735n: C.’s attempt at reading erotic connotations into Plautus’ repeated use of the syllable ca here and in 132–3 is highly subjective and on the whole unconvincing; on 819n: nos instead of non; on 931n: “In P.’s topsy-turvy world ... father and son may even become rivals for the same woman (e.g. Mer.).” It is important to remember that the plot of Plautus’ Mercator has its origins in Philemon’s Emporos; on 1009–14n: Ter. Enni. 292ff is yet another example worth quoting from New Comedy in illustration of the familiar entrance pattern involving description of a ‘wild-goose chase’ throughout the city; on 1022n: it would have been appropriate to point out the striking frequency of such knocking-scenes in Attic comedy as well as in its Latin adaptations. A useful discussion of the relevant material from Menander, Plautus and Terence is found in P. G. McC. Brown, PLLS 8, 1995, 71–89. For Old Comedy, see Aristoph. Ra. 31ff, 460ff; Acharn. 493ff, 1071–2; Eq. 725ff; Nub. 131ff; Av. 531ff, 92–4; Eccl. 966ff; Plut. 1097ff. Door-knocking presumably takes place also in Acharn. 174ff; Nub. 866ff; Lys. 1216ff; Pax 179ff. In Vesp. 152ff and possibly also in Thesm. 65ff, the traditional pattern of the knocking-scene has been reversed. Such scenes are not unheard-of in tragedy: see esp. Aesch. Cho. 653–69; Eur. IT 1284–328; Hyps. Fr. I. 1. 4–5; on 1037, 1038nn: In discussing these lines C. seemingly ignores Plautus’ exploitation of legal terminology (advocatus, adissi) for comic purposes. On Plautus’ originality in this field, esp. in the context of amatory relationships, see Zagagi, ‘Tradition and Originality in Plautus’ (Göttingen 1980) 106–11.


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In 544 pages, Oldsjö’s ‘Tense and Aspect in Caesar’s Narrative’ discusses the linguistic theory of tense, aspect and ‘Aktionsart’ as it applies to Latin grammar and the text of Caesar’s commentaries. Its main purpose is “to bridge the widening gap between Latin linguistics and general linguistics as regards the treatment of these important categories.” (16). O.’s complementary interests in linguistic theory and Caesar’s narrative are carried out in four major parts: Part 1: the theory of tense, aspect and ‘Aktionsart’; Part 2: on aspectual conflicts in Latin, by which that author refers to the use of the imperfective aspect in reference to telic situations or the perfective aspect in reference to atelic situations; Part 3: the analysis of excerpts from Caesar’s text; Part 4: the structure of Caesar’s narrative. A final section summarizes all too briefly (4. 3 pages) the author’s conclusions.

It is both a strength and a weakness of the book that it attempts to cover linguistic theory for the non-linguist and to offer practical stylistic description and criticism that tests and complicates the theories that it examines and espouses. The strength lies in the fact that anyone who is not an expert in linguistics can with enough tenacity and commitment come away from O.’s text with a much sounder understanding of the current debates about what tense and aspect are and the problems of accounting for them in any consistent theoretical framework. The weakness is that the wealth and detail of argument together with the
complications offered by the examples may well leave the non-specialist exhausted by the theory and unhappy with the contribution that theoretical debate has made to understanding the text of Caesar, while the specialist will feel not only that the basic review is inadequate but that the summary of other theories is tendentious. Caesarians will not be much interested in the diachronic coherence of a theory of aspect and tense or in whether aspect is derived from tense or tense from aspect, but will want a more sophisticated discussion of Caesar’s ‘Tendenz’ and rhetoric. Latin teachers may or may not be relieved to learn one-quarter of the way through the book that Latin of the classical period has both tense and aspect, but they will find that the theory does not help them respond to the pedagogical needs they serve. And most readers will find the book too long, too daunting, and not easily accessible as a research tool (there is, for instance, no list of tables).

Part One: Theory (Chapters 1–4). In Chapter One, O. develops Reichenbach’s theory of tense in terms of relative reference points. Chapter Two explores this model of tense in terms of aspect and argues that tense is derived from aspect: the pluperfect aspect, ‘completed’, is reinterpreted as temporal, «anterior in relation to a past reference point» (60). Chapter 3 relates the interpretation of tense and aspect to the morphological development of the forms in Latin in an effort to explain usage in terms of formal history. Here, the aoristic past is assimilated to the perfective forms. The result will be to some an odd opposition between the perfective past (i.e. simple past) and the imperfective past and the assumption that the simple past is derived from the present perfect: «Morphologically, all the tense forms are formed on two aspect stems, the infectum (imperfective) and the perfectum (perfective)» (68). Throughout, O. is not interested in the traditional division of aspect into aoristic, perfective and imperfective, and substitutes instead an opposition between perfective (the narrative perfect in the past) and the imperfect, reducing the pluperfect to an ancillary temporal role. There is not space here to examine in detail the consequences of this view, but a passage from BC. 3. 39 discussed on p. 125 shows its weaknesses.


Clearly, we can read the tenses of this passage in a purely temporal way: ‘Caesar was at that time observing his previous custom. After putting the ninth legion on the left, and after his forces had been attenuated at Dyrrachium, he added the eighth legion so as to create one legion from two and he had (already) ordered them to protect each other’. However, we can also read the passage emphasizing aspect: ‘As part of Caesar’s on-going effort to observe his previous custom, when he had completed the deployment of the ninth although they had suffered great depletion at Dyrrachium, he added the eighth legion in order to make one legion of two. Furthermore, he had given them orders to protect each other’. After some further background information that is not just prior but completed as a necessary condition for Caesar’s actions, this passage ends ‘Caesar himself took up a position facing Pompey’. To some extent, the question of whether the pluperfect expresses anteri—

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ority or perfective aspect can only be answered by appeal to subjective measures like: which makes a better story? However, in this particular example we can at least appeal to narrative sequence: both erat adiennata and insierat are out of iconic sequence. This is not reasonable if the pluperfect is temporal. If, on the other hand, its perfective aspect points to an achieved state, then it becomes ‘background information’ which is often out of temporal order, precisely because it is not as important to sequence as to cause or reasoning. The real problem with analyses like O.’s is that we cannot and do not want to reduce something like the pluperfect to mere anteriority nor to some rigid aspectual emphasis.

The fourth chapter discusses the relationship of ‘Aktionsart’ and situation-type. ‘Aktionsart’ is implicit in the root of the verb, an abstract, cognitive notion, and forms no part of the grammatical system (137–38) – the problem here is that it is impossible to draw a line between the phasal character of the root and the way that character is modified by context (including aspect, adverbs, subject, etc.). The problems O. finds himself in are suggested by the following: «it is only relevant to speak of ‘Aktionsart’ if there is a correlation between the situation intrinsic to the verb root and the actual situations indicated by the uses of the verb root». (156). The term ‘situation-type’ extends ‘Aktionsart’ to include all the elements that determine the phasal character of the clause or sentence. Granted that the more elements there are and the more are taken into account, the better one is to determine whether a situation is a ‘state’, a ‘process’, an ‘accomplishment’ or an ‘achievement’. Still, these distinctions are not absolute or scientific. According to the schema on p. 163, we cannot have telic states; however, one may argue that Nirvana would qualify or eudaimonia or ‘mindfulness’. The discussion seems to this reader to founder between the Aristotelian view that «situations are by nature of different types» (157) and the admission found in a footnote that situation-type «refers to our interpretation of statements about the world and not to our interpretation of the world itself». (162 n. 372). This fundamental conflict appears throughout the text and is never resolved.

Part 2: Aspextual conflicts in Latin. As the title to this part indicates, we are dealing with conflicts between ‘Aktionsart’/situation type and aspect. O. considers how conflicts may create metaphorical uses, and the role played by the ontological status of the subject and object and by negatives. He then reviews the conflict between imperfect aspect and telic situation and the perfect aspect and a stative situation. It should be noted, however, that conflicts between ‘Aktionsart’ and aspect are only possible if verbal roots refer to situations of specific and natural aspectual character and conflicts between situation type and aspect are only possible if it is not true that «aspect can change the phasal character of a situation, and that it ultimately determines the phasal character of the complete clause/sentence.» (173). In other words, O. is proceeding into a discussion that his own prior discussion has made theoretically unprofitable. This does not mean that the particular discussions will not be interesting and even stimulating (or frustrating), but it does leave one with the feeling that the overall project is more of an atelic state than an accomplishment.

In order to proceed O. has to step back to Aristotelian assumptions. «Meanings referring to telic situations (accomplishments and achievements) are normally viewed through the perfective aspect. When viewed imperfectively they acquire pointed aspectual meanings.» (183). This begins to sound more like sociology and rhetoric than linguistics. In the first place, the idea that roots may have
different meanings (as opposed to translations) is itself problematic. To make his case, O. uses *relinquere*, which means ‘to remain’ when intransitive and ‘to leave’ when transitive. O. claims (178–80) that ‘to remain’ is a «stative situation» and so naturally takes the imperfect, while ‘to leave’ is a dynamic, telic and punctual situation and so normally takes the perfect. This sounds good, but is not, in fact, born out even by O.’s statistics. To be sure, 9 of 10 instances of ‘to remain’ use the imperfect, while only 5 of 108 instances of ‘to leave’ do. However, one may also note that by the same figures the imperfect refers to a transitive, telic state more than 1/3 of the time. The problem is that O. is trying to create an algorithm out of situation, aspect and meaning, when language is as constructive and representational as it is referential.

A telling example occurs on p. 208: *conpluresque milites in viis urbis omnibus partibus interficiebantur* (BC 3. 106. 5). O. claims that the imperfect makes the killing iterative. However, the iterative content of the sentence does not derive from the imperfect, but from the terms *conplures* and *omnibus*. To be more precise one should say that the killing, which as a matter of cognitive content kept happening, is presented as an on-going event by the imperfect aspect.

Toward the end of Part 2, O. claims that the conative meaning of the imperfect is «heavily dependent on the context rather than being a basic function of the imperfect» (233), by which he means that «to understand the imperfect as ‘conative’ … it is necessary to use extralinguistic knowledge». (233 n. 482). This is an odd position to take for someone who used terms like ‘normal’, ‘natural’ and ‘pointed’ – as if they were linguistic and not extralinguistic categories. But the real problem runs deeper and goes to the understanding of markedness, which may mean that O.’s problems begin with the elimination of the aoristic past. Marked forms in linguistics always require inference – iteration, on-goingness, incohativity, conativeness, all these ‘aspects’ are inferences from a form that marks the action as incomplete and can only be justified by context and extralinguistic knowledge.

Part 3: Presentation and analysis of the material. In this section we come to the practical analysis of Caesar’s prose. The first chapter, Chapter 8, discusses the principles of selection and textual problems. Chapter 9 then compares the tense usage in Caesar with that of Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Florus and Eutropius and introduces an ingenious and «simple method of measuring the pace of a narrative» as a ratio of pages to years. This leads to a correlation between the perfect with fast paced narratives and the imperfect with slower paced narratives like Caesar’s. This evidence is then seen to support the standard view that the historical present is functionally the equivalent of the perfect. Chapter 10 focuses on Caesar’s use of the tenses in main and subordinate clauses, for foregrounding and backgrounding material, and the use of the imperfect as an aspect, not as a tense. O. argues that the distinction between the historical present and the narrative perfect is stylistic. He offers some speculation about the composition of both the BG and the BC, and concludes with a section on the present perfect which, being a present tense, is not surprisingly limited to authorial comments and *oratio recta*. There are many tables and a lot of detail but the conclusions are neither innovative nor solid. For instance, «it is difficult to ascribe any clear stylistic value at all to the present of narration in Caesar, since this tense form is the one most
used in his narrative." (364). Well, then, we should compare Caesar with Livy and Vergil.

Part 4: Beyond tense and aspect. After toiling through the first three parts of this book, one looks forward to Part 4 because it promises to move beyond the reification of discourse effects and the effort to correlate reference and presentation into the structure of Caesar’s narrative. Chapter 11 isolates 12 types of information (like ‘Decision and command’, ‘Influence’, and ‘Possession and control’) and plots that information according to subordination and tense. While the information is detailed and valuable, there are two tables in Chapter 11 that are especially worth calling attention to. After describing and analyzing the 12 information types, we find that some, like ‘Perception’, are placed in subordinate clauses and participial constructions 77% of the time, while others, like ‘Decision and command’, are so placed only 14% of the time. A category like ‘Influence’ is expressed by subordinate clauses 7.5% of the time, while it is expressed in participles 50.7% of the time. Without going into more detail here, readers are directed to Table 11. 15 p. 447 for distribution by subordinate structure, and Table 11. 16 p. 453 for distribution by tense. The problem with this information however is glaring: if information structure determines tense and subordination, then we cannot conclude that ‘Aktionsart’ or situation-type is as relevant as the opening chapters of the book assume. In other words, tense and aspect is a function of the structure of narrative, not of the real world.

Chapter 12 considers how narrative structure can affect our understanding of the relationship between aspect and ‘Aktionsart/situation type. O. addresses the iconic structure of narratives, seriality, and foregrounding and backgrounding. Unfortunately, here we find the same kinds of problems that plague O.’s work elsewhere. The effort to correlate situation type and aspect leads to false conclusions and faulty analyses. Two examples will suggest how O. goes wrong.

«[12. 3] Max and Harry hit each other. The police came.» is interpreted as sequential because the second clause is dynamic (a telic achievement). «[12. 7] Max and Harry hit each other. They were both very angry.» is not interpreted as sequential because ‘being angry’ is stative. «[12. 8] Max and Harry hit each other. They stood in the backyard.» is not interpreted as sequential because, although «they stood» is dynamic, it is an atelic process rather than a telic achievement or an accomplishment. O. concludes that sequentiality requires a telic situation. However, if one substitutes «They stood there bleeding», an atelic process, for «They stood in the backyard», we now have a sequence. It is easy to play this game and every time we discover that the correlation between aspect and situation is not determinative.

Later O. asks «whether or not telic situations described imperfectively, i.e. as being ongoing, will be interpreted as sequential». He offers the following as a demonstration that sequentiality is the natural interpretation of narrative:

ante hos obliquis ordinibus in quincuncem dispositis scrobis tres in altitudinem pedes fodiebantur paulatim angustiore ad infimum fastigio. huc teretes stipes feminis crassitudine ab summo praeacuti et praeusti demittebantur, ita ut non amplius digitis quattuor e terra eminerent; simul confirmandi et stabiliendi causa singuli ab infimo solo pedes terra excubabantur; reliqua pars scrobis ad occultandas insidias viminibus ac virgultis integratebatur. (BG 7. 73. 5–7)

The problem with the example is that sequentiality is established by adverbs: hoc requires the digging of the pits to be completed; simul indicates that the actions of fixing stakes in the ground and tamping dirt around them was simultaneous; and reliqua pars indicates that the staking had been completed.
Finally, in 12.3 O. attempts to relate the various aspects of his discussion to the concept of ‘grounding’, the distinction an author makes between the foreground, or the main line of events (which are sequential) and the background, or events that are usually concurrent with the foreground. According to Hopper, ‘grounding’ is a ‘cluster concept’ because it uses the resources of reference, mood, voice, word order and so on. O.’s discussion not only confirms this view, but seems to be uncomfortable with «a fuzziness at the very core of the concept of grounding.» (475). While he recognizes that information type can be usefully plotted along the foreground-background continuum, and that the phasal character of a situation may affect its grounding, in the end it seems that O.’s topic and the opportunities created by the idea of grounding exhaust him. «In my view, this means that if we want to apply the concept of grounding we have to use it as a comprehensive term dependent on all these factors (and still others)». The last word in the body of his text is «etc.».

‘Part 5: Summary and conclusions’ is too brief to be useful, and that is in large part because the book attempts to cover every detail and to write for every audience. Most readers will not be interested in every chapter or part, and many will be frustrated by the assumptions and the dogged method of argument. An enormous amount of work that has gone into this book but the main value of the work is in its summary of data and its exhaustive bibliography.

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**Janine Andrae:** *Vom Kosmos zum Chaos. Ovids Metamorphosen und Vergils Aeneis.*
Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier 2003. 285 S. (Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium. 54.).

Any Latin poet who was born in 43 B.C. would inevitably grow up under the influence of the immortal genius Vergil, as well as of the generation of elegiac poets such as Gallus, Tibullus, and Propertius. Ovid came to Rome from Sulmo early in the 20’s to continue and finish his studies, and he was no doubt excited by the various products of that artistic political and educational center. Horace had just completed his two books of Satires; Vergil had just published his *Georgica*; Tibullus and Ovid were about to have their first collections of elegies given to the public. And Ovid found himself and felt himself in the center of a mass of poetry that provoked admiration and emulation. He tells us in *Tr.* 4. 10 that he associated at different levels with all these poets, except that somehow the fates cheated him of the chance to become a friend of Tibullus (though he was around for about a decade with him), and that he only knew Vergil by sight: *Vergilium vidi tantum* (51). I find it a bit odd that friendship with Tibullus did not develop over those years, when Ovid was starting to compose elegies himself, but it is not

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