

An Idol of the School: the Aspectual Theory of the Stoics

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It is commonly held that the Stoics put forward a description of the Greek tense system that is based on an implicit or explicit recognition of aspect; this interpretation of the only surviving source (a scholium to Dionysius Thrax by Stephanus) was first proposed by Pohlenz, and has been generally accepted since with only few exceptions. A closer investigation of the text seems to contradict this theory or, at least, to question a methodological approach which interprets this scholium in the light of modern aspectual theories rather than placing it in the framework of the cultural climate of that age. The aim of the Stoics, when defining Greek tenses, did not stem from a grammatical interest as such, but from a more general philosophical one, which connected these definitions to Stoics' conceptions about time and cause, their tense logic and so forth. Their *diáthesis* of tense would imply several formal defaults, if the intervention of a category distinguished from tense/time were presupposed. The establishment of two "present" tenses, an *enestós paratitikós* and an *enestós syntelikós*, is explained on the basis of the Stoics' view of present time. Particular attention is paid to terminology: thus, f.i., *enestós* must be interpreted not in the common sense of an unqualified, static, present, but in its original perfect meaning of "begun and thus impending", which fits the Stoics' view of the present as a mere transition from the past into the future.

This article is a first account of a wider programme of research in this field.

1. It is commonly accepted that the Stoics were the first to systematize the so-called tense forms of the Greek verb, and their work, through the subsequent mediation of the Alexandrian and Roman grammarians, is to this day the basis of our grammatical tradition. This system is based on a series of binary and ternary oppositions which are summed up in the following table (based on Schwyzler 1950 p. 249).¹

Ι χρόνοι ὀρισμένοι

a) χρόνοι παρατατικοί oder ἀτελείς, tempora infecta

1. παρατατικός ἐνεστώς, imperfectum praesens (Präsens),

2. παρατατικός παρωχημένος, imperfectum praeteritum (Imperfektum),

¹ For other attempts at graphical reconstructions of the Stoic system cf. Pohlenz (1939 p. 177); Barwick (1957 p. 53); Versteegh (1980 p. 353) and Colachides' scheme in Versteegh (p. 354).

- b) χρόνοι τέλει οἱ συντεταγμένοι, tempora perfecta
 3. τέλειος ἐνστώς, perfectum praesens (Perfektum),
 4. τέλειος παρώχνημένος, perfectum praeteritum (Plusquamperfektum),
 II χρόνοι ἀόριστοι
 5. ἀόριστος παρώχνημένος [Aorist; lat. fehlend],
 6. ἀόριστος μέλλον, imperfectum futurum (Futurum).

It is almost equally paradigmatic to interpret the Stoic tense system as being based on the conscious recognition of those functions which we now generally ascribe to the category of aspect, so that the Stoics are seen at least as the precursors of the discovery of this category, if not actually its conscious discoverers. This view was already implicit in the manuals of the comparative period, in which the chapter dedicated to the study of *Aktionsarten* was typically preceded by a brief mention of Stoic theory. However, it is worth noting the caution shown by Wackernagel (1920 p. 15), who limits himself to mentioning the way the Stoics divided up tenses and attempting to provide explanations of the individual terms without making any explicit reference to terms like *Aktionsart*: thus, for example, he glosses τέλειος ἐνστώς as the *Tempusform* (my italics) which expresses "eine in der Gegenwart vollendete Handlung", a definition which, as my analysis will show, is very precise in its terminological caution and accuracy. The aspectual interpretation was made explicit by Pohlenz (1939 p. 177 f; 1948 p. 45 f) according to whom the peculiarity of the Stoic system lay in the fact "daß nicht die Zeitstufen zum Einteilungsprinzip erhoben werden, sondern die Aktionsarten" (1939 p. 177). Indeed, he claims that the Stoic system constitutes a "merkwürdige Ausnahmestellung" within a grammatical tradition which has, for centuries, concentrated exclusively on the category of tense.²

1.1. Pohlenz's position has, to some extent, become the rule, as is indirectly clear from the fact that Weinrich, one of the few modern linguists to deny the existence of aspect, considers this category to be inexistent, at least in modern western languages, except as an invention of the Stoics who are supposed to have been influenced by the grammar of the Semitic languages (1964 p. 14). The idea that aspect should be considered, in a historiographical and epistemological sense, to be an *invention* rather than a *discovery*, is a view that nowadays seems to me to be less improbable than it might at first sight appear (I shall deal with this elsewhere): that which is by no means certain is that this invention should be attributed to the Stoics, as I intend to claim in this paper.

The aspectual nature of the Stoic system has since been explicitly

² Pohlenz believes that he can affirm "ohne Zweifel" that the Stoics' unusual view was due to the influence of the Semitic languages on Zeno, who was probably of Semitic origin. For this point see also his 1926 work.

affirmed by scholars like Robins (1951 p. 35: "The Stoics established four tenses in the full sense: two times and two aspects"), Barwick (1957: the Stoic system is based on two tenses and three *Aktionsarten*), Gonda (1962 p. 17: "these 'aspectual' distinctions"—note, moreover, the limiting use of inverted commas) and Versteegh (1980 p. 343: "Stoic aspectual categorization"), and gained, as it were, official recognition by being included in Schwyzer-Debrunner's *Griechische Grammatik*.³ The only exceptions to this rule in the field of linguistics were Lohmann (1953 p. 173 ff), who had, however, initially adhered to the official view (1948 p. 70 f; 1949 p. 228), and Hiersche (1977); both deny the aspectual character of the Stoic system with arguments that are convincing but did not succeed in overcoming the entrenched position of the traditional view⁴; on the other hand it cannot be without importance that scholars of the Stoic view of time, like Goldschmidt (1969; 1972) and Hadot (1969), who have looked at the question from a historical-philosophical viewpoint rather than a linguistic one, do not even mention this interpretation.

1.2. There are, above all, two factors which may have suggested this interpretation to linguists operating within a theoretical framework which could favour this kind of reading—especially the historical comparative linguists to whom we owe the 'definitive' discovery of aspect.

On the one hand the Stoics defined the perfect as a present (ἐνστώς); in this way the Greek language appears to be attributed with two distinct morphological forms for the same temporal referent, and, as this seems clearly inconceivable, it was deduced that they must have understood the two forms of χρόνος ἐνστώς as differing in terms of other than temporal content. It is well-known that the recognition of the existence of aspect by 19th century linguistics was partly due to this type of observation and to the fact that it was noted, rightly or wrongly, that the Greek perfect was not a tense of the preterite, as traditional pre-comparative grammar had claimed. Consequently, it was held that the Stoics had proceeded along

³ To be exact, the term *Aktionsart* is not used in this work to describe the Stoic system: however, it is implicit in the observation that, although χρόνος remains the *Oberbegriff*, the concepts of *Verlauf oder Erstreckung* and *Nicht-Vollendung v. Vollendung* appear as *Unterbegriffe*. Gonda too affirms that tense remains the privileged category in the Stoic system, which, as Hiersche observes (1977), is already an attenuation of the traditional interpretation.

⁴ The strength of this tradition is indirectly indicated by Pinborg (1975), who, in a context, which could be called handbook-like, sets out the Stoic scheme without making any reference to its presumed aspectual nature, despite the fact that he knew—and quotes—Lohmann's 1953 work: it is true that Pinborg always uses the word "tense", but the fact that he puts together indifferently both supporters and an opponent of the aspectual interpretation, is, at least, odd without some direct discussion of the problem. A view that is, in some ways, intermediate, is expressed by Serbat (1975), according to whom, a "moins rapide et moins prévenue" analysis of the sources could give more importance to tense and less to aspect in the Stoic system; he claims that even Varro's work should be interpreted less aspectually than is traditionally the case (Serbat 1976).

the same lines of reasoning, identifying correctly that which the data of their language would necessarily reveal to anyone who knew how to observe them with a careful unbiased 'scientific' eye.

On the other hand, this interpretation seemed to be backed up by the terminology used by the Stoics, in whose work the three traditional terms (which, as we shall see, were only such in part) ἐνεστώζ, παρωχημένος and μέλλων, which obviously refer to tense, appeared to be in some way balanced by the pair παρατατικός *v* τέλειος/συντελικός. It was an obvious step to interpret the latter two as 'completed, perfectum', and therefore, to read into their system a conceptual and terminological framework familiar from Slav grammar which denoted *aspect*, a concept which comparative linguistics was applying to other Indo-European languages and, above all, to Greek, Sanscrit and Latin, and even to the *Ursprache* itself. Consequently, παρατατικός was supposed, in turn, to indicate the other half of the aspectual pair. However, at this point, the terminology already begins to wobble: alongside the translation "non-completed", which is more immediate because it is derived from the opposition with συντελικός (*Umwollendung* in Barwick and Schwyzer-Debrunner), we find terms like "durative" (Wackernagel; Lohmann 1953 p. 185 "*fortdauernd*"; 1949 p. 228 "*dauernd*": however, in his 1948 work p. 71 he translates it as "*Erstreckung*") or "continuative" (Gonda p. 17): it is as if the famous terminological *Verwirrung* of so much 19th century aspectology were reflected, perhaps not by chance, in the interpretation of its presumed precursors. It should be mentioned that none of these terms, except Lohmann's *Erstreckung* and the *extensif* of the more recent French research into the field (Hoffmann 1983; Caujolle-Zaslavsky 1985; Lallot 1985), corresponds, other than indirectly, to the true meaning of παρατατικός, as Hiersche (1979 p. 279) rightly points out. At a more general level, it remains to be seen if the conceptual and terminological opposite of 'completed' is 'durative' or 'continuative'. If nothing else, the translation "perfective *v* imperfective" proposed by Colachlides (quoted in Versteegh 1980 p. 354) at least has the merit of being coherently aspectual.

In conclusion, according to this interpretation, the Stoics, who considered both the present and the perfect to be ἐνεστώτες on the temporal plane, were said to have distinguished them in terms of aspect, the former being παρατατικός and the latter συντελικός.

In this way, linguists, who were in the process of discovering this new verbal category, felt themselves to be in some way backed up in their discovery by the fact that aspect had been glimpsed at centuries before, within that very language on which the nascent science of aspectology was currently working. At the same time, they were able to gain from it a confirmation of the superiority of the new methodology of comparative linguistics, which was able to organize, into a coherent and complete system, material which either had not until then been seen or, according to the

historiographical patterns of the time, had only been partially glimpsed, and, above all, had remained an isolated intuition because of the epistemological immaturity of the days when linguistics was still "prescientific" (as it was described in contemporary handbooks).

1.3. From the general point of view of a programme of linguistic historiography, I must confess my doubts as regards any form of presumed (more or less *merkwürdige*) *Ausnahmestellung*. This concept presupposes, in the field of historiography, a view of the evolution of linguistics (and science in general) consisting of a process of progress by accumulation, which tends (παράτειναι!) towards the acquisition (συντελεῖν) of objective truth, which can only be achieved when the now scientific nature of linguistics enables it to see that which the object, the language or languages, contains within itself—a content which cannot but appear in all its evident phenomenon as soon as the researcher is capable of seeing it. Before this scientific phase (but which: the one that begins with Bopp, Saussure or Chomsky?) nothing can exist other than the intuitions and the *Ausnahmestellungen* of precursors whose ingenuous ingenuity (forgive the play on words) is said to have enabled them to catch a glimpse of a linguistic phenomenon (ingenuity) without being capable of following their intuitions through to their extreme consequences, because linguistics (according to this view) either did not yet exist or was still too hampered by ideological prejudices of various types (religious, philosophical, logical and, in any case, 'prescientific'). However, this historiographic view is particularly weak as regards the case in point, because the Stoics, said to be the only scholars to have been capable of discovering aspect in two thousand years, were characterized by so-called logical/ontological "prejudices" just as much as anyone else, if not more so.

From the historiographical point of view, then, it would be better to begin by asking whether the presumed discovery of aspect can be justifiably attributed to that period—that is to say, whether it can be seen as being a coherent part of the body of doctrine of the Stoics, and whether it might have been based in the (not only linguistic) culture of the period. It should be borne in mind that for the Stoics, as for all of classical culture, linguistics was not an autonomous discipline, separate from the others because of its specific object of study and its methods, so it cannot be presumed that a category like aspect could have been perceived on a plane of merely linguistic and grammatical meditation, rather than being part of the overall conceptual structure of the school. I will only look at this question in part because it is outside my field of competence, limiting myself to recalling that Steinthal already denied that the Stoics recognized the distinction between tense and *actio* and stressed instead the extreme coherence between their tense system and their ontological doctrine of physical time (1890⁷ p. 312)—an example of intellectual honesty that is all the more convincing

because this mixture of grammar and "metaphysics" was so uncongenial to him that he thought that it rendered their tense theory "verderblich" (*op. cit.* p. 311). It should be noted that Steinthal was writing his history of Greek and Roman linguistics in a period (the first edition was published in 1863) in which aspectology had only just begun to exist and had only produced the distinction, put forward by Curtius in 1852, between *Zeitstufe* and *Zeitart*, which was not yet, and not only from a terminological point of view, the theory of *Aktionsarten* of the Brugmann period, despite what handbooks on the subject might say in a somewhat hasty way (as I intend to show elsewhere). Moreover, Steinthal was responsible for the posthumous 1856 edition of Heyse's *System der Sprachwissenschaft*, in which the author introduces the distinction between subjective and objective tenses, from a viewpoint which is no longer the traditional time/tense centered one, but nor is it, once more, that of Brugmann's *Aktionsart*-ology, being instead an interesting example of a conceptual as well as chronological mediation between the two—or, in other words, an use of the data provided by the new historical-comparative grammar in the context of an explanation still linked to the best that the traditional *Tempuslehre* had to offer. Thus, Steinthal was less conditioned than others by an obvious enthusiasm for this newly discovered scientific object and was able to read the Stoic sources with less bias. What is rather surprising is the fact that, with the exception of Hiersche (1977 p. 285), Steinthal has been largely ignored by the exegetes of the Stoic system. A careful reading of Steinthal on the question of the Stoics could have helped avoid certain hasty over-interpretations.

2. A general observation made by Steinthal allows me to put forward my first objection to the aspectual interpretation of the Stoics' theoretical system. His remarks concerning the connexion between the recognition of a category and the use of an appropriate terminology are still valid:

"Es ist festzuhalten, daß eine Kategorie erst dann wirklich in der Wissenschaft auftritt, wenn sie entweder einen Namen erhält, der so glücklich gewählt oder gebildet ist, daß er ihr Wesen dem Geiste mit einem Schläge zeigt; oder wenn für sie der Name zwar nur conventionell fixirt, aber ihr Wesen in einer Definition ausgesprochen wird" (1891² p. 274).

In more general terms, we should note with Kuhn the importance in a discipline, or branch of a discipline, of that esoteric moment in which a terminology is established, which later becomes accepted by all or, at least, the majority of the practitioners. As regards aspectology, it is clear that this stage has been reached by contemporary linguistics, in which the use of the expressions *aspect* and *Aktionsart*, whilst allowing for different viewpoints, automatically identifies the scope of the phenomena to which the linguist is referring: for example, it is well-known that the European distinction between aspect and *Aktionsart* has only been partly accepted

by American linguistics, but nevertheless, any linguist finding the term *aspect* in an American paper on the subject at least knows that the author is not referring to phenomena relating to tense.

It cannot be a question of chance that the Stoics used the single term *χρόνος* both to define the three *Zeitstufen* (*ἐνεστώς*, *παρωχημένος* and *μέλλων*) and to refer to the presumed aspects *συντελικός* and *παράστατικός*. It is surprising that a school which was so careful about terminological distinctions did not make them on an occasion when it recognized a category which was not present in traditional analysis; this is all the more remarkable, if we bear in mind that the word *ἐνεστώς*, which is of central importance to their temporal theory, was, at least in part, an innovation, and was, in any case, as we shall see, used in a way that was by no means innocent, so to say, and without significance.

The extent to which Greek philosophical and linguistic culture was careful about terminology when it was *defining* something is explicitly stated by the scholiast to Dionysius Thrax who, before defining the individual tenses, says: "Ἡ δὲ ὀνομασία τῶν χρόνων ἀπὸ σημασίας ἐγένετο, "The denomination of the tenses derives from their meanings" (404, 1, ed. Hilgard).

In the absence of any proof to the contrary, an objective interpretation of the sources should proceed from the realization that the Stoics used the term *χρόνος* to define all the forms that they dealt with, and, following on from this, from the recognition that they intended to refer to *tense* and not aspect, whatever their degree of awareness of the phenomena that we now define as aspectual might have been.

2.1. Of course, this objection is, at least in part, anticipated by scholars like Schwyzer and Gonda who, as we have seen, interpret the terminological question as an indication of the fact that the Stoics recognized the existence of aspect but continued to subordinate it to tense (hence the use of *χρόνος*). Once again, however, I still cannot understand why the Stoics did not feel the need to find a name for the *Unterbegriff* (Schwyzer) that they were supposed to have recognized alongside the *Oberbegriff* *χρόνος*.

One could, of course, imagine that, in the history of the discovery of aspect, the Stoics represent a sort of compromise between the recognition of new facts and the use of traditional terminology to describe them, or, in other words, that they were still moving within that stage of a scientific discovery that Kuhn defines as recognizing "that something is" without arriving at the mature stage of recognizing "*what* it is", which alone represents the final stage of a discovery (Kuhn 1970³ p. 55).

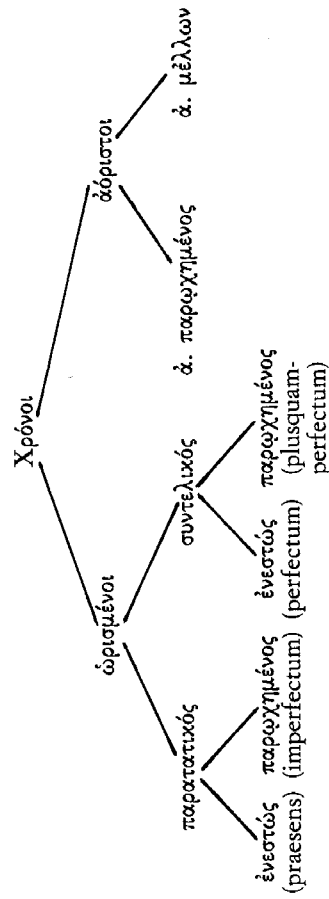
However, the problem is that, if we interpret Stoic tense theory in a natural way, by placing it within Stoic thought rather than looking at it through the spectacles of contemporary grammar, we realise that the Stoics

not only were quite aware of the fact that "something is" in the tense system of the Greek verb, but also knew what it was: and for them it was χρόνος and not aspect.

2.2. In fact Lohmann (1953 p. 183 ff) is clearly right when he points out that the Stoics' tense system is based on the procedure typical of classical logic, whose rules had repeatedly been laid down by Plato, of *dividing* a genus into species (διαίρεσις). The fact that it is a question of διαίρεσις is also shown by the terminology used inasmuch as Greek grammarians call the classification of tenses τομή or τμήμα and the verb used is τέμνω: see, for example, the passage in the scholiast Stephanus, where he wonders why Dionysius Thrax "does not cut (i.e. divide) the present and the future": τὸν ἐνεστώτα οὐ τέμνει οὔτε τὸν μέλλοντα (249, 27); another scholiast phrases the same question thus: διὰ τί μὴ ὁ ἐνεστώς καὶ ὁ μέλλων ἔσχε τομήν. On the other hand, τομή is also the very term used by the Stoics to define the διαίρεσις: διαίρεσις δὲ ἐστὶ γένους ἢ εἰς τὰ προσεχῆ εἶδη τομή (SVF III p. 215, 25.1). Finally, Plutarch tells us explicitly that Chrysippus' discussion on the relationship between present, past and future (with which we shall deal shortly) was an exercise in technical skill in διαίρεσις: βουλόμενος φιλοτεχνεῖν περὶ τὴν διαίρεσιν (SVF II 518).

I would also like to add that the establishment of a terminology which was as precise as possible was considered to be an essential point in the process of διαίρεσις, as is clear from Plato (*Sph.* 267 d) according to whom the lack of terminology in some areas (τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀνάγκη μὴ σφόδρα εὐπορεῖν) was due to the fact that scholars of the past had not been good at διαίρεσις (τῆς τῶν γενῶν κατ' εἶδη διαίρεσεως παλαιά τις ... ἀργία τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ἀσύννους παρῆν, ὥστε μὴδ' ἐπιχειρεῖν μηδὲν ἀαιρεῖσθαι).

2.2.1. In addition to the purely terminological issue, there is also a further side to the question. However we try to reconstruct the Stoics' διαίρεσις of tenses, it must operate within a single grammatical category or we will achieve results which are clearly absurd. Let us take as an example the scheme proposed by Pohlenz (1939 p. 177):



If we accept Pohlenz's interpretation, according to which the terms ὁρισμένος - ὁριστός and to an even greater extent συντελικός and παρὰ ταῦτα refer to *Aktionsarten* and not tenses, and if, on the other hand, we admit that ἐνεστώς, παρῶν καὶ μέλλον can only refer to *Zeitsphären*, we are clearly attributing to the Stoics' διαίρεσις both an incongruity and the violation of a rule, in addition, once again, to a failure to make a terminological distinction, given the unitary nature of the term χρόνος at the first branch.

The incongruity lies in the fact the species of a different genus, in this case the time/tense of the last branch, are made into a species of the genus that is to be divided (the *Aktionsart*, which, according to Pohlenz, is the Stoics' *Einteilungsprinzip*): I wonder what we would have thought of the Stoics if they had carried out their διαίρεσις of grammatical gender by dividing it first, as they actually did, into masculine, feminine and neuter and then subdividing each of these elements into, for example, singular, plural and dual.

The violation of a rule consists of the fact that the species that make up each branch of the διαίρεσις should be mutually exclusive, but in Pohlenz's division the present (παρὰ ταῦτα ἐνεστώς) and the imperfect (παρὰ ταῦτα παρῶν) are only mutually exclusive as regards tense (present *v* preterite) but they are not in opposition as regards aspect, both of them being παρὰ ταῦτα.

As a result of this, Pohlenz's scheme can only be valid *in itself* as a possible reconstruction of the Stoic διαίρεσις if we recognize that the division was made inside a single category, and, given that we can only interpret the three terms ἐνεστώς, παρῶν καὶ μέλλον in terms of time this category can only be *tense*. It is not by chance that Lohmann's reconstruction of the Stoic διαίρεσις, in which the category of tense is first divided into present, past and future, and the present is in turn subdivided into παρὰ ταῦτα ἐνεστώς and συντελικός, whilst the past is divided threefold into παρὰ ταῦτα ἐνεστώς, συντελικός and ὁριστός, does not attribute the Stoics with any errors of form because it is based solely on the category of tense and makes no mention of *Aktionsart* and/or aspect.

It should be noted that, in this way, not only are improbable logical conceptual incongruities in the Stoic system eliminated, but this view also fits better into the historical background where it originated. The Stoic διαίρεσις of the tenses no longer appears as an anachronistic anticipation of aspectual theory, which has no basis in ancient Greek culture and for which there was no disciplinary paradigm comparable to that of historical-comparative linguistics, by which, and not by chance, aspect was recognized. It is rather similar to the theory of the διαφοραί of the preterite tense of Alexandrian grammar, which should clearly be considered as the direct or indirect inheritance of the work carried out by the Stoics: it is well known

that the first *τομή* of the Alexandrian grammarians was the one that recognized the three *Zeitstufen* of present, preterite and future.

Obviously, it now remains for us to see how the terms *παρσεντικός* and *συντελικός*, which are apparently so strongly aspectual, can be explained in terms of tense.

3. It did not escape Steinhil (1890 p. 310) that the Stoic view of tense contains an apparent contradiction, about which, however, he limits himself to noting that it is "*auffallend*".

We have seen that they defined the perfect as a "*present* (completed)", *ἐνεστώς* (*συντελικός*), thus attributing it with a temporal valence of a present. There is, however, indirect evidence that they considered it at the same time to be a preterite tense, according to a tradition which was already present in Aristotle³ and became the rule thanks to Alexandrian grammar and continued as such even for most of the 19th century.

This indirect source is a passage from Sextus Empiricus (M VIII 254 ff = SVF II 221) which quotes the Stoics' defence of their semiological principle whereby the sign and the object signified are contemporaneous (*τὸ σημεῖον παρὸν παρόντος εἶναι δεῖ σημειῖον*) against the objection that a sign could also be a sign of past or future things: this objection used expressions like *εἰ οὐλὴν ἔχει οὗτος, ἔλκος ἔσχηκεν οὗτος*: "if this man has a scar he has had a wound" or: *εἰ καρδίαν τέρωται οὗτος, ἀποθανεῖται οὗτος*: "if this man has been wounded in the heart he will die". The Stoics countered by objecting that the temporal position of the event to which the sign refers was not the same as that of the sign itself, which is, again, contemporary with the inference that is derived from it (*ἀλλ' ἐστὶ τὰ παρωχημένα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα, τὸ μέντοι σημειῖον καὶ τὸ σημειωτὸν καὶ τούτοις παρὸν παρόντος ἐστίν*). As regards the first sentence in particular, it is true that the wound has been, is in the past and is no longer (*τὸ μὲν ἔλκος γέγονεν ἤδη καὶ παρωχέσκειν*), but it is also true that the inference of its having been is placed in the present (*τὸ δὲ ἔλκος ἐσχέκεται τούτων ἀξίωμα καθεστὴκος ἐνέσκειν, περὶ γεγονότος τινὸς λεγόμενον*).

Naturally, on this occasion, the philosophical-semiological problem is of less interest to us than the unquestionable fact that the entire argumentation about the past is carried out through forms of the perfect and that the preterite character of the perfect, as Steinhil observes, is never questioned.

Generally speaking, I again think that we should be careful before claiming that there is a contradiction within a doctrinal *corpus* which is otherwise coherent as a whole: above all we should avoid seeing a specific

³ Po. 1457 a 17: *τὸ δὲ βαδίζει ἢ βεβήδωκεν προσσημαίνει* τὸ μὲν τὸν παρόντα χρόνον τὸ δὲ τὸν παρεληλυθότα: "The forms 'he is walking' and 'he has walked' *ad-signify* the present and the preterite time".

systematization as contradictory by looking at it from our point of view rather than that of the author or school that proposed it.

Once again, it is useless to hide behind the usual pseudo-explanations, such as suggesting that the Stoics had noticed the *ἐνεστώς* character of the perfect but continued to include it amongst the *διαφοραὶ* of the preterite in honour of tradition; this type of explanation explains nothing because it is put forward in order to conserve our spectacles rather than adopting those of the authors dealt with. It should also be noted that the Stoics did not inherit a grammatical tradition, rather they helped found one through the mediation of Alexandrian grammar. Nor would it have been a problem for the Stoics to have gone against Aristotelian tradition, seeing as they did so at other points in their doctrinal *corpus*. Thus, the only alternative that remains, is to accept the evidence of the fact that the Stoics, in defining the perfect *ἐνεστώς*, and (not *but*) including it amongst the preterite tenses, intended to do so consciously and theoretically.

In reality, the contradiction is merely apparent and disappears if we consider, on the one hand, the specific function of the Greek perfect within the Greek verbal system and, on the other hand, the inferences that its specificity could induce in the Stoics, who were elaborating a descriptive and explicative system of the Greek tenses according to precise theoretical premises, which, it should be underlined, were not inspired by specific autonomous linguistico-grammatical considerations: from both these points of view, the perfect occupied a position of great importance in the overall scheme of verbal forms, as Lohmann rightly points out (1953 p. 196).

3.1. Modern aspectology, above all after the work of Wackernagel (1904) and Chantraine (1927) on the Greek perfect, has perhaps been one-sided in that it treated this form as a present as such; this interpretation was the inevitable consequence of the enthusiasm that accompanied the discovery of the category of aspect, which was followed (as I intend to discuss elsewhere) by a sort of *noli me tangere* as regards tense; this attitude was also a (historically justifiable) reaction to the tense-centered nature of previous grammatical tradition.

I certainly do not intend to deny that the so-called stative perfect contains reference to present time, seeing as a form like *τέθνηκε* doubtlessly indicates 'he is + dead, *er ist tod*'; but it is equally true that this temporal reference is realized inasmuch as the condition of 'dead' is the stative-durative consequence of the previous completion of the eventive-momentary process of 'dying': *θάνειν*. In a similar way, *τετέμενται* undoubtedly means 'to be hot', but this does not make it a synonym of *θερμός εἶναι*, given that the latter represents a condition in itself, whilst the former represents the condition of being hot seen as the result of having previously heated up (e.g. Hp. *vict* 2 p. 64): *σπάσματα γὰρ ἐμποιοῖ διὰ τοῦδε· τεθερμασμένον τὸ σῶμα, τὸ μὲν δέσμα ἰσχυρῶς λεπτόναι* "ruptures are produced in this way".

after the body has heated up, the skin violently grows thin", vs. 2.45: *θερμοὶ φύσει μὲν ὀρχυρὸν καὶ θεμνὸν* "lupines are by nature strong and warm". In short, the specificity of the Greek perfect, which is by its very nature "zweischichtig" (Lohmann 1953 p. 194), is particularly appreciated by those, like Kurylowicz (1964 p. 95), who see in it, to use Hjelmslevian and Brøndalian terminology, the *complex* element of the category of aspect in Greek: it is perfective in terms of the imperfectiveness of the theme of the present, but imperfective in terms of the perfectiveness of the aorist: moreover, inasmuch as the Greek verbal forms in the indicative also involve temporal reference, the perfect is equally complex on a temporal plane, in that it contains reference to the present, relative to the pure preterite character of the aorist, whilst not excluding reference to the preterite, relative to the purely present time reference of the present indicative.

The matter is made still more complicated by the fact that the Greek perfect went through an evolution, which must already have been taking place in the Stoic period, which consisted of the development of a 'constative' value, indicating pure anteriority; a development which caused the perfect to invade the sphere of the aorist and therefore to disappear, or rather, to be substituted on the level of expression.

It is probable that, in this case too, the situation was less clear-cut than handbooks suggest and that the two values existed side by side, at least for while, and were determined by the lexical meaning of the verb. An inchoative verb is intrinsically prone to acquiring a resultative-stative rather than simply constative value in the perfect. The passage from Sextus Empiricus with which we started gives us a clear example of the validity of this hypothesis; *ἐογγενέαι* is felt to be pure indication of anteriority, as is clear from Sextus Empiricus' comment, which is clearly the viewpoint of the Stoics: if I say that *ἔλαος ἔογγεν οὗτος* "this man has had a wound", the fact of having had a wound is in the past and is no longer valid in the present, because the wound no longer exists (*οὐκέτι γὰρ ἔστιν ἔλαος*). The *τέτρωται* of *εἰ καρδίαν τέτρωται οὗτος, ἀποθανεῖται οὗτος* ("if this man has been wounded in the heart, he will die"), on the other hand, continues to refer to the present (Sextus Empiricus comments: *τὸ μὲν τραῦμα τῆς καρδίας εἶναι φασιν ἤδη* "the wound in the heart is still present").

Moreover, the situation in Italian is not so very different from that in Greek, given that our *passato prossimo* can have both values according to the meaning of the verb and/or the presence of temporal referents in the co-text: if I say "*ho avuto un forte raffreddore*" (I had a heavy cold), the sentence refers only to the past, whereas, if I say "*ho preso un forte raffreddore*" (I have taken a heavy cold), in the absence of time adverbials referring to the past (e.g. a year ago), the implication is that I have a cold at the moment in which I am speaking.

Let us look again at the two quotes from Sextus Empiricus. The apodosis of the second one contains a future (*εἰ καρδίαν τέτρωται οὗτος, ἀποθανεῖται*

οὗτος) which could not be contained in the first sentence because of the two different verbs used in the perfect: in a similar way, one can say in Italian "*ho preso un forte raffreddore, ma mi passerà*" (I have taken a heavy cold, but it will go), but one cannot say "*ho avuto un forte raffreddore, ma mi passerà*" (I had a heavy cold, but it will go). Thus, the "present-ness" of the perfect, especially the stative-resultative perfect (which is the most significant and characteristic functional variant of this verbal form), rather than referring to a point in time, or, in other words, being a representation of the *vūn καὶ αὐτό* and as such *ἀδιαιρέτον* mentioned by Aristotle (*Ph.* 233 b 33), is that of a present which is dilated, or dilatable in two directions: towards the past, inasmuch as the state that is represented is the result of a prior process which has arrived at its conclusion, ('*ho il raffreddore per averlo preso*'), but also towards the future, inasmuch as it is the indication of a state that is susceptible to further development, obviously, in those cases in which we are referring to transitory states and not permanent ones like being dead ('*Il raffreddore che ho per averlo preso passerà*'). As we shall see, this element is of fundamental importance for the comprehension of the Stoic temporal system.

3.2. Let us add another element. Elsewhere (1983), I tried to indicate how, between the two semantic components of the stative—resultative perfect, there is not only a temporal relationship—the expression of an anteriority that is prolonged into the present or (to consider the same thing from a different angle) a present condition seen as the result of a previous process. There is also an underlying causal relationship, in that the previous process is at the same time the cause of the present state.

Lohmann (1953 p. 192 ff) observes, with greater historico-philosophical insight, how, from the *philosophical* point of view of the Stoics, a form like, for example, Aeschylus' *κατέκτονας* (*Eum.* 587 f: *τὴν μητέρα' εἰπὲ πρῶτον εἰ κατέκτονας*) was characterized by a double value. On the one hand it is a judgement ("du bist Mutter-Mörder"); Lohmann is obviously playing on the ambiguity of the term *Urteil*, which can refer both to the judgement of the tradition of Aristotelian logic and to judgement in the juridical sense (which would be more appropriate to the Aeschylan context). On the other hand, it can be that which Stoic terminology called the *ἀξίωμα* (to be more exact a *συμπελεστικὸν ἀξίωμα*⁶) of an *αἰτιον*-(causal) relationship: "du hast deine Mutter getötet".⁷ In the first case we have the indication of a BEING

⁶ Lohmann (1953 p. 189 ff) conveniently emphasises that *συμπελεστικὸν* and *παραραιτικὸν* belonged to the Stoics' *logical* terminology before being used in their linguistic speculation; he quotes a passage from Sextus Empiricus (*M.* X 91-102), in which the use of these two terms is illustrated with numerous examples. The whole question of the history of these terms as well as that of *ἀρέτης* merits a separate paper.

⁷ Lohmann, basing himself on Wackernagel, whose example he uses, underlines that Orestes answers the Eumenides with the most neutral (or relational-constative) form of the aorist: *ἔκτεινα* ("I did kill her").

whereas in the second we have a judgement on a BECOMING (p. 193). Lohmann claims that the progressive development of the resultative perfect goes in the direction of the movement of the viewpoint from the first component to the second one. The perfect is characterized by an innate *Zweideutigkeit*,⁸ in that, when it is used, the present (but Lohmann specifies *τὰ παρόντα*, a distinction which, as we shall see, is essential) is seen in the light of a process in the past, thus providing a sort of linguistic equivalent of Anaxagoras' statement that *ὅφει ... τῶν ἀδῆλων τὰ φαινόμενα*: "perceptible things are the vision of things not evident to the senses" (Anax. 21 a); this *Zweideutigkeit*, Lohmann goes on, gave way to a univocal form which substituted a subjective organisation of time for the old one, which was more objective, in accordance with the change that Alexandrian culture was bringing to the view of time and causality, the latter being seen as "ein interpretiertes Zeit-Verhältnis" (p. 177).

3.2.1. Both Steinthal and Lohmann underline the fact that the interest of the Stoics for physical time, and therefore for tense, was closely related to their doctrine of causality and the relationship between cause and effect: this is also indicated by the fact that they placed time amongst the causes (SVF II 346 a, from Seneca: *ponant* (sc. the Stoics) *inter causas tempus*). Lohmann in particular (1953 p. 179) indicated how Greek thought in that period was moving towards a logic of consequence of the "if A therefore B" type, which is, at the same time, at the basis of the Stoic semiological system, as is indicated by the examples looked at previously (§ 3): the Stoics do not seem to have tended decisively towards a view of causality as a chronological relationship, which is implicit in the Latin terminology *antecedens-consequens*; they seem rather to have remained faithful to the principle of co-presence and therefore of contemporaneity of cause and effect (*αἰτίον ἐστιν οὐ παρόντος γίνεται τὸ ἀποτελεσμα*: S.E.M. 9.228), according to which the cause cannot precede the effect (S.E.P. 3.16: *τὸ αἴτιον πρὸς τι ὑπάρχον καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀποτελεσμα ὃν οὐ δύναται προηγεῖσθαι αὐτοῦ ὡς αἴτιον*).

3.2.2. I would like to point out, *en passant*, that the term for effect, *ἀποτελεσμα*, belongs to the same lexical class as the term used by the Stoics to indicate the theme of the perfect (*συντελικός*), and, moreover, that the two verbs which are at the base of both forms, *ἀποτελέω* and *συντελέω* were semantically so close that they were sometimes used indifferently. Both are characterized by a basic meaning of "bring to a conclusion, finish", etc., said, above all, but not exclusively, of material objects: e.g. X. HG 3.2.10: *ἀπετέλεσε τὸ τεῖχος ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ ἡρινοῦ χρόνου πρὸ ὁλώρας*, Plb.

⁸ I find his definition of the perfect in the earliest usage excellent: it "machte ... aus zwei Aussagen eine Aussage" (p. 194).

1.2.1.3: *ἄμα τῷ συντελεσθῆναι τὸς ναῦς*. The semantic similarity goes as far as permitting both verbs to be used to indicate a financial contribution (e.g. D. 20.28: *... ἐν ταῖς εἰσφοραῖς συντελεῖν εἰς τὸν πόλεμον*, X. Cyr. 3.2.19: *εἰ μέλλοιεν τὰ νομιζόμενα ... ἀποτελεῖν οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι*. Consequently *ἀποτελεσμα* has the basic value of "fulfillment, perfection", both in relation to objects and manual activities (e.g. Plb. 4.78.5: *τὸ μέντοι γε τῆς τέχνης ἀποτελεσμα συμφωνεῖται παρὰ πᾶσι*), and said of a period of time (Arist. Mu. 397 a 14: *εἰς μὲν τὸ ἀποτελεσμα καὶ ἐνιαυτοῦ*). In turn, *συντελέω*, can be used in the passive to indicate the philosophical concept of "being caused, being the effect, the product" (as in, for example, Epicurus, cfr. Ep. 2.88: *... ὃ οὐκ ἀντιμαρτυρεῖται τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν γινόμενοις πλεοναχῶς συντελεῖσθαι*).

3.2.3. Thus, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that we find, at the centre of the Stoic tense system, a form like the perfect, which, inasmuch as it represents the *συντέλεια* of a process and hence its *ἀποτελεσμα*, unites cause and effect in a co-presence, referring them both to the present.

Of course, our culture and our technique of dividing up linguistic units, as regards both expression and content, may feel the definition of a form as 'present' and its placing among the forms referring to the preterite to be incongruent, or, as I said at the beginning, contradictory: but this contradiction disappears if we take into account what was said above about both the functions of the Greek perfect and how it must have appeared to the Stoics on the basis of their ideas.

3.3. By and large, this view was inherited by Alexandrian grammar, which treats the perfect as one of the four *διαφοραί* of the *παρεληλυδῶς χρόνος*, even though it defines it both from the point of view of the *συντέλεια* (the scholiast to Dionysius Thrax says that *ἡ ... δύναμις αὐτοῦ τ' ὡς συντέλειας θεωρεῖται*: "its meaning ... is to be seen in the indication of completeness" 249.19) and from that of reference to the present: Apollonius Dyscolus says that the perfect indicates *τὸ ἄμα νοήματι ἡυσιμένον*: "the action brought to an end at the same time as it is conceived" (*de adv.* 124.19 ed. Schneider). The two points of view are unified by Apollonius Dyscolus, according to whom, this tense *οὐ παρωχημένου συντέλειαν σημαίνει ... τὴν γε μὴν ἐνεστώσαν* (*de synt.* III, c. 6, p. 288), in which it is not splitting hairs to observe the different use of the genitive (*παρωχημένου*) and the adjectival participle (*τὴν ... ἐνεστώσαν*): the perfect does not indicate the completion of the past, but *present completion*. In any case, the system of linguistic, logical and physical points of view which are at the basis of the Stoic treatment of the perfect is, to a certain extent, simplified but also trivialized (and the *apparent* contradiction that is present in the Stoics is thus eliminated): the denomination *ἐνεστώς συντελικός* is abandoned and is substituted with *παραινέμενος* ("adjacent"), and the perfect is explained as the tense that indicates that the fulfilment of the past action is near

the present (ὁ δὲ παρακειμένος νοεῖται ἀπὸ τοῦ παρακεισθαι καὶ ἐγγὺς εἶναι τοῦ ἐνεστώτος τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ: Schol. to Dionysius Thrax 249.16) inasmuch as its fulfillment happened not very long ago (δηλοῖ γὰρ τὸ μὴ πρὸ πολλοῦ τοῦ χρόνου περᾶσθαι τὸ πράγμα).

In this rationalisation we can see the distant ancestor of the various "twenty four hour theories" with which pre-nineteenth century French grammar tried to explain the use of the *passé composé* to distinguish it from the *passé simple*; in a similar way, the ancient scholiast to Dionysius Thrax (the same scholiast Stephanus who summarized the temporal theories of the Stoics) saw the perfect as an aorist to which ἄρτι ("just") could be added, whose function it is to define the "quantity of the past" (ποσὸν τοῦ παρελθόντος), where the presence of πάλαι ("long ago") would require the use of the ὑπερσυντέλικος, our pluperfect.

Once again, it would be all too easy to point out that this systematisation is artificial, provided that we do not use artificial as a synonym for 'ingenuous' and a- or pre-scientific: and it is enough to point out that behind the introduction of the adverbs ἄρτι and πάλαι by Greek grammarians and their scholiasts, was the Aristotelian theory of the partitions of time in reference to νῦν which is laid out in *Ph.* 222 a ff; cf., f.i., for ἄρτι and πάλαι, 222 b 13 ff: καὶ τὸ ἄρτι τὸ ἐγγὺς τοῦ παρόντος νῦν [τὸ] μῦρον τοῦ παρελθόντος. Πότε ἤλθε; ἄρτι, ἐὰν ᾗ ὁ χρόνος ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἐνεστώτος νῦν. Πάλαι δὲ τὸ πόρρω.

3.3.1. It is more important to point out how this type of explanation of the perfect remained the rule in Western grammar until the discovery of aspect, on the part of 19th century comparative linguistics, caused it to be relegated amongst those products of grammatical tradition which were considered to be ingenuous.

Moreover, even in the early 19th century, the perspective was a tense orientated one, despite the fact that the progress made by classical philology had undoubtedly produced a better empirical understanding of the Greek verb system. Let us take as an example the case of Buttman, whom both Delbrück (1897 p. 3) and Wackernagel (1920 p. 150) consider as a sort of precursor of the discovery of *Aktionsart* because he had defined the Greek perfect as "ein wahres Präsens" (1839² p. 88). A careful reading of Buttman's grammar shows that the author was still proceeding from a tense orientated perspective and was quite unaware, even on an intuitive level, of the possible existence of another category; furthermore, it should be noted that this character of "true present" is dealt with in the section on the *Anomalien der Bedeutung* of the tense forms and that the author attributes it to the fact that the perfect indicates "den aus dem vergangen (sic) Ereignis erfolgten Zustand", so that *κέκτημαι*, for example, means "ich habe erworben, und als Erfolg daraus ich besitze", the cases in which the perfect seems to have a value of pure present, according to Buttman,

depend on a sort of lack of attention for the anterior process in favour of an emphasis on the present state: even οἶδα is said to mean *in itself* "I know in that I have seen". Finally, the perfect is placed, coherently, among the preterites as it had been in the 1824 grammar, in which Buttman not only claims that the only Greek tense to be different from those of our languages is the aorist, but also considers the perfect one of the three "relative" preterites (those which, unlike the purely narrative aorist, presuppose a *Zeitbestimmung*, which, in the case of the perfect, is the present (p. 388)).

4. At this point, in order also to establish how the perfect fits into Stoic tense theory as a whole, we must examine the rest of their system. In this section, my analysis will concentrate largely on the terminology used by the Stoics, which, if analysed with greater care than has hitherto been the case, can give us fundamental clues to how the Stoics saw the individual forms.

4.1. The term whose interpretation is most certain is, obviously, *συντέλικός*, which can only indicate the *perfectum*, completed, character of the *ἐνέργεια* expressed by the verb; however, in this case too, it is important to emphasise the *temporal*, rather than (or, at least, more than) 'aspectual' nature of the definition, which, as we have already had occasion to note, always implies, in the case of the *ἐνεστώς συντέλικός*, the nearness to the present of the completion of the action; better still, the two notions: that of completion, and that of location in time, are totally interrelated, in that they were both evidently felt to be necessary to the definition of a category which, however, is one and indivisible: cf. the definitions of the perfect and pluperfect as being both indicators of a completed *past* (*ἐκτέρος τελείως παρώχρηται*). All the definitions of the Scholiasts agree on this.

4.1.1. Not enough attention has been paid to the fact that the very use of the term *ὑπερσυντέλικος* to name the pluperfect (*plusquamperfectum*) implies that the completion of the action and its location in time are viewed in a unitary fashion, without the need to divide the two features into two distinct grammatical categories as modern linguistics does.

The term is composed of the preverb *ὑπερ-*, which contains the idea of an excess, of having gone over a limit, and as such it is often used in philosophical terminology to indicate a transcendently characterized quality (e.g. Plot. 6.9.6: τῷ ἐνὶ οὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν εἶσιν ... ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὑπεράγαθον καὶ αὐτὸ οὐχ ἐαυτῷ, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις ἀγαθόν).

A morphologically similar word is *ὑπερέλειος*, a term used by mathematicians to indicate numbers in which the sum of the factors is greater than themselves, whereas the *τέλειος* number is one that is equal to the

sum of its divisors: Nicomachus defined the number ὑπερτελής as one that ὑπὲρ τὰ προσήκοντα αὐτῷ καὶ συμβάλλοντα μέρη ἔχων ἕτερα πλείονα (Ar. 1.1.4) and, by way of an image, gave the example of a living being with ten tongues, ten mouths etc.

Clearly, within an aspectual system, there cannot be an excess of perfectivity, of completeness of an action; an action may be viewed as either completed or non-completed, but cannot be 'hypercompleted': it is not a matter of chance that Aristotle equated, completeness (or perfection) to totality (Cael. 268 a 20: τὰ πάντα καὶ τὸ πᾶν καὶ τὸ τέλειον οὐ κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν διαφέρουσιν ἀλλήλων).

It seems to me necessarily to follow that the excess of completeness implied by the use of ὑπερ- can only be of a temporal nature, indicating a completion that took place in a period that is 'in excess' in respect of that indicated by the perfect, that is to say, in a moment that is 'exceedingly' far from the present—a concept which is made explicit in all the definitions of grammatical tradition.

5. Let us go on to analyse the two terms in Stoic tense terminology that are somehow the most characteristic but the least simple: παρατατικός and ἐνεστώς.

5.1. We have already seen how Hiersche contests the adequacy of the majority of the translations of παρατατικός proposed by those who interpret Stoic theory in terms of aspect. In fact, the only really inadequate translation would be 'imperfective, uncompleted', because this clearly applies to ἀτελής, a term which is also used by the scholiast who has handed down the Stoic system to us: both the present and the preterite παρατατικοί are ἀτελεῖς inasmuch as they are opposed to the present and the preterite συντελειοί.⁹

Translations like 'durative' or 'continuative' can legitimately render παρατατικός as *such*, provided that (1) we take into account that these values

⁹ Despite the fact that it is well-known, I think it worthwhile to remind the reader of the passage from the scholiast Stephanus which tells us of the Stoics' tense theory (for a recent translation of it in a Western language see Lallot in *Histoire, Epistémologie, Langage*, 7:1, 1985, p. 13 f.).

Τὸν ἐνεστώτα οἱ Στωικοὶ ἐνεστώτα παρατατικὸν ὀρίζονται, ὅτι παρατείνεται καὶ εἰς (παρεληλυθότα καὶ εἰς) μέλλοντα: ὁ γὰρ λέγων «ποιῶ» καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ ὁρσέ τι ἐμψάνει καὶ ὅτι ποιήσει: τὸν δὲ παρατατικὸν παρωχημένον παρατατικὸν ὁ γὰρ (λέγων) «ἐποίουν» ὅτι τὸ πλεόν ἐποίησεν ἐμψάνει, οὕτω δὲ πεπλήρωκεν, ἀλλὰ ποιήσει μὲν, ἐν ὀλίγῳ δὲ χρόνῳ· εἰ γὰρ τὸ παρωχημένον πλεόν, τὸ λείπον ὀλίγον· ὁ καὶ προσληφθέν ποιήσει τέλειον παρωχητότα, τὸν γέγραφα, ὅς καλεῖται παρατεμένος διὰ τὸ πλησίον ἔχειν τὴν συνέλειαν τῆς ἐνεργείας: ὁ τοῖον ἐνεστώς καὶ παρατατικός ὡς ἀτελεῖς ἄμφοι συγγενεῖς, διὰ καὶ αὐτοῖς συμφωνοῖς χρώνται, οἷον τῷ τῷ ἐκτελεῖν. Ὁ δὲ παρατεμένος καλεῖται ἐνεστώς συντελειός, τούτου δὲ παρωχημένος ὁ ὑπερσυντελειός: ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐκἀτέρως τελέως παρωχητά, συγγενεῖς καὶ τοῖς χαρακτηριστικοῖς στοιχείοις χρώμενοι τοῖς αὐτοῖς φαίνονται, οἷον τέτυκα ἐτετέφην· ὥστε δὲ ὁ ἐπὶ οὖν πλεόν ἔχει [τὸ παρωχημένον] πρὸς τὸν ποῖω οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἐπεποιήκειν πρὸς τὸν πεποιήκα [...]

only apply to παρατατικός in that they are derived from the primary meaning of the term and (2) we also take into account the entire context in which the adjective is used by the scholiast to illustrate the Stoics' system

Παρατατικός is obviously connected to the series of terms which forms the semantic constellation of παρατείνω, which, used intransitively and in the middle forms, means 'to extend' or 'to be extended' (according to the presence of temporal-aspectual factors), both literally¹⁰ and figuratively with the meaning of 'prolong'.¹¹ Παρατείνω indicates an extension or a prolongation that is not only spatial, but also temporal.

Against this background, translations based on concepts like 'lasting' or 'continuing' may be appropriate, especially when adverbials that refer to a prolonged and, so to say, static period of time, like the so-called accusative of time, are present or are deducible from the context.¹² From our point of view, the cases in which παρατείνω is used temporally to indicate duration and an extension of time beyond the statistical norm are particularly interesting. An example of this is Luc. *Macr.* 3: Νέστορα ... ἐπὶ τρεῖς παρατείναι γενεὰς "Ομήρος λέγει, ... καὶ Τειρεσίαν δὲ ... ἡ τραγωδία μέχρ' ἐξ γενεῶν παρατείναι λέγει. Compare also the expression ζῶν παρατείνω which was used to indicate a life which lasted in some way more than the average.¹³

5.1.1. As for the question that concerns us here, we must understand the value παρατατικός not only in terms of an analysis of the word itself, but also by taking into consideration the context in which it occurs in Stephanus' scholium. A propos, it seems very strange that the proponents of the aspectual nature of Stoic theory have not noticed that the scholiast, rather than limiting himself to quoting the Stoic definition of the present (ἐνεστώτα παρατατικόν), adds an explanation. The present is defined as παρατατικός "ὅτι παρατείνεται καὶ εἰς μέλλοντα", because it also extends towards the future. The nature of the context is clearly dynamic and not static: to use modern terminology, the παρατάσις of the present is processive-eventive and not stative. A translation with 'last' or 'continue', although inexact, is admissible as long as, rather than giving these two expressions the connotations of modern aspectual theory, we see the duration or

¹⁰ Cf. for example X. *An.* 1.7.15: παρέτετατο δὲ ἡ φάρος ἄνω διὰ τοῦ πείδιου ἐπὶ δώδεκα παρασάγγας μέχρι τοῦ Μηδίας τείχους.

¹¹ Cf. for example Arist. *Pol.* 1451 b 38 (a propos of the ἐπισοδιώδης μῦθος): ἐν ᾧ τὰ ἐπισοδία μετ' ἀλλήλα οὐτ' εἰκός οὐτ' ἀνάγκη εἶναι ... ἀγωνίσματα γὰρ ποιοῦντες καὶ παρὰ τὴν δύναμιν παρατείνοντες τὸν μῦθον πολλάκις διαστρέφειν ἀναγκάζονται τὸ ἐφεξῆς.

¹² Cf. for example App. *Syr.* 48: πόλεμος ... παρατείνας ἐς τὴν μάχιστα τεσσαράκοντα, ἐν ᾧς...

¹³ Similar values are obviously also present in the corresponding noun παράτασις, which could have had a, so to say, "static" use (cf. for example Dam. *Pr.* 298: τὸ αἰεταί φαιεν παράτασιν) and a more dynamic one (cf. for example Plot. 3.7.8: εἰ δὲ τὸ διάστημα τῆς κινήσεως λέγοι τις χρόνον, οὐ τὸ αὐτῆς τῆς κινήσεως, ἀλλὰ παρ' ὃ αὐτῇ ἡ κίνησις τὴν παράτασιν ἔχει οἷον συμπαράθευσα ἐκείνης).

continuation not as being *in* the present, but as *moving towards* the future.¹⁴

The imperfect is defined in an analogous way, in that it too indicates that the action, most of which has already been accomplished, will be completed in the future. As regards the present, it should be emphasised that the scholiast does not merely say that it *παράτελεται* εἰς μέλλοντα, but adds a *KAI* which is clearly just as significant, to the extent that Hilgard's edition proposes an integration to the text that is absent in Becker's (see note 9). However we establish the text to be (and its meaning seems to me to be sufficiently clear even without the addition), the scholiast obviously intended to say that the Stoics defined the present as *παράτατις* because "it extends (both towards the past and) towards the future as well".

Thus, the present is not seen as a point, but rather as a dynamic extension towards the other two temporal positions, preterite and future: it is a present that is somehow *tensive*, to use an expression derived from Guillaume, without, obviously wanting to see a precursor of this in the Stoics: it cannot, therefore, be a question of chance, that the most correct translation—*extensive*—has established itself in the French speaking world (Hoffmann 1983; Cuijolle-Zaslavsky 1985; Lallot 1985. See Hoffmann 1983 for the use of *πρότασις* in philosophical terminology).

5.2. As Steinthal already pointed out (1890 p. 311 ff), we can only understand how the present can stretch out both to the past and to the future by taking into account the fact that Stoic tense theory cannot be isolated from their general theory of time, and it will therefore be necessary for us to go over the relevant aspects of this theory. It was based on the view, which was paradigmatic in the ancient world from Aristotle onwards, that time was characterized by continual movement, in that "part of it was and is no more and part will be and is not yet" (τὸ μὲν ... αὐτοῦ γέγονε καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν: *Ar. Ph.* 217 b 34), a view which, obviously, put the very existence of time into doubt. It was therefore considered all the more difficult, if not impossible, to grasp the *vñ*, which appears continuously as a borderline between past and future (τὸ *vñ* ... συνέχει, γὰρ τὸν χρόνον τὸν παρελθόντα καὶ ἐσόμενον, καὶ πέρας χρόνου ἔστιν· ἔστι γὰρ τοῦ μὲν ἀρχῇ, τοῦ δὲ τελευτῇ: 222 a 10).

The so-called temporal paradox was inherited by the Stoics, according to whom the fact that time can be continually divided up makes it impossible to isolate, through *διαίρεσις*, a moment that is present in the strict sense

¹⁴ I agree, therefore, with Hietsche's translation (1977 p. 279), which uses *sich erstrecken*. It is interesting to observe, on the other hand, that whereas Lohmann uses *erstrecken* (the *χρόνου παρατατικὸν* indicate the "Zeitweise der Erstreckung") in the 1948 article (p. 70), in which he uses the term *Aktionsart* (p. 71) in reference to Stoic theory, in the 1953 article, which contains a thorough and very convincing criticism of the traditional interpretation (pp. 184 ff), he uses the term *fortdauern*.

of the word (κατ' ἀπαρτισμόν): one can only speak of a present in a wider sense (κατὰ πλάτος).¹⁵

This is obviously not the place to go into the ontological nature of these two presents:¹⁶ certainly, however, that κατὰ πλάτος is also, if not exclusively, the linguistic present, manifested in the predicative verb (κατηγόρημα), as is clear both from other passages about the Stoics (like the one quoted below: *SVF* II 509, 26) and from the constant distinction made by the scholiasts between the point of view of the "philosophers", according to which the present did not exist, and that of the grammarians: in the *Etyimologicum Magnum* (820 s.v. ὥρον) it is said that "the present is brief and has its being together with its being spoken" (ὁ ... ἐνεστώς ἀκαριαῖός ἐστι καὶ ἄμα τῷ λέγεσθαι ἔχει καὶ τὸ εἶναι).

5.2.1. Whatever the situation on a purely philosophical plane, we must concentrate here on an element which has had a series of fundamental implications in the development of Western grammar.

This present κατὰ πλάτος was attributed by the Stoics with a degree of existence¹⁷ superior to that of the preterite and the future, and therefore, it was, in some way, privileged (as we have already seen from the passage quoted at note 15). Note the following passage about Chrysippus' theories: μόνον δ' ὑπάρχειν φησι τὸν ἐνεστώτα, τὸν δὲ παρωχήμενον καὶ τὸν μέλλοντα ὑφιστάται μὲν, ὑπάρχειν δὲ οὐδαμῶς φησιν, ὥς καὶ κατηγορήματα ὑπάρχειν λέγεται μόντα τὰ συμβεβηκότα, οἷον τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑπάρχει μοι ὅτε περιπατῶ, ὅτε δὲ κατακέλμμαι ἢ κάθηναι οὐχ ὑπάρχει. ("He also says that only the present belongs; the past and the future subsist, but belong in no way, just as only predicates which are (actual) attributes are said to belong, for

¹⁵ ... οὐδεὶς ὅλως ἐνίσταται χρόνος· Ἐπεὶ γὰρ εἰς ἀπειρον ἡ τομὴ τῶν συνεχόντων ἐστὶ, κατὰ τὴν διαίρεσιν παύτην καὶ πᾶς χρόνος εἰς ἀπειρον ἔχει τὴν τομὴν· ὥστε μὴδένα κατ' ἀπαρτισμόν ἐνεστώτα χρόνον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πλάτος λέγεσθαι ("... no time is wholly present. For since continuous things are infinitely divisible, on the basis of this division every time too is infinitely divisible. Consequently no time is present exactly, but it is broadly said to be so". Transl. by Long-Sedley, 1987, p. 304).

¹⁶ According to Goldschmidt (1969' p. 37), the difference consists in the fact that the present κατ' ἀπαρτισμόν is an entity of thought, whereas that κατὰ πλάτος originates in the realm of sensation. Goldschmidt bases himself on a passage that refers to Posidonius which is especially important in this context: τὸ δὲ *vñ* καὶ τὰ ὅμοια ἐν πλάτει, χρόνον καὶ οὐχὶ κατ' ἀπαρτισμόν νοεῖσθαι. Λέγεσθαι δὲ τὸ *vñ* καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἐλαχίστον πρὸς αἰσθήσαν χρόνον περὶ τὸν διορισμόν τοῦ μέλλοντος καὶ παρελθούτος συνεστώμενον. (*Dox. Gr.* Diels 461, 19 ff).

¹⁷ I deliberately use a generic expression in order not to have to discuss the specifically philosophical problem of the difference between the *subsist* of the preterite and the future, indicated by *υφιστάται*, and the *exist* of the present (ὑπάρχειν). Goldschmidt (1969' p. 43) thinks that *υφιστάται* indicates a mode of being that only exists in thought and is typical of incorporeal entities; Hadot (1969), on the other hand, sees in ὑπάρχειν the indication of the actualized relationship of a predicate with a subject. According to him, it is not a coincidence that it is the same verb that Aristotle used in the famous passage in which he spoke of the present being the only form of *βήμα* because it *προσσημαίνει* τὸ *vñ* ὑπάρχειν (*Int.* 16 b 9). Goldschmidt made serious objections to this interpretation (1972).

instance, walking around belongs to me when I am walking around, but it does not belong when I am lying down or sitting": SVF II 509, 26; transl. by Long & Sedley 1987 p. 304).

In this passage, the mode of being of the present, as an actualising form, is significantly compared with that of the *κατηγόρημα*, which *ὑπάρχει* only in the presence of an actualised relationship with the subject whose predicate it is. From a purely philosophical standpoint, this view involves a temporalisation of the present *vis à vis* the eternity of the Platonic *is*, which only exists in contrast with the movement of *was* and *will be*, changing copies of the unchanging Being of which it can only be said that *it is* (*τί ἐστι* 37 e 5: *λέγομεν γὰρ δι' ὧς ἦν ἔστιν τε καὶ ἔσται, τῇ δὲ τὸ ἔστιν μόνον κατὰ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον προσήκει*...).¹⁸

It is also interesting to observe, because of its implications for tense theory, that this present (whose risk—as Goldschmidt (1969 p. 49) observes—was the evanescence in the flux of time, once the metaphysical support of the eternal world of forms had been removed) is able to widen out to the past and the future; consequently Apollodorus said that all time is present: *ἐνεστανάει δὲ τὸν πάντα χρόνον ὡς τὸν ἐναιετὸν ἐνεστηκέναι λέγομεν κατὰ μείζονα περιγραφὴν* ("but the whole of time is present, as we say that the year is present on a larger compass": SVF III p. 260, 8.21; transl. by Long & Sedley 1987, p. 305) and Cicero, opportunely quoted by Goldschmidt (p. 49), affirmed that, whilst animals are tied to the present, man, inasmuch as he is capable of retracing the chain of causality, can extend the present in the direction of the other two tenses.¹⁹

5.2.2. On a strictly linguistico-grammatical plane, this represents the beginning of a tradition that has, in practice, continued up to the present day, albeit under different guises according to the theoretical differences of the various schools: I am referring here to a way of dealing with verbal forms by starting from the granting of a position of privilege to the present, which thus becomes a sort of tense *par excellence*, which is, in some way, innate to the very nature of the verb.

¹⁸ Goldschmidt (1969 p. 44) points out that this temporalisation of the present was, obviously, a consequence of the altered ontological perspective of the Stoics, according to which the *σῶμα* substituted the Platonic idea, and consequently two *ἀρχαί* were established: τὸ ποιοῦν καὶ τὸ πάσχον (cf. for example SVF I 85).

From this perspective, another of the 'naïveties' of Alexandrian grammar can be seen in quite a different light. I am referring to the theory of the parts of speech, according to which the *ὄνομα* is supposed to refer to the indication of the *σῶμα* (!) and the verb to that of *ἐνέργεια* ή *πᾶθος*. This is another example of a grammatical systematisation which has a philosophical tradition of Stoic origin behind it.

¹⁹ *homo ... quod rationis est particeps, per quam consequentia cernit, causas rerum uidet earumque praegressus et quasi antecessiones non ignorat, similitudines comparat rebusque praesentibus adiungit atque adnectit futuras...* (de off. 1.4.11): we have seen to what extent the theory of time, and therefore that of tense, was linked to that of causality in Stoic thought.

The centrality of the present was also mirrored in the ordering of the three forms in the treatises of the ancient world. They were always ordered in the sequence *ἐνεστώς, παρεγγμένος, μέλλων*, a choice which was obviously not casual in an age when people were convinced that the order in which elements were mentioned in the writing of a treatise had to follow a corresponding ontological or logical *ordo*: it is not by chance that, in a profoundly changed conception of time like ours, we speak rather of past-present-future, reflecting our view of time as a straight line pointing in one direction.²⁰

Lohmann (1953 p. 180) is doubtless right when he affirms that the theory of *tempora* in the Stoics and the Alexandrian grammarians is equivalent to making the present *one* of the tenses, as opposed to the well-known Aristotelian equivalence between present and *ῥῆμα* (the other tenses are not said to be *ῥήματα*, but *πρώσεις ῥήματος*); this, however does not mean that the three tenses are considered equivalent if nothing else because of the permanent connection between the present and the truth value of a proposition (see Goldschmidt 1972), so that, for example, the introduction of a future or a preterite in a conditional proposition can lead to fallacies (see, for example, SVF II 206).

I intend to pause elsewhere on this privilege which has been accorded the present in a tradition that goes back, through the usual mediation of Alexandrian grammar, to Greek philosophy, though with differing motivations—metaphysical in Plato, logical in Aristotle and logical-ontological in the Stoics. Here, I will limit myself to pointing out how a distant echo of this tradition reached 19th century comparative grammar.

The idea of an Indo-European which had aspect but no tense was generally accepted by this school, and was justified by the *zeitlos* use of the present that is still attested in historical times in the various Indo-European languages. According to this view, even when Indo-European, or the individual languages, did acquire tense, its morphological marking was said to be limited to preterite and future through means like the augment or temporal specialization of forms that had originally had different functions; the present, on the other hand, was supposed to have remained unmarked. This view was made "official" in Brugmann and Delbrück's *Grundriss* (cf. for example Brugmann 1916² p. 70 ff), whose basic theories were provided by authors like Paul (1909⁴ p. 275) and, even earlier, Curtius (1846 p. 15).²¹

²⁰ For example, the scholiast Stephanus specifically faces the problem of whether Dionysius Thrax was right to put the present before the other tenses, and comes to the conclusion that he was, both because the present is the *δέμα* of the other forms, and because καὶ ὁ παρεγγμένος ἦν ποτε ἐνεστώς "the past too once was present" (p. 249, 9 ff).

²¹ According to Paul, the present is the tense that is the least strongly characterized and its various non *praesentisch* uses show us what the situation could have been in a phase previous to the establishment of tenses in grammar; in this phase temporal relations were absent from

5.2.3. I would like to conclude this section with a further terminological observation: as far as I know, not enough importance has, so far, been given to the fact that the preterite was named by the Greeks through the *perfect* and not the aorist, of *παρέργησαι*, as would theoretically have been possible. Note the passage from a scholiast to Dionysius Thrax (404, 38), who defines the preterite as follows: *τί ἐστι παρελθὺς; ὁ ᾗδη παρελθὼν* "What is past tense? that which already passed away", and then goes on to wonder about the reason for the four-fold division: *διὰ τί τέσσαρες διαφοραὶ τοῦ παρελθυθότος; διότι τὰ παρελθόντα ἢ παρήκτασιν ἔχουσιν ἢ ...* "Why are there four differences of past time? because past things either have extension or..."

The difference in the use of the two tempo-aspectual forms seems evident: the past, which is objectively such and is consequently named with an aorist (*τὰ παρελθόντα*), is only made conceptually and linguistically pertinent through a reference to the present, which means, therefore, that it must be terminologically singled out through the use of the perfect. Hence too, we can indirectly infer the centrality of the present in Greek philosophy, and consequently in Greek grammar.

5.3. Even the term *ἐνεστώς*, which designates the present, is richer in interpretative implications than we generally think. The traditional translation, '*present*', does correspond to the specific meaning of the word, but, at the same time, it has the disadvantage of having been loaded up, over the course of the centuries, with a series of connotations that it did not necessarily have at the beginning, because they have accumulated in layers in accordance with the progressive changes that have come about in the conception of time.

It is important to remember that the Greek (or Latin) cultural terminology that we use is, for us, something that is given, something that is taken for granted and transmitted passively by tradition; the Greeks, on the other hand, were actively *founding* a terminology, whose correct interpretation is one of the tasks of a historian of the sciences.

An important fact noted by Lohmann (1953), is that the use of *ἐνεστώς* rather than *παρὼν* (*χρόνος*), to name the present, was an innovation on the part of the Stoics. The earlier form represented the present as *presence*, *Anwesenheit*, and the author claims that the terminological change is the

the verb as such and could be expressed through adverbs and particles or could even only be worked out from the context.

As to Curtius, he saw the basic function of the verb in terms of *Anlage*: in the absence of specific markers, the union of a verbal theme and a pronominal form automatically refers to the present (1846 p. 124 ff). It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that this theory presupposes the glottogenic theory of the pronominal origin of the Indo-European verb endings, according to which every form of the verb is supposed to constitute a sort of predicative microcosm.

This whole view seems to be a sort of revisitation of the Aristotelian *de interpretatione* seen in the light of the new discoveries of comparative grammar.

consequence of the change in the conception of time that we referred to above: more specifically, the *objective* view of time of classical Greek thought is said to have been replaced by the *subjective* view of Hellenistic thought, which was to be expressed most fully in Latin culture (p. 181).²²

5.3.1. If we now turn to an *internal* analysis of the term that was chosen to designate the present from this new cultural perspective, we must start from the only apparently obvious fact that *ἐνεστώς* is the perfect participle of *ἐνίστημι*, and that the meaning of this verb that is most relevant from our point of view is obviously '*to begin*', both in the causative sense (in the active-transitive forms)²³ and in the middle sense, in the middle and active-intransitive forms (cf. for example Thphr. *HP* 9.8.2: *ὁ μὲν ... ὁπισθὸς γίνετα τῶν ὀπιζομένων ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τοῦ ὕθρους τῶν μὲν ἐνισταμένου τῶν δὲ προελθυθότος*, or *LXX 3 Ki* 12.24: *ἐνισταμένου τοῦ ἐνιωτοῦ*). It is easy, above all in the aorist, to pass from this meaning, which is typical especially in the imperfective forms of the theme of the present, to values like '*to be at hand*' (Liddell-Scott), as in *D.* 18.89: *ὁ γὰρ τότε ἐνστάς πόλεμος...*, whilst the theme of the perfect will obviously indicate '*having begun/being*', as in *Aeschin.* 2.58: *ἔτι τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ πρὸς Φιλίππον ὅμιν ἐνεστηκότος* (in which it should be noted that the deictic reference is to the past) or in *D.* 18.139: *οὐκέτι ἐν ἀμφισβητησίμῳ τὰ πράγματα ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐνεστήκει πόλεμος* ("the situation was no longer in doubt, but it had begun/there was war"); see also the following passage from Aristotle, in which *ἐνεστημέναι*, '*to be in progress because it has started*', is opposed to *γίνεσθαι μέλλειν*, '*to be about to be, to start*': (*Rh. Al.* 1425 a 35) *γίνεσθαι μὲν οὖν μέλλοντα πόλεμον ἐκ τούτων ἀποτρέπτέον ἥδη δ' ἐνεστώτα παύειν ἐπιχειροῦντας...* Alongside this the developed meaning, already noted by Lohmann (1953 p. 181), of '*to impend*', generally in a menacing sense, '*imminere*', attested, for example, in *Hdt.* 1.83: *τοιούτων δὲ τοῖσι Σπαρτιάτησι ἐνεστέωντων προημάτων*.

Thus, the *χρόνος ἐνεστώς* (or, more precisely, the *χρόνος νῦν ἐνεστώς*, see, for example *Lycurg.* 7: *ὁ δὲ νῦν ἐνεστώς ἀγών*), is time "*existent inasmuch as it has begun*", a terminological definition which fits all the

²² In the passage from Cicero discussed in note 19, the present as presence (a concept which is underlined by the parallel use of *adese* and *praesent*) is said to be typical of animals in that (animal) *sensu mouetur, ad id solum, quod adest quodque praesens est, se accomodat, paulum admodum sentiens praeteritum aut futurum*.

The two terms used to designate the present also co-exist in the Stoics, even though they introduced, or, at least, made paradigmatic, the use of the term *ἐνεστώς*; it would be useful to research into the question of if and how they were differentiated. Here, I will limit myself to observing that *παρὼν* continued to be used, certainly not by chance, when a contemporaneous and co-present relationship between the sign and the thing designated, or between cause and effect was being referred to (see the passages quoted above).

²³ Cf. for example *D.* 10.21: *οὐδὲν πόποι... τῶν πραγμάτων ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐνεστήσασθ' οὐδὲ κατεσθενέσασθ' ὁρθῶς*.

observations that we made about the perfect (the scholiast to Dionysius Thrax says that ἐνεστώς is so called ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνεστηγμένου καὶ παρῆναι "from its having begun and being present (anwesend)": 404, 1). This was obviously clear to the Romans, who translated it with *in-stans*, a translation which renders not only the two morphological elements that make up ἐν-εστώς, but also the meaning of the compound, seeing as *instare* has the dynamic meaning of 'impend' (cf. for example Cic. *Cat.* 2.5.: *quibus ego confido impendere fatum aliquod et poenam iam diu ... debitam aut instare iam plane aut certe appropinquare*); with a very similar image, the Romans defined the imperfect (the Stoics' χρόνος παρωχημένος παραστατικός) also with the term *incohatum*, or time that has begun, in that, as Charisius said, *quod incohatum est non est perfectum*.

5.3.2. This internal analysis of the term ἐνεστώς enables us to make a series of observations.

1. The present is seen in a dynamic, rather than static, fashion, as that portion of time that exists, 'impends' now (νῦν) inasmuch as it started before: remember the Aristotelian opposition (above) between already being, ἐνεστηγμέναι, and not yet being, γίνεσθαι μέλλειν. As it is named by means of a perfect, the present is seen as a portion of time that retrospectively connects the νῦν to an anteriority in which the beginning of this portion is located; at the same time, however, inasmuch as *quod incohatum est non est perfectum*, this portion is prospectively stretched out towards the future: remember that, according to the scholiast Stephanus, he who says "τοῦτ' ὧ, "I am doing", makes it clear that he has already done something and that he is going to do the rest: καὶ ὅτι ἐποίησέ τι ἔμφαίνει καὶ ὅτι ποιήσει.

2. The present is not seen, or at least is not necessarily seen, in terms of a point, as is implied today by the term *instant*, a typical example of the process of conceptual concretion and slippage of which I spoke above. This is also clear from the fact that ἐνεστώς is often used to define as present generic portions of time like *καιρός*, ample ones like *μερίς* or abstract concepts that could be temporalised, like *καρία* or *ἀνάγκη* (cf. Liddell-Scott s.v. ἐνίστημι B III): remember also the passage from Apollodorus mentioned above, in which the ἐνεστώναι refers to time as a whole (ἐνεστώναι ... τὸν πάντα χρόνον).

Moreover, in order to refer to 'points' on the time line, the Greeks preferred, as in the case of τὸ νῦν and the like, to substantivize time adverbs.

5.3.3. Let us link what we have found out from our internal analysis of the term ἐνεστώς with the ancient world's paradigmatic doctrine of the elusiveness of the present (elusive because, as the Stoics agreed, τοῦ ἐνεστηγότος χρόνου τὸ μὲν μέλλον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ παρεληλυθός: "a portion of the present time is future, another is past": SVF II, 517): it should also

be remembered that, for the Stoics, we can only speak of a present κατὰ τῆς φύσεως, and that this present is, at least typically, the linguistic one.

At this point, it will seem consistent rather than strange, that the Stoics were able to allow the presence of two χρόνοι ἐνεστώτες even without resorting to an aspectual theory.

One of the two presents, the χρόνος ἐνεστώς συντελικός, is pertinent to that portion of the ἐνεστώς νῦν that is such inasmuch as it is the prolongation in the present of a process that began in the past and has been brought to completion: the perfect. The other, the χρόνος ἐνεστώς παραστατικός, is used to represent a process which, as it is not yet finished, prolongs itself from the present (or the past, but in this type of representation the beginning of the process is less, as we would say today, pertinent) into the future: the so-called morphological present. Similarly, we can have two preterites, one to refer to a portion of time that is not only preterite and completed, but is also 'exceedingly' so, or in other words arrived at completion in a portion of the past that is sufficiently far from the present not to extend into it: the pluperfect or χρόνος παρωχημένος συντελικός; whereas the other preterite indicates a portion of past time that is not yet completed and, as such, extends into the future through the present: the imperfect or χρόνος παρωχημένος παραστατικός.²⁴

6. From our analysis so far, it seems to be clear that:

(a) a careful, complete and at the same time natural reading of the scholiast's text and (b) a close examination of the terminology lead us to the conclusion that the Stoics did *not* single out a category other than tense, a recognition for which Greek linguistics totally lacked any premise, both cultural in the broad sense and paradigmatic in the disciplinary sense. Rather, they intended to expound a theory of verb forms wholly within that which we would now define the category of tense, a theory which, above all, was coherent with their theory of time.

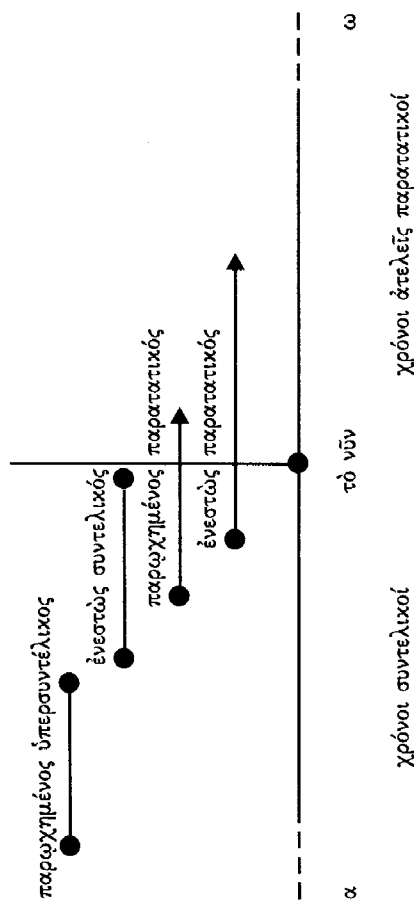
²⁴ In Mrs Cuijolle-Zaslavsky's view, the mere mention of a χρόνος ἐνεστώς in this system contradicts the Stoic theory of the physical non-existence of a present time and therefore casts a doubt on Stephanus' accuracy when summarizing the Stoic theory of tenses: "un grammairien stoïcien aurait avant tout cherché à retirer de son poëse au temps verbal du présent" (1985 p. 25).

Her analysis is too important to be dealt with synthetically and I intend to discuss the whole point elsewhere. Here I will limit myself to observing that the very fact of introducing *two* present tenses, a retrospective and a prospective one (as I call them in the text) is equivalent to denying the existence of a present and is therefore consistent with the Stoic view of time: the real partition of time/tense is that which opposes (through an ἀντιτάξις) past and future, the psychological and linguistic present(s) being our apprehension of these two actual times, which allowed the Stoics to state that "every time is present". But, as Mr Lloyd (1978 p. 294) points out, "where everything is present, nothing is *present*, as the night in which all cats are grey".

My impression is that Stephanus' scholium is consistent both with the Stoic view of time and Alexandrian treatment of tenses, obviously derived from the Stoics. It is my burden to prove this view in a programme of research, of which the present essay is a first provisional sketch.

Therefore, the only historically valid interpretation continues to be Steinthal's (1890 p. 311), according to which the division in tenses *ἀτελείς* and *συντελείοι*, far from referring to two series of *genera actionum* or *gestorum*, remains wholly "in der Linie der Zeit" and the two groups of tenses "entstehen durch eine Teilung dieser Linie".

The Stoic tense system, therefore, could be graphically represented in the following manner—though I doubt whether they would have recognized themselves in this linear directional view of time.²⁵



7. The picture that has been outlined here is somewhat complicated by a statement by Lohmann which opens out an important theoretical and interpretative perspective, even if it was made in a marginal way in a 1949 article dedicated to the origin of Aristotelian syllogistics.

We have seen how Lohmann, together with Hiersche, is the only contemporary linguist to have denied the aspectual nature of the Stoic system with arguments that are both convincing and demonstrable in terms of history of philosophical and linguistic thought. Interestingly, he had previously (1948 p. 71) used the term *Aktionsart* to refer to the Stoic system. In his 1949 article (which was published after this one and before the one discussed above), he claims (p. 228) that, in the Stoics' *Tempussystem*, which

²⁵ My graphic representation is very similar to that recently proposed by Mr. Lallot (1985 p. 000), the only relevant difference being that in mine the line pertaining to the *ἐνεστώδης συντελικός* 'touches' the *νῦν* rather than being *adjacent* (*παρὰχέμενος*) to it.

It should be added that the *Teilung* in the time line referred to by Steinthal is supposed to render the *ex divisione* of a passage from Varro (9.96-97), which is, incidentally, philologically rather problematic. I do not think that this interpretation is correct, because the term *divisio* had a precise technical significance, corresponding to the *διαίρεσις* of Greek logic. It is also clear that my graphical representation is not, in any way, intended as yet another attempt at reconstructing the *διαίρεσις* carried out by the Stoics on the tenses.

he sees as being based on the opposition between *Andauern* (*χρόνοι παρατατικοί*) and *Vollendetsein* (*χρόνοι συντελικοί*), the terms used refer not so much to the indication of *Zeitstufe*, but more to that of *Zeitart*.

Apparently, the use of the term *Zeitart*, which clearly derives from Curtius, seems to be nothing more than a variant of *Aktionsart*, so that Lohmann's position here would seem to be closer to that of 1948 than that of 1953. In fact, the terminological choice is deliberate and constitutes a refusal, which in my opinion is theoretically justifiable, to accept that which is implicit in the choice of the term *Aktionsart* made by Brugmann, who understood the recently discovered category to be resolutely different from the category of tense, almost as if both categories, in the last analysis, did not have something to do with the linguistic representation of time, albeit from different points of view: I intend to deal with this elsewhere.

In Lohmann's opinion, the Stoic system of *χρόνοι* does not refer to that series of "chronologische(n) Relation(en) in der linearen Zeit-Erstreckung" which is typical of the organisation of the Latin verb, and therefore, as a result, of our conception of time; it refers, he claims, not to "ein solches relatives Zeitverhältnis in bezug auf den Redenden oder auf andere Vorgänge", but to the "Weise, wie der Vorgang oder Zustand selbst sich im *Verhältnis zur Zeit* charakterisiert" (my italics)—or, in other words, whether the reference is to a durative process or a completed one etc.

7.1. I do not believe that I can agree with Lohmann's statement that the Stoic tense system is not at all *Zeitstufe* orientated, as I think I have already demonstrated, and that it does not indicate a *Zeitverhältnis* with the time of the speaker.

We have seen that in this system all the tenses were organized and defined from the point of view of their relationship with the present (obviously the speaker's present), either as such or, more properly, as a portion of time which only constitutes a transition towards the future: Mrs. Caujolle-Zaslavsky's recent analysis (1985) has rightly underlined the fact that in Stephanus' scheme the pertinent anchor time is that of the end of the process, rather than the present. It is not by chance that Steinthal (1890 p. 315) considered this classificatory centrality of the present as the main limit of the Stoic system, even if I think that this criticism is not justifiable from a historiographic point of view.

Whereas, on the one hand, it is true that their tense system does not allow for a temporal relation between one process and others, that is to say, it does not allow for the modern notion of *relative tenses*: on the other hand, it is also true that this depends on the very structure of the Greek verb, which does not permit the morphological identification of this relationship, which is central to the organisation of the Latin verb (Lohmann 1953).

As for the claim that the Stoic system contains the idea of *ZEITART*,

I think we can accept Lohmann's claim in the hope that this does not seem to be in contradiction with that which has been said so far. Two facts should be taken into consideration.

On the one hand, the Stoic system as a whole is based on the definition of the tenses both in terms of the location of processes *in* time (but without, as we have already mentioned, the notion of relative tense) and in terms of the structuring *of* time, seen as completed (*συντελειός*) or non-completed (*ἀτελής*), and, as such, tensive (*παραρατιχός*); note also how, for the Stoics, this completed or non-completed/tensive feature, rather than pertaining to a process, as it would in an aspectual theory, pertains to time: they do not speak of a possible ἐνέργεια συντελιχή or παραρατιχή, but of a χρόνος συντελιχός — παραρατιχός. This element is of central importance, seeing as Alexandrian grammar showed itself to be unsure on this point, at least as regards the definition of the value of the tenses in moods other than the indicative (Steinthal 1891 p. 302).

On the other hand, Greek linguistic culture, at least from the Alexandrian period onwards, was far from unaware of those *phenomena* that we now attribute to the category of aspect (cf. Steinthal 1891 p. 302 ff and *passim*), as is pointed out by Hiersche (1977 p. 286), who makes use of this fact as a further confirmation of the fact that the Stoics did *not* recognize the category of aspect. As we have already mentioned, the two phenomena—the chronological and, so to say, structural characterisation of the process—were both always present in the definitions of the tense forms; a particularly clear example is that of a scholiast to Dionysius Thrax when he defines the present as the tense “which has an ‘impending’ and non-completed meaning”: ἐνισταμένην καὶ ἀπλήρωτον ἔχον τὴν σημασίαν (404, 24).²⁶

The conclusion is that the Stoics had a view of tense that included both *Zeitstufe* and *Zeitart* (but not *Aktionsart* or aspect), *without their feeling the need to postulate a grammatical category singled out as distinct from tense* to indicate the latter type of phenomenon: of this they had a semantic awareness, but not a *morphological-formal* or *categorical* one; this obviously did not depend on an explicative or descriptive inadequacy (as it is fashionable to say today) on the part of their theoretical corpus, but on the fact that their doctrinal system and the *climate of opinion* (Koerner 1976 p. 690) of contemporary Greek culture were such as to allow these phenomena to be dealt with from a *purely temporal perspective*. In other

²⁶ Apparently, the imperfect is only defined on the basis of the structure of the process, as the tense “which has an extensive and non-completed meaning ... that is, the tense which indicates a non-completed extension of the action”: παραρατεταμένην καὶ ἀπλήρωτον ἔχων τὴν σημασίαν ..., τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ὁ δηλοῦν ἀπλήρωτον ἐνεργείας παράτασιν (ib. 28). But the ‘chronological’ definition is already implicit in the fact that the imperfect constitutes one of the four διαποταί of the preterite.

words, they did not feel the need to distinguish that which modern linguistics feels it essential to distinguish.

It should also be borne in mind that their scheme referred principally to the verbal forms of the indicative, for reasons that it could be interesting to study elsewhere; it is well-known that in an analysis of the indicative mood, a non aspectual perspective is less liable to run into those anomalies which, in the long run, make a purely temporal perspective untenable and hence may lead to the discovery of the category of aspect.

7.1.1. If the situation is as outlined above, it is probable that the teachings of the Stoics and the tradition that followed them is not only interesting from a historiographical point of view, but can also offer a series of still valid suggestions that a theory of the verb should not ignore. In particular, they can contribute towards inducing greater caution as regards the total separation of tense and aspect or *Aktionsart*, in that the latter are also concerned with the temporal representation of processes. Curtius was, without doubt, thinking of this when he used the word *Zeitart* to express a notion that he kept distinct from, but parallel to *Zeitstufe*, and his choice was not purely terminological, as handbooks imply when they outline the history of aspectual research.

It is undeniable that the separation between linguistics and philosophy, whose beginning, in my opinion, goes back to the Schleierhian-neogrammatical paradigm, was necessary to allow linguistics to reach the stage of a “mature science”, but it is just as true that it produced, at times, a degree of reductive banalisation as regards previous grammatical theories: an example of this can be found in the movement, which happened with Brugmann, from a theory of *Zeitart* to one of *Aktionsart*.

To claim a present relevance for Stoic theory is, after all, coherent with the attitude of these scholars, who believed in everlasting recurrence and who, like Marcus Aurelius, maintained that the script was the same even if the actors changed.

7.2. In the same way as we have seen for the perfect and the present, in this case too the point of view of the Stoics and ancient Greek grammar in general began an interpretative tradition that went on almost up to the beginning of comparative grammar: the only temporal category to be recognized in the verb was tense and this was made to include aspectual phenomena too, if they were perceived at all, which was not always the case.²⁷

²⁷ Krüger's view is particularly interesting here. In his Greek school grammar, after having listed the Greek *Tempora*, together with their Greek names, he merely defines them by quoting the definitions of the Greek grammarians, and in particular those of the scholiast Stephanus (1862 p. 91). Krüger also accepts another traditional commonplace, the elusiveness of the present κατ' ἀποφασισμόν, in that “die Zeit verharrt nicht; der Laut, kaum verhallt, gehört schon der

To appreciate this, it is enough to remember that even in the fields of Slav and Semitic languages, in which aspect would seem spontaneously to force itself on the analyst with an obviousness that is lacking in other languages, grammarians did not recognize the individuality of this category for a long time, and dealt with phenomena related to it as if they belonged to the category of tense.

For example, in the field of Russian grammar, Lomosofov identified as many as ten *tenses*, of which six were said to belong to the preterite. In this, he was following the theory of the *differentiae* of the preterite tenses of Alexandrian-Latin origin (cf. Freidhof 1983; Panzer 1983), and it was not until the first half of the 19th century that grammarians acquired some awareness of aspect (cf. Mazon 1913; 1931).

As for the Semitic languages, Gesenius' Hebrew grammar still speaks of *tempora*, using the traditional terms of preterite and future for the perfect and imperfect forms, and observing that the scarcity of forms for the expression of temporal relationships is the cause of a certain *Vieldeutigkeit* of those that do exist (1834¹ p. 219): König, even in 1897, hesitated to adopt integrally the by then explicitly aspectual interpretations of the Semitic verb that were being proposed. In practice, the aspectual organisation of the verb system of these languages only became the paradigmatic theory with Cohen's 1924 work.

I would like to linger on these phenomena in detail elsewhere, but I felt it important to point out, through this brief review, just how antihistorical it is to attribute the discovery of verbal aspect to the Stoics.

The question of the grammars of the Slav and Semitic languages seems to me to be one of the clearest examples of the fact that, at least in linguistics, discoveries and conceptual systematisations do not come about because of the intrinsically evident nature of the object to be discovered, but only because, and when, a school develops a theoretical *corpus* which enables the analyst to perceive the phenomenon in question. Obviously, I do not mean to claim by this, that a tense theory which does not contain the notion of aspect can enjoy complete explicative and descriptive adequacy (as we would say today); I am merely saying that it was, for a long time, thought possible to do without granting categorical autonomy to things aspectual.

Verbal aspect is a discovery that was made wholly within the paradigm of historical-comparative linguistics, and from here it was handed down to the contemporary schools of linguistics, because only within that school was the theoretical background for its discovery fully developed. There

Vergangenheit an", and the present in particular is "als ein zeitloser Punkt zu denken, der auf der unendlichen Linie der Zeit rastlos aus der Vergangenheit in die Zukunft fortleitet" (p. 170). This commonplace also had to be abandoned with great difficulty only after the "Copernican revolution", produced by comparative grammar, above all in its neogrammarian phase, in the attitude of linguists towards the data of languages as well as towards theories and methods.

remains, then, nothing more than to wish it a survival of two thousand years like the *temporal* theory of the Stoics.

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