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Tempus, Aspect and *Aktionsart* in Latin (Recent trends 1961–1981)*

H. PINKSTER, Amsterdam

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0. Preface

When A. SZANTYR published his revision of HOFMANN's 'Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik', he knew that it had been impossible for him to incorporate quite a few recent publications, some of them dealing with relationship between Tempus, Aspect and *Aktionsart*, and defining characteristics of each of these categories for Latin¹. As a consequence, the distinction between 'Aspect' on the one hand and '*Aktionsart*' on the other hand, and between several types of '*Aktionsart*', is dismissed in quite a determined way (: 301). In the meantime a large number of publications have become available. It is not my intention, in this paper, to present some sort of '*Forschungsbericht*' about all the publications that have come to

Abbreviations:

K.-St.	= KÜHNER, R. & C. STEGMANN (1912) Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache, II. Satzlehre (2 vols.), Hannover, Hahn (2 nd ed.)
Sz.	= SZANTYR, A. (1965) Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik, München, Beck
ASNP	= Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Cl. di Lettere e Filosofia
AU	= Altsprachlicher Unterricht
Cl.Q.	= Classical Quarterly
FoL	= Foundations of Language
IF	= Indogermanische Forschungen
JoL	= Journal of Linguistics
Lg.	= Language
MH	= Museum Helveticum
REA	= Revue des Études Anciennes
REL	= Revue des Études Latines
RPh	= Revue de Philologie
SPhS	= Studia Philologica Salmantica, Univ. de Salamanca, Acta Salm., Filos. y Letras
W.d.F.	= Wege der Forschung
W.St.	= Wiener Studien
ZVS	= Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung

¹ E.g. KRAVAR (1961).

my notice. I have, in fact, discussed a number of them in PINKSTER (1969b), and my bibliography records other publications I have been able to consult. In this paper I will confine myself to a few trends in the study of Tempus, Aspect and *Aktionsart*. I will also add a few suggestions which may be useful for further research.

In the first place, it has been acknowledged in a number of studies inside and outside classical philology that the traditional notion of '*Aktionsart*' is not very well defined. Sz. and other Latinists use the notion to refer to certain characteristic qualities of verbs (or predicates). It has been shown, however, to pertain to the whole constellation of predicates and their immediately accompanying constituents (e. g. Subjects and Objects) together. Also, it has been shown that there is no clear-cut difference between Tempus and Aspect, at least not in the entire verbal system.

Secondly, the entire field of Latin linguistics has changed. There is much more attention for post-Latin instead of for pre-Latin developments. Also there are some publications in which empirical evidence is brought forward in order to prove the position taken by the author without purely verbal manipulation of a restricted number of examples.

Thirdly, there has been much more attention in the last two decades for the role of the tenses in narrative structure and the role played by the categories of Tempus, Aspect and related categories. WEINRICH (1964) has prepared the way for this and, in spite of the defects of his study for Latin, his main argument has stimulated several Latinists as well. Studies by VON ALBRECHT (1968; 1970) and CHAUSSERIE-LAPRÉE (1969) are other representatives of this development.

The structure of my paper does not follow the lines I have observed so far as will be clear from the table of contents. I will try, however, to focus my argument in such a way that the preceding generalizations will prove to be justified. I will start, whenever possible, with the standard opinion that can be found in SZANTYR's grammar. The reader will find an appendix containing references to the passages of Sz.'s grammar that are discussed in this paper. I have also endeavoured to learn what commentators have written about the subject-matter in the last decade. I have recorded their opinion, whenever this seemed useful.

First of all, however, I will explain certain notions that I will use throughout this paper.

I will make a distinction between 'Tempus' and 'tense'. By 'tense' (sometimes 'tense form') and 'tenses' I will refer to particular members of the verbal paradigm or a set of them, e. g. 'perfect, indicative, 1 pers., sing.' and 'perfect'. 'Tempus', on the other hand, refers to a semantic category, comparable in a sense with other semantic categories such as Modus. In this sense 'Tempus' is used in opposition to 'Aspect'. '*Aktionsart*' will be discussed later, but as an initial definition it may suffice to say that it refers to features of the meaning of the verb in its entire paradigm. Apart from these terms, which bear on the subject under discussion, I will use some of the terminology of Functional Grammar (DIK, 1978). I will use the term 'argument' for those constituents which are 'obligatory' on account of the meaning of the predicate. The term 'satellite' on the other hand, refers to 'optional' constituents. By 'nuclear predication' I will understand the predicate

side by side with its arguments². A nuclear predication differs from an 'extended' predication, which may also comprise satellites. Moreover the notion 'predication', referring to an abstract structure, has to be distinguished from the notion 'sentence' and 'clause'. The latter notions are reserved for actual utterances.

Furthermore I will use the term 'state of affairs' as a general term for the action, event, process, state, etc. which a nuclear predication (predicate + argument[s]) designates.

1. Tempus, Aspect and *Aktionsart*

1.1. Tempus

Among the categories of Tempus, Aspect and *Aktionsart*, Tempus seems to be the easiest to define. A common definition is that Tempus is a deictic category, that locates states of affairs in time, usually with reference to the moment of speaking, though also with reference to other moments (COMRIE, 1976: 3-5; LYONS, 1977: 677). Tempus is also described as a means for chronological ordering of events (e. g. FREED, 1977: 10). In Latin, finite verb forms, at least indicative and subjunctive, are morphologically marked for Tempus. However, the same deictic functions may be fulfilled by other means as well, e. g. temporal Adjuncts (adverbials)³. In Latin and other languages where both means are available, certain types of Adjuncts are compatible with certain tenses and incompatible with others.

In recent times there have been suggestions that the definition of Tempus presented above and the assumption of a relationship between 'Tempus' and the extralinguistic category of 'Time' has to be abandoned. WEINRICH (1964) has taken this position. Before him BULL (1960: 22) was very explicit: "No tense form locates an event in time", a passage approved of by WEINRICH (1964: 41). It is correct, of course, to say that Tempus does not tell us 'when' a particular state of affairs took place. In fact, in Latin, English and other languages, temporal adverbs, temporal adverbial clauses, etc. have this function. Nonetheless, Tempus tells us something about the relative order of events, e. g. whether some event took place before or after the time of speaking. Precisely the compatibility-relations between certain tenses and certain temporal expressions prove that Tempus has a deictic function in the way mentioned above⁴. Moreover, I do not believe that many

² The terminology resembles that in PINKSTER (1972). The relationship with HAPP (1976), SCHERER (1975) and others is obvious.

³ There are languages in which temporal information is expressed separately. SERBAT (1975: 489) refers to Capanahua, a language of Peru, where such information is contained in a so-called paragraph-marker. See also BEAUGRANDE - DRESSLER (1981: 69-70); LYONS (1977: 678).

⁴ My own view of WEINRICH can be found in PINKSTER (1969: 172-4). See also FAJEN (1971) and STRUNK (1968). WEINRICH makes more of BULL's words than BULL himself would appreciate, I believe.

linguists would defend the positions attacked by WEINRICH. Yet there are some traces of a more strictly temporal view on Tempus. First there is the old discussion about the function of the present tense and the question whether it is possible to point to a precise moment 'Now' lying between 'Past' and 'Future', to which the so-called present tense might be said to refer, a discussion that has been reintroduced by SERBAT (1975: 380–3; 1976b: 207–14; 1980 a). The basic mistake in this discussion is, of course, as SERBAT points out, the assumption that the present tense always refers to one precise moment 'Now'⁵. The same narrow conception of Tempus also underlies the idea of Tempus as an objective category as opposed to Aspect. I will come back to this in 1.2.

In Latin, Tempus is formally expressed on the predicate. In recent times attention has been paid to the fact that Tempus is indeed formally expressed in the verb form, but that, nonetheless, it is best taken as a property of the (extended) predication. (DOWTY, 1979: 134; KLEIN, 1974: 42; 94 – both with references to earlier literature; LYONS, 1977: 678)⁶. This is not solely a model-theoretical observation, but it has practical relevance for the description of certain phenomena in Latin as well. First, the above mentioned (in)compatibility of temporal adverbs and certain tenses may be explained in this way⁷. Secondly it explains why present participles and other praedicativa refer to the same time as that of the (finite) predicate.

- (1) *flens me obsecravit* . . . ('he wept as he implored me', Plt. Tri. 154).
- (2) *castris se pavidus tenebat* ('he kept timidly within his breastworks', Liv. 3,26,3).

Participles are marked for simultaneity, posteriority or anteriority without independently locating the state of affairs to which they refer with respect to the moment of speaking; adjectives in the function Praedicativum can only be understood as simultaneous with the main predicate and as being located in the same time as the main predication (PINKSTER, 1982). Thirdly, it explains why the tense of finite clauses in a sentence is regularly adjusted to the tense of the matrix predication (the phenomenon of the so-called consecutio temporum)⁸. Fourthly, regarding Tempus as a property of the predication brings Tempus on a par with Modus, also a property of the predication⁹, which might help to explain

certain compatibility relations between Tempus and Modus: there are, for example, no imperative past sentences. It also allows of the relationship between Tempus and Modus which appears from the so-called modal use of certain tenses (e. g. the futurum pro imperativo: LYONS, 1977: 809–23; Sz.: 310–11) as well as certain prehistoric developments, e. g. the emergence of the future tense in Indo-European languages (STRUNK, 1968).

I will add at this point three remarks about temporal systems in general. Firstly, the familiar tripartite division of time in 'past', 'present' and 'future' is not a universal characteristic of temporal systems, although this has been considered 'natural' from antiquity onwards (cf. LYONS, 1977: 677–8; SERBAT, 1975: 368–85). In fact, in the Latin non-periphrastic subjunctive forms we find a bipartite distinction past/non-past, which is the normal one in a wide range of languages. Secondly, some attention has been given, especially in the Copenhagen and Prague tradition in linguistics, to the relative position of tenses with respect to each other in terms of markedness. In this approach the present tense is sometimes regarded as the unmarked category with respect to the feature 'past' (as 'non-past')¹⁰. A similar approach can be found in SERBAT (1975: 383–5). He observes, as has been done before him by others, that for example present tense *ornamus* differs from imperfect *ornabamus* and future *ornabimus* in the absence of an explicit marker for Tempus and he concludes from this that the so-called present tense is in fact a non-temporal verb form "that expresses solely the meaning of the verb (as well as person and voice)"¹¹. Regarding in this way the present tense as a non-temporal form also explains, according to SERBAT (1975: 385–90), such various uses of the present as 'praesens pro futuro' as exemplified in *cras tibi lego lectionem* and the historic present. However, even if the instances of these uses of the present tense are regarded as being substitutable by future and past tense forms respectively¹², this is not enough to postulate 'unmarkedness' or 'atemporality' for the present tense. Such a postulate would only hold if the present could replace all tenses in all types of context. There is no evidence of this kind. In fact, I will give some counterarguments later in this paper (section 4.1., p. 310f.). Thirdly, I will devote a few words to 'absolute' and 'relative' (or 'primary' and 'secondary') tenses. Latin, as many other languages, has (at least to some extent) a two-dimensional verb system. In the first place states of affairs may be ordered sequentially with respect to each other. Secondly, states of affairs may be located in present, past or future. Thus *laudaverat* is anterior with respect to some orientation moment in the past. This can be visualized in the following way:

⁵ I will come back to other aspects of SERBAT's article later on.

⁶ In CHOMSKY's 'Aspect' (1965) model Tempus is regarded as a category of the Predicate Phrase.

⁷ For the interrelatedness of tenses and temporal Adjuncts in English see CRYSTAL (1966) and SMITH (1978).

⁸ On the 'consecutio temporum' see BARBU (1969); GRASSI (1967); SEGURA (1974 a; 1978).

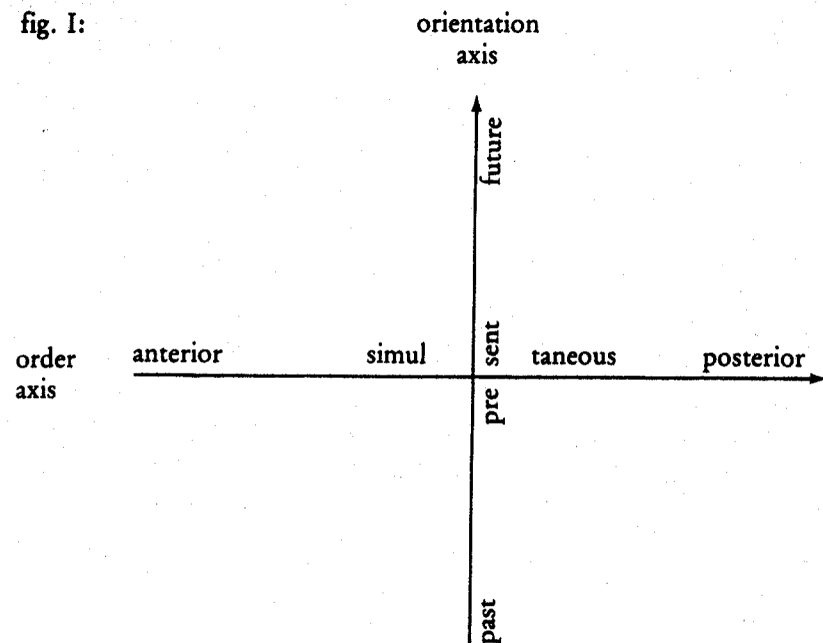
⁹ Cf. SCHERER (1975: 146). Sz.: 325, however, defines Modus as a category by which the mental attitude of the speaker with respect to the verbal process ('Verbalvorgang') is expressed.

¹⁰ Cf. BERGLAND (1942) and criticism in MARINER BIGORRA (1958). Also, in a different framework, KIPARSKY (1968) (Objections in PINKSTER [1969 b: 187–8]).

¹¹ Compare too WOLFSON (1979: 179–181) on the 'timeless' present in English, with references to TWADDELL (1960) and others. On the problems connected with such a one to one conception of morphology and semantics see MATTHEWS (1974: esp. 150–2).

¹² This need not imply, that the expressions are synonymous, of course.

fig. I:



BULL (1960) has dealt with temporal systems of this type most systematically although his theory is not essentially different from what MADVIG suggested more than a century ago (cf. VET, 1979: 7–8)¹³. He observes that such a system may contain tense forms which at first sight seem to be redundant. For instance, a tense which marks an event as simultaneous with respect to some orientation moment in the past is logically equivalent to a tense which marks an event as anterior with respect to the moment of speaking. In both cases the event is 'past'. Also, as BULL observes, there is some parallelism between the 'aspectual' notion perfective and the 'temporal' notion anterior and between imperfective and simultaneous: for example an event which is marked as simultaneous with the orientation moment past, will be understood as 'still going on', 'not-perfected' at that moment. Compare too HARRIS (1970: 65) and LYONS (1977: 689) on the difficulty of distinguishing anteriority and completion. In Latin, the perfect and imperfect tense have both been regarded as past tenses from antiquity onwards (cf. SERBAT, 1976a: 315; also, p. 288 below). This need not imply, however, that they are identical within the framework of the two-dimensional analysis given above, and in fact, the rules of the so-called 'consecutio temporum' say that the perfect denotes anteriority with respect to a present tense, whereas the im-

¹³ A related approach can be found in REICHENBACH (1947) 'speech time', 'event time', 'reference time', cf. DOWTY (1979: 331–3) and HUDDLESTON (1969). See also VET (1979: 5–33). Various articles of related interest in ROHRER (1977, 1978).

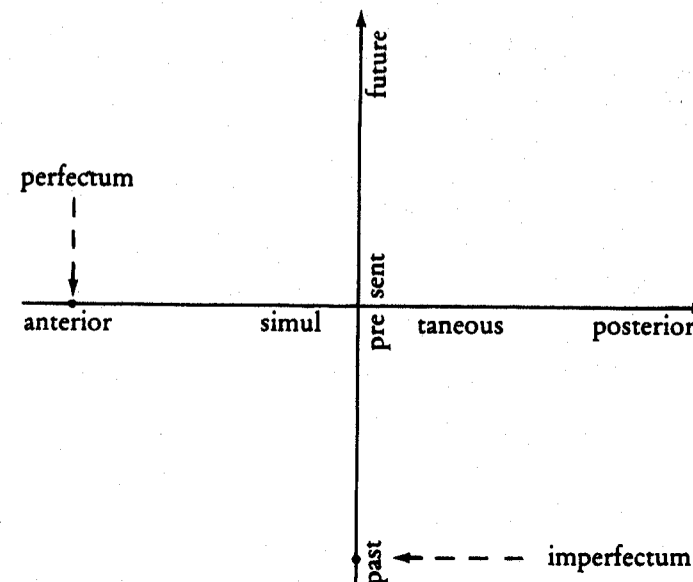
perfect denotes simultaneity with respect to a given past orientation moment (cf. Sz.: 550):

(3) *rogo quid fecerit* ('I ask what he has done').

(4) *rogavi quid faceret* ('I asked what he was doing').

In the graphical representation this might be represented in the following way:

fig. II:



In Latin linguistics the plusquamperfectum and the futurum exactum are described in the way indicated above. The perfect and imperfect, however, and the differences between them are often described in terms of Aspect. The feasibility of doing so depends very much on what type of temporal system one assumes for Latin. I will come back to this later on.

1.2. Aspect

Aspect, 'grammatical aspect', as opposed to so-called 'lexical aspect' (= *Aktionsart*) is often negatively defined as a grammatical category referring to certain non-deictic¹⁴ temporal meanings of verb forms, such as 'completion', 'iteration', etc. (BERTOCCHI, 1980: 141; LYONS, 1977: 707). In COMRIE (1976: 3) aspects are described as "different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation" (cf. FREED, 1979: 10).

¹⁴ SCHERER (1975: 65) follows HEGER (1963) in calling Aspect a deictic category. It should be noted, however, that HEGER's concept of 'deixis' is broader than the one intended here.

Latin linguists who use the term 'Aspect' are not very explicit about the precise meaning of the term and criteria for establishing the aspectual value of a verb form are rarely mentioned. Sz. (: 300) defines 'perfective' and 'imperfective' in the following way: „*Anschaung der Handlung im Hinblick auf ihre Vollendung*“ and „(*Anschaung der Handlung im Hinblick auf den Verlauf*)“, respectively. These definitions are, however, not very operational. I give one example. The Latin perfect, as is well-known, is regarded by Sz. as having a perfective aspectual value. KRAVAR (1968: 64–5), however, has drawn attention to the fact that the perfect can be used in what he calls 'paratatic contexts', that is in contexts in which an event must be understood as having lasted for some time. In fact, the perfect may mark states of affairs of all types as having lasted for some time and having stopped, without implying that the state of affairs has reached some 'natural' end. This is especially clear when the context contains explicit information about Duration, etc. (Compare TRONSKI, 1960: 360–1). He refers among other examples to:

- (5) *facies . . . perpetuo quae fecisti, ut omnes aequitatem tuam . . . laudarent* ("for you will never cease to act as you have done, in such a way as to win all men's praise", Cic. Q.Fr. 1,1,45).
- (6) *satis . . . vixi: invictus enim morior*, ("I have lived long enough, for I will die unconquered", Nepos Epam. 15,9,4).
- (7) *ex eo die dies continuos quinque Caesar pro castris suas copias produxit* ("for five days in succession Caesar brought up his own forces out in front of the camp", Caes. Gal. 1,48,3).

According to KRAVAR, Slavic languages would use the imperfective aspect in cases like these. In fact, the notion 'completion' which is often used in discussions on Aspect in Latin does not apply if it is understood in the sense that all phases of the state of affairs have been run through. I will come back to these examples in § 2.1.

Those linguists who describe the Latin verb system as an aspectual system often refer to Aspect as a subjective category¹⁵ as opposed to Tempus which is supposed to be necessarily bound up with the temporal structure of the reality to which it refers (references in Sz.: 301; cf. COMRIE, 1976: 4; LONGACRE, 1976: 240; SCHERER, 1975: 65). It is also often implied that the speaker (writer) is to a large extent free which aspectual form to choose. This is, however, only partly true. A speaker is, indeed, free to choose a certain point of view for expressing a certain event or set of events, but if a certain point of view has been taken there is not much choice. In other words, the context often determines the choice (cf. VON ALBRECHT, 1970: 226; on Ancient Greek cf. RUIJGH, 1979: 221–3). Nor can Tempus be understood as purely an objective category either, witness examples of the so-called imperfect instead of the present as in (8):

- (8) *sed si domi est, Demaenetum volebam* ("but I wished to see Demaenetus, if he is at home", Plt. As. 452).

¹⁵ I would not consider 'iteration' a 'subjective' category, as SCHERER (1975: 65) does.

The use of the imperfect instead of the present tense has the effect of making the statement less direct, more polite (Sz.: 316). The so-called modal uses of the tenses are a case in point as well. The lack of precision of definition and the assumption of 'subjectivity' as an essential characteristic of Aspect have contributed to the explanation of a number of idiomatic expressions as 'aspectual', for example expressions like *ne feceris*. I will come back to some of these in § 2.1, below p. 296ff.

Aspect and Tempus are both categories that have to do with time. In those languages in which both categories are present there need not be pairs of aspectual forms for each individual tense. In Russian, for example, there is no perfective present (the corresponding form actually refers to the future). There are several languages where aspectually different forms exist only for the past (COMRIE, 1976: 71). If we were to interpret the opposition between Latin *veni* and *veniebam* as an aspectual one – which I prefer not to do –, the fact that there are practically no other aspectual oppositions in Latin need not be forbidding.

I have referred to descriptions of tenses in terms of markedness above. Aspectual systems have been described in a similar way. Thus BERGLAND (1942) suggested describing the Latin verb system as being organized in two categories: imperfective (all forms of the infectum stem) / perfective (all forms of the perfectum stem) of which the imperfective verb forms are unmarked for Aspect. This, again, would imply that imperfective verb forms may substitute perfective verb forms which at least for Latin is not proved¹⁶. Arguments for regarding the imperfective forms as unmarked category might be of the kind suggested by FORSYTH for Russian (1970: 347–50). He observes that imperfective verb forms are used in answers if the question contains the same verb (in the perfective form). Imperfective forms are also preferred in sentences where the emphasis is not on the verb form, but for example on the subject, the circumstances or the purpose of the event (FORSYTH, 1970: 82–7).

1.3. The relationship between Tempus and Aspect

From the observation that both Tempus and Aspect have to do with Time it follows that the central question in discussions on the Latin verbal system, viz. whether the opposition between perfect and imperfect indicative is 'aspectual' or 'temporal', can be fruitfully discussed only if both concepts are defined precisely enough. In most studies on Latin I am familiar with, Aspect is related to the concept of 'completion'. In studies in which the position is defended that the category of 'Tempus' suffices to explain the actual occurrence of Latin verb forms, a distinction is often made between 'absolute' and 'relative' tenses in the sense indicated above. The notions of 'anteriority' and 'simultaneity' are, of course, very important in this discussion. The question is, then, what is the precise difference between such concepts as 'completion' and 'anteriority'. BULL rightly observes (1960: 26) that the

¹⁶ Refutation of BERGLAND in MARINER BIGORRA (1958).

"parallelism between perfective/anterior and imperfective/simultaneous is not to be taken as a proof that the entire verb system of a complicated language can be explained in terms of either aspect or order. The vector (= sequential order – H.P.) by itself provides no explanation of the difference between he sings and he is singing . . . These are clearly aspectual differences. In contrast, Aspect provides no explanation of the difference between the two auxiliaries in he has sung and he had sung. These are clearly differences in axis of orientation"¹⁷.

The question to be answered for Latin is whether there are such forms as sings and is singing, that is, forms that cannot be explained by assuming a difference in orientation moment. In fact, a number of studies go into this problem. I will come back to them in my discussion on the perfect (p. 190–6).

1.4. *Aktionsart*

I consider the debate on the usefulness of distinguishing Aspect ('grammatical aspect') and *Aktionsart* ('lexical aspect') settled; I refer to COMRIE (1976: 41–51), GRASSI (1967), PERROT (1975), SCHERER (1975: 65–6) and SERBAT (1976: 325 ff.). There are three topics in the matter of *Aktionsart* that, in my opinion, deserve further attention. They are (i) the question whether *Aktionsart* is a purely verbal category or something that relates to larger units; (ii) the number of *Aktionsarten* that may be distinguished and the criteria for doing so; (iii) the relationship between *Aktionsart* on the one hand and Tempus or Aspect on the other.

(i) Definition of *Aktionsart*

Although there have been incidental suggestions in the past that *Aktionsart* is not solely determined by the meaning of a verb¹⁸, but that, rather, it is a category that depends on the meaning of both the verb and its immediately accompanying constituents, VERKUIJL (1972) was the first to deal with the problem systematically. His overall conclusions seem to have found acceptance, e. g. in BERTOCCHI (1980: 151), COMRIE (1976: 45), DOWTY (1979: 62–5), PERROT (1975). See also VET (1979) on French. FREED (1979: 62–3) and KLEIN (1974: 103) also point to what they call the influence of the context. Such "immediately accompanying constituents of the verb" are arguments related to the predicate (e. g. Subject and Object) as well as satellites (e. g. Direction Adjuncts with motion verbs). VERKUIJL shows that the *Aktionsart* is sensitive to certain characteristics of arguments. It makes a difference, for example, whether the Object – Noun Phrase in (9) is definite or indefinite:

- (9) a John built that house in a month.
b *John built houses in a month (from DOWTY, 1979: 62).

¹⁷ I do not go into a discussion of the precise relationship between sings and is singing.

¹⁸ GRASSI (1967: 150) observes that a verb may have more than one *Aktionsart* if it has more than one meaning, e. g. a literal and a figurative meaning. See also PINKSTER (1969 a: 37–8).

For a Direction Adjunct consider (10)¹⁹:

- (10) a Greetje walked for hours.
b *Greetje walked from the Mint to the Dam for hours (from VERKUIJL, 1972: ch. 2).

It appears from the above examples that a certain predicate may occur both in 'durative' and 'non-durative', or rather 'terminative', states of affairs, as appears from the compatibility or incompatibility with certain 'aspectual adverbials' (the term is from DOWTY, 1979: 332) specifying either duration (for hours in [10]) or the time necessary to bring the state of affairs to an end (in a month in [9]).

In Latin linguistics there have not been published results of empirical research in this matter. It is interesting to note, however, that there has been some research from an entirely different angle on the necessity and feasibility of determining the number and type of arguments belonging to a verb, especially HAPP (1976). It might be useful to reconsider the vehement attacks on HAPP's results, in particular those by GUIRAUD (1978) and SERBAT (1978), in this light.

(ii) Criteria for determining *Aktionsart*:

Much attention has been paid the last twenty years to the criteria for establishing a typology of verbs, and, to a lesser extent, of states of affairs. A full survey of criteria is given in DOWTY (1979: 52–60).²⁰ We have already seen two of such criteria in (i). In fact, selection restrictions between predicates (rather states of affairs) on the one hand and 'aspectual Adjuncts' on the other have played a role in the literature on aspect for quite some time. Notice that this type of Adjuncts differs from the 'Time locating' Adjuncts mentioned in 1.1. (p. 273), precisely in that there exist selection restrictions between states of affairs and aspectual Adjuncts and not between states of affairs and the other type. Another set of criteria that has received attention in the literature comprises expressions that refer to the degree of effectuation of an action or process. One such expression is the adverb almost²¹, which with certain states of affairs (e. g. paint a picture) may cause the interpretation that the work was left unfinished:

- (11) John almost painted the picture.

This sentence may be interpreted either in the sense that the picture was left unfinished, or that it almost happened that John painted a picture. Another set of related expressions are verbs like begin, continue, and stop, so-called 'Phasals' in LONGACRE (1976: 238); a monograph on these verbs is FREED (1979). To give just one example, certain states of affairs (e. g. notice a painting) cannot occur as a complement with stop:

- (12) *John stopped noticing the painting.

¹⁹ I do not go into the problem of deciding whether the Direction constituent is obligatory (in that case an argument) or optional (in that case a satellite) with 'walk'.

²⁰ To the literature in DOWTY one may add SIBLEY (1955).

²¹ Compare too BALLWEG (1975).

Apart from the criteria mentioned so far, which all have to do in some way with the temporal structure of the states of affairs there is another set of criteria which show the degree to which a person may 'control' whether the state of affairs takes place or not. They are quite often used in setting up a typology of verbs (or states of affairs) although, strictly speaking, they have nothing to do with the temporal structure of states of affairs. Examples are certain Manner Adjuncts like carefully and attentively. They are not allowed in:

- (13) a *John carefully noticed the painting.
b *John carefully knew the answer.

Other tests by which one may distinguish 'controlled' states of affairs from 'non-controlled' ones are the imperative test, and the embedding test with verbs like persuade²²:

- (14) a *John persuaded Harry to know the answer.
b *John persuaded Bill to notice a stranger in the room.

In Latin linguistics the notion of 'control' has been applied by BOLKESTEIN (e.g. 1980: 38–40, and passim). Compare too DIK (1978: 32–6) and in a related sense 'Agentive/Non-Agentive' in DOWTY (1979: 183–4). However, since the notion control is not relevant to the temporal structure of the states of affairs I will leave it out of account.

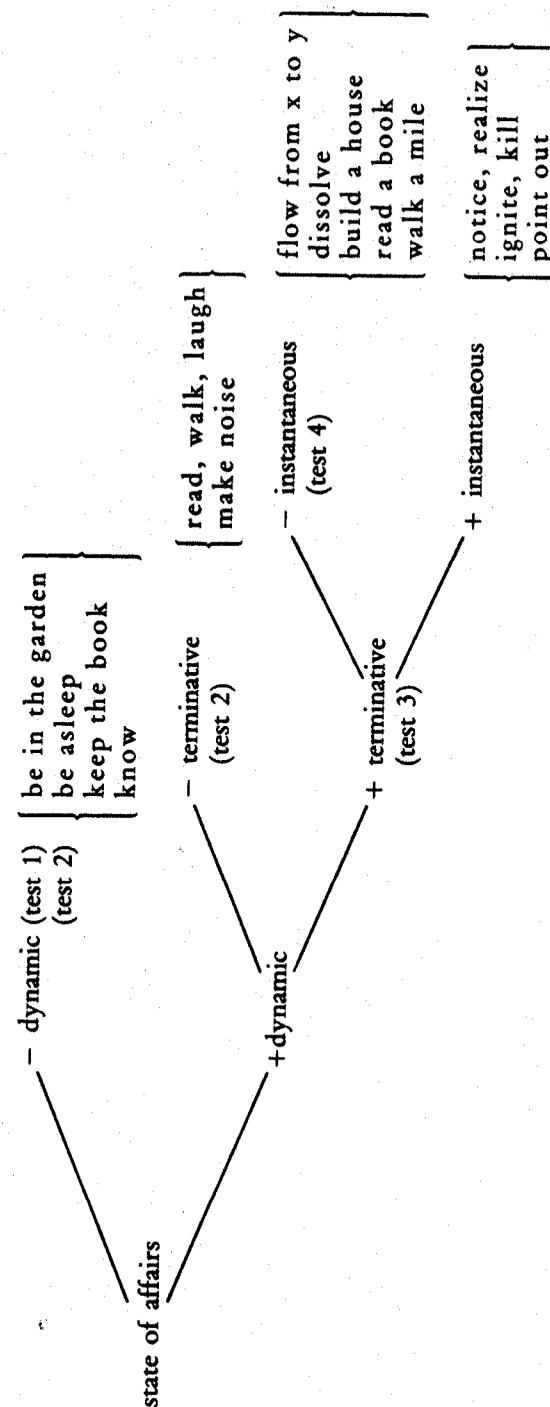
I will distinguish the following states of affairs (fig. III, p. 283). Most of the examples are taken from DOWTY (1979: 184)²³.

In Latin linguistics some attention has been given to a classification of verbs in imperfective and perfective verbs (Sz.: 303). Some of the findings can be reformulated and inserted into the framework outlined above. Thus, the imperfective class may be said to consist of verbs which, depending on what arguments go with them, can be called non-dynamic and (dynamic but) non-terminative (see fig. III on p. 283). They can be specified by Duration Adjuncts, for example a preposition phrase *per annos centum*. On the other hand, the so-called 'perfective' verbs can be equated to 'terminative' (fig. III). They may be specified by Adjuncts indicating the time necessary to reach the end, e.g. a preposition phrase *in hora una*. As far as I know, the co-occurrence of these types of Adjuncts with states of affairs has not been systematically investigated. I studied a sample taken at random from the well-known lexica and did not find counterexamples to what I expected intuitively: for example I did not find non-dynamic states of affairs with 'Time within which' Adjuncts. The sample contained, however, examples which make it clear that simply putting labels like 'imperfective' and 'perfective' on verbs (instead of states of affairs) will not do. For instance, *venire*

²² The notion 'control' applies to a verb like *stop* as well, which when predicated of a human being also implies some deliberate act on his part (John stopped laughing).

²³ Notice that this survey presents a classification of predicates, although incidentally some additional specification of the state of affairs is supplied. For the distinction '– dynamic / + dynamic' compare DIK (1978: 32). For a similar approach to the typology of states of affairs to the one presented here compare VESTER (forthcoming).

fig. III: types of states of affairs



test 1: In English – dynamic states of affairs do not occur in the Progressive.

test 2: In English – dynamic and – terminative states of affairs may be specified by expressions like 'for ... hours'.

test 3: In English + terminative states of affairs may be specified by expressions like 'in ... time'.

test 4: In English – instantaneous states of affairs may be embedded in a complement with 'to stop/finish'. Ambiguity may arise if specified by 'almost'.

is often called 'perfective' (Sz.: 303); yet a Duration Adjunct is possible under certain conditions, e.g. in (15):

- (15) *Philippus nullus usquam, nec nuntius ab eo per aliquot horas veniebat* ("Philip was nowhere in sight and no messenger arrived from him for several hours", Liv. 32,35,2).

The explanation is, of course, to be found in the presence of a negation.

The tests that are used in order to classify verbs as either imperfective or perfective are the following (Sz.: 303):

- (a) The so-called MEYER-criterion
- (b) The occurrence of the infinitive verb with phasal verbs like *coepti*, *desii*, etc.
- (c) The interpretation of the imperfect as iterative or conative and certain interpretations of the perfect. I will briefly discuss this in (iii) (p. 285).

I will say a few words about (a) and (b).

(a) The so-called MEYER-criterion says that with non-terminative (in Sz.'s terminology: imperfective) verbs like *ire* the perfect indicates a state of being somewhere, which may also explain the low frequency of Direction Adjuncts, whereas with the perfect of terminative verbs like *venire* such expressions are found quite frequently. GRASSI (1964) has shown that the originally much more stringent formulation of the criterion does not work, because, firstly there are counter-examples such as (16) and, secondly, MEYER's study is not reliable statistically.

- (16) *deos atque amicos iit salutatum ad forum* ("gone to the forum to pay his respects to the gods and his friends", Plt. Ba. 347).

In fact, in view of the example with English walk quoted from VERKUIJL (10), one would not expect *ire* + Direction Adjunct to differ from *venire* + Direction Adjunct with respect to *Aktionsart*.

(b) According to Sz. phasal verbs normally govern imperfective verbs. KRAVAR (1968: 57) has given examples of embedded infinitives of supposed perfective verbs, e.g. (17) and (18):

- (17) *satis pericli incepti adire* ("I undertook the facing of quite enough risk", Ter. An. 821).
(18) *Suebi . . . domum reverti coeperunt* ("the Suebi began to return homewards", Caes. Gal. 1,54,1).

On the other hand, with these phasal verbs non-dynamic (in Sz.'s terminology: imperfective) states of affairs are exceptional²⁴.

²⁴ Research by A. MACHTELT BOLKESTEIN and ELSELINE VESTER, contract ZWO 31-39 (Lexica Plt., Ter., Caes., Cic., Liv.).

- (19) *atque edepol non minitabor, sed dabo, mihi si perges molestus esse* ("Yes, and by heaven, I won't threaten - I'll give you one, if you go on annoying me", Plt. Cu. 571-2).
(20) *(ratio) non tum denique incipit lex esse* ("reason did not first become law", Cic. Leg. 2,10).

The conclusion is that the criteria used by Sz. e.a. have to be re-examined in the light of the new insights reported on above. This also means that the notions I have introduced in fig. III will be used in this paper in an intuitive way²⁵.

(iii) The relationship between *Aktionsart* and Tempus-Aspect

Some of the distinctions given above have played a role in the description of the use of Latin tenses. K.-ST. (: I, 120-1) remark that the so-called conative use of the present, imperfect and present participle is restricted to verbs indicating an intended action ("*beabsichtigte Ausführung einer Handlung*"). One of their examples is (21).

- (21) *veniebatis igitur in Africam . . . Prohibiti estis in provincia vestra pedem ponere* ("well, you were going to Africa . . . You were debarred from setting foot in your province", Cic. Lig. 24).

In the terminology adopted here a conative interpretation may be said to be restricted to + terminative, - instantaneous states of affairs, mostly + control under certain well-defined contextual conditions. There has, however, been no systematic research in this direction in Latin linguistics. I will come back to this on p. 301-3. Other illustrations of the relationship between *Aktionsart* and tense form are the so-called negative perfect (see p. 292) and the ingressive perfect (see p. 299). For Russian FORSYTH (1970: 46ff.) observes inter alia that instantaneous verbs are practically restricted to the perfective aspect, whereas states occur mostly in the imperfective. REINHOLD (1956: 23-37) has tried to make a classification of Latin verbs by studying the tenses in which they occur. He found that certain verbs tend to occur more often in the imperfectum than in the perfectum or the other way around. Such statistical observations may be correct, but conclusions to the effect that, for instance, the occurrence of the imperfectum is caused by the *Aktionsart* of the verb are too rash. In fact, a verb (with a specific *Aktionsart*) will by its meaning be suited for a limited set of contexts, for instance action verbs will frequently form the main line (or foreground) of a narrative text, and it is this contextual feature that determines, for instance, for Latin that the tense is perfect. Compare HOPPER (1979: 215) on the relationship between verb meaning and narrative structure.

²⁵ 'Intuitive' in the sense that I have not found counter-indications so far, but I am not yet sure that they do not exist. I will not discuss another criterion, viz. the relationship or rather, the absence of a systematic relationship between prefixation and *Aktionsart* (Sz.: 304). VAN DER HEYDE (1926) is in my opinion still the best study. GARCÍA HERNÁNDEZ (1977: 101) is too positive about the role of preverbs with respect to the *Aktionsart* of a verb.

1.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have dealt with Tempus, Aspect and *Aktionsart* from the point of view of general linguistics. Most Latin textbooks lack precision in the way they define the concepts that are discussed above. As far as I know there are very few studies in which it is made clear in what sense the author uses for example the notion 'Aspect' (an exception are the articles by KRAVAR) and which objective tests might be helpful in deciding whether setting up such a category for Latin is useful or not. The category of Tempus is dispatched most of the time without any indication of its usefulness or necessity. *Aktionsart* as far as I know is always considered a category that applies to verbs. Criteria for arriving at a classification of verbs (or: states of affairs) are lacking.

2. The Latin perfect and imperfect

In this chapter I will pay attention to those Latin tenses that are really open to dispute. These are, above all, the perfect tense and, to a lesser degree, the imperfect. Other so-called historical verb forms, like the historic present and the historic infinitive will be discussed in § 4, below p. 310ff. I will deal with each of these separately in this order. I will also say a few words about the tense system as a whole (2.1.4.), p. 293 ff.

2.1. The perfect²⁶

The Latin perfect has been problematic for linguists from antiquity onwards. This chapter will start with a brief discussion of the ancient theories in order to demonstrate that the debate still turns on questions which are inherent in the descriptions of Roman grammarians. Next I will concentrate on some facets of the perfect, viz. the notion of 'completion', and the orientation moment. I will then go into some of the explanations that can be given for the occurrence of perfect forms in present and past contexts. Two types of explanation will receive attention, namely the diachronic explanation and an explanation that starts from the two-dimensional character of the verbal system alluded to above. I will add a short survey of supposed aspectual explanations of certain idiomatic expressions like *ne feceris*.

²⁶ I will use the term perfect in a more restricted sense for the indicative perfect forms. However, much of what I have to say is also applicable to the subjunctive forms and to the infinitive. I will mention these non-indicative forms whenever necessary.

2.1.1. Roman grammarians

The Latin perfect, as I said, has been the most problematic tense form from antiquity onwards. Thus the discussion in Varro L.L. 9,96 already contains traces of a dispute about the way to fit the perfect into the tense system. Varro makes a stand against opponents of the theory of analogia who appear to have taken *lēgi*, *lego* and *legam* as a semantically coherent set and to have argued that there is no correlation for this coherence in the morphological structure of these tense forms. Varro objected that in this way forms which mark an event as only having begun (but not finished), i.e. *lego* and *legam* are put on a par with a form that marks an event as finished (*lēgi*). Hence his well-known distinction of *verba infecta* and *verba perfecta* (elsewhere: *verba infecti* and *verba perfecti*). In terms of the two-dimensional temporal system sketched above, one might say that some people departed from a semantic set of sequential order and observed that this semantic structure is not reflected in the morphology. Varro, on the other hand, takes the axis of orientation as a starting point. What is clear, at any rate, is that Varro substituted an imperfect for *lēgi* in the initial set *lēgi*, *lego*, *legam* and, as a consequence, he must have felt some sort of semantic similarity between the two forms. Later authors, e.g. Priscian, refer to the perfect as a past tense (*praeteritum*), that is, as in some respect similar to the imperfect as well.²⁷ Modern linguists differ in the degree to which they take the ancient views seriously. MEILLET who was strongly influenced by his views on verbal aspect in Slavic languages, based his conception of the Latin tense structure on Varro's short remarks. According to him, Latin has two aspectual paradigms, an 'infectum' and a 'perfectum', both comprising a present, past and future tense, in the following way:

fig. IV: MEILLET's tense system

tempus \ aspect	infectum		perfectum	
present	<i>lego</i>		<i>lēgi</i>	
past	<i>legebam</i>		<i>lēgeram</i>	
future	<i>legam</i>		<i>lēgero</i>	

This theory was very influential, especially in France. Several scholars, recently SERBAT (1976 b: 330–340), have taken quite some trouble to reject a key-stone in this system, viz. the characterization of the perfect tense as referring to the

²⁷ The theories of the grammatici Latini are discussed very thoroughly in SERBAT (1976 a: 308–23).

moment of speaking (present) and having perfective aspect. According to him, the perfect is a past tense, which has to be put on a row with *legebam* in fig. IV. This view on the perfect may be visualized in fig. V.

fig. V:

before past	past	present	before future	future
<i>lēgeram</i>	<i>legebam</i> <i>lēgi</i>	<i>lego</i>	<i>lēgero</i>	<i>legam</i>

(Compare too KRAVAR 1975b: 56.) Note that fig. IV is a two-dimensional representation of the Latin verbal system, comparable in some way with fig. I and II on pp. 276 and 277, whereas fig. V is mono-dimensional²⁸. One of SERBAT's arguments for calling the perfect a past tense is the ancient characterization of the perfect as a praeteritum²⁹. The question is, however, what value one should attach to the terminology of the Roman grammarians in view, for example, of the quite unsatisfactory way in which they describe the difference between perfect and plusquamperfectum. I will therefore leave the Roman grammarians and turn to empirical observations on the use of the perfect.

2.1.2. The notion 'completion'

Priscian's description of the perfect (8,52,3) is well-known. He says that a Roman uses the imperfect *si incipiam in praeterito versum scribere et imperfectum eum* (scil. *versum*) *relinquam*, and then adds about the perfect: *continuo enim scripto ad finem versu dico "scripsi versum"*. I agree with the interpretation of the example *versum scripsi*. However, the implication that the action of writing has resulted in a verse is linked up with the particular state of affairs *scribere versum* (+ terminative, – instantaneous). Such a result interpretation is absent, for example in (22):

(22) *nostri praeceptores servum cervumque u et o litteris scripserunt* ("my own teachers spelt *servus* and *cervus* with a *uo*", Quint. 1,7,26).

I also refer to the examples given on p. 278 which illustrate that the perfect is used for states of affairs that have lasted for some time in the past and have ended without having resulted in some 'product'. It may be useful in this context to

²⁸ I do not want to suggest that fig. V is a correct representation of SERBAT's views. He would not, for example, put the present tense *lego* in a central position between the past and future tenses.
²⁹ The perfect (active) is regarded as a past tense in e.g. WEINRICH (1964) as well. Criticism in POLLAK (1968: 472–3) and SCHAUWECKER (1968: 268–9).

stress the frequency of Duration Adjuncts with the perfect, if compared with the imperfect.

The Latin perfect, by its 'finished' or 'ended' semantic value, differs from the imperfect which, as I will explain in 2.2., below p. 300, indicates that at some orientation moment in the past the event designated was going on and had not yet finished. Now certain types of Adjuncts may be expected to occur more easily in predications which are marked as 'ended' than in predications which are marked as 'still going on'. It seems unlikely, for example, that a specification of the number of times a state of affairs obtains will be given in a predication in which the state of affairs is presented as 'still going on'. I expected that such a specification could only be given afterwards. Therefore, one might expect to find (23) and not (24):

- (23) *sed fui . . . bis in Bithynia* ("I have been in Bithynia twice", Cic. Planc. 84).
 (24) **sed eram bis in Bithynia*.

This supposition seemed to be justified in a first tentative count of the number of instances of quantifying expressions (*semel*³⁰, *bis*, *ter*, *quater*, *quinq̄iens*). In my material I found more than 120 instances of the perfect indicative and only one of the imperfect (indicative), which, moreover, can be explained:

- (25) *nascenti cui tris animas Feronia mater / (horrendum dictu) dederat, terna arma movenda, / ter leto sternendus erat, cui tunc tamen omnis / abstulit haec animas dextra . . . /* ("whom at his birth his mother Feronia had given (awful to tell) three lives with threefold armour to wear – thrice had he to be laid down in death; yet on that day this hand bereft him of all his lives", Verg. A. 8,564–7).

This example cannot be interpreted in such a way that "it was thrice the case that he had to be laid down", but only that "the situation was such that he had thrice to be laid down"³¹. Another type of Adjuncts which one expects with the perfect tense, and not, for example, with the imperfect tense are expressions indicating the time needed to bring a state of affairs to its end. I have, however, not been able to find enough instances of this expression type to prove the hypothesis³². I

³⁰ *Semel* also means "the first time", e.g. Liv. 42,34,9: *bis deinde in Hispania militavi, semel Q. Fulvio Flacco, iterum Ti. Sempronio Graccho praetore*. – Such cases are not intended here. Material from lexica of Plt., Cic. Phil., Orat., Caes., Verg., Liv., Stat., Tac.
³¹ Similarly, such quantifying expressions are not to be expected with other verb forms which represent a state of affairs as 'going on', e.g. a present participle. There is, however, one difficult passage in Statius Silvae 5,3,29–30: *nam me ter relegens caelo (caelum HEINSIUS) terque ora retexens luna videt residem* ("for thrice has the moon journeyed over the heaven and thrice displayed her countenance, and still beholds me sluggish"). – On the historic present see below. On the relationship between frequency Adjuncts and 'Aspect' compare also FUGIER (1982).
³² There are certain expressions that may be ambiguous, for example preposition phrases introduced by *intra*. Consider the following example: Tac. H. 5,10: *Vespasianus . . . intra (inter codd.) duas aetates cuncta camporum omnisque . . . urbes victore exercitu tenebat*. ("V. occupied with his victorious army the whole of the level country and all the cities") – The preposition phrase indicates the time elapsed before V. had hold of the country.

have not found counter-examples either. By the same principle one would expect expressions which specify the degree to which an event has taken place to occur more frequently with the perfect than with the imperfect. It has for example been observed before that in sentences with the negation *non* the perfect tense predominates (for example more than 10 times as frequent in Plt.) (cf. VON ALBRECHT, 1968: 459)³³. *Paene* may be used to specify the degree to which a change has been effectuated (cf. p. 281). In that case the perfect is used (cf. ex. [34] on p. 292). FORSYTH (1970: 349) has an observation on the use of the imperfective which seems to be relevant to our problem: "the basic function of the imperfective is to denote the type of action without reference to totality, frequency, mode of procedure," etc.³⁴. Also Adjuncts specifying the result of an action normally occur with perfect forms, e.g. *prosperare* in (26)³⁵:

(26) *cum iis . . . prospere pugnavit* ("with them he fought successfully", Liv. 35,22,8).

Finally, it might be predicted that perfect forms of terminative states of affairs (for example consisting of a verb + a definite object) occur much more frequently than those of non-terminative states of affairs (consisting of the same verb and an indefinite object) (cf. p. 280). A first count of perfect and imperfect forms with definite and indefinite object with verbs like *scribere*, *aedificare*, etc. in Livy and the orations of Cicero suggests that the hypothesis is correct (imperfect: 15 examples, 6 indefinite; perfect 22 examples, 20 definite). Much more detailed research into the conditions which determine the distribution of the two tenses has to be done. It is clear, however, that there exists empirical evidence which proves that the perfect marks a state of affairs as having ended, and with particular states of affairs as having resulted in some state. Some further argumentation may be found in the following paragraph, dealing with the orientation moment of the perfect.

2.1.3. The orientation moment of the perfect

In section 2.1.1., above p. 287f., I referred to MEILLET's conception of the perfect as a present tense with perfective aspect. Other scholars, on the other hand, consider the perfect a past tense, for example, in SERBAT's recent formu-

³³ See on the other hand SZ. (: 316) for special interpretations of negated imperfect; SZ's remarks are too positive.

³⁴ Perhaps speech verbs should be taken into consideration as well. Since indirect speech may be regarded as a means for summarizing a person's actual words the perfect forms of *dicere* would be expected to be much more common than the imperfect ones. This assumption is correct for Livy and Plautus. — It might furthermore be hypothesized that satellites in general occur more frequently in predications with a perfect tense than in predications with an imperfect tense.

³⁵ Exceptions in the material (Petr., Ter., Cic. [Orations, Phil.], Caesar, Vergil, Liv., Stat., Tac.) with respect to *prosperare* and *prospero eventum* (ca. 100 examples) are Liv. 21,7,6 *ita haudquaquam prospere . . . succedebat* and Tac. A. 15,5,3 *nec praesentia prospere fluebant*. Both negated (?)

lation as a tense expressing «*purement et simplement un procès achevé dans le passé, au sens du passé simple français et sans référence explicite au présent*» (1976 b: 341). The idea of the majority of Latinists is that the perfect has a double value. K.-ST. (: I, 124) for example distinguish a 'Perfectum Praesens' and a 'Perfectum historicum' (Compare too SZ.: 318). I will discuss in this section a number of facts which are relevant to deciding what is the orientation moment of the perfect: the moment of speaking, the past, or both. The perfect, as is well-known, occurs in two types of context, both in historical narrative and in present contexts (e.g. in conversation in Plautus)³⁶. An argument for assuming a double value of the perfect can be found in the sequence of tense rules: The tense of an embedded clause with a matrix verb in the perfect tense may be both present and past (SZ.: 550; HARRIS, 1970: 65; POIRIER, 1978, in his reply to SERBAT [1976 b] [compare too their discussion in SERBAT (ed.) 1980: 98–101]). Examples are (27) and (28):

(27) *etiamne ad subsellia cum ferro atque telis venistis ut hic . . . iuguletis . . . Sex. Roscium?* ("have you come to these benches fully armed to murder Sex. Roscius?", Cic. Rosc. Am. 32).

(28) *prima docuit maiores nostros quam praeclarum esset exteris gentibus imperare* ("she was the first to make our forefathers perceive how splendid a thing foreign empire is", Cic. Ver. 2,2).

The assumption of a past value of the perfect is furthermore supported by the identical behaviour of imperfect and perfect tenses if transformed into indirect speech:

(29) a *Socrates doctrinam amavit* } *aiunt Socratem doctrinam amavisse.*
b *Socrates doctrinam amabat*

(example from RONCONI 1968: 101)³⁷. The perfect may, on the other hand, be regarded as related to the moment of speaking, again on account of the sequence of tense rules, which state that a perfect tense in an embedded clause expresses anteriority with respect to a matrix verb in the present tense (ex. [3] above). The distribution of the perfect in complex sentences and in larger texts shows that the extreme approaches of MEILLET and SERBAT both do not cover the facts.

Another type of argument has to do with the interpretation of perfect forms of certain verbs in certain contexts. First there is the so-called present use of the perfect as exemplified in certain petrified cases like *memini* and *novi*.³⁸ Secondly there are cases of the passive perfect interpreted as a present result like *urbs circumdata muro* (compare the Romance developments). Thirdly, there are cases of

³⁶ Statistics in SERBAT (1976 b: 341). TOURATIER (1982) also regards the perfect as a tense presenting an event as «*achevé*».

³⁷ But, of course, the present infinitive is normal with *memini*: — *memini enim mihi narrare Mucium . . .*, Cic. de Orat. 1,167.

³⁸ Even the standard example *novi* can, of course, be used without a present meaning, as is proved by the coordination with the perfects *vidisti* and *conlocutus es* in Plt. Ps. 619–20: *sed ubi tu me nobisti gentium aut vidisti aut conlocutus?* — On the present (or resultative) use of the perfect cf. GARCÍA HERNÁNDEZ (1977: 97).

the so-called negative perfect ('perfectum logicum' in Sz.: 318) which can only be understood as having relevance to the moment of speaking:

- (30) *fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Teucrorum* ("we Trojans are not, Ilium is not, and the great glory of the Teucrians", Verg. A. 2,325).

Also some of the observations in 2.1.2. (above p. 288 ff.) can better be understood if one assumes that the states of affairs are presented as related to the moment of speaking. It is true that the number of these cases is limited (SERBAT 1976 b: 431–2), but for the description of the value of the perfect it is not so much the frequency of occurrence that counts, as the fact that the imperfect cannot be used in this way. Consider also occurrences of the perfect with the temporal adverb *nunc* (VAIREL, 1979: 384–5; 406–9; discussion in SERBAT [ed.] 1980: 105–11) (ex. [31] as well as ex. [32], which in its context can only be understood as applying to the moment of speaking as well)³⁹.

- (31) *ea patientia virtus frugalitasque est ut proxime ad nostram disciplinam illam veterem, non ad hanc quae nunc increbruit videantur accedere* ("the character is so hardy and upright and honest, that it really reminds us of the stern old Roman manners, rather than those which have come to prevail among us today", Cic. Ver. 2,7).
- (32) *in eodem silentio multa alia oratorum officia iacuerunt* ("in a like silence have languished many other duties of the orator", Cic. de Orat. 2,64).

There seem to be enough arguments, therefore, to regard the perfect as having 'current relevance', in other words, relevance to the moment of speaking. In this respect it resembles the English present perfect. The Latin perfect is different from the English verb form, however, in that it lacks the kind of restrictions that hold for the English present perfect. COMRIE (1976: 54) observes e.g. that "the Perfect may not be used together with specification of the time of the past situation, i.e. one cannot say 'I have got up at five o'clock this morning'" (cf. HUDDLESTON, 1969: 783–6; 795). The Latin perfect goes freely with past temporal Adjuncts in a present context, e.g. in dialogue.

- (33) *tun heri hunc salutavisti* ("welcomed him yesterday, did you?", Plt. Am. 717).
- (34) *etsi heri . . . id quod quaerebatur paene explicatum est* ("it is true that our inquiry of yesterday was almost fully cleared up", Cic. Ac. 2,10).

These examples make it clear that the Latin perfect behaves as a simple past tense as well (cf. BERTOCCHI, 1980: 143–5 on the Italian passato prossimo).

The question that remains is, of course, how to account for the double value of the perfect. I will turn to this question now.

³⁹ Cf. PETERSMANN (1977: 177, n. 122) on Petr. 47,5 *vetui* (BÜCHELER and most editors read *vetuo*): „Die mit dem Perfekt bezeichnete Handlung bezw. deren Wirkung reicht also bis in die Gegenwart hinein“. An example of *nunc* + imperf. on p. 301.

2.1.4. Explanations for the present and past value of the perfect

From 2.1.3. it seems to follow that the perfect has two orientation moments (time of speech and past). In 2.1.2. (above p. 288 ff.) I have provided arguments for the 'finished' character of the perfect. The question to be answered now is what is the precise relationship between these facts and, specifically, how the perfect can occur both in present and in past contexts. I will now discuss two different approaches to this question.

2.1.4.1. The diachronic approach

The double value of the perfect has been accepted by the majority of Latin linguists as a matter beyond dispute, which is moreover regarded as quite understandable in a diachronic Indo-European perspective. Thus Sz. (: 317) states that the Latin perfect continues both the Indo-European perfect and the Indo-European aorist in morphological and semantic respects. The situation is, of course, much more complex, e.g. it is only with a restricted number of states of affairs that the perfect may be interpreted as the present state resulting from past action; and the perfectum paradigm contains other forms by the side of ancient aorist and perfect stems. In fact, the merging of perfect and aorist can best be explained by assuming that at some prehistoric stage the difference between perfect and aorist had been (almost) neutralized (so SAFAREWICZ, 1973). The Indo-European perfect has developed into a past tense in several other languages (LEU-MANN, 1977: 510–11, also MEILLET [1921]) and similar developments are known for tenses designating "present state resulting from past action" in other languages, for example in Italian (*passato prossimo*, BERTOCCHI, 1980: 145) and in "some (especially southern) varieties of German" (COMRIE, 1976: 53).

In the absence of some common denominator for all the uses of the perfect dealt with so far, one might characterize (with HARRIS, 1970: 66) the Latin tense system as an "inherently unstable situation" in which at least two factors play a role, viz. the fundamental instability of "present result from past action" in general and the drift towards a periphrastic, or analytic, active counterpart for the analytic passive perfect forms (*epistula scripta est* > *epistulam scriptam habeo*) (COLEMAN, 1975: 114; HARRIS, l.c.; 1978: 132 ff.).

The emergence of analytic present perfect forms with *habeo* is valued as an argument for the non-existence of the use in classical times of the perfect to express the present result of past action by SERBAT (ed.) (1980: 112): if the perfect could be used as a 'present result' tense, why invent another. In my opinion, this view of how languages develop is too mechanic and, therefore, too simple. Apparently the range of contexts in which the perfect could be used narrowed down gradually and at some time some of its uses were gradually adopted by the analytic verb forms⁴⁰. The chronology of this development is not very clear. Some scholars, for example COLEMAN, 1975: 113, PETERSMANN, 1977: 189; Sz.: 317

⁴⁰ Notice that the developments in passive and active were not strictly parallel. On *-tus fui* cf. KRAVAR (1966).

- (c) the perfect can be described in terms that are useful for the other verb forms as well, so that:
- (d) it is not necessary to introduce the category of aspect for which there is little support in the tense system as a whole. We will see that the 'aspectual effect' of the juxtaposition of perfect and imperfect in historical narrative (*perfecto procedit, imperfecto insistit oratio*) derives from their semantic value and need not force us to introduce the category of aspect. Furthermore, as I said on p. 276, the difference between the aspectual notions of perfectivity and imperfectivity and the temporal notions of anteriority and simultaneity is not very clear.

Further evidence for the correctness of this conception of the perfect might be found in sentences in which two temporal expressions are juxtaposed, one of which specifies the orientation moment (moment of speaking) and one the time at which the event took place (the 'event time'). It is interesting in this context to refer to the following examples.

- (37) *nunc huc remisit nuper ad me epistulam* ("and now he just recently sent me back a letter", Plt. Tru. 397).
- (38) *idem Menandri Phasma nunc nuper dedit* ("the same man has now recently produced Menander's Phasma", Ter. Eun. prol. 9).

SERBAT (in: SERBAT [ed.], 1980: 108) remarks that *nunc* in these examples refers to the moment of speaking whereas *nuper* refers to the event time of *dedit* («réfère à l'époque de dedit»). One might paraphrase: "the situation is now so that he has recently . . .". If SERBAT's analysis is correct, these examples would corroborate the assumption of a two-dimensional conception of the Latin verbal system. However, these examples are usually explained in a different way and further evidence of this kind would be very welcome⁴³.

2.1.5. Idiomatic uses of the perfect

The perfect indicative, subjunctive and infinitive forms are sometimes used in such a way that synchronically they can hardly be fitted into the overall value of perfectum forms, being anteriority with respect to some orientation moment. It is usual in Latin grammars to look for diachronic explanations of these uses and for parallels with Greek. As a corollary it is often assumed that these idiomatic facts are evidence for an underlying aspectual explanation of the Latin tense system. I will deal with a few of these uses, for example the use of the perfect in comparisons, the so-called gnomic perfect, the perfect infinitive used with certain modal verbs and prohibitions of the type *ne feceris*.

1. SVENSSON (1973) draws attention to what he explains as „aoristische zeitlose Perfekte“ in Virgil's similes. One of his examples is:

⁴³ For another type of explanation (*nunc* refers to the moment of speaking and *nuper* to 'die unmittelbare Vergangenheit' which is part of *nunc*) compare THOMSEN (1930: 10). Also Sz.: 799.

- (39) *velut . . . aper . . . substitit infremuitque ferox et inhorruit armo:
nec . . .* ("even as the boar halts, snorts savagely and bristles up his shoulders", Verg. A. 10, 707–12).

There is no objection against interpreting the perfects in (39) in the usual way: the wild boar has stopped etc. and as a consequence a situation arises in which every body is afraid. There is no need for introducing the concept of 'Aspect' to explain such cases⁴⁴.

2. Another example of so-called timeless or gnomic use (Sz.: 318) of the perfect is (40):

- (40) *etiam quom cavisse ratus est, saepe is cautor captus est* ("even when he supposed he was on his guard, your guarder has often enough be gulled" Plt. Cap. 256).

Captus refers to some anterior event; iteration is expressed by *saepe*. Both in this case and in the preceding one Greek influence may be assumed, because the phenomenon is most conspicuous in "Hellenizing registers" (COLEMAN, 1975: 133). There is no evidence for an aspectual explanation of these cases. (On gnomic use of tenses also LYONS, 1977: 681.)

3. The use of the perfect infinitive without a clear anterior meaning is well known. The material which is usually assembled under this heading is, however not uniform. First, there are examples like (41).

- (41) *ne mihi . . . carpere somnos neu . . . libeat iacuisse* ("may I not then be fain to woo soft sleep or to lie outstretched", Verg. G. 3,435–6).

In this example the use of the perfect cannot be explained by assuming aspectual differences⁴⁵. Greek influence probably favoured its expansion in Augustean literature (COLEMAN, 1975: 133). An 'anterior' explanation is given by K.-ST. (: I, 133) but this is not very illuminating either⁴⁶. The material, however, also contains examples of the type (42):

- (42) *quoi illam dedisset exquisisse oportuit* ("you should have inquired to whom she gave her", Plt. Ci. 574).

⁴⁴ Some of SVENSSON's examples present more difficulties, for example *demisere* in Verg. A. 9,435–7, where the perfect as it stands indicates the result of the terminative state of affairs *caput demittere: veluti cum flos succisus aratro / languescit moriens, lassove papaveri collo / demisere caput . . .* ("as when a flower, severed by the plough, droops in death; or a poppies, with weary neck, bow the head").

⁴⁵ Aspectual explanations are accepted by COLEMAN (ad Verg. Ecl. 2,34), COURTNEY (ad Juv. 3,162), KENNEY (ad Lucr. 3,683), NISBET-HUBBARD (ad Hor. C. 1,34,16 "instantaneous perfect"), OLLFORS (1967: 37–42). A temporal (anterior) explanation is given in AUSTIN (ad Verg. A. 6,79).

⁴⁶ The Dutch language has an idiomatic expression: *Ik wil niet gezegd hebben dat . . .* (= "I do not want to be understood as having said that") as a polite or diplomatic alternative for "do not say that", expressing anteriority with respect to some future moment (cf. K.-ST. : [I, 133] opinion).

In these cases we have to do with some sort of 'Tempus harmony', or 'attraction' (K.-St.: I, 135; BOLKESTEIN, 1980: 160, n. 16).

There is no reason to base an aspectual conception of the Latin tense system on cases like these.

4. Sz. (: 351-2) draws attention to the fact that the use of the perfect infinitive in prohibitions in archaic Latin and in legal texts resembles the use of the perfect subjunctive in expressions like *ne feceris*. The use of the perfect subjunctive in prohibitions is usually explained as aspectual, for example in Sz., 337. The differences between *ne feceris* and *ne facias* is described as a difference in „im Einzelfall“ and „allgemein“ (Sz., l. c.), or as "momentary" vs. "durative" (HANDFORD, 1947: 46-7). Compare too CALBOLI (1966: 293-308). The passages cited by Sz. in support of his view at first sight look convincing:

- (43) *unde is? quid fers? quid festinas? : tua quod nil refert, ne cures* ("where have you been? what are you bringing? what's the hurry? : keep your nose out of other folks' business", Plt. St. 319-23).
- (44) *hos te satius est docere, ut, quando agas, quid agas sciant. nos tu ne curassis: scimus rem omnem* ("they are the ones for you to instruct so that they'll know what you're doing when you do it. Don't bother about us: we know the whole business", Plt. Poe. 552-3).

The first passage has the air of a general statement, as some sort of proverb. See PETERSMANN a. l. for parallels. On the other hand, the second example has a definite Object with *curassis* and the context suggests that the exhortation is not meant in a general way. However, the difference assumed by Sz. and others is not supported by a sufficient number of parallels and the paraphrase, as a consequence, is rather ad hoc. Compare the following passages, one with *dicas*, the other with *dixeris*, both having an AcI construction as its Object where an aspectual explanation is impossible:

- (45) *ne te indotatam dicas quoi dos sit domi* ("you are not to say you have no dowry, when you have one at home", Plt. Per. 391).
- (46) *ne duas neve te advexisse dixeris* ("don't give her and don't say you have brought her", Plt. Mer. 401).

It seems to me then that the initial passages (43) and (44) have been overinterpreted in the desire to prove the existence of an aspectual difference. It is doubtful whether a sufficient number of minimal pairs can be found which may be convincingly proved to differ only in aspect. For similar reservations about the paraphrases cited above compare GRASSI (1967: 220-4). COLEMAN (1975: 133) argues that any aspectual explanation whatsoever is unlikely in view of the differences that exist in the frequency with which they occur in individual writers⁴⁷. It

is evident that *ne feceris* poses problems for a temporal explanation as well as for an aspectual one. Commands and prohibitions normally refer to some future moment and there are no parallels for anterior verb forms in embedded predications with verbs like *vetare*, *inbere*, etc. either. (Compare on tense restrictions in commands BOLKESTEIN, 1980: 39).

5. Another type is *dixerit (ali)quis* (Sz.: 333-4). The claims for an aspectual explanation have never been very strong. Recently VAIREL (1978) has stressed the fact that these forms can neither be explained within an aspectual theory, nor be said to express anteriority. Her own description of these forms runs as follows: The perfect subjunctive expresses a «*atténuation de l'expression*». This form follows a general tendency of languages to use past tenses for 'non-actual' situations. However, she does not offer arguments for her hypothetical description⁴⁸.

6. Finally, I briefly refer to the so-called ingressive use of the perfect. Sz. (: 318) mentions under the heading „*Praesentisches Perfekt vom erreichten Zustand*“ instances of so-called 'ingressive' perfects in Late Latin. According to him Greek influence (the ingressive use of the aorist) must be assumed. Austin (ad Verg. A. 6,81 *patuere*) and others draw attention to what they call the 'perfect of instantaneous happening'. PETERSMANN (1977: 178-79) discusses the matter in connection with (47):

- (47) *molestus fuit, Philerosque proclamavit* ("he was a bore, and Phileros shouted out", Petr. 43,1).

He translates: „*er begann lästig zu werden*“ and concludes that the phenomenon is genuinely Latin and developed under Greek influence. However, even if PETERSMANN's interpretation is necessary (which I doubt), the question is whether the perfect is used in order to impose such an interpretation. This is clearly not the case. Consider also (48).

- (48) *Hic Catulus adrisit et simul . . . inquit* ("here Catulus smiled on him and said", Cic. de Orat. 2,28).

The perfect *adrisit* may be interpreted as "began to laugh". However, all such stage remarks on the part of Cicero are in the perfect⁴⁹. There exists, therefore, no intentional use of the perfect in an ingressive sense for example as a stylistic alternative for the imperfect. (Compare KRAVAR, 1968: 58.)

7. Conclusion. Some of the cases of the perfect discussed in 1.-6. have in common that they do not fit very well into a particular theory with respect to the Latin tense system as a whole. Both the restricted number and the diversity of these examples prevent a general conclusion. Some of them can best be regarded

⁴⁸ I wonder whether considering the perfect subjunctive as a 'past' tense fits in with VAIREL's (1979) description of the perfect indicative.

⁴⁹ In Vergil the historic present of non-dynamic states of affairs may be interpreted in an ingressive (or dynamic) sense as well. Consider A. 4,499: *haec effata silet, pallor simul occupat ora*; cf. *ardet* in 9,66.

⁴⁷ COLEMAN, l. c. holds that Cicero uses *ne facias* in his 'Letters' against *ne feceris* in his formal writings, but see CALBOLI (1966: 294). I have left out of account the use of the imperative (*cura hoc*: Plt. Ba. 1035, *cura te*: Ci. 115) which often occurs with definite Objects. On the stylistic character of forms like *curassis* etc., which were practically extinct in Plautus' time, see HAPP (1967: 87-92).

as idiomatic (3., 4., 5.); the other cases can be regarded as specific interpretations, in a specific context, of predicates of a specific type.

I have almost completely confined myself in the preceding sections to the semantic value of the perfect (anteriority with respect to the moment of speaking) in isolated sentences. I will come back to the function of the perfect tense in narrative texts in section 3, below p. 304ff.

2.2. The imperfect

In this section I will pay attention to two issues, viz. the semantic value ('going on') of the imperfect and some of its contextual interpretations.

2.2.1. The semantic value of the imperfect

Most Latinists agree that the function of the imperfect is to mark a state of affairs as going on at some time in the past, and as a consequence, as not finished at that time. In contrast, the semantic value of the perfect, as we have seen, is 'ended'.

The use of the imperfect does not imply that a state of affairs is to be regarded as lasting for a long period (see above; also K.-St.: I, 122). The assumption however of 'duration' as a typical value of the imperfect can be found quite frequently. Thus AUSTIN (ad Verg. A. 4,409) observes that the imperfect form *dabas* 'shows the frequency of her cries':

(49) *quosve dabas gemitus, cum . . .* ("what sighs didst thou utter", Verg. A. 4,409).

The frequency of Dido's cries appears from the plural *gemitus*. If Dido would have uttered one sigh the imperfect would also be much more likely, and the perfect certainly odd⁵⁰. The 'going on', 'non-finished' value of the imperfect entails that the use of the imperfect is obligatory in situations in which it is clear that the state of affairs has not reached its 'natural end'. Two examples are (50) and (51):

(50) *extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam, fama prior* ("have I lost my honour and that former fame, by which alone I was winning a title to the stars", Verg. A. 4,322-3).

⁵⁰ FORDYCE (ad Verg. A. 7,571 *levabat*) suggests that the "force of the imperfect may be to emphasize the gradual relief which A's disappearance brought". This is not the reason why the imperfect is used. The context demands a 'non-finished' tense (consequently the imperfect) since no succession is implied. Consequently *levabat* can not be substituted by the perfect form. A substitute might be *levans*. WILLIAMS a.l., however, follows the manuscript R in reading *levavit*, which would suggest successive events.

(51) *ergo in Graecia musici floruerunt discebantque id omnes nec qui nesciebat satis excultus doctrina putabatur* ("musicians accordingly flourished in Greece; everyone would learn music, and the man who was unacquainted with the art was not regarded as completely educated", Cic. Tusc. 1,4).

In (50) the perfect form *adii* is not possible since this would mean that Dido had reached the stars by her fame. Similarly, in (51) *didicerunt* would mean that all Greeks attained full mastery of the art of music, which apparently was not the case. Notice that in this example the imperfect is coordinated with a perfect tense. KRAVAR (1968: 65) suggests that in such cases the distinction between perfect and imperfect disappears. This view does no justice, however, to the fact that the selection of these tenses is not really free. By the same argument it is understandable that a person meeting someone else in Plautine comedy asks *quo ibas* and not *quo iisti*:

(52) *quo nunc ibas? : exulatum* ("where were you going? : into exile", Plt. Merc. 884)⁵¹.

The imperfect is also necessary if one wants to create the impression of reporting from personal experience. A familiar example is (53):

(53) *dicebat melius quam scripsit Hortensius* ("H. used to speak better than his written speeches would indicate", Cic. Or. 132).

scribebat would have been impossible since it would have created the impression that Cicero was present in H's writing. On the other hand Cicero knew from his own experience about *dicebat*. *Dixit* would have been too neutral. Compare K.-St.: I, 131 against KRAVAR (1968: 65) who suggests that in such cases perfect and imperfect are virtually interchangeable.

2.2.2. Contextual interpretations of the imperfect

The context of a sentence containing an imperfect may contain information which induces the reader to conclude that a state of affairs that as such is explicitly situated in the past is valid at the time of speaking as well. We saw ex. (8) on p. 278 (compare too K.-St.: I, 123). Also, in an appropriate context, a state of affairs may be understood as not to have reached its 'natural end', the so-called 'inceptive' or 'conative' use of the imperfect referred to on p. 285 (cf. Sz.: 316).

I suggested above that the conative use of the imperfect is found with terminative, non-instantaneous states of affairs, and, in fact, many of the examples in the grammars are of that kind. Sz. (: 303), in his terminology, observes: „Von perfektiven Verben ist im allgemeinen kein Imperf. möglich, es sei denn ein iteratives oder ein Imperf. de conatu (z. B. Plt. Asin. 207 quom ad te veniebam 'zu kommen pflegte' . . ." Now, there are two types of objections which may be raised against Sz.'s claim. In the first place, both WOYTEK (1970: 84-5) and

⁵¹ Notice the echo of this sentence in Plt. Merc. 981: *nam ibat exulatum : An abiit?*

PETERSMANN (1977: 174) have drawn attention to further exceptions to Sz.'s generalization. One is (54):

- (54) *veniebamus in forum deficiente iam die, in quo notavimus frequentiam rerum venalium* ("it was already dusk when we came into the market. We saw a quantity of things for sale . . .", Petr. 12,1).

The explanation for this passage is that upon their arrival they observed certain things, that is, the normal 'Inzidenz-schema' imperfect-perfect (for the term cf. KLEIN, 1974: 31)⁵². The generalization in Sz. leaves open the question whether the de conatu use of the imperfect is restricted to his 'perfective' verbs. We will see below that at least one recent commentary applies the description to a non-terminative verb as well (*tenere*)⁵³. Secondly, the wording of Sz. wrongly suggests that with these verbs the imperfect is to be interpreted in a de conatu sense independently of the context in which it occurs. For a familiar type of context signal from which the reader may infer that a certain state of affairs has not come to its end compare (55). The example is given in K.-St. (: I, 121).

- (55) *ipsi ex silvis rari propugnabant nostrosque intra munitiones ingredi prohibebant. At milites legionis septimae testudine facta et aggere ad munitiones adiecto locum ceperunt . . .* ("the enemy came out of the woods to fight in small groups, and sought to prevent our troops from entering the fortifications, but the men of the Seventh Legion formed a 'tortoise' and threw up a ramp against the fortifications, and so took the position", Caes. Gal. 5,9,6).

A familiar device from Tacitus is a following *nisi* clause (e. g. Tac. A. 1,63,2 *trudebanturque in paludem . . . ni Caesar*)⁵⁴. Now, it is clear that the interpretation of an imperfect de conatu is much more subjective if no such explicit clue is present. For example, Juv. 8,261 *laxabant* is explained as 'conative' by COURTNEY in his recent commentary. In this case it becomes clear a few lines later that the action of the consul's sons was prevented in the end. No such information is available in (56):

- (56) *Galli per dumos aderant arcemque tenebant* ("the Gauls were near amid the thickets, laying hold of the fort", Verg. A. 8,657).

In order to understand this imperfect as 'conative' (as EDEN a. l. does) it is necessary to use extralinguistic knowledge. We know from other sources that the Gauls were eventually driven back. The imperfect, however, is just as normal as all other

⁵² WOYTEK even goes so far as to suggest that the imperfect may assume the function of the perfect. In this connection he refers to Bell. Alex. 13 where *parabant* is followed by *se paraverunt*. However, *parabant* stands between a number of other imperfect forms, and *se paraverunt* between a number of perfect forms introduced by *itaque*. Again the normal 'Inzidenz-schema'.

⁵³ VAN DER HEYDE, in his grammar for secondary schools, rightly observed: "The imperfect of a verb like *dormire* and *stare* never means 'I tried to sleep', 'I tried to stand'."

⁵⁴ RUCH (1967: 112) assumes ellipsis in this kind of expression, but this is an underestimation of the intentional, stylistic, character of the Tacitean construction. Other examples: Cic. Leg. 1,52; Off. 2,67; Verg. A. 6,358; Cf. K.-St.: II, 404.

imperfects in this description of the shield of Vulcan. Compare the use of the imperfects in the description of the temple in Verg. A. 1,453 ff., as well as the example from Caesar (55). That is, although one may be tempted to interpret an imperfect as 'conative' if one wants to (and people want it much more often than is necessary), the imperfect is never used as some stylistic variant of the perfect. It occurs under exactly the same conditions as an imperfect of each other verb. As a final illustration let me mention Sz.'s example (: 303): *vix cuiquam persuadebatur* („*keinem wollte es einleuchten*“). The passage runs:

- (57) *alii alia non taciti solum opinabantur sed sermonibus etiam ferebant Romanos facturos; vix cuiquam persuadebatur Graecia omni cessuros* ("they not only had their own thoughts, some believing one thing and others another, but discussed openly what the Romans would do; almost no one was convinced that they would withdraw from the whole of Greece", Liv. 33,32,3).

It may be true, therefore, that the imperfect of *persuadere* is only used with a conative interpretation. In this passage, however, the imperfect must be explained in the same way as the other imperfect forms.

Sz. (: 316) has some information on the frequency of the use of the 'imperfectum de conatu' by particular authors. I think that, in as far this matter has been investigated, intuitions have been predominant and that both the type of states of affairs and the contextual signals have not been studied thoroughly enough. Therefore I have my doubts about the correctness of Sz.'s indications. Even so, it is extremely unlikely that this use of the imperfect, which is so directly related to its semantic value, should have been ungrammatical in the period our texts are taken from. The same holds for the present tense. It is a bit awkward therefore to find KENNEY (ad Lucr. 3,350) commenting on *refutat*: "tries to disprove; but the 'conative' or 'inceptive' use of the present tense is not reliably attested in Latin before the Augustean period . . .".

I will come back to the use of the imperfect in narrative contexts in section 3.1., below p. 304 ff.

3. The role of the tenses in narrative structure

The four 'historical' verb forms (perfect, imperfect, historic present and historic infinitive) occur in narrative texts in varying frequency and combination. I have dealt with the semantic value of perfect and imperfect in the preceding section. Historic present and historic infinitive will follow in § 4, below p. 310 ff. CHAUSERIE-LAPRÉE has studied them in their mutual relationship (1969: 370 ff.). Both in this study (: 383 ff.) and in CALLEBAT (1968: 427 ff.) attention is also paid to explicit coordination of different tenses. VON ALBRECHT (1968; 1970) has concentrated on the function of the perfect in epic contexts. I will first deal with the relationship between imperfect and perfect in historical narrative; next I will discuss briefly the mutual relationship of the four verb forms under discussion.

Section 3.3. will deal with coordination. Finally, I will say a few words on VON ALBRECHT's approach to the tenses in Vergil.

3.1. The imperfect as a background tense

The stylistic effect of the juxtaposition of perfect and imperfect is well-known. The perfect is used of the 'actual story line' (the foreground), the imperfect for the 'supportive material' (background). This distinction of two levels in historical narrative and their mutual relationship is found in a variety of languages (BEAUGRANDE-DRESSLER, 1981: 69–70; HOPPER, 1979: 213; LYONS, 1977: 688; WEINRICH, 1964). The use of the imperfect as 'background tense' follows from its semantic value. It marks a state of affairs as pertaining to the past and as 'going on' at that time. It is therefore perfectly suited for presenting the framework into which other events may be fitted. Thus, in contexts in which an imperfect or a series of imperfects precedes a perfect, the state of affairs expressed in the perfect will be understood as the incident that takes place in a given situation, in the same way as a sentence with a 'cum inversum' construction. Or the relationship may be specified by connectors such as *igitur*, *ergo*, etc. In contexts in which an imperfect or a series of imperfects follows a perfect tense, the state of affairs expressed in the imperfect will be understood as giving subsidiary information, often explaining why the state of affairs expressed in the perfect obtained. This relationship may also be made explicit by connectors like *nam* and *enim*.

The perfect indicates that a state of affairs has come to an end. In narrative contexts without contextual information to the contrary states of affairs expressed in the perfect tense form are understood as succeeding each other, especially if the Subject constituents refer to the same person. An example is (58):

- (58) *Orgetorix . . . suam familiam . . . coegit et omnes clientes . . . conduxit. per eos . . . se eripuit* ("Orgetorix gathered all his retainers and also assembled all clients and through them escaped from taking his trial", Caes. Gal. 1,4).

The actions in which Orgetorix is involved are all of them 'discrete': he first *coegit* and *conduxit* and then *eripuit*. In cases in which the imperfect occurs the states of affairs are not necessarily discrete. Compare (59):

- (59) (*Caesar*) *Aeduos . . . in dicione videbat Germanorum teneri eorumque ob-sides esse apud Ariovistum . . . intellegebat. quod . . . turpissimum . . . arbitrabatur. . . Germanos consuescere Rhenum transire . . . videbat; neque sibi homines . . . barbaros . . . temperaturos existimabat quin . . . ; quibus rebus quam maturime occurrendum putabat* ("he could see that the Aedui were fast bound in subjection to the Germans and he was aware that their hostages were with Ariovistus. This he deemed to be an utter disgrace. He could see that the Germans were becoming gradually accustomed to cross the Rhine. Nor did he suppose that the barbarians would stop. All this, he felt, must be faced without a moment's delay", Caes. Gal. 1,33).

There is no relation of succession between the states of affairs expressed in the imperfect forms. This is understandable from the function of the imperfect to mark events solely as going on at some time in the past. They may overlap. Conversely, one might hypothesize that events which are not successive but occur at the same time cannot be expressed in perfect tenses. Consider the following examples:

- (60) (*Mercurius*) *hinc toto praeceps se corpore ad undas/misit avi similis, quae circum litora, circum/piscoscos scopulos humilis volat aequora iuxta./haud aliter terras inter caelumque volabat/litus harenosum ad Libyae, ventosque secabat.* ("hence with his whole frame he sped sheer down to the waves like a bird, which round the shores, round the fish-haunted cliffs, flies low near to the waters. Even thus between earth and sky flew Cyllene's nursling to Libya's sandy shore and cut the winds", Verg. A. 4,253–7).
- (61) *ac mihi . . . minime conveniens inter se oratio Cleomedontis visa est. elevabat Romanum bellum eventumque eius eundem fore, qui . . . , dicebat* ("and to me, at least, Cleomedon's speech seemed by no means consistent with itself. He belittled the Roman war, and claimed that the result would be the same as that of the earlier war", Liv. 32,21,12).

In the first example the action *volabat* is some sort of specification of *se misit* in line 254. At any rate, the action *volabat* does not follow *se misit* and as a consequence the perfect is excluded. This may be formulated in another way by saying that the imperfect is necessary here, because what Vergil wants to tell is not that Mercury flew, but that his flying proceeded in a specific way (i. e. how he was flying). Similarly, in (61) the reported speech with the imperfects *elevabat* and *dicebat* is a specification of the verbal noun *oratio*⁵⁵.

After these general observations on the relationship between states of affairs expressed in the imperfect and states of affairs expressed in the perfect in narrative context, I will briefly discuss three typical cases.

(i) In the preceding paragraph I referred to contexts in which there is a close relationship between the states of affairs expressed in the imperfect and those expressed in the perfect. Sometimes, however, coherence of this type is absent. Consider (62):

- (62) *eo fere tempore consul Acilius Naupactum oppugnabat* ("at about this time the consul Acilius was besieging Naupactus", Liv. 36,43,1).

This sentence comes in between a story about C. Livius' crossing to Delos and his being delayed for some time in the harbour of Delos. There is no connection whatsoever between Acilius' and Livius' activities and the sentence makes the impression of having been inserted as some afterthought ("Oh yes, you might be

⁵⁵ Notice that out of only 7 examples of *dicere* in the imperfect in Livy with an Accusative c. Infinitive construction 5 are of this type: 32,21,12; 40,2; 33,13,8; 38,13,9; 42,32,1. For an example of a series 'Imperf. *deinde* Imperf.' see Liv. 32,23,8 (both imperfects are background information).

curious to know where the consul was at the time, well he was besieging Naupactus"). Of course, no other tense was available to mark this side-issue.

(ii) Since the function of the imperfect is to mark an event as going on in the past, introducing a narrative or a new episode of it by an imperfect tense or a series of imperfect tenses will have the effect of creating an expectation on the part of the reader (hearer) to know what incidents occurred in the background situation marked by the imperfect(s). Also, the effect will be one of evoking distance between the present and the past. It is therefore very suitable for introducing a fairy tale as in Apuleius' Amor and Psyche episode (63):

(63) *erant in quadam civitate rex et regina* ("there were at some time in a certain city a king and a queen", Apul. Met. 4,28).

Conversely, the imperfect is not to be used if it is not one's intention to first present the setting within which incidents to be reported later took place. Thus one finds (64) and (65):

(64) *Samia mihi mater fuit; ea habitabat Rhodi* ("my mother was a Samian; she lived at Rhodos", Ter. Eun. 107).

(65) *Apud Helvetios longe nobilissimus fuit et ditissimus Orgetorix* ("among the Helvetians the noblest man by far and the most wealthy was Orgetorix", Caes. Gal. 1,2).

Sz. (: 317) draws attention to the fact that perfect and imperfect of *esse* are often interchangeable. KRAVAR (1968: 64) suggests that (64) is an instance of juxtaposition of perfect and imperfect where the contrast between these tenses is neutralized. However, this seems not to be true. *Erat* in (64) would be awkward: "once upon a time I had a Samian mother". The information the speaker intends to convey is about the birthplace of his mother, as appears also from the initial position (and hyperbaton) of the Focus constituent *Samia*. Similarly, in (65) Caesar, after his paragraphs on Gallia, informs us about Helvetia. The constituent which is Topic in the sentence (*apud Helvetios*) has its usual place in the beginning of the sentence⁵⁶. The sentence contains information about by far the richest man, who is specified to be Orgetorix. It would be strange to present such information about an unknown person as background information.

There is some correlation between the arrangement of pragmatic functions such as Topic, Focus and Theme in a sentence and the distinction between background and foreground in a narrative text. Tense seems to be one of the instruments by which the information structure becomes explicit. Compare HOPPER (1979: 213)⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ 'Focus' and 'Topic' are used in the sense of DIK (1978). For application of these notions to Latin cf. BOLKESTEIN (1981). For the sentence initial position of Topic constituents in Roman historians cf. CHAUSERIE-LAPRÉE (1969: 18ff.).

⁵⁷ The interrelationship between tense and word order in Latin might prove an interesting research object. In Livy *erat*, *erant* (copula or existential *esse*) occur markedly more often in the first place of the sentence or clause than *fuit*, *fuert*. The imperfect functions as a background signal. The relatively high frequency of its occurrence at the beginning of the

(iii) A specific use of the imperfect is the so-called 'imperfect of immediate action'. It can be illustrated by (66) and (67):

(66) *dixerat. Ille patris magni parere parabat/imperio* ("he ceased. The god made ready to obey his mighty father's bidding", Verg. A. 4,238-9).

(67) *Nec plura effatus ad altos/tendebat muros gressumque in castra ferebat./Iamque oratores aderant ex urbe Latina* ("and without further words he turned to the lofty walls and bent his steps towards the camp. And now came envoys from the Latin city", Verg. A. 11,98-100).

In (66) the impression is one of speed; Mercury was already preparing his departure before Jupiter had finished. The imperfect may be compared with the imperfect in (68):

(68) *Dixerat. Ille Iovis monitis immota tenebat/lumina* ("she ceased: he by Jove's command held his eyes steadfast", Verg. A. 4,331).

The difference is that *ille parabat parere* is a dynamic state of affairs, whereas in (68) the state of affairs is non-dynamic⁵⁸. Hence the difference in interpretation. In (67) the imperfect in the second sentence (*aderant*) occurs in a sentence which apart from its tense looks like a sentence in the 'Inzidenz-schema' discussed above (*iamque*), in which the perfect is normal⁵⁹. It must either be explained along the lines of *parabat* and *tenebat* in (66) and (68), or the two imperfects in the first sentence (*tenebat*, *ferebat*) must be considered as some sort of 'open end' of the preceding episode. This open end clashes with the opening of a new episode, which – quite normally – starts with background information. I do not believe (contra VON ALBRECHT, 1970: 224) that two parallel imperfects may facilitate the transition from one event to another. VON ALBRECHT's example is Verg. A. 4,553-6:

(69) *tantos illa suo rumpebat pectore questus:/Aeneas celsa in puppi iam certus eundi/carpebat* (cf. *carpebant* in 522) *somnos rebus iam rite paratis./Huic se forma dei . . . obtulit* ("such were the wails that kept bursting from her heart. But now that all was duly ordered, and now that he was resolved on going, Aeneas was snatching sleep on his vessel's high stern. In his sleep there appeared to him a vision of the god", Verg. A. 4,553-6).

In my opinion, both states of affairs marked by the imperfect in (69) are background information with respect to the same state of affairs, viz. *obtulit*. The imperfect is often used (as I indicated above) to mark simultaneous events. I

sentence might follow from the need to inform the reader as soon as possible about the overall structure of the narrative (cf. CHAUSERIE-LAPRÉE [1969: 349; 56]). Notice that *fuere* in Livy occurs frequently at the beginning of the sentence, disturbing, in a sense, the relationship between *erant/fuerunt*.

⁵⁸ *parabat imperio* is continued by *et primum pedibus talaria nectit / . . . tum virgam capit*. The historic presents are not successive to *parabat*, but specifications. Compare the imperfect in 11,4 (*solvebat*), which is also specified by a series of historic presents.

⁵⁹ For a 'motion interpretation' of *adesse* cf. PETERSMANN (1977: 104), SIEGERT (1959), TLL s.v. in 795,7ff. Also Sz.: 345.

prefer, therefore, to regard (67) as a highly stylistic use of the imperfect to suggest immediate action⁶⁰.

3.2. The distribution of the 'historical verb forms'

CHAUSSEURIE-LAPRÉE (1969: 403–10) has paid attention to the principle of *variatio* in Latin historians. From his study it becomes clear that variation of tenses was an important instrument in setting off individual episodes in a narrative text. An excellent example is (70):

- (70) *secundum orationem praetoris murmur ortum aliorum cum adsensu, aliorum inclementer adsentientes increpantium, et iam . . . populi universi inter se altercabantur. Tum inter magistratus gentis . . . certamen nihilo segnius quam inter multitudinem esse* ("after the praetor's speech there arose an outcry, some applauding, some sharply rebuking those who approved; and soon whole communities were involved in the quarrel. Then among the magistrates of the people an argument began no less violent than that among the mass of the delegates", Liv. 32,22,1–2).

Notice the expression *et iam* and the historic infinitive *esse*. Compare too CHAUSSEURIE-LAPRÉE's discussion on Livy 34,15 (: 408–10). Elsewhere (: 369–383) CHAUSSEURIE-LAPRÉE discusses the differences in the way individual authors use the historic infinitive. Sallust, for example, has sequences of several historic infinitives, often referring to simultaneous events (i. e. imperfect tense forms would be possible). Tacitus often uses one single historic infinitive (mostly successive). All this means that stylistic considerations have to a large extent influenced the distribution of the tenses.

3.3. Coordination of different verb forms

Variation of tenses in coordinate structures is discussed by Sz. (: 815). As is well-known, predications coordinated by *et* and other coordinators mostly show the same tense (compare too SCHIFFRIN [1981] and WOLFSON [1979] on conversational English texts). However, *et* and other coordinators may also coordinate predications the relationship between which might rather be called explicative, adversative, etc. It is, furthermore, useful to make a distinction between coordination between predications and coordinations between predicates (in which case the subject is always identical). In English, for example, coordination of predications "does not have an inhibiting effect in tense switching",

⁶⁰ Examples and properties of the imperfect of immediate action can be found in VON ALBRECHT (1968: 460ff.) and CHAUSSEURIE-LAPRÉE (1969: 526ff.). An example with *iamque* is Verg. A. 2,209 (which AUSTIN a.l. wrongly interpretes as "were on the very point of landing"). Compare also Sall. Jug. 97,4: *simul . . . de hostium adventu cognovit et ipsi hostes aderant* and CHAUSSEURIE-LAPRÉE (1969: 388).

whereas coordination of predicates has (SCHIFFRIN, 1981: 55). Therefore, coordination of predications expressed in different tenses, though less frequent, need not be ungrammatical. Still the very difference in form has led classical scholars to register such cases and even to try to explain the supposed oddity of these patterns. An example is HAHN (1930). Recently both CALLEBAT (1968: 427ff.) and CHAUSSEURIE-LAPRÉE (1969: 383ff.) investigated instances of coordination. Regrettably, they have both proceeded in a too mechanic way. I will illustrate this with a few examples.

First there are those cases in which the imperfect is regarded as irregular in view of a preceding perfect (or historic present) tense. In some of these cases, however, the imperfect can be explained on account of the tense that follows.

- (71) *Fidenates . . . terga vertunt; multoque effusius . . . oppidum repetebant. non tamen eripuerunt se hosti*, ("the men from Fidenae ran, and in far greater disorder . . . sought to regain the town. But the Fidenates did not escape their foes", Liv. 1,14,9–10).
 (72) *conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant* ("all were hushed, and held their gaze bent upon him", Verg. A. 2,1).
 (73) *cadaver accurro et . . . rimabar singula . . . ecce uxor misella . . . introrumpit* ("I ran unto the dead body and viewed him closely round about . . . Immediately came in the wretched matron", Apul. 2,26).

In these examples the imperfects can be explained as describing the setting in which the state of affairs expressed in the present or perfect obtains⁶¹. Other cases need a different explanation, e.g. (74):

- (74) *Rhesi . . . tentoria . . . agnoscit . . . quae . . . /Tydides . . . vastabat caede cruentus/ardentisque avertit equos in castra* ("he discerns the tents of Rhesus, which the blood-stained son of Tydeus laid waste . . . and (he -T.-) turned the fiery steeds away to the camp", Verg. A. 1,469–72).

The events depicted on the temples are described in both imperfect and historic present forms (see also p. 303). In our passage *avertit* must be understood as being used 'instead of' the imperfect (in that case both the acts of *vastare* and *avertere* are represented on the temple).

3.4. The 'werkimmanent' approach

VON ALBRECHT in his 'Glotta' article (1970) (cf. SCHERER [1975: 111]) starts from the observation that the perfect in Vergil's 'Aeneid' is relatively rare (which is true, but see p. 311). This leads him to regard the perfect as the stylistically marked tense, which therefore needs explanation, instead of the historic present on which most Latinists, e.g. KOLLER (1951), tend to concentrate. Moreover, in his opinion it is impossible to explain Vergil's use of the perfect on the basis of well-known theories about the semantic value of the tenses, e.g. the aspectual

⁶¹ Other examples are: Verg. A. 2,209; 671; Liv. 7,13,11; Apul. M. 2,29; 5,22.

explanation. It must be assumed, in his view, that Vergil regulates the use of specific tenses according to his literary goal, especially because the frequency of the perfect is quite low. In other words, Vergil's use of the tenses ought to be studied in a 'werkimmanent' way. VON ALBRECHT suggests that the perfect has four major functions (1970: 220):

- (a) The perfect marks the beginning and end of an episode (its normal function, cf. p. 312), e.g. A. 4,30
- (b) The perfect marks dramatic events in the narrative, e.g. A. 4,705
- (c) The perfect marks divine scenes, e.g. A. 4, 557–70
- (d) The perfect marks psychic and emotional states and situations, e.g. A. 5,55; 297.

The reader will observe that there is a difference between the first function and the others. This might be described as follows: The first function is that of an episode marker, whereas the other functions relate to the subject matter of the narrative. This means that they need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, the examples given by VON ALBRECHT for the functions (b) – (d) are all manifestations of function (a). This holds for the majority of his examples⁶². This is, of course, to be expected. Book 4 is full of divine action and human emotion and at the boundary of the individual episodes the perfect is the normal tense (unless there are other signals). As a consequence I do not believe that the conclusion of this otherwise interesting article is fully justified: „Der Tempusgebrauch offenbart schlagend den sakralen und psychologisch-innerlichen Grundzug der Aeneishandlung“ (1970: 221).

4. Historic present and historic infinitive

The function of the indicative present and present infinitive in historical narrative is often described in terms of the semantic value that is assumed for perfect and imperfect respectively. For example, the historic present is often regarded as a stylistic alternative for the perfect. Both forms have received quite some attention recently. I will first discuss the historic present, next the historic infinitive.

4.1. The historic present

Most Latinists regard the present tense as expressing simultaneity with the moment of speaking or, in other words, the time during which states of affairs expressed in the present obtain includes the moment of speaking (Sz.: 305). This

⁶² The functions (b), (c) and (d) may overlap as well. Thus VON ALBRECHT mentions A. 4,220 as a representative of (c) and (d); it is, actually, an example of function (a).

view on the value of the present creates two problems, viz. the use of the present for events that have taken place in the past, and the use of the present in a future sense. Recently SERBAT (1975; 1976 b) has defended the position of regarding the present as 'nontemporal', followed with modifications by TOURATIER (1982). I will discuss this matter in some detail now.

I will start with a few remarks on the frequency of the historic present. NISBET-HUBBARD (ad Hor. C. 1,34,12) remark that "the historic present is epic and grand"⁶³. This use of the present is, indeed, very frequent in epic poetry. However, the present is the usual narrative tense in other texts as well, as appears from its frequency in main clauses and sentences in, among other texts, narrative parts of Cicero's 'Verrinae' (4,38–43; 5,33–42), and Caesar's 'Gallic War'. Consider the following figures with respect to Caesar's use in Gal. 1–7. These figures do not distinguish between, for example, the historic present and the 'geographic' present, but may still prove illustrative enough.

fig. VII: percentages of tense forms in main sentences in Caes. Gal. 1–7:

tense book	present indicative	perfect indicative	imperfect indicative
1	28	47	22
2	12	57	28
3	28	45	25
4	23	55	15
5	61	24	12
6	74	12	8
7	55	24	16
average	49	33	16

Notice that Caesar's use of the present changes in the course of the books. Also the number of imperfect forms gradually decreases from book 4 onwards. Nepos (Hann.) shows a markedly higher use of the perfect, whereas in Sallust (Jug. 1–30) present and perfect are almost in balance. Still, in these authors, the use of the present is remarkably high as well. Compare too the figures given by SERBAT (1975: 396–8). By way of comparison, notice that SCHIFFRIN (1981: 47; 51) mentions a percentage of 30 in contemporary English oral narrative.

The question is, now, what value should be attached to the relatively frequent occurrence of the present in historical narrative. The traditional ex-

⁶³ A very exceptional use of the present is found in Statius Th. 5,509 (*serpens ter lingua vibrat*, which must be interpreted as equivalent to an imperfect in its context. However, the quantifying adverb *ter* is difficult to explain in that case (cf. p. 289). The entire expression is mannered. Cf. MOZLEY's translation: "a threefold quivering tongue".

planation is that the present is used in order to present a series of events as some sort of eye-witness account⁶⁴. The stylistic effect is supposed to be, accordingly, some sort of 'tension'. However, both VON ALBRECHT (1970: 219) and SERBAT (1975: 386–9; 1976 b: 218–9) object to such a stylistic explanation of the historic present precisely on account of the relative frequency of the use of the present. I will return to VON ALBRECHT's position later on. SERBAT infers from statistical observations of this kind, that it is unreasonable to explain the frequent use of this tense form as due to specific stylistic effects. In his opinion the frequent occurrence of the present in historical narrative may be regarded as some sort of proof for the timeless character of the present.⁶⁵

I remarked before that taking the present tense as some sort of nontemporal tense cannot explain certain restrictions on the use of the present to refer to situations which do not include the moment of speaking. However, there are restrictions on the use of the historic present. Thus, in my opinion, it would be inappropriate to exchange the perfects in the final lines of Dido's dying episode for present tense forms:

- (75) *omnis et una/dilapsus calor atque in ventos vita recessit* ("and therewith all the warmth ebbed away, and the life passed away into the winds", Verg. A. 4,704–5).

In such a passage a present form would express the event as going on, and some closing statement would be expected. Similarly, an episode can hardly begin with a present form. It is particularly the 'non-finished' character of the present that makes it unsuitable for occurring at the end of an episode (compare too Sz. 307, with literature). On the other hand the present is not suited for opening a past narrative either in present contexts, because in that case ambiguity would arise. There must be some sort of past signal in the context. There are clearly differences in meaning between perfect and present and we might conclude that the statistical predominance of the historic present in certain types of texts is nothing more than a literary convention, which, otherwise, obeys the general rule referred to above, that the context itself must have a sufficient number of past signals (see also SCHIFFRIN [1981] and WOLFSON [1978; 1979])⁶⁶.

The so-called present 'pro futuro' is also often cited as evidence for the non-temporal or unmarked character of the present tense. Sz. (: 307–8) explains the

present 'pro futuro' as essentially a feature that belongs to everyday conversation, in which future plans are presented as at hand at the moment of speaking. Moreover he observes that it occurs most often with 'perfective' verbs, to be paraphrased in this context as 'dynamic' and 'instantaneous' states of affairs. SERBAT (1975: 384–5) has explained this use on the basis of his conception of the present as a non-temporal verb form. Here too the question is, whether the present may replace the future in all contexts, and therefore, could be called non-temporal. As far as I know, the problem has not been approached from this angle systematically. There are, however, a few indications which suggest that the present cannot replace the future in all circumstances. SERBAT (1975: 397ff.) and others observe that the future also has a modal function, which is, of course, absent in the present. R. RISSELADA (personal communication) observes that *ibo* is used (and not *eo*) in Plautus, in an aside if the intended action is performed immediately (17 times).

There have recently been several studies that are relevant to the question whether the historic present is some sort of substitute of the perfect (the traditional point of view) or (also) of the imperfect (which my observations so far imply). The position that the historic present is a stylistic ('intensive') variant of the perfect has been taken by DRESSLER (1968: 146)⁶⁷. KRAVAR (1969; 1971)⁶⁸ replied that the present may also be used in contexts in which an event is expressed as going on and is not necessarily successive, i.e. where an imperfect could replace the present. One of his examples is (1969: 25):

- (76) *tubae contra utrimque occurrunt, consonat terra, clamorem utrimque efferunt* ("the trumpets blared on either side: earth echoes; on either side the battle cry is raised", Plt. Am. 227–8).

In this example the events may well be understood as successive, and, accordingly, the present tense may be substituted by a perfect. In the following example, however, the events are simultaneous and, therefore, the present might only be replaced by an imperfect tense and cannot be replaced by the perfect.

- (77) *totis trepidatur castris, atque alius ex alio causam tumultus quaerit* ("there was confusion throughout the camp, and one sought from another the cause of the uproar", Caes. Gal. 6,37,6).

KRAVAR observes, rightly I think, that the answer to the question whether the present may be replaced by a perfect or an imperfect often correlates with the type of state of affairs that is involved (compare, too, KOLLER [1951]). This means that for example in Vergil the decision is often difficult to take. An entire episode (both 'foreground' and 'background') may be transferred⁶⁹ to the present, witness

⁶⁴ An interesting study on this aspect of the use of the historic present in Chaucer is BAUER (1967). WOLFSON (1979) studied the use of the historic present in modern English conversations. She opposes to regarding the historic present as 'dramatic' (: 169, 173). According to her the past is much more often used in dramatic episodes. The traditional explanation is supported by the findings of SCHIFFRIN (1981: 58).

⁶⁵ SERBAT does not go into the debate, to be discussed later on, whether the present is used 'instead of' a perfect or an imperfect tense.

⁶⁶ WOLFSON's main thesis is that the basic function of the historic present is alternation, by which episodes in a text are separated with respect to each other. SCHIFFRIN (1981: 56) has shown, however, that the switch from past tense to historic present in English differs from the switch from historic present to past tense. In the first case the effect is 'vividness', in the second 'variation'. More research into alternation signals in Latin texts has to be done.

⁶⁷ PETERSMANN (1977: 169–70) follows DRESSLER. Cf. also PANAGL (1970).

⁶⁸ HAHN (1930: 22ff.), in a study that has regrettably been forgotten, also draws attention to the use of the historic present instead of the imperfect. Her illustrations are not very convincing, however (e.g. A. 2,203–9; 1,471–2; false interpunction in 6,469–70). Compare too RONCONI (1968: 49–51).

⁶⁹ Quintilian (9,3,11) regarded the use of the historic present as metaphorical (*transferuntur*).

A. 4,54–89). In this passage some of the states of affairs can hardly be interpreted as succeeding each other. Thus *adeunt*, *exquirunt*, etc. in the beginning of the episode (introduced by perfects!) must be successive, but *est*, *vivit*, *uritur*, etc. in 56 ff. – after an exclamation by Vergil –⁷⁰ designate states of affairs that coincide. Compare too *pendent* at the end of the episode (1. 88). Line 90 (*quam simul ac tali persensit peste teneri*) denotes the incident that occurs in the situation described in the preceding lines. Such an event is normally expressed in the perfect, the situation in the imperfect. The passage contains both dynamic and non-dynamic states of affairs. This suggests that it is not possible to explain successive historic presents solely by referring to the state(s) of affairs in question (contra KOLLER 1951], who operates too mechanically in this matter). Our conclusion must be that such differences as exist between perfect and imperfect in narrative texts are neutralized if the (historic) present is used (cf. COMRIE, 1976: 73). This does not exclude the possibility that individual authors may behave differently.

4.2. The historic infinitive

The present infinitive – which strictly speaking is not a tense – is used instead of the past tenses in dramatic passages in historical narrative (Sz.: 367). However, DRESSLER (1968) has argued that the historic infinitive must be regarded as an intensive alternative for the imperfect, with which it shares the imperfective aspectual value. This is represented in the following matrix (1968: 46).

fig. VIII: features of the major historical tenses according to DRESSLER:

tense	aspectual value imperfective	stylistic value intensity
perfect	–	–
imperfect	+	–
present	–	+
infinitive	+	+

As for DRESSLER's point of view on the historic present, this was discussed in the preceding section. Even if one takes his view for granted for the sake of argument, there are objections to the matrix in two respects. In the first place there are contexts in which it is very difficult to feel a distinction between present and infinitive, let alone prove it:

⁷⁰ One might also take *est* and *vivit* as parts of Vergil's comment, seeing that Vergil resumes the narrative with the explicit mentioning of Dido in 68.

(78) *venit Chremes postridie ad me clamitans: indignum facinus; comperisse Pamphilum pro uxore habere hanc peregrinam. ego illud sedulo negare factum. ille instat factum. denique ita tum discedo ab illo ut . . .* ("next day comes Chremes full of complaint: A shocking affair! He had found out that Pamphilus regarded this foreign person as his wife. I zealously denied it, he insisted it was so. Finally we parted in a manner . . .", Ter. An. 144–48).

(Example from KRAVAR, 1969: 29). Secondly, the infinitive occurs in expression types which are typical for the perfect (though not exclusive), e.g. *tum vero, hinc*, etc. (CONTINO, 1977; CHAUSSEURIE-LAPRÉE, 1969: 370; 527).

(79) *tum pius Aeneas umeris abscindere vestem / auxilioque vocare deos et tendere palmas* ("then good Aeneas rent the garment from his shoulders, and called the gods to his aid, lifting up his hands", Verg. A. 5, 685–6).

Another example – extreme, as so often in Statius, – is (80):

(80) *vix steterat campo, subita mansuescere pace agmina sentirique nefas* ("scarce had she set foot upon the plain, when a sudden peace stilled the fury of the warriors, and they were conscious of their crime", Stat. Th. 11, 474–5).

I think, therefore, that Sz.'s account is correct and that the infinitive may indeed occur in perfect contexts and in imperfect contexts. Compare too CONTINO's conclusion (1977: 110) and ROSÉN (1980: 47). It may be true, of course, that statistically the use 'instead of' an imperfect is predominant.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have dealt with a few general topics which are relevant for the description of the Latin tense system as a whole. Further research on the feasibility of the two-dimensional temporal approach outlined on pp. 294–6 will be necessary. The same holds for the availability of objective criteria for establishing a typology of states of affairs in Latin. Functional analyses of the use of the tenses in narrative texts should preferably be based on the results of such research.

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