

The Greek verb ἔχω has two future formations, ἔξω and στήσω. Scholarly opinion is divided, however, as to whether there is any semantic difference between them. Some (Blass, Kühner–Gerth, and to a certain extent Chantraine) distinguish the stems aspectually: in their view, ἔξω, which has the e-grade of the present ἔχω, shows imperfective aspect (“will have *or* keep”), while στήσω, with the zero grade shared by the aorist ἔσχεον, has perfective aspect (“will stop *or* hold back”). Others (Wackernagel, Hartmann, Schwyzer–Debrunner) deny that any such aspectual distinction can be drawn, pointing to such passages as the following, where the supposedly aoristic στήσω is clearly durative (note the accusative of time τόσσον χρόνον): στήσω γὰρ πόλεμον τόσσον χρόνον ὅσσον ἄνωγας (*Il.* 24.670). Now Bernhard Mader, in a 1970 dissertation, already did much to defend the position that, at least in Homer, we can speak of an aspectual distinction. Though durative, στήσω can still have the perfective aspect of the aorist, for this is the tense most often found with accusatives of extent of time (cf. the numerous examples of clauses like ἐνταῦθα ἔμειναν ἡμέρας τρεῖς in Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (1.4.2, etc.)). This affinity is understandable: under most circumstances, the presence of an accusative of time sets a bound of sorts on the action, which is thus regarded as the completed whole that is expressed by the perfective aorist.

But what about in Attic? In some respects, Attic seems to have moved away from the more aspect-based verbal system of Homeric Greek (e.g. the present tense, previously imperfective, can now be used as a perfective historical present), so perhaps we may find a loss of aspectual distinction in the future as well. Indeed, the bare statistics suggest that στήσω has lost so much ground to ἔξω that it could hardly be considered a freely available aspectual alternative. In Xenophon, for example, there are 112 examples of the future indicative and infinitive of ἔξω and its compounds, but only 4 formed from στήσω. Still, in considering the future of ἔχω, one must also keep another phenomenon in mind: the more frequent existence of alternative mediopassive futures (φανοῦμαι vs φανήσομαι), also explained by Blass as differing in aspect, a view recently upheld by Rutger Allan. Sure enough, there are some signs that, even if only vestigially, something similar is at work with ἔχω. First, it is misleading to infer too much from the raw figures: there is no denying that στήσω is rare, but, equally important, so too is the aorist ἔσχε(ν) (24× in the 3rd person indicative) compared to the imperfect εἶχε(ν) (153×). We are simply dealing with a verb that strongly prefers the imperfective to the perfective aspect. Furthermore, in the compound παρέχω, which has one future indicative formed from στήσω- and seventeen from ἔξω-, one can descry an aspectual difference. While the one example of παραστήσω (*An.* 6.6.18) refers to a single, one-time surrender, the ἔξω futures all refer to the establishment of unbounded states of affairs (often indicated by the nature of the object, such as ἀγοράν or ἀσχολίαν). Although the details vary from author to author, a thorough examination of ἔχω and its compounds in a range of prose texts reveals that the two futures are far from interchangeable.