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A THREE-DIMENSIONAL, SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF TENSE USAGE IN GREGORY OF TOURS' *DECEM LIBRI HISTORiarum*

Summary: The current paper investigates the three-dimensional meaning potential of the Late Latin narrative tenses. The grammatical categories 'tense' and 'aspect' are hypothesized to express meaning on the three metafunctional levels posited by Systemic Functional Linguistics. Combinations of their ideational and textual dimensions can be used to classify the various 'traditional labels' proposed in the literature on the Latin tenses. Interpersonal meaning, however, gives rise to an extra possibility to account for tense usage by referring to a number of perspectives from which the author invites his audience to experience the narrated events. An author like Gregory of Tours may avail himself of these perspectives to influence his audience in taking a stance on the events. The ultimate tense selection depends on a hierarchy of metafunctional considerations the author may have. The current paper also briefly discusses some of the morphological developments reported in the literature on the Latin tense system.

Key words: Late Latin, verbal semantics, tense and aspect, Systemic Functional Linguistics, perspective, textual strategies

1. THEORETICAL OBSERVATIONS

Defining tense and aspect in narratives

Tense is usually defined as a grammatical means that contributes to the location of a state of affairs (SoA) in time, with the speech moment as ultimate ground.¹ *Absolute tense* locates an event (E) with respect to the speech moment (S) in a direct way, as either anterior ($E < S^2$, i.e. past), simultaneous ($E = S$, i.e. present) or posterior ($E > S$,

¹ COMRIE, B.: *Tense*. Cambridge 1985, 9; and PINKSTER, H.: *The Oxford Latin Syntax. Vol. 1: The Simple Clause*. Oxford 2015, 379.

² For this style of notation, cf. REICHENBACH, H.: *Elements of Symbolic Logic*. New York 1947.

i.e. future).³ The Latin perfect indicative, as it is commonly used in narratives, is regarded by Pinkster as an absolute past tense ($E < S$), while the imperfect is conceived of as an *absolute-relative tense*, i.e. it locates an SoA as simultaneous to a past reference point ($E = R < S$).⁴ Another absolute-relative tense commonly used in narratives is the pluperfect tense, which locates an SoA as anterior to such a past reference point ($E < R < S$).⁵

(Grammatical) *aspect*, to be discerned from lexical aspect or Aktionsart, is a more problematic category in terms of a correct definition.⁶ In the literature on Latin but also general linguistics, definitions vary in their inclusion of the concepts of ‘termination’, ‘view’ and ‘viewpoint’.⁷ *Termination* concerns the representation of an SoA as ‘terminating in story-time’ or not; *view* is about presenting an SoA as “one complete, indivisible whole”⁸ (global view) or with partial focus only where there is overlap with such a globally viewed event (partial view); *viewpoint* concerns the point of view taken on the story-events, either through the experience of a story-internal ‘consciousness’ (viewpoint from within) or from a distance, with overview and with external knowledge (viewpoint from without).⁹

A three-dimensional definition of aspect seems obvious. Using the terminology of the three metafunctions or levels of meaning posited by Systemic Functional Linguistics,¹⁰ ideational aspect or termination concerns the construal of our conception of reality; textual aspect or view concerns the presentation of the text into a foreground and a background; and interpersonal aspect or viewpoint contributes to inviting the audience to take a certain perspective on the events.¹¹

³ COMRIE (n. 1) 36.

⁴ PINKSTER (n. 1) 410–416, 442.

⁵ PINKSTER (n. 1) 455.

⁶ The existence of aspect in Latin, and its relation to tense, are matters of dispute. For an overview of the literature on Classical Latin, see e.g. AERTS, S.: Tense, Aspect and Aktionsart in Classical Latin: Towards a New Approach. *SO* 92 (2018) 107–149. Hints of a certain aspectual awareness may be found in grammarians of Late Antiquity (e.g. Priscian or Donatus), but I follow Haverling in her observation that we should not attribute too much linguistic accuracy to these writers: their main focus is prescriptive rather than descriptive, and while some changes with respect to Classical Latin remain unmentioned, others are perceived incorrectly altogether (HAVERLING, G. V. M.: Les verbes en -sc- et la notion d’inchoativité chez les grammairiens tardifs. In GARCEA, A. – LHOMMÉ, M.-K. – VALLAT, D. [eds]: *Polyphonia Romana. Hommages à Frédérique Biville*. Hildesheim 2013, 781–791).

⁷ Cf. COSERIU, E.: Aspect verbal ou aspects verbaux? Quelques questions de théorie et de méthode. In MARTIN, R. B. – DAVID, J. (eds): *La notion d’aspect*. Paris 1980, 13–23, here 21–22, and BOOGAART, R. J. U.: Aspect and Aktionsart. In BOOIJ, G. ET AL. (eds): *Morphology: An International Handbook on Inflection and Word-Formation*. Berlin 2004, 1165–1180, here 1173–1174.

⁸ DIK, S. C.: *The Theory of Functional Grammar. Part 1: The Structure of the Clause*. 2nd edition. Berlin 1997, 221.

⁹ BOOGAART (n. 7) 1174.

¹⁰ HALLIDAY, M. A. K. – MATTHIESSEN, C. M. I. M.: *Halliday’s Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 4th edition. Milton Park 2014; BACHE, C. *English Tense and Aspect in Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar*. London 2008; THOMPSON, G.: *Introducing Functional Grammar*. 3rd edition. London 2014.

¹¹ AERTS (n. 6) 121–12, 125.

Tense may be defined as a three-dimensional category as well: ideational tense concerns our conceptualization of the chronological structure of reality¹² ($E < S$, $E = R < S$, $E < R < S$, $E = S$, $E < R = S$, ...); textual tense concerns the 'status' of an SoA as independent (foreground, $E > E$) – based on the status of absolute tense – or as dependent, secondary (background, $E < R$ or $E = R$) – based on the status of absolute-relative tense; and interpersonal tense concerns the vantage point taken on the events, either from the speech moment ($E < S$), as a virtual eyewitness ($E = S$) or through the experience of a story-internal character ($E = R$).¹³

Meaning potential and tense choice

The main Latin narrative tenses, i.e. perfect, present and imperfect indicative, are hypothesized to possess a metafunctionally diverse meaning potential based on three aspectual and three temporal dimensions of meaning. In each of these meaning categories, the three tenses have a default value, the most salient of which will ultimately determine the most suitable verb tense.

In the existing literature, many uses of the tenses have been provided with 'traditional labels', which mainly concern ideational and temporal meanings.¹⁴ For example, the 'narrative perfect' would be classified as an absolute past tense (ideational tense: $E < S$) used for the narration of events that occur on the timeline in iconic order¹⁵ (textual tense: $E_y > E_x$), terminate at story-time (ideational aspect: terminated) and are presented as one, indivisible whole (textual aspect: global view). However, the perfect is also used instead of the pluperfect tense to express anterior background, i.e. *perfectum pro plusquamperfecto* (ideational tense: $E < R < S$; textual tense: $E < R$), which increasingly occurs in Late Latin, especially in main clauses.¹⁶ Consider example¹⁷ (1):

- (1) Tunc illi magicis haec artibus factum adseverantes, insurgunt contra eum in una conspiratione, et trahentes eum, DICEBANT: 'Non diutius nobis falso pastoris nomine dominaberis'. Ille autem ad satisfaciendo adhuc populo prunas arden-tes in byrrum suum **posuit**, et ad se stringens, usque ad sepulchrum beati Martini

¹² BACHE (n. 10) 109.

¹³ AERTS (n. 6) 122–124.

¹⁴ See, e.g. ADEMA, S. M.: *Tenses in Vergil's Aeneid. Narrative Style and Structure*. Leiden 2019; CHAUSSERIE-LAPRÉE, J.-P.: *L'expression narrative chez les historiens latins: histoire d'un style*. Paris 1969; KÜHNER, R. – STEGMANN, C.: *Ausführliche Grammatik Der Lateinischen Sprache, II: Satzlehre*. 2nd edition. Hannover 1912; MELLET, S.: *L'imparfait de l'indicatif en latin classique: temps, aspect, modalité*. Paris 1988; MENGE, H. ET AL.: *Lehrbuch der Lateinischen Syntax und Semantik*. 5th edition. Darmstadt 2012; PINKSTER (n. 1).

¹⁵ MELLET, S. ET AL.: *Grammaire fondamentale du latin: le signifié du verbe*. Louvain 1994, 83.

¹⁶ KISS, S.: *Tendances évolutives de la syntaxe verbale en latin tardif*. Debrecen 1982, 11.

¹⁷ The examples from Gregory of Tours' text in this paper are cited from the edition of KRUSCH, B. – LEVISON, W. (eds): *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis. Libri Historiarum X*. Hannover 1951.

una cum populorum turbis accedit, proiectasque ante sepulchrum prunas, vestimentum inustum **apparuit**. Illo quoque sic prosequente: ‘...’, illis vero non credentibus, sed contradicentibus, trahitur, calumniatur, eicitur, ut sermo sancti adimpleretur: ‘...’. (*Hist.* 2. 1)

If one considers that, at the moment when the perfect indicative *posuit* is narrated, the mob was already dragging Brictius away to Saint Martin’s tomb to continue the persecution, *posuit* can only make sense as an anterior background event, i.e. ‘he had placed, and ... went to Saint Martin’s tomb’.

The imperfect is mainly reserved for the description of simultaneous background (ideational tense: $E = R < S$; textual tense: $E = R$), ongoing at story-time (ideational aspect: unterminated) and presented as a background frame against which the events of the foreground occur (textual aspect: partial view). However, it can also be used to express an absolute past tense event (ideational tense: $E < S$) which occurs on the timeline – though not necessarily in iconic sequence – (textual tense: $E > E$) and which leaves the narration open to return to after a digression (textual aspect: open).¹⁸ Consider example (2):

- (2) [ait Martinus:] “Amen dico tibi, quia **obtinui** apud Deum, ut post me ad pontificatus honorem accedas, sed noveris te in episcopatu multa adversa passurum.” Brictius haec audiens INRIDEBAT, dicens: ‘Nonne verum **dixi**, istum delera verba proferre?’ (*Hist.* 2. 1)

When Saint Martin overhears his protégé Brictius slandering him, he turns to the youth and predicts many ordeals for him. Brictius’ response, sc. *inridebat*, resembles the narrative perfect in all respects but one: his laughing reaction is presented by the narrator as something he will return to, viz. when he narrates Brictius’ hardships in the passage in example (1).

2. PERSPECTIVES IN LATIN NARRATIVES

On the interpersonal level of meaning, then, tense and aspect work together to invite the audience to take a certain perspective on the events. The choice to do so is not obligatory for the author: if he does not wish to trigger such an interpretation, the tense choice is only determined by ideational and especially textual meaning (i.e. foreground vs. background). In this case, we speak of a *neutral perspective*, as in example (3):

¹⁸ Cf. RIJKSBARON, A.: The Discourse Function of the Imperfect. In RIJKSBARON, A. ET AL.: *In the Footsteps of Raphael Kühner*. Amsterdam 1988, 237–254. An ‘openly viewed’ SoA resembles (a) globally viewed events, in the sense that they are initiated at that moment in the narrative sequence of events, and (b) partially viewed situations, in the sense that they are presented without a final delimitation at this point in the narrative.

- (3) Tempore vero Sygiberthi (...) pro fide ac devotione Radegundis beata in partibus orientis clericos **distinat** pro dominicae crucis ligno ac sanctorum apostolorum ceterorumque martyrum reliquiis. Qui euntes **detulerunt** haec pignora. Quibus delatis, **petiit** regina episcopum, ut cum honore debito grandique psallentio in monasterium locarentur. Sed ille dispiciens suggestionem eius, ascensis aequitibus, villae se **contulit**. Tunc regina iteratis ad regem Sigibertum **direxit**, depraecans, ut iniunctione sua quicumque ex episcopis haec pignora cum illo quo DECEBAT honorem votumque eius EXPOSCEBAT in monasterium collocaret. (*Hist.* 9. 40)

When the author wants his audience to take an *external perspective* on the events, he is likely to comment on the events with external evaluation, he might compare the events to other events, and he is able to manipulate the chronology of the events by switching back and forth on the timeline.¹⁹ The interpersonal temporal meaning of this perspective's default indicative tense, sc. the perfect tense, is a vantage point in the speech moment (E < S), and is combined with an interpersonal aspectual meaning of viewpoint from without. Cotextual cues²⁰ which allow us to identify this perspective are (a) the use of distal deictic indications that assert the distance between the story-world and the time of communication (*ibi, tunc, postea, ...*);²¹ (b) externally evaluative and comparative lexis;²² and (c) the use of e.g. the perfect subjunctive in subordinate clauses which stresses the interpersonal link with the speech moment. Consider example (4):

- (4) Eo anno beatissima Radegundis ab hoc mundo **migravit**. Quae magnum planctum in monasterio, quem constituerat, **dereliquit**. **Fuique** et ego praesens ad eam sepeliendam. **Obiit** autem mense sexto, tertia decima die mensis, **sepulta** post triduum. Quae autem ibi ipsa die virtutes **apparuerunt**, vel qualiter **fuerit funerata**, in libro Miraculorum plenius scribere **studui**. (*Hist.* 9. 2)

The author supports the external perspective by switching back and forth between the exact dates of Radegund's death and her funeral. He refers to himself, a speech participant in the communication setting between writer and audience. He also uses the

¹⁹ Compare with the 'report mode' or 'discursive mode' of ADEMA (n. 14) and SMITH, C. S.: *Modes of Discourse: The Local Structure of Texts*. Cambridge 2003.

²⁰ Cf. AERTS, S.: Cotextual Cues for the Annotation of Perspective in Livy's *Ab Urbe condita*. *Philologia Classica* 14.2 (2019) 216–238.

²¹ Cf. ANDERSON, S. R. – KEENAN, E. L.: Deixis. In SHOPEN, T. (ed.): *Language Typology and Syntactic Description. Vol. 3: Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon*. Cambridge 1985, 259–308, here 278: "Furthermore, notions such as 'near to the speaker' may be interpreted not only in the literal, physical sense, but also by extension to 'psychological proximity', i.e., vividness to the mind of the speaker (...)." It follows, then, that the reverse is true for the notion 'far from the speaker'.

²² Cf. TUCKER, G. H.: *The Lexicogrammar of Adjectives: A Systemic Functional Approach to Lexis*. London 1998; MCINTYRE, D.: *Point of View in Plays: A Cognitive Stylistic Approach to Viewpoint in Drama and Other Text-Types*. Amsterdam 2006; STOCKWELL, P.: *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*. London 2002.

superlative of *beata* to express his admiration of Radegund, and distal deictic indications like *eo anno* and *ibi*. He concludes by referring to his authorship again, and stresses the vantage point in the speech moment with *fuert funerata*.

Using the *internal perspective*, on the other hand, the author invites his audience to relive the events through the eyes of (one of) the characters. He is now not able to manipulate the chronology, but instead there is an unmediated experience without the use of temporal adverbials. The language appeals to the perceptions of characters and readers, while the events are likely to have a high impact on their psyche. The experienter stays 'in focus' through the use of pronouns to refer to them. The use of direct speech and proximal deictic indications, which assimilate the story-world to the world of communication (*hic, ecce!, nunc, ...*), supports this interpretation. A *conditio sine qua non* for the internal perspective is the 'givenness'²³ of a story-internal character to identify with. The interpersonal temporal meaning of the imperfect, which is most often used for this perspective, is an identification with a past reference point ($E = R$) while its aspectual meaning is a viewpoint from within. In example (5), Gregory narrates a dream from the internal perspective of one of the nuns of Poitiers:

- (5) Cumque viam [puella] nesciret, vir quidam se **obviam obtulit**, dicens: '...' At illa gratias agens, SEQUEBATUR praecedentem. Quibus ambolantibus, **pervenerunt** ad fontem magnum, cuius aquae tamquam aurum SPLENDEBANT, herbae vero in modum diversarum gemmarum vernante luce RADIABANT. Et **ait** vir ad eam: '...'. Cumque illa avide ex his aquis auriret, ecce ab alia parte VENIEBAT abbatissa et, denudatam puellam, **induit** eam vestem regia, quae tanta luce auroque et munilibus REFULGEBAT, ut vix possit intendi, dicente sibi abbatissa: '...' (*Hist.* 6.29)

The language is clearly very visual, and the nun is referred to by means of pronouns throughout the narration, or merely by the ending of the verbs. The proximal deictic *veniebat* suggests that she is the interpersonal deictic centre of the story. We also find direct speech and hardly any strictly locative temporal adverbials manipulating the chronology.

The imperfect can also be used when there is no given reference point or character to identify with. In that case, the temporal meaning is ' $E = R < S$ ': the link with the speech moment is retained, simulating a narrator who displaces himself to the story-world and transmits the events as a camera-eye to the audience located in the speech situation.²⁴ Because of its morphology, the imperfect necessarily combines this temporal meaning here with an aspectual meaning of viewpoint from within. The result of these two interpersonal values is that this *scenic camera-eye perspective*

²³ Cf. GUNDEL, J.: Information Structure and Referential Givenness/Newness: How Much Belongs in the Grammar? In MÜLLER, S. (ed.): *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar, Michigan State University*. Stanford, CA 2003, 122–42.

²⁴ Cf. DE JONG, I. J. F. – NÜNLIST, R.: From Bird's Eye View to Close-up. The Standpoint of the Narrator in the Homeric Epics. In BIERL, A. ET AL. (eds): *Antike Literatur in Neuer Deutung*. Leipzig 2004, 63–83.

potentially occurs with proximal as well as distal deictic indications, necessarily with descriptive language and without any comparative lexis or evaluation which cannot be ascribed to a neutral, direct observer. Indirect speech is to be expected rather than direct speech. Example (6) may provide an idea of how this perspective is induced:

- (6) Post haec corpus aquis ablutum ita candore niveo REFULGEBAT, ut nullum lentum repperire abbatissa potuisset in promptu, quod corpore candidior cerneretur. (*Hist.* 6. 29)

The historical present tense, then, may simulate a ‘temporal illusion of proximity’ (E = S) in narratives, which transports the narrator and audience to the story-world as virtual eyewitnesses. For the *immersive eyewitness perspective*, the aspectually neutral present indicative tense combines this temporal meaning with an aspectual meaning of viewpoint from within. The audience is ‘immersed’²⁵ into the story, reliving the events themselves as if they were there. There is, however, no opportunity for external evaluation or comparison to other events because of the viewpoint from within. The language is syntactically quite simple and visually very rich, with proximal deictic indications to be expected. The process types are very perceptible and therefore almost exclusively material (i.e., verbs of ‘doing’ or ‘happening’) or verbal (i.e., verbs of ‘saying’).²⁶ These elements are illustrated by example (7):

- (7) Interea Iustina praeposita ... extincto cereo, abbatissam operit. Sed venientes cum evaginatīs gladiis ac lanceis, scissa veste et paene sanctimunalium manibus laniatis, adpraehensam praepositam pro abbatissa, quia tenebrae ERANT, excussis lintaminibus, a capite soluta caesariae, detrahunt et usque basilicam sancti Helari inter manus deferunt. (*Hist.* 10. 15)

Finally, the distanced eyewitness perspective relies on the combination, found with the aspectually neutral historical present tense, of a temporal value of ‘E = S’ and an aspectual value of viewpoint from without. The narrator still draws his audience into the story-world in much the same way as for the immersive eyewitness perspective, but they remain at a certain distance.²⁷ The result is that the narration may be accompanied by external evaluation and comparison to other events, reflecting this overview. Example (1) (see above) may serve as an illustration: the conclusion of Briccius’ ordeal is described very visually and contains proximal deictic words like *adhuc*, but also evaluative comments like *calumniatur* and the information, unknown to the mob, that Briccius had hidden coals in his cassock.

²⁵ Cf. ALLAN, R. J. ET AL.: From *Enargeia* to Immersion: The Ancient Roots of a Modern Concept.” *Style* 51.1 (2017) 34–51.

²⁶ HALLIDAY–MATTHIESSEN (n. 10) 224–309.

²⁷ Cf. ALLAN, R. J.: History as Presence. Time, Tense and Narrative Modes in Thucydides. In TSAKMAKIS, A. – TAMIOLAKI, M.: *Thucydides Between History and Literature*. Berlin 2013, 371–90, here 377.

3. METAFUNCTIONAL HIERARCHY

The ultimate tense choice is based on the most salient metafunctional meaning of tense and aspect. In the first instance, the choice between foreground and background determines the tense. Secondly, the author decides if he wants to invite his audience to take a perspective, which will then perhaps change the verb tense. Thirdly, an ideational meaning may overrule the verb tense choice, if, for instance, the author wants to stress the success or termination of an action in a scene narrated in the distanced eye-witness perspective. In example (1), the perfect tense of *apparuit* in the narration in the distanced eyewitness perspective may be explained by referring to the intention of the author to stress termination, i.e. the interpretation of *appareo* as the telic ‘to appear’ rather than the atelic ‘to seem’.

For some process types, if it is relevant, a fourth step may be to anticipate on the conclusion, arrival, answer, or execution of a search, a movement, a question or an order, respectively. This textual meaning decides on the tense choice at the last moment. In example (3), quoted above and narrated from a neutral perspective, the present tense of *distinat* implies that the order with which the monks are sent to the Holy Land, will be carried out successfully, which is then narrated by the ‘perfect of success’ *detulerunt*; the perfect tense of *petiit*, on the other hand, already suggests that the request of Saint Radegund will *not* be granted.

4. TENSE USAGE IN THE *DECEM LIBRI HISTORIARUM*

For this paper, the meaning potential of the indicative tenses in two episodes of Gregory’s *Decem libri historiarum*, i.e. the episcopate of Briccius and part of the collection of paragraphs on the rebellious nuns in Poitiers, was analysed statistically. First, Fig. 1 displays the share of each perspective in the story of Briccius:

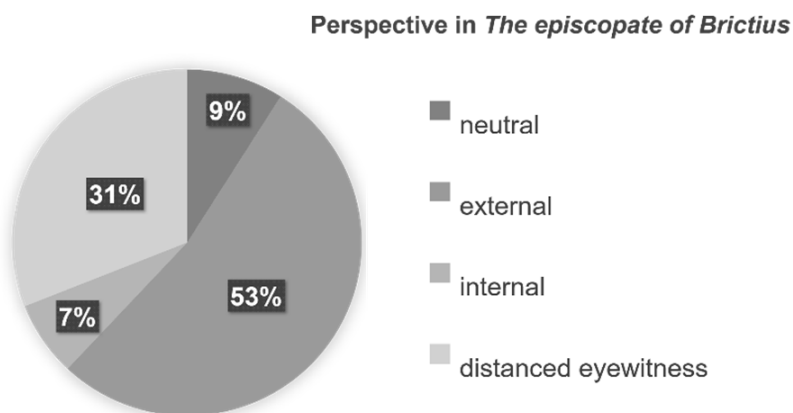


Fig. 1. The use of perspective in Gregory of Tours, *Hist. 2. 1* (n = 56)

The fact that this first episode occurred long before Gregory's lifetime, is reflected in his disproportionate use of the distanced eyewitness perspective: he seems prone to give his opinion about events he has played no part in. The fact that the external perspective is used even more follows quite naturally from its commonness and from the fact that the distanced eyewitness perspective is only used for very visual scenes at a slower narrative pace. Note that the immersive eyewitness perspective is not used at all.

The story of the nuns of Poitiers, however, occurred during Gregory's adult life, and he has had a very large role to play in it. Consider Fig. 2:

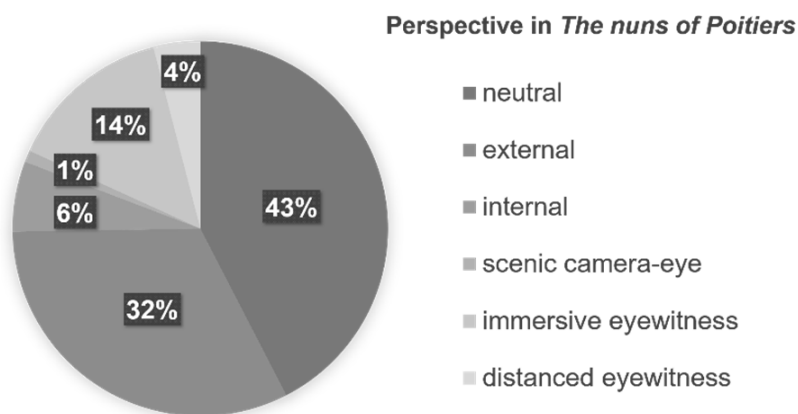


Fig. 2. The use of perspective in Gregory of Tours, *Hist.* 6. 29, 9. 2, 9. 39–43, 10. 15a (n = 163)

Gregory seems eager to retain his neutrality in narrating these events and his role in them. Instead of the distanced eyewitness perspective, he uses the neutral perspective far more often, as well as the immersive eyewitness perspective. Both these attitudes to the events of the texts leave little room for evaluative commentary on the part of the narrator. In particular, the immersive eyewitness perspective invites the audience to form their own opinion about the events, albeit greatly – and subtly – assisted by the visual description of shocking events such as those in example (7).

Although the number of indicative tenses analysed for this paper (n = 190²⁸) should refrain us from being too certain in our conclusions, the statistical model of the *Conditional Inference Tree* (CIT),²⁹ which can be read as a regular decision tree, allows us to recognize some tendencies in the process of verb tense selection within the proposed framework. The CIT for the current data is shown in Fig. 3. At node 5, the tree shows that the combination of 'unterminated' with 'iconic sequence of foregrounded events' (tenseTE: $E_y > E_x$) occurs most often with an anticipatory imperfect

²⁸ At this point, only the indicative forms with only one possible annotation for 'verb tense' were included in the analysis.

²⁹ HOTHORN, T. ET AL.: Unbiased Recursive Partitioning: A Conditional Inference Framework." *J. Comput. Graph. Stat.* 15.3 (2006) 651–674.

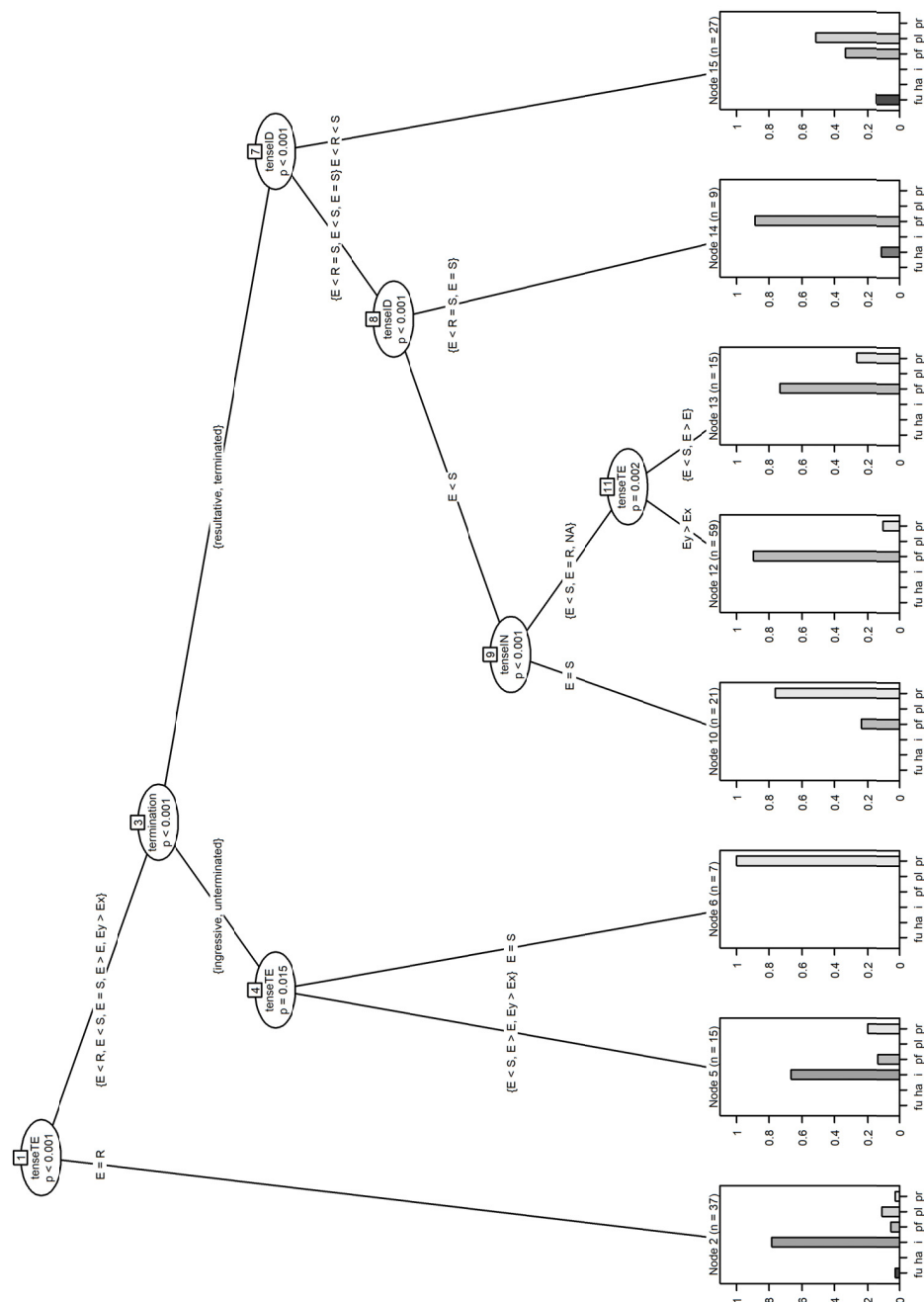


Fig. 3. The combined impact of the six aspecto-temporal dimensions on tense selection (abbreviations for the values of the outcome variable from left to right: past participle + *fuerat*, past participle + *habet*, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect and present).

or present tense, or a historical present tense. The possibility of using the latter tense for this combination of meanings results from the aspectual neutrality of the present indicative. At node 10, ‘termination’ is shown to combine with ‘temporal illusion of proximity’ (tenseIN: E = S) in the use of the historical present tense but also the perfect indicative, in case the desire to stress the termination of the event overrules the interpersonal meaning. Termination combines with a ‘vantage point in the speech moment’ (tenseIN: E < S) and an ‘iconic sequence of events’ in the use of the narrative perfect as well, but also in the use of the present tense, when the desire to express anticipation is larger than other metafunctional considerations (node 12). Finally, when the sequence is not iconic (tenseTE: E > E), the annalistic present³⁰ is often used, as a dry way to state, for example, political facts or the succession of one bishop by another; alternatively, the ‘authorial perfect’³¹ with the interpersonal value of ‘E < S’ combines with this manipulation of the chronology (tenseTE: E > E) (node 13). For reasons of space and proper emphasis, the explanation of the analysis provided here will have to suffice for now; more elaborate details will be given in future publications when a larger dataset will enhance our accuracy and certainty.

5. CONCERNING MORPHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In my current corpus of 273 analysed indicatives and subjunctives, only one example of the construction ‘past participle + *habet(ur)*’ occurs:

- (8) Sic enim et [a(b)] antecessores in epistulam, quae ad beatam Radegundem in initio huius congregationis scripserunt, **habetur insertum**. (*Hist.* 9. 39)

In contrast to the analysis of Mikulová,³² I do not believe that Gregory mistook *habetur insertum* for *inseruerunt* in this passage. Rather, the author is more likely either to have contaminated the passive with the active construction (*antecessores ... habent insertum ~ ab antecessoribus ... habetur insertum*) or to have written *a antecessores*, which is a common process of haplography; indeed, *a* is a common abbreviation for *ab*, while ‘*a(b)* + accusative’ is a common construction in vulgar Latin already attested in Pompeii.³³ Be that as it may, this particular token, which should be interpreted as ‘it is written’, adds to the number of examples in Mikulová’s discussion of the passive version of this construction with the meaning of ‘resultative state.’ However, there is also an example in the nonnarrative part of our corpus where a synthetic perfect active is used for the same resultative meaning, i.e. *obtinui* in example (2),

³⁰ See PINKSTER (n. 1) 409.

³¹ See PINKSTER (n. 1) 454.

³² MIKULOVÁ, J.: *Haberi* + Passive Perfect Participle. *Glotta* 92.1 (2016) 152–74, here 159.

³³ HOFMANN, J. B. – SZANTYR, A.: *Lateinische Grammatik. II: Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*. 2nd edition. München 1972, 257.

which should be interpreted as ‘I know for a fact’. Moreover, this ‘old’ perfect is also used three times to emphasize the termination of a situation in direct speech.³⁴

Only one occurrence of the passive construction ‘past participle + *fui*’ was found in our corpus, sc. in example (4): the meaning of *fuerit funerata* is clearly anterior, as already described by Kiss.³⁵ As concerns the old passive/deponent perfect forms, one of 24 tokens conveys a resultative state,³⁶ one indicates current relevance,³⁷ and the others are all used in much the same way as the perfect tense is always used in narratives.

Its counterpart for the expression of the meanings of – originally – the pluperfect, i.e. ‘past participle + *fuerat*’, occurs almost exclusively with anterior meaning.³⁸ Only one out of eight tokens clearly concerns a past state resulting from a completed action of ‘flocking around’, i.e. ‘being gathered around’ (example (9)). All attested forms of the old passive/deponent pluperfect do, however, indicate resultative meaning.

- (9) Gundigisilus autem, (...) epistulam (...) conscripsit ad sacerdotes illos, qui tunc cum rege Gunthchramno **fuerant adgregati**. (*Hist.* 9. 41)

The new active construction for the expression of past states of transitive verbs, i.e. ‘past participle + *habebat(ur)*’, did not occur in the current corpus. In contrast, the synthetic active pluperfect was mostly used for anterior meaning³⁹ but twice out of 17 times also to express resultative meaning.⁴⁰ This is consistent with the data I have been gathering from Livy’s narrative.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It should now be clear that there is good reason to assume that the three-dimensional meaning potential of the Latin tenses suggested in similar work on Classical Latin,⁴¹ was still available to Gregory of Tours in the 6th century CE. The selection of the verb tense has been shown to occur according to a hierarchy of different metafunctional meanings. No reason was found to disacknowledge the survival of aspect into Late Latin on the basis of the current study, on the important condition that it is defined in all its metafunctional complexity.

Especially the interpersonal meaning potential of the Latin tenses has proven to be an important tool for Latin authors like Gregory to influence their audience’s

³⁴ *Hist.* 2. 1: *celavi, fui*; 6. 29: *quaesisti*.

³⁵ KISS (n. 16) 28.

³⁶ *Hist.* 9. 43: *suspensae sumus*.

³⁷ *Hist.* 6. 29: *perpessi sumus*.

³⁸ KISS (n. 16) 28.

³⁹ KISS (n. 16) 10–11.

⁴⁰ *Hist.* 6. 29: *advenerat*; 9. 41 *obsederat*.

⁴¹ AERTS (n. 6); AERTS, S.: Latin tense and aspect in 3D: a functional description of tense usage in Livy’s narrative. Submitted.

stance towards the narrated events. As alluded to before (see note 19), other scholars have used similar concepts such as ‘discourse modes’ to explain these interpersonal meanings. Concerning the relation to this existing and undoubtedly very valuable research, this paper’s aim has been (a) to come to these results with a purely linguistic, non-narratological framework, and (b) to propose a set of tools that is more suitable for an analysis on clause level rather than discourse level.

Concerning the morphological developments reported in the literature, especially the low total frequency of these new tense forms is conspicuous. More evidence was found, however, for the evolutions in the passive voice. Again, no support was found for the claim that the Late Latin synthetic perfect would have completely lost its potential for the expression of resultativity or for the emphasis of termination.

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