

In *2 Thessalonians*, we have the optative in *four* instances, namely: Παρακαλέσαι . . . στηρίξαι, *May he comfort your hearts and establish you* (ii. 17); Κατευθύναι, *May the Lord direct* (iii. 5); Δώη, *May the Lord give you* (ver. 16).

The *First Epistle to Timothy* has no optative, but *2 Timothy* has *three* instances of this mode, namely: Δώη, *May the Lord grant*; twice in i. 16, 18; Μὴ ποτε δώη, *Perhaps God may grant* (ii. 25).

The *Epistle to Titus* contains no optative, but that to *Philemon* has one instance of it, Ὀυαίμην (2 aor. mid.), *May I have joy of thee* (ver. 20).

In the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, we find *one* instance of the optative, Καταρτίσαι, *May God make you perfect* (xiii. 21). This is presumptive proof that an Alexandrian did not write this epistle, as it is not likely that the use of this mode in but one instance would have satisfied his fine Greek taste.

The closing book of our New Testament Canon, the Apocalypse, contains no optative, which is not strange when we consider the Hebraistic style of the book.

We thus find that the optative mode occurs but *sixty-six* times in the entire Greek Testament of Westcott and Hort. But it is interesting to inquire how far these instances rest upon our oldest Greek manuscripts. We find upon examination that our two oldest codices, *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*, and also the *Alexandrian*, in every instance except one or two, support the text of Westcott and Hort in this matter. The Alexandrian has δύνανται in Acts xxvii. 12, instead of δύναντο; and *Vaticanus* has δῶ (sub.) in Ephesians i. 17, where Westcott and Hort have δώη (opt.). *Vaticanus* lacks that part of the New Testament containing the three optatives in *2 Timothy*, the one in *Philemon*, and the one in *Hebrews*.

We have seen that in nearly all the cases in which the optative occurs in the New Testament, it is used to express a *wish* or *prayer* except in the writings of Luke. This use of the optative is also most common in the LXX. and in the Apocryphal writers of the Old Testament. The reason for using the optative so often in the *third* person, instead of the imperative, — as is the general usage in Classic prose

Greek, — becomes obvious upon a little reflection. As this person is generally used to express a *wish* or *prayer* to God to perform something for others, — in cases where the petitioner has no special claims upon the Almighty, — or to deprecate certain things, it is proper that the optative, a mild imperative, should be used.¹ Also in the phrase *μὴ γένοιτο*, there may be an implied reference to God to prevent what is wrong or unpleasant to the deprecator.

Here the question arises, Why did the Hellenists generally make so little use of the optative mode? We would answer, that as Jews they had been accustomed to the use of Hebrew or Aramaic, languages that have but two tenses,^c a perfect and a future (or imperfect, as the grammarians now generally call it), and possess no distinct forms to indicate finite modes; and co-ordinating their sentences rather than subordinating them, they did not feel the need of the delicate optative. Greek syntax certainly requires, as a general rule,² that the primary tenses should be followed by the subjunctive, and the secondary tenses by the optative when a purpose is to be indicated. But the Jew had never been accustomed to any *secondary* tense in his vernacular, so that the optative seemed almost useless to him to express a purpose, and the subjunctive seemed most natural. In indirect discourse, the Hellenist found it *admissible* to use the indicative mode, and as this harmonized with his vernacular, he naturally followed it. Hellenistic Greek uses hypothetical periods where the supposition is contrary to reality. Thus in John xi. 21: *Κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὦδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθαιεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου*, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died. But if the thought had been that Christ's presence might be a reality, it could have been expressed in Classic Greek by an optative both in the *protasis* and *apodosis*. But Martha would have said in the style of New Testament Greek, *Ἐὰν ἦς (or εἰ εἶ) ὦδε οὐκ ἀποθαιεῖται ὁ ἀδελφός μου*, If thou wilt be (or art) here, my brother will not die. In Mark iii. 2, it is stated that they were watching (him to see) if he will heal (*εἰ θεραπεύσει*) on the sabbaths. But in Luke vi. 7, the text is, *if he heals (εἰ θεραπεύει)*. Classic Greek would have the optative form of *θεραπεύειν*. Mark xi. 13 has the construction *ἦλθεν εἰ ἄρα τι εὕρησει ἐν αὐτῇ*, *he came* if perchance he *will find* something on it. Classic Greek would most likely take the optative³ instead of the indicative in such a statement.

¹ But when God wishes a thing done, he *commands* it (Gen. i.).

² Thucydides in many instances violates this rule.

³ Thus Arrian, B. I. 2, 5: Alexander ordered the archers to shoot their arrows, and the slingers to hurl their missiles, into the barbarians, *εἰ πως προκαλέσαιο*, if by any means he might call them forth from the woods into the open ground.

The Greek language possessed such a great variety of construction of sentences, both in regard to modes and tenses, that the Hellenist had generally but little difficulty in finding some form of admissible expression in which to clothe his thoughts and facts.

We have already stated that in Modern Greek the optative mode is entirely wanting. In accounting for this, we may observe that it is a well-known fact that language reflects the thoughts and feelings of the people among whom it has sprung up and by whom it has been developed. Nothing but the optative, with its nice shades of thought and expression, could satisfy the subtile, skeptical intellect of the ancient Greeks, especially the Athenians. But when once their intellectuality and culture declined, they no longer had use for the delicate optative, and the subjunctive mode met all their wants. It is not at all probable that the Latin subjunctive contributed much to the elimination of the optative from the modern Greek.