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[Nijk, A. Arjan. Tense-switching in Classical Greek: a cognitive approach]

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The book *Tense-Switching in Classical Greek. A Cognitive Approach* by Arjan A. Nijk, a lecturer at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society, fully delivers on the promise of its title. Adopting a cognitive approach, the Dutch linguist investigates variation between the past and present tenses to refer to past events (*present for preterite*) in an extensive corpus of Classical Greek texts (5th–4th centuries BC) and beyond. The author argues that the use of the *present for preterite* depends on the activation of implicit conceptual scenarios in which the gap between the past and the present is bridged. The author unprecedentedly describes generally applicable conceptual scenarios and combines linguistic theorising with philological and statistical methods to provide a complete overview of the phenomenon of tense-switching in Classical Greek. As a result, the book provides an indispensable theoretical and practical tool for classicists, linguists, and narratologists interested in tense-switching in various genres from different periods, ranging from ancient times to the Middle Ages to modernity.

The book is divided into four chapters. It includes a rich and up-to-date bibliography, a number of tables, an appendix, and two indexes (an *index locorum* and a general index of persons and terms). Readers will benefit from the translation of all quoted passages from works by ancient and other authors. Equally, students who are just getting acquainted with the discussed topic will appreciate the conclusion sections intended as "takeaways" provided at the end of each chapter, where the most important information and arguments that should be kept in mind are summarised.

The author opens his account with a comprehensive introduction (pp. 1–30), that introduces the theoretical background, which elucidates a variety of key cognitive terms and three usages of the *present for preterite* in terms of narrative modes (*diegetic*, *mimetic*) as elaborated by ancient critic pseudo-Longinus and narrative movements as established by modern narratologist Gérard Genette (*summary*, *scene*). It also presents the two main aspects in which the author's investigation distinguishes itself in terms of its scope. First, his account integrates three levels of linguistic analysis by focusing on 1. the question of the *semantics* of the *present for preterite* and the *conceptual scenario* that allows for the construal of past events as being part of the present, 2. the question of the *pragmatic functions* of the *present for preterite* and how these functions are derived from the semantics of the relevant present forms, and 3. the question of how the pragmatic functions translate into *quantifiable usage patterns*. Second, the author's account both acknowledges *distinct usages* of the *present for preterite* and unifies these usages under a general model. This methodology is inspirational and useful for a linguistic-cognitive analysis of tense-switching in other languages, and I think it should not go unnoticed by any scholar who is interested in the phenomenon.

In the first chapter, entitled "General Conceptual Model" (pp. 31–65), the author outlines his arguments as well as the theoretical framework for understanding tense-switching. In cognitive terms, his main argument is that there are two ways in which the gap between the *ground* and a *distal event space* can be bridged conceptually (*displacement* vs. *representation scenario*). The

first involves a displacement of the ground to the distal space. The second involves bridging the distal entities into the ground in the form of a representation. The fundamental difference between the two is that the *representation scenario* allows for the designated events to be edited (by compression and abstraction) in a way that the *displacement scenario* does not. The difference is illustrated by the following example (p. 38):

(1) *Displacement scenario*: 'We are standing on the plain of Gaugamela. It is the first of October, 331 BC. Over there on the left are the forces of Alexander. On the right, you can see King Darius.'

(2) *Representation scenario*: Imagine that the speaker is standing in front of a model of the plain of Gaugamela. The forces of Alexander and Darius are represented by miniature soldiers. The speaker says, 'This is the plain of Gaugamela. Here are the forces of Alexander. On the right is King Darius.'

A comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon is greatly aided by the author's illustration of the theory in a variety of genres and languages with material from nineteenth-century English and French novels, camera footage shown on Dutch news, an episode of an American comedy show, and ancient Greek narratives.

In the second chapter, entitled "Scenic Narrative and the Mimetic Present" (pp. 66–146), the author investigates the mimetic potential of the *present for preterite* when used in scenic narrative, thus exploring the idea of a simulation as representation. His main argument is that the use of the *present for preterite* in scenic narrative depends on the pretence that the designated past events are presently being re-enacted in a simulation. The pretence of re-enactment consists in the degree of *narrative mimesis*, which involves mental simulation, physical depiction, and *iconic use of grammar*. After elucidating the use of the *present for preterite* as positively correlated with

narrative mimesis in terms of mental stimulation, the author focuses on physical stimulation or 'depiction'. Subsequently, he describes four aspects of depiction: iconic gesture, stress and intonation, sound symbolism, and direct speech representation. In addition to the concept of *narrative mimesis* in terms of the opposition of *diegesis* and *mimesis*, the chapter also presents the concept of *communicative dynamism*, which concerns the newsworthiness or relevance of the designated events in the context of the communicative situation. To illustrate how these explanatory principles can be employed to account for tense-switching, two case studies are offered at the end of the chapter. The author meticulously compares two passages from the *Electra* plays of Sophocles (lines 893–908) and Euripides (lines 509–519).

The third chapter, entitled "Summary Narrative and the Diegetic Present" (pp. 147–232), focuses on the *diegetic* function of the *present for preterite*. The author's main argument is that the pragmatic function of the *present for preterite* in summary narrative is to signal to the addressees that they are to update their mental model in the light of salient changes in its structure. Subsequently, the author identifies the following attention-management strategies: announcements of the next event, typically with cataphoric reference; questions and exhortations to the audience; clause complexity; and the use of the particle δή ('then', 'so') to mark discourse progression. The author identifies two primary functions of the *present for preterite* in summary narrative. The first function is marking changes in the narrative dynamic. Remarkably, unlike previous scholarship (Fleischman 1990; Fludernik 1991; Allan 2007, 2009, 2011), the author does not connect the explanatory value of this concept with the episodic structure of the narrative (*narrative turns* in complication-part), but rather with the macro-structure of the story. For the second function, the *present for preterite* in summary narrative

marks changes in the status of referents. Similarly to the previous chapter, the end of this chapter offers two case studies, where several passages from the Demosthenes' speeches *Against Boeotus* 1 and 2, and Aeschines' *On the False Embassy* and *Against Ctesiphon* are analysed.

In the fourth and final chapter, entitled "Zero-Degree Narrativity and the Registering Present" (pp. 233–265), the author analyses the use of the *present for preterite* as 'on record', which consists of events that are well-established in shared cultural memory (iconographical representations, mythological events, and chronographic records) and occur prototypically in non-narrative discourse (metanarrative commentary, dialogue, monologue, etc.). The author thereby contradicts the common assumption that tense-switching is confined to narrative discourse (e.g., Fleischman 1990; Rijksbaron 2006; Thoma 2011). One of the main arguments made in this chapter is that the *registering* present is just as expressive as the *diegetic* and *mimetic* present in the sense that it evokes a conceptual scenario in which past events are presently accessible in the form of a *representation scenario*. Further, its pragmatic function is the rhetorical function, which is to elevate the status of the designated event and underline the legitimacy of the speaker's assertion. Importantly, at the end of this chapter, the author expresses the hope that his discussion will inspire scholars to include these present forms in the discussion of more familiar *diegetic* and *mimetic* instances.

With a meticulous quantitative and explanatory analysis of material from an extensive corpus of Classical Greek texts (from the historians Thucydides, Herodotus and Xenophon; the canonical orators Aeschines, Andocides, Antiphon, Demosthenes, Dinarchus, Hyperides, Isaeus, Isocrates, Lycurgus, and Lysias; the dramatists Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, Sophocles, and Menander; and Plato), Arjan A. Nijk's monograph provides an extraordinarily precious contribution to the study of tense-switching primarily, but not exclusively, in Classical Greek. The presented publication is an example of a highly professional and engaging work, which opens fresh paths of research in the fascinating matter of tense-switching. The book *Tense-Switching in Classical Greek. A Cognitive Approach* by Arjan A. Nijk is strongly recommended to become a source of knowledge and inspiration for every scholar, whether classicist, linguist, or narratologist, who seeks a deeper understanding of narrative and rhetorical principles and strategies.

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