# Aspectual choice with *verba dicendi* in Herodotus' *Histories*

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## Elección aspectual con *verba dicendi* en las *Historias* de Heródoto

I discuss the factors that motivate the choice for the aorist versus imperfect tense with *verba dicendi* in Ancient Greek. I argue that the textual dimension plays a particularly important role, and that two subdimensions must be taken into account: (a) *whether the author wishes to draw explicit attention to what is said*; (b) *whether a reaction can be expected by the speaker (and by extension the reader)*. I frame my observations within a larger theory of aspect in Ancient Greek, which takes into account —next to the textual dimension— two other major dimensions, called the «ideational» and the «interpersonal» dimension. The analysis concentrates on the eighth book of Herodotus' *Histories*.

*Key words*: Ancient Greek; aspectual choice; *verba dicendi*; textual dimension

El presente estudio examina los factores que motivan la elección del aoristo vs. el imperfecto con *verba dicendi* en griego antiguo. Sostengo que la dimensión textual desempeña un papel fundamental, y que conviene tomar en cuenta dos subdimensiones: (a) *si el autor desea llamar la atención explícita sobre lo que se dice*; (b) *si se puede esperar una reacción por parte del hablante (y por extensión del lector)*. Estas observaciones se enmarcan dentro de una teoría más amplia sobre el aspecto en griego antiguo que toma en consideración —además de la dimensión textual— dos otras dimensiones principales, las llamadas dimensiones «ideacional» y «interpersonal». El análisis se centra en el libro octavo de las *Historias* de Heródoto.

*Palabras clave*: griego antiguo; elección aspectual; *verba dicendi*; dimensión textual.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Aspect in Ancient Greek has been studied from many different perspectives, too many to outline in the context of this article[1]. Generalizing, one could say that

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three major dimensions[2] have been (and need to be) taken into account, called
«ideational»[3], «textual»[4] and «interpersonal»[5]. The amount of scholarly attention
that has been dedicated to each of these dimensions, however, varies: as noted by
Colvin 1998 among others, the relevance of the textual dimension (i.c. the fore-
ground-background distinction) is now becoming increasingly accepted. How the
three dimensions interact —which is a very complex matter[6], to which I briefly
return in the conclusion— is an element which remains unclear at present[7].

The purpose of the present article is to elucidate what motivates the choice
for the aorist versus the imperfect tense with one particular category of verbs,
so-called *verba dicendi*. This is a matter which is discussed in most of the
standard grammars[8], but on which no consensus has been reached so far. While
some grammarians believe semantic and/or pragmatic factors play a role, oth-
ers believe the distinction between imperfect versus aorist is of little to no
importance. Goodwin 1966[1889], p. 17, for example, writes the following:

> Since the same event may thus be stated by the aorist or the imperfect according
> to the writer's point of view, it is natural that it should occasionally be a matter of
> indifference which form is used, especially when the action is of such a nature that
> it is not important to distinguish its duration from its occurrence. For example, this
> distinction can seldom be important in such expressions as *he said*, *he commanded*.

Two articles have been dedicated to the use of these verbs in Herodotus,
that is, Salmon 1950 and Bakker 1968, to which I refer below. For addition-
al observations, reference can be made to Svennson 1930, Sedgwick 1940,
1957, and Hettrich 1976, pp. 59-70[9].

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[2] These dimensions were first described by Halliday (e.g. 1978) in his *Systemic Functional
Grammar*. For an application to aspect, see e.g. Fleischman 1989, pp. 1-2.

[3] E.g. Friedrich 1979; Gerö & von Stechow 2003.

[4] E.g. Rijksbaron 1988; Ruijgh 1991.

[5] E.g. Bakker 1997; Vassilaki 2000.

[6] See Janda 2004 for a recent application to Russian.

[7] Without going into detail, I agree with one of the main principles proposed by Janda
2004, that is, that the semantic value of verb forms (the ideational dimension) is basic and
can never be cancelled.

[8] E.g. Schwyzer 1950, pp. 277-278; Kühner & Gerth 1976[1904], pp. 143-144; Rijksbaron
2002, pp. 18-19.

[9] Various articles have also been dedicated to the use of the aorist versus present impera-
tive of *uerba dicendi* (especially of the verb λέγω in Plato and the orators). A good overview
of recent findings is given by Basset, Culioli & Lallot 2000, pp. 19-26.

On the basis of an analysis of the eighth book of Herodotus' *Histories* (see §2), I argue that the textual dimension plays a particularly important role when it comes to the choice for the aorist versus imperfect tense with *verba dicendi*. To be more specific, I believe two subdimensions need to be taken into account, which go beyond the traditional foreground – background distinction to which I referred above. These can be specified as follows:

a) *Does the author intend to attach prominence/draw explicit attention to what is said?*

The relevance of this dimension was first indicated by Salmon 1950, p. 168, who drew attention to the fact that the imperfect of the verb λέγω is often accompanied by the «forward-pointing device»[10] τάδε (much more so than the aorist form of the same verb):

> Si l'auteur emploie un démonstratif, c'est qu'il désire attirer spécialement l'attention du lecteur sur ce qui va suivre; Ainsi donc, la présence du démonstratif rattache la phrase qui le renferme bien plus à ce qui suit qu'à ce qui précède. Pour l'auteur, donc, l'essentiel est le discours direct lui-même, c'est-à-dire, le développement de l'action marquée par le verbe déclaratif.

When the aorist is used, on the other hand, the author attaches more importance to the fact that something is said, as a simple fact, a next step in the narration, than to the actual message[11]. This also explains why the imperfect is often used before a speech, while the aorist at the end[12].

Salmon's 1950 findings were criticized by Bakker 1968, who argued that (a) τάδε (as well as the imperfect) causes a «stagnation», rather than an intimate connection[13]; (b) there is no causal relationship between the presence of τάδε and the imperfect; when an effect of stagnation is desired, the author

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[10] I borrow this term from Runge 2010.

[11] Compare in this regard also Levinsohn 2000, p. 262, who argues with regard to the New Testament that an author can *background* a speech by using indirect speech.

[12] Cf. Dik 1995, pp. 165-171, who does not, however, refer to the work of Salmon.

[13] Compare Runge 2010, p. 63 on the effect of forward-pointing devices: «the forward-pointing reference ends up creating a discontinuity just before the target to which it points. This extra reference has the effect of slowing down the flow of the discourse».

can just as well choose the aorist accompanied by τάδε; (c) other factors may lie at the basis of the choice for the imperfect versus aorist[14].

While it is true that the co-occurrence of the imperfect and τάδε cannot be considered a rule, I believe it does form a significant indication of the effect of the imperfect, that is, drawing attention to what follows rather than to the actual event of saying (a «stagnation», as Bakker would have it, only contributes to this effect). I furthermore agree with Bakker 1968 that other factors must be taken into account; one of these is also situated on the textual plane, and is outlined immediately below.

b) *Can the speaker (and by extension the reader) expect a reaction?*

In his article, Salmon 1950, p. 169 briefly remarks that the imperfect, besides drawing attention to the content of what is said, can also serve to announce a reply, without, however, further elaborating this suggestion. To better understand this function of the imperfect, we can turn to Rijksbaron 1986, 1988, 2002 and Basset 2009, 2011 among others, who have investigated the discourse function of the imperfect. These scholars stress that the imperfect marks narrative cohesion, both with remote and less remote contexts. As Rijksbaron 1988, p. 237 puts it, «[the] imperfect creates a 'framework' or 'time anchor' for other states of affairs, and raises expectations as to what is going to happen next». In the case of *uerba dicendi*, the most obvious reaction that can be expected is a verbal one, though this is not necessarily the case[15]. A similar use of the imperfect can be found with other verbs, of which verbs of *sending* and *going* are perhaps the most well known[16].

As one of the reviewers notes, «it does not seem very difficult to associate the values here proposed for the PR [present stem, KB] ... with the imperfective general content usually proposed for the stem». Indeed, the semantic contrast that is often suggested on the ideational level between imperfective and perfective aspect, that is *unboundedness* vs. *boundedness*[17], can be quite

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[14] Bakker remains somewhat vague about this third point. See e.g. Bakker 1968, p. 28: «imperfect and demonstrative pronoun are easily combined inasmuch as both of them cause a stagnation in the flow of the narrative. They accompany each other, however, only when the other circumstances co-operate.»

[15] Compare the observations made by Dik 1995, pp. 165-71.

[16] See e.g. Smyth 1984[1920], p. 424.

[17] Compare Rijksbaron 2002, p. 1.

naturally extended to the textual level: by not explicitly profiling boundaries, the imperfect creates a certain expectation towards what is to follow.

## II.  ANALYSIS OF *UERBA DICENDI* IN HERODOTUS, *HISTORIES* VIII

In what follows, I analyze the use of the aorist versus imperfect tense with *uerba dicendi* in the eighth book of Herodotus' *Histories* (for historical background on this verb class, I refer to Fournier 1946)[18]. The eighth book, which has as its center-piece the battle at Salamis (480 BC), contains many verbs of saying and related verbs; in alphabetical order, these are (προ)αγορεύω, ἀμείβομαι, ἀπαγγέλλω, ἀπαιτέω, (τὴν γνώμην) ἀποδείκνυμαι, δέομαι, διαβάλλω, ἐκκαλέω, ἐκφέρομαι, ἐπαγγέλλομαι, (ἐπ)έρομαι, (ἐπ)ερωτάω, ἐπιφέρομαι, κελεύω, λέγω, παραγυμνόω, παραινέω, προφέρω, (λόγον) προσφέρω, (ἀνα)πυνθάνομαι, σημαίνω, (τὴν γνώμην) τίθεμαι, ὑποκρίνομαι, and φημί.

My approach diverges from that adopted by Salmon 1950 and Bakker 1968 on the following three points: (a) in order to take into account the complex factors that motivate the choice for the aorist versus imperfect tense with *uerba dicendi*, I believe it is necessary to discuss the use of these verbs in their context. In other words, I discuss *passages*[19], rather than isolated verbs[20]; (b) I take into account a larger number of verbs. Previous discussions mainly focused on λέγω (which in the present corpus too is the most frequently used); (c) I take into account verbs that introduce both direct and indirect speech.

### 1. *Greek terror (§§4-5)*[21]

> (1) καταρρωδήσαντες δρησμὸν ἐβουλεύοντο ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀρτεμισίου ἔσω ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα. [2] γνόντες δὲ σφέας οἱ Εὐβοέες ταῦτα βουλευομένους <u>ἐδέοντο</u> Εὐρυβιάδεω προσμεῖναι χρόνον ὀλίγον, ἔστ᾽ ἂν αὐτοὶ τέκνα τε καὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας ὑπεκθέωνται. ὡς δ᾽ οὐκ ἔπειθον, μεταβάντες τὸν Ἀθηναίων στρατηγὸν

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[18] Note that I do not analyse historical presents, which deserve a separate treatment.

[19] The Greek text is based on the edition by Godley 1920. The translations are taken from Macaulay 1890.

[20] For reasons of space, I focus on passages containing more than one (indicative) form.

[21] In the Greek text and translation, imperfect forms are underlined twice, and aorist forms once.

πείθουσι Θεμιστοκλέα ἐπὶ μισθῷ τριήκοντα ταλάντοισι, ἐπ᾽ ᾧ τε καταμείναντες πρὸ τῆς Εὐβοίης ποιήσονται τὴν ναυμαχίην. 5. ὁ δὲ Θεμιστοκλῆς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐπισχεῖν ὧδε ποιέει· ... Ἀδείμαντος γὰρ ὁ Ὠκύτου ὁ Κορίνθιος στρατηγὸς τῶν λοιπῶν ἤσπαιρε μοῦνος, φάμενος ἀποπλεύσεσθαί τε ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀρτεμισίου καὶ οὐ παραμενέειν, πρὸς δὴ τοῦτον *εἶπε* ὁ Θεμιστοκλῆς ἐπομόσας [2] «οὐ σύ γε ἡμέας ἀπολείψεις, ἐπεί τοι ἐγὼ μέζω δῶρα δώσω ἢ βασιλεὺς ἄν τοι ὁ Μῆδων πέμψειε ἀπολιπόντι τοὺς συμμάχους». (Hdt., VIII 4.1-2/5.1-2)

[The Hellenes] were struck with fear, and they deliberated about retreating from Artemision to the inner parts of Hellas. And the Eubœans perceiving that they were so deliberating, _asked_ Eurybiades to stay there by them for a short time, until they should have removed out of their land their children, and their households; and as they did not persuade him, they went elsewhere and persuaded Themistocles the commander of the Athenians by a payment of thirty talents, the condition being that the fleet should stay and fight the sea-battle in front of Eubœa. 5. Themistocles then caused the Hellenes to stay in the following manner:— ... Adeimantos son of Okytos, the Corinthian commander, was the only one of all the others who still made a struggle, saying that he would sail away from Artemision and would not stay with the others: to him therefore Themistocles _said_ with an oath: «Thou at least shalt not leave us, for I will give thee greater gifts than the king of the Medes would send to thee, if thou shouldest desert thy allies.»

In this first episode, which is situated at the beginning of the eighth book of the *Histories*, we read about the fearful reaction of the Greeks when they first see the enormous Persian fleet. They deliberate about retreating from Artemisium to the inner parts of Greece, which is not, however, in the interest of the Euboeaens, who first beseech Eurybiades (the Spartan commander) and afterwards Themistocles (the Athenian commander) to stay. The first verb form that is used is ἐδέοντο «they asked». As this verb inherently anticipates a reaction, the choice for the imperfect may be motivated at the textual level[22]. However, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that the other storyline events in §4 are also narrated in the imperfect tense (ἐβουλεύοντο «they deliberated»; οὐκ ἔπειθον «they did not persuade»), together with a historical present (πείθουσι «they persuaded»). This indicates that it is Hero-

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    [22] Note that this reaction is not explicitly narrated, but should be inferred from οὐκ ἔπειθον «they did not persuade».

dotus' intention to narrate the events from an «internal» perspective, as if a (virtual) character were present[23]. Concentrating on Thucydides, Bakker (1997) has drawn attention to this use of the imperfect under the heading of the «mimetic mode» (also «discourse of the observer»), noting that it effects a «displaced immediacy». In §5, on the other hand, an aorist form is used (εἶπε «he said»), and here the textual dimension seems to play a more important role: no reaction is expected by Themistocles, and it is taken as self-evident that Adeimantus will not say no to such a generous offer.

## 2. *Themistocles' plans (§19)*

συλλέξας τοὺς στρατηγοὺς <u>ἔλεγέ</u> σφι ὡς δοκέοι ἔχειν τινὰ παλάμην, τῇ ἐλπίζοι τῶν βασιλέος συμμάχων ἀποστήσειν τοὺς ἀρίστους. [2] ταῦτα μέν νυν ἐς τοσοῦτο <u>παρεγύμνου</u>, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖσι κατήκουσι πρήγμασι τάδε ποιητέα σφι εἶναι <u>ἔλεγε</u>, τῶν τε προβάτων τῶν Εὐβοϊκῶν καταθύειν ὅσα τις ἐθέλοι· κρέσσον γὰρ εἶναι τὴν στρατιὴν ἔχειν ἢ τοὺς πολεμίους· <u>παραίνεέ</u> τε προειπεῖν τοῖσι ἑωυτῶν ἑκάστους πῦρ ἀνακαίειν· κομιδῆς δὲ πέρι τὴν ὥρην αὐτῷ μελήσειν, ὥστε ἀσινέας ἀπικέσθαι ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα. ταῦτα ἤρεσέ σφι ποιέειν, καὶ αὐτίκα πῦρ ἀνακαυσάμενοι ἐτράποντο πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα (Hdt., VIII 19.1-2)

He [Themistocles] assembled the generals and <u>*said to*</u> them that he thought he had a device by which he hoped to cause the best of the king's allies to leave him. This matter he <u>*revealed*</u> to that extent only; and with regard to their present circumstances, he <u>*said*</u> that they must do as follows:— every one must slaughter of the flocks of the Eubœans as many as he wanted, for it was better that their army should have them than the enemy; moreover he <u>*advised*</u> that each one should command his own men to kindle a fire: and as for the time of their departure he would see to it in such wise that they should come safe to Hellas. This they were content to do, and forthwith when they had kindled a fire they turned their attention to the flocks.

This second episode is located after the second battle at Artemisium (in which, as Herodotus notes, the Greeks suffered severely). In it, Themistocles devises a plan to safely retreat, and furthermore to separate the Ionians and Carians from the other Barbarians (by leaving behind a message). The choice

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[23] I should stress that this should not be seen as a third *textual* factor, as one of the reviewers suggests: creating an internal perspective belongs to the interpersonal level, which will not further concern us here.

for the imperfects (ἔλεγε «he said», παρεγύμνου «he revealed», παραίνεε «he exhorted») can be explained on the textual level, that is, they raise the expectation of a reaction, which in this case is non-verbal (ταῦτα ἤρεσέ σφι ποιέειν, καὶ αὐτίκα πῦρ ἀνακαυσάμενοι ἐτράποντο πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα «this they were content to do, and forthwith when they kindled a fire they turned their attention to the flocks»). Note that the reaction itself is narrated through aorists, which «wrap up» this paragraph.

### 3. *News about Thermopylae (§§21-22)*

> [2] οὗτος ὦν ὁ Ἀβρώνιχος ἀπικόμενός σφι *ἐσήμαινε* τὰ γεγονότα περὶ Λεωνίδην καὶ τὸν στρατὸν αὐτοῦ. οἱ δὲ ὡς ἐπύθοντο ταῦτα, οὐκέτι ἐς ἀναβολὰς ἐποιεῦντο τὴν ἀποχώρησιν, ἐκομίζοντο δὲ ὡς ἕκαστοι ἐτάχθησαν, Κορίνθιοι πρῶτοι, ὕστατοι δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι. 22. Ἀθηναίων δὲ νέας τὰς ἄριστα πλεούσας ἐπιλεξάμενος Θεμιστοκλῆς ἐπορεύετο περὶ τὰ πότιμα ὕδατα, ἐντάμνων ἐν τοῖσι λίθοισι γράμματα. τὰ Ἴωνες ἐπελθόντες τῇ ὑστεραίῃ ἡμέρῃ ἐπὶ τὸ Ἀρτεμίσιον ἐπελέξαντο. τὰ δὲ γράμματα τάδε *ἔλεγε* … (Hdt., VIII 21.2/22.1)

> This Abronichos then had arrived, and he *proceeded to signify* to them that which had come to pass about Leonidas and his army; and then when they were informed of it no longer put off their retreat, but set forth in the order in which they were severally posted, the Corinthians first and the Athenians last. 22. Themistocles however selected those ships of the Athenians which sailed best, and went round to the springs of drinking-water, cutting inscriptions on the stones there, which the Ionians read when they came to Artemision on the following day. These inscriptions *ran* thus …

When they are about to retreat, the Greeks receive the bad news about Thermopylae through a messenger. From a textual point of view, it is unsurpring that ἐσήμαινε «he told» should be an imperfect: it raises a certain expectation about how the Greeks will react to the news[24]. Note, however, that the choice for the imperfect may be additionally motivated at the interpersonal level (that is, providing an «internal» perspective), as the other verbs carrying the storyline in §21 are also in the imperfect: ἐποιεῦντο «they did»; ἐκομίζοντο «they carried». The choice for the imperfect in §22 seems to be

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[24] In this context, it is interesting to note that Bowie (2007:45) in his recent edition opts for the aorist form ἐσήμηνε.

differently motivated: here it serves to draw explicit attention to the contents of the (important) message left behind by Themistocles for the Ionions and Carians, as also signalled by the forward-pointing device τάδε. As noted in the introduction, both elements slow down the course of the narrative, and as such highlight the message that follows.

## 4. *The Olympic games (§26)*

> ἧκον δέ σφι αὐτόμολοι ἄνδρες ἀπ᾽ Ἀρκαδίης ὀλίγοι τινές, βίου τε δεόμενοι καὶ ἐνεργοὶ βουλόμενοι εἶναι. ἄγοντες δὲ τούτους ἐς ὄψιν τὴν βασιλέος *ἐπυνθάνοντο* οἱ Πέρσαι περὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τί ποιέοιεν· εἷς δέ τις πρὸ πάντων ἦν ὁ εἰρωτῶν αὐτοὺς ταῦτα. [2] οἳ δέ σφι *ἔλεγον* ὡς Ὀλύμπια ἄγουσι καὶ θεωρέοιεν ἀγῶνα γυμνικὸν καὶ ἱππικόν. ὁ δὲ *ἐπείρετο ὅ* τι τὸ ἄεθλον εἴη σφι κείμενον περὶ ὅτευ ἀγωνίζονται· οἳ δ᾽ *εἶπον* τῆς ἐλαίης τὸν διδόμενον στέφανον. ἐνθαῦτα εἴπας γνώμην γενναιοτάτην Τιγράνης ὁ Ἀρταβάνου δειλίην ὦφλε πρὸς βασιλέος. [3] πυνθανόμενος γὰρ τὸ ἄεθλον ἐὸν στέφανον ἀλλ᾽ οὐ χρήματα, οὔτε ἠνέσχετο σιγῶν *εἶπέ* τε ἐς πάντας τάδε. «παπαῖ Μαρδόνιε, κοίους ἐπ᾽ ἄνδρας ἤγαγες μαχησομένους ἡμέας, οἳ οὐ περὶ χρημάτων τὸν ἀγῶνα ποιεῦνται ἀλλὰ περὶ ἀρετῆς». τούτῳ μὲν δὴ ταῦτα εἴρητο (Hdt., VIII 26.1-3)

> There had come also to them a few deserters from Arcadia, men in want of livelihood and desiring to be employed. These the Persians brought into the king's presence and *inquired* about the Hellenes, what they were doing; and one man it was who asked them this for all the rest. They *told* them that the Hellenes were keeping the Olympic festival and were looking on at a contest of athletics and horsemanship. He then *inquired* again, what was the prize proposed to them, for the sake of which they contended; and they *told* them of the wreath of olive which is given. Then Tigranes the son of Artabanos uttered a thought which was most noble, though thereby he incurred from the king the reproach of cowardice: for hearing that the prize was a wreath and not money, he could not endure to keep silence, but in the presence of all he *spoke* these words: «Ah! Mardonios, what kind of men are these against whom thou hast brought us to fight, who make their contest not for money but for honour!» Thus was it spoken by this man.

This episode is situated after the Persians' sightseeing at Thermopylae (§25), and contains a digression with regard to the Olymic games, in which Persian and Greek ideology are contrasted. The variation in the use of imper-

fect versus aorist in this passage is very interesting, and can be explained at
the textual level by means of whether a reaction is expected or not: ἐπυνθάνοντο
«they inquired» is in the imperfect, as a reaction is expected to the Persians'
question. This (verbal) reaction is given in the next sentence (ἔλεγον «they
said»), where again the verb is used in the imperfect, raising the expectation
of another reaction. This reaction follows in the next sentence (ἐπείρετο «he
inquired again»), where Xerxes asks another question (in the imperfect,
unsurprisingly). The answer to this question is expressed in the aorist (εἶπον
«they said»), indicating that this is the final reply, and no more reactions
should be expected to their answer. At the end of the episode, a general re-
mark is made by Tigranes, which is again expressed in the aorist (εἶπε «he
said»). Here we seem to have a conflict at the textual level: on the one hand,
no reaction to this bitter remark is expected (suggesting an aorist), but on the
other hand the pronoun τάδε indicates that a certain importance is attached to
the message (suggesting an imperfect). In the present context, the former
aspect seems to have been the more important one.

## 5. *The dispute between the Thessalians and the Phocians (§§29-30)*

> τούτων δή σφι ἀμφοτέρων ἔχοντες ἔγκοτον οἱ Θεσσαλοὶ πέμψαντες κήρυκα
> *ἠγόρευον* τάδε. «ὦ Φωκέες, ἤδη τι μᾶλλον γνωσιμαχέετε μὴ εἶναι ὅμοιοι ἡμῖν.
> [2] πρόσθε τε γὰρ ἐν τοῖσι Ἕλλησι, ὅσον χρόνον ἐκεῖνα ἡμῖν ἤνδανε, πλέον
> αἰεί κοτε ὑμέων ἐφερόμεθα· ... ἡμεῖς μέντοι τὸ πᾶν ἔχοντες οὐ μνησικακέομεν,
> ἀλλ᾿ ἡμῖν γενέσθω ἀντ᾿ αὐτῶν πεντήκοντα τάλαντα ἀργυρίου, καὶ ὑμῖν
> ὑποδεκόμεθα τὰ ἐπιόντα ἐπὶ τὴν χώρην ἀποτρέψειν». 30. ταῦτά σφι
> *ἐπαγγέλλοντο* οἱ Θεσσαλοί. οἱ γὰρ Φωκέες μοῦνοι τῶν ταύτῃ ἀνθρώπων οὐκ
> ἐμήδιζον, κατ᾿ ἄλλο μὲν οὐδέν, ὡς ἐγὼ συμβαλλόμενος εὑρίσκω, κατὰ δὲ τὸ
> ἔχθος τὸ Θεσσαλῶν· [2] εἰ δὲ Θεσσαλοὶ τὰ Ἑλλήνων ηὖξον, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκέειν,
> ἐμήδιζον ἂν οἱ Φωκέες. ταῦτα ἐπαγγελλομένων Θεσσαλῶν, οὔτε δώσειν
> *ἔφασαν* χρήματα, παρέχειν τε σφίσι Θεσσαλοῖσι ὁμοίως μηδίζειν, εἰ ἄλλως
> βουλοίατο (Hdt., VIII 29.1-2/30.1-2)

> Bearing then a grudge for both of these things, the Thessalians sent a herald
> and *addressed* them thus: «Phokians, we advise you to be more disposed now
> to change your minds and to admit that ye are not on a level with us ... We
> however, though we have all the power in our hands, do not bear malice, but
> let there be paid to us fifty talents of silver in return for this, and we will
> engage to avert the dangers which threaten to come upon your land.» 30. Thus

the Thessalians *proposed* to them; for the Phokians alone of all the people in those parts were not taking the side of the Medes, and this for no other reason, as I conjecture, but only because of their enmity with the Thessalians; and if the Thessalians had supported the cause of the Hellenes, I am of opinion that the Phokians would have been on the side of the Medes. When the Thessalians proposed this, they *said* that they would not give the money, and that it was open to them to take the Median side just as much as the Thessalians, if they desired it for other reasons.

The dispute between the Thessalians and the Phocians is situated in between two larger structural parts, that is, the battles at Artemisium on the one hand (§§1-26), and the battle at Salamis (§§40-97) on the other hand. Herodotus narrates the background of the dispute between the two sides, and how the Thessalians (who are fighting with the Persians) threaten the Phocians that they will deprive them of their land and enslave them. The message sent to the Phocians is introduced by the imperfect ἠγόρευον «they said», which together with the pronoun τάδε slows down the flow of the narrative and as such draws explicit attention to the content of the speech. It is repeated by the imperfect ἐπαγγέλλοντο «they announced», which anticipates a reaction by the Phocians. This reaction is given by the aorist ἔφασαν «they said», which indicates that no further reaction is to be expected.

6. *The Greek council (§§57-61)*

ἐνθαῦτα δὴ Θεμιστοκλέα ἀπικόμενον ἐπὶ τὴν νέα *εἴρετο* Μνησίφιλος ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος ὅ τι σφι εἴη βεβουλευμένον. πυθόμενος δὲ πρὸς αὐτοῦ ὡς εἴη δεδογμένον ἀνάγειν τὰς νέας πρὸς τὸν Ἰσθμὸν καὶ πρὸ τῆς Πελοποννήσου ναυμαχέειν, *εἶπε* … 58. κάρτα τε τῷ Θεμιστοκλέι ἤρεσε ἡ ὑποθήκη, καὶ οὐδὲν πρὸς ταῦτα ἀμειψάμενος ἤιε ἐπὶ τὴν νέα τὴν Εὐρυβιάδεω. ἀπικόμενος δὲ *ἔφη* ἐθέλειν οἱ κοινόν τι πρῆγμα συμμῖξαι· ὁ δ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐς τὴν νέα *ἐκέλευε* ἐσβάντα λέγειν, εἴ τι θέλει. [2] ἐνθαῦτα ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης παριζόμενός οἱ καταλέγει ἐκεῖνά τε πάντα τὰ ἤκουσε Μνησιφίλου, ἑωυτοῦ ποιεύμενος, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ προστιθείς, ἐς ὃ ἀνέγνωσε χρηίζων ἔκ τε τῆς νεὸς ἐκβῆναι συλλέξαι τε τοὺς στρατηγοὺς ἐς τὸ συνέδριον. 59. ὡς δὲ ἄρα συνελέχθησαν, πρὶν ἢ τὸν Εὐρυβιάδην προθεῖναι τὸν λόγον τῶν εἴνεκα συνήγαγε τοὺς στρατηγούς, πολλὸς ἦν ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης ἐν τοῖσι λόγοισι οἷα κάρτα δεόμενος· λέγοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ, ὁ Κορίνθιος στρατηγὸς Ἀδείμαντος ὁ Ὠκύτου *εἶπε* «ὦ Θεμιστόκλεες, ἐν τοῖσι ἀγῶσι οἱ προεξανιστάμενοι ῥαπίζονται». ὁ δὲ ἀπολυόμενος *ἔφη* «οἱ δέ γε ἐγκαταλειπόμενοι οὐ στεφανοῦνται». 60. τότε μὲν ἠπίως πρὸς τὸν

Κορίνθιον *ἀμείψατο*, πρὸς δὲ τὸν Εὐρυβιάδην *ἔλεγε* ἐκείνων μὲν ἔτι οὐδὲν τῶν πρότερον λεχθέντων, ὡς ἐπεὰν ἀπαείρωσι ἀπὸ Σαλαμῖνος διαδρήσονται· παρεόντων γὰρ τῶν συμμάχων οὐκ ἔφερέ οἱ κόσμον οὐδένα κατηγορέειν· ὁ δὲ ἄλλου λόγου εἴχετο, λέγων τάδε. … 61. ταῦτα λέγοντος Θεμιστοκλέος αὖτις ὁ Κορίνθιος Ἀδείμαντος *ἐπεφέρετο*, σιγᾶν τε κελεύων τῷ μὴ ἐστὶ πατρὶς καὶ Εὐρυβιάδην οὐκ ἐῶν ἐπιψηφίζειν ἀπόλι ἀνδρί· πόλιν γὰρ τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα παρεχόμενον οὕτω *ἐκέλευε* γνώμας συμβάλλεσθαι. ταῦτα δέ οἱ *προέφερε* ὅτι ἡλώκεσάν τε καὶ κατείχοντο αἱ Ἀθῆναι. [2] τότε δὴ ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης κεῖνόν τε καὶ τοὺς Κορινθίους πολλά τε καὶ κακὰ *ἔλεγε*, ἑωυτοῖσι τε ἐδήλου λόγῳ ὡς εἴη καὶ πόλις καὶ γῆ μέζων ἤ περ ἐκείνοισι, ἔστ᾽ ἂν διηκόσιαι νέες σφι ἔωσι πεπληρωμέναι· οὐδαμοὺς γὰρ Ἑλλήνων αὐτοὺς ἐπιόντας ἀποκρούσεσθαι (Hdt., VIII 57.1/58.1-2/59.1/60.1/61.1-2)


And when Themistocles had come to his ship, Mnesiphilos an Athenian *asked* him what they had resolved; and being informed by him that it had been de-termined to take out the ships to the Isthmus and fight a battle by sea in de-fence of the Peloponnese, he *said* … 58. This advice very much commended itself to Themistocles; and without making any answer he went to the ship of Eurybiades. Having come thither he *said* that he desired to communicate to him a matter which concerned the common good; and Eurybiades *bade* him come into his ship and speak, if he desired to say anything. Then Themistocles sitting down beside him repeated to him all those things which he had heard Mnesiphilos say, making as if they were his own thoughts, and adding to them many others; until at last by urgent request he persuaded him to come out of his ship and gather the commanders to the council. 59. So when they were gathered together, before Eurybiades proposed the discussion of the things for which he had assembled the commanders, Themistocles spoke with much vehemence being very eager to gain his end; and as he was speaking, the Corinthian commander, Adeimantos the son of Okytos, *said*: «Themistocles, at the games those who stand forth for the contest before the due time are beaten with rods.» He justifying himself *said*: «Yes, but those who remain behind are not crowned.» 60. At that time he *made answer* mildly to the Co-rinthian; and to Eurybiades he *said* not now any of those things which he had said before, to the effect that if they should set sail from Salamis they would disperse in different directions; for it was not seemly for him to bring charges against the allies in their presence: but he held to another way of reasoning, saying… 61. When Themistocles thus spoke, the Corinthian Adeimantos *in-veighed* against him for the second time, bidding him to be silent because he had no native land, and urging Eurybiades not to put to the vote the proposal of one who was a citizen of no city; for he *said* that Themistocles might bring

opinions before the council if he could show a city belonging to him, but otherwise not. This *objection he made* against him because Athens had been taken and was held by the enemy. Then Themistocles *said* many evil things of him and of the Corinthians both, and declared also that he himself and his countrymen had in truth a city and a land larger than that of the Corinthians, so long as they had two hundred ships fully manned; for none of the Hellenes would be able to repel the Athenians if they came to fight against them.

In this longer scene, the Greek council (now at Salamis) deliberates about retreating when it hears about the destruction of Athens (§§51-53). Various u*erba dicendi* are used. The first of these is the imperfect εἴρετο «he asked», which inherently anticipates a reaction[25] (note that a reaction is not explicitly reported, but should be inferred from πυθόμενος ὡς … «being informed that»). The subject of εἴρετο is the Athenian Mnesiphilus, who also undertakes a second verbal action, εἶπε «he said»: that this verb is in the aorist tense may come as a surprise, given the importance of Mnesiphilus' message (urging Themistocles to fight at Salamis). At the textual level, it indicates that no immediate reaction from Themistocles is expected (as explicitly mentioned: οὐδὲν πρὸς ταῦτα ἀμειψάμενος «without making any answer to these things»). In contrast, in the next paragraph two imperfects are used (ἔφη «he said»; ἐκέλευε «he ordered»), anticipating a reaction from Eurybiades and Themistocles respectively.

Before Themistocles actually addresses the council about whether they should fight at Salamis or not, he is interrupted by the Corynthian commander Adeimantus: the aorist εἶπε can be seen as a reaction to Themistocles' vehement speaking beforehand (πολλὸς ἦν ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης ἐν τοῖσι λόγοισι «Themistocles spoke with much vehemence»). Themistocles' own reaction to this first attack is expressed in the imperfect (ἔφη), which in this particular case seems to indicate that he has not finished speaking yet, that he has more to say (as the same person continues speaking in §60). The contrast between ἀμείψατο «he answered» and ἔλεγε «he said» in §60 is quite striking: it indicates that no reaction should be expected to Themistocles' reponse to Adeimantus' first attack, while such a reaction can be expected for what he says to Eurybiades (who eventually must decide whether the Spartans will stay). In §61, we encounter four more imperfects. Three of these, which express

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[25]  Compare ἐδέοντο in (1) and ἐπυνθάνοντο and ἐπείρετο in (4).

Adeimantus' second attack on Themistocles (ἐπεφέρετο «he attacked», ἐκέλευε «he ordered», προέφερε «he brought forward»), anticipate a reaction by Themistocles. Themistocles' reaction in §61.2 is expressed in the imperfect (ἔλεγε «he said»), which again seems to indicate that he is not finished yet with his reply (as he continues speaking in §62).

## 7. *Xerxes consults his leaders (§§67-68)*

> ὡς δὲ κόσμῳ ἐπεξῆς ἵζοντο, πέμψας Ξέρξης Μαρδόνιον _εἰρώτα_ ἀποπειρώμενος ἑκάστου εἰ ναυμαχίην ποιέοιτο. 68. ἐπεὶ δὲ περιιὼν _εἰρώτα_ ὁ Μαρδόνιος ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ Σιδωνίου, οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι κατὰ τὠυτὸ γνώμην _ἐξεφέροντο_ κελεύοντες ναυμαχίην ποιέεσθαι, Ἀρτεμισίη δὲ τάδε _ἔφη_ … (Hdt., VIII 67.2/68.1)

> And when they were seated in due order, Xerxes sent Mardonios and _inquired_, making trial of each one, whether he should fight a battle by sea. 68. So when Mardonios _went round asking_ them, beginning with the king of Sidon, the others _gave their opinions_ all to the same effect, advising him to fight a battle by sea, but Artemisia _spoke_ these words …

Some paragraphs later, we turn to the Persian camp, where Xerxes consults his leaders through his commander Mardonius. That the verb εἰρώτα «he asked» (§67) is in the imperfect can be explained through the fact that a response is expected. Such a response is given by Artemisia, whose words are introduced by ἔφη «she said». This, in combination with the forward-pointing device τάδε, indicates the explicit attention Herodotus wants to draw to Artemisia's words.

The use of εἰρώτα «he asked» (§68) and ἐξεφέροντο «they gave their opinion» differs from what we have seen so far, in that these verbs denote an iterative event (Mardonius asking the opinion of each of the commanders separately, and they responding in similar fashion). As such, it seems likely that the ideational dimension plays a more important role in the choice for the imperfect here[26].

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[26] I should stress that we are not dealing with an additional factor on the textual level, as one of the reviewers suggests: iteration belongs to the ideational level, which does not particularly concern us here.

## 8. *Aristeides & Themistocles (§§79-81)*

[2] οὗτος ὠνὴρ στὰς ἐπὶ τὸ συνέδριον *ἐξεκαλέετο* Θεμιστοκλέα, ἐόντα μὲν ἑωυτῷ οὐ φίλον ἐχθρὸν δὲ τὰ μάλιστα· ὑπὸ δὲ μεγάθεος τῶν παρεόντων κακῶν λήθην ἐκείνων ποιεύμενος *ἐξεκαλέετο*, θέλων αὐτῷ συμμῖξαι· προακηκόεε δὲ ὅτι σπεύδοιεν οἱ ἀπὸ Πελοποννήσου ἀνάγειν τὰς νέας πρὸς τὸν Ἰσθμόν. [3] ὡς δὲ ἐξῆλθέ οἱ Θεμιστοκλέης, *ἔλεγε* Ἀριστείδης τάδε …. 80. ὃ δ᾽ *ἀμείβετο* τοῖσιδε …. 81. ἐνθαῦτα *ἔλεγε* παρελθὼν ὁ Ἀριστείδης, φάμενος ἐξ Αἰγίνης τε ἥκειν καὶ μόγις ἐκπλῶσαι λαθὼν τοὺς ἐπορμέοντας (Hdt., VIII 79.2-3/80.1./81.1)

This man came into the council and *called forth* Themistocles, who was to him not a friend, but an enemy to the last degree; but because of the greatness of the present troubles he let those matters be forgotten and *called* him *forth*, desiring to communicate with him. Now he had heard beforehand that the Peloponnesians were pressing to take the ships away to the Isthmus. So when Themistocles came forth to him, Aristeides *spoke* these words … 80. He *made answer* as follows … 81. Aristeides accordingly came forward and *told* them this, saying that he had come from Egina and had with difficulty escaped without being perceived by those who were blockading them.

In this episode, we again turn to the Greek council, where the Athenian Aristeides (οὗτος ὠνὴρ «this man») now addresses Themistocles, informing him that the Greeks at Salamis are surrounded by the Persians. The use of the imperfect ἐξεκαλέετο «he called forth» (twice) is motivated at the textual level, anticipating Themistocles' reaction. The next two imperfects, which are accompanied by τάδε/τοῖσιδε slow down the flow of the narrative and as such draw attention to the content of the speeches.

The use of the imperfect ἔλεγε «he said» in §81 is more difficult to explain, as no further reply is given by Themistocles. Since the other storyline events in this paragraph are also expressed in the imperfect (συνεβούλευε «he advised»; ἐγίνετο «there happened»), the motivation for the imperfect may lie primarily at the interpersonal level, signalling an «internal» perspective to the events[27].

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[27] As if a (virtual) character were witnessing the events; compare our previous passages (1) and (3).

## 9. *The Phoenicians accuse the Ionians (§90)*

ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ τόδε ἐν τῷ θορύβῳ τούτῳ. τῶν τινες Φοινίκων, τῶν αἱ νέες διεφθάρατο, ἐλθόντες παρὰ βασιλέα *διέβαλλον* τοὺς Ἴωνας, ὡς δι᾽ ἐκείνους ἀπολοίατο αἱ νέες, ὡς προδόντων. συνήνεικε ὦν οὕτω ὥστε Ἰώνων τε τοὺς στρατηγοὺς μὴ ἀπολέσθαι Φοινίκων τε τοὺς διαβάλλοντας λαβεῖν τοιόνδε μισθόν ... [3] ... ὡς γὰρ εἶδε σφέας Ξέρξης ἔργον μέγα ἐργασαμένους, ἐτράπετο πρὸς τοὺς Φοίνικας οἷα ὑπερλυπεόμενός τε καὶ πάντας αἰτιώμενος, καὶ σφεων *ἐκέλευσε* τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀποταμεῖν, ἵνα μὴ αὐτοὶ κακοὶ γενόμενοι τοὺς ἀμείνονας διαβάλλωσι. [4] ὅκως γὰρ τινα ἴδοι Ξέρξης τῶν ἑωυτοῦ ἔργον τι ἀποδεικνύμενον ἐν τῇ ναυμαχίῃ, κατήμενος ὑπὸ τῷ ὄρεϊ τῷ ἀντίον Σαλαμῖνος τὸ καλέεται Αἰγάλεως, *ἀνεπυνθάνετο* τὸν ποιήσαντα, καὶ οἱ γραμματισταὶ ἀνέγραφον πατρόθεν τὸν τριήραρχον καὶ τὴν πόλιν (Hdt., VIII 90.1, 3-4)

It happened also in the course of this confusion that some of the Phenicians, whose ships had been destroyed, came to the king and *accused* the Ionians, saying that by means of them their ships had been lost, and that they had been traitors to the cause. Now it so came about that not only the commanders of the Ionians did not lose their lives, but the Phenicians who accused them received a reward such as I shall tell. ... For when Xerxes saw that they [the Phenicians] had performed a great exploit, he turned to the Phenicians (for he was exceedingly vexed and disposed to find fault with all) and *bade* cut off their heads, in order that they might not, after having been cowards themselves, accuse others who were better men than they. For whensoever Xerxes (sitting just under the mountain opposite Salamis, which is called Aigaleos) saw any one of his own side display a deed of valour in the sea-fight, he *inquired* about him who had done it, and the scribes recorded the name of the ship's captain with that of his father and the city from whence he came.

The next episode follows the battle at Salamis, in which the Greeks defeat the Persians. After the battle, the Phoenicians accuse the Ionians that their ships were lost because of them. As they expect a verdict from Xerxes, it is natural that διέβαλλον «they accused» should be in the imperfect. The actual decision, on the other hand is expressed in the aorist (ἐκέλευσε «he ordered»), as Xerxes' decision is final. The last verb in this passage, ἀνεπυνθάνετο «he inquired», indicates an iterative event in a backgrounded γάρ-clause; as such, it seems likely that factors other than the ones focused on in this article have motivated the choice for the imperfect[28].

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[28]  Compare (7).

## 10. *Xerxes asks the advice of Mardonius and Artemisia (§§100-101)*

> λογισάμενος ὦν ταῦτα <u>*προσέφερε*</u> τὸν λόγον τόνδε … 101. ταῦτα ἀκούσας
> Ξέρξης ὡς ἐκ κακῶν ἐχάρη τε καὶ ἥσθη, πρὸς Μαρδόνιόν τε βουλευσάμενος <u>*ἔφη*</u>
> ὑποκρινέεσθαι ὁκότερον ποιήσει τούτων. ὡς δὲ ἐβουλεύετο ἅμα Περσέων τοῖσι
> ἐπικλήτοισι, ἔδοξέ οἱ καὶ Ἀρτεμισίην ἐς συμβουλίην μεταπέμψασθαι ... [2] ὡς
> δὲ ἀπίκετο ἡ Ἀρτεμισίη ... <u>*ἔλεξε*</u> Ξέρξης τάδε … (Hdt., VIII 100.1/101.1-2)

> He [Mardonius] reckoned up these things, I say, and <u>*addressed his speech*</u> to the
> king as follows … 101. Hearing this Xerxes was rejoiced and delighted so far
> as he might be after his misfortunes, and to Mardonios he <u>*said*</u> that when he had
> taken counsel he would reply and say which of these two things he would do.
> So when he was taking counsel with those of the Persians who were called to
> be his advisers, it seemed good to him to send for Artemisia also to give him
> counsel ... . So when Artemisia had come, Xerxes ... <u>*spoke*</u> to her thus …

After the Persians' defeat at Salamis, Xerxes considers retreating to Persia.
His general, Mardonius, thereupon addresses the King, and proposes that either
Xerxes does not retreat, or that he leaves behind himself (Mardonius, that is)
with part of the army. That such an important proposal should be introduced
by an imperfect (προσέφερε τὸν λόγον τόνδε «he uttered the following speech»)
is hardly surprising. The use of the imperfect ἔφη «he said» is somewhat more
difficult to explain, since no immediate reaction from Mardonius follows Xerx-
es' words[29]. Perhaps the imperfect is used here to signal discourse cohesion
with a more remote context, that is, §107, where Xerxes informs Mardonius of
his decision (καλέσας Μαρδόνιον ἐκέλευσέ μιν τῆς στρατιῆς διαλέγειν τοὺς
βούλεται «he called Mardonius and ordered him to choose of the army whom
he wanted»)[30]. The verb form ἔλεξε «he said» introduces Xerxes' words to
Artemisia. The pronoun τάδε indicates that a certain importance is attached to
these words, but since Xerxes actually repeats Mardonius' proposal (which is
old information for the reader), the use of the aorist does not seem out of place.

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[29] Various scholars (e.g. Wackernagel 1926, pp. 172-3) have suggested that ἔφη is an
imperfect in form, but an aorist in meaning. While this suggestion would fit in the present
context, I agree with Svensson 1930, p. 62 that it is not entirely satisfactory since: (a) many
other verbs of saying occur frequently in the imperfect (and evidently these cannot all be
considered imperfects in meaning, but aorists in form); (b) it remains unclear why an aorist
form ἔφησε was built, if ἔφη already functioned as an aorist.

[30] Compare with the use of ἔφη in §59 (printed under (6)), indicating that Themistocles
has not finished speaking yet.

In this particular case a response by Artemisia can be expected, but this is sig-
nalled in the following paragraph (§102) by ὃ μὲν ταῦτα συνεβουλεύετο «he
thus consulted her», where an imperfect form sums up Xerxes' words.

11. *Hermotimus' revenge (§106)*

> ὡς δὲ τὸ στράτευμα τὸ Περσικὸν ὅρμα βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἐὼν ἐν Σάρδισι,
> ἐνθαῦτα καταβὰς κατὰ δή τι πρῆγμα ὁ Ἑρμότιμος ἐς γῆν τὴν Μυσίην, τὴν Χῖοι
> μὲν νέμονται Ἀταρνεὺς δὲ καλέεται, εὑρίσκει τὸν Πανιώνιον ἐνθαῦτα. [2]
> ἐπιγνοὺς δὲ <u>*ἔλεγε*</u> πρὸς αὐτὸν πολλοὺς καὶ φιλίους λόγους, πρῶτα μέν οἱ καταλέγων
> ὅσα αὐτὸς δι᾽ ἐκεῖνον ἔχοι ἀγαθά, δεύτερα δέ οἱ ὑπισχνεύμενος ἀντὶ τούτων ὅσα
> μιν ἀγαθὰ ποιήσει ἢν κομίσας τοὺς οἰκέτας οἰκέῃ ἐκείνῃ, ὥστε ὑποδεξάμενον
> ἄσμενον τοὺς λόγους τὸν Πανιώνιον κομίσαι τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα. [3] ὡς δὲ
> ἄρα πανοικίῃ μιν περιέλαβε, <u>*ἔλεγε*</u> ὁ Ἑρμότιμος τάδε … (Hdt., VIII 106.1-3)

> And when the king, being at that time in Sardis, was setting the Persian army
> in motion to march against Athens, then Hermotimos, having gone down for
> some business to that part of Mysia which the Chians occupy and which is
> called Atarneus, found there Panionios: and having recognised him he <u>*spoke*</u>
> to him many friendly words, first recounting to him all the good things which
> he had by his means, and next making promises in return for this, and saying
> how many good things he would do for him, if he would bring his household
> and dwell in that land; so that Panionios gladly accepting his proposals brou-
> ght his children and his wife. Then, when he had caught him together with his
> whole house, Hermotimos <u>*spoke*</u> as follows …

After Xerxes has made his decision to retreat and leave part of the army
with Mardonius, Herodotus briefly interrupts the narrative with the story of
Hermotimus (§§104-106), who seeks revenge against his former master, Pan-
ionius, who turned him into a eunuch. The form ἔλεγε «he said» is used twice,
but I would argue that the two cases have a different motivation. In the first
case, the imperfect anticipates Panionius' reaction to Hermotimus' proposal
(expressed in the aorist: κομίσαι). In the second case, on the other hand, the
imperfect primarily draws attention to the content of Hermotimus' bitter words.

12. *Themistocles and the Greek council (§§108-110)*

> τὸν μέν νυν ναυτικὸν τὸν Ξέρξεω στρατὸν οὐκ ἐπεῖδον διώξαντες μέχρι
> Ἄνδρου, ἐς δὲ τὴν Ἄνδρον ἀπικόμενοι ἐβουλεύοντο. [2] Θεμιστοκλέης μέν νυν
> <u>*γνώμην ἀπεδείκνυτο*</u> διὰ νήσων τραπομένους καὶ ἐπιδιώξαντας τὰς νέας πλέειν

ἰθέως ἐπὶ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον λύσοντας τὰς γεφύρας· Εὐρυβιάδης δὲ τὴν ἐναντίην ταύτῃ *γνώμην ἐτίθετο*, λέγων ὡς εἰ λύσουσι τὰς σχεδίας, τοῦτ᾽ ἂν μέγιστον πάντων σφι κακῶν τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐργάσαιτο … 109. ὡς δὲ ἔμαθε ὅτι οὐ πείσει τούς γε πολλοὺς πλέειν ἐς τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης, μεταβαλὼν πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους (οὗτοι γὰρ μάλιστα ἐκπεφευγότων περιημέκτεον, ὁρμέατό τε ἐς τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον πλέειν καὶ ἐπὶ σφέων αὐτῶν βαλόμενοι, εἰ οἱ ἄλλοι μὴ βουλοίατο) *ἔλεγέ* σφι τάδε … [5] ταῦτα *ἔλεγε* ἀποθήκην μέλλων ποιήσασθαι ἐς τὸν Πέρσην, ἵνα ἢν ἄρα τί μιν καταλαμβάνῃ πρὸς Ἀθηναίων πάθος ἔχῃ ἀποστροφήν· τά περ ὦν καὶ ἐγένετο. 110. ... [2] ὡς δὲ οὗτοί οἱ ἀνεγνωσμένοι ἦσαν, αὐτίκα μετὰ ταῦτα ὁ Θεμιστοκλέης ἄνδρας ἀπέπεμπε ἔχοντας πλοῖον, τοῖσι ἐπίστευε σιγᾶν ἐς πᾶσαν βάσανον ἀπικνεομένοισι τὰ αὐτὸς ἐνετείλατο βασιλέι φράσαι· τῶν καὶ Σίκιννος ὁ οἰκέτης αὖτις ἐγένετο· οἳ ἐπείτε ἀπίκοντο πρὸς τὴν Ἀττικήν, οἳ μὲν κατέμενον ἐπὶ τῷ πλοίῳ, Σίκιννος δὲ ἀναβὰς παρὰ Ξέρξην *ἔλεγε* τάδε … (Hdt., VIII 108.1-2/109.1, 5/110.2)

They pursued therefore as far as Andros, but did not get a sight of the fleet of Xerxes; and when they had come to Andros, they deliberated what they should do. Themistocles then *declared as his opinion* that they should take their course through the islands and pursue after the ships, and afterwards sail straight to the Hellespont to break up the bridges; but Eurybiades *expressed the opposite opinion* to this, saying that if they should break up the floating-bridges, they would therein do the greatest possible evil to Hellas … 109. When Themistocles perceived that he would not be able to persuade them, or at least the greater number of them, to sail to the Hellespont, he changed his counsel and turning to the Athenians (for these were grieved most at the escape of the enemy and were anxious to sail to the Hellespont even by themselves alone, if the others were not willing) to them he *spoke* as follows … Thus he *spoke*, intending to lay up for himself a store of gratitude with the Persian, in order that if after all any evil should come upon him at the hands of the Athenians, he might have a place of refuge: and this was in fact that which came to pass. 110. ... So when these had been persuaded by him, forthwith after this Themistocles sent men with a vessel, whom he trusted to keep silence, to whatever test they might be brought, of that which he himself charged them to tell the king; and of them Sikinnos his servant again was one. When these came to Attica, the rest stayed behind in the ship, while Sikinnos went up to Xerxes and *spoke* these words …

    In this next episode, we again turn to the Greek council, which is now deliberating about whether the Greeks should pursue the Persians on their retreat. Initially, Themistocles is determined to do so, but when he learns that the majority is not in favor of this course of action, he decides to change his

opinion. Themistocles also has a back-up plan, however, in that he sends a message to the Persians that they can safely return home, so as to be in the King's favor (in case something should go wrong).

All of the verbal actions mentioned in this passage are expressed in the imperfect (τὴν γνώμην ἀπεδείκνυτο «he delivered his opinion», τὴν γνώμην ἐτίθετο «he expressed his opinion», ἔλεγε «he said»). Since the same is true for most of the other storyline events (ἐδόκεε «it seemed good», ἐβουλεύοντο «they deliberated», ἐπείθοντο «they were persuaded», ἀπέπεμπε «he sent away»), it seems that the interpersonal dimension is particularly important for the choice of the imperfects in this episode. The events are presented from an internal perspective, as if a (virtual) character were present. This does not, however, entirely cancel the textual effect of the imperfect: in those cases where ἔλεγε «he said» is accompanied by the pronoun τάδε, the imperfect can still be said to «slow down» the flow of the narrative. When it comes to the anticipation of a reaction (reply), the situation is somewhat more complicated: the imperfects γνώμην ἀπεδείκνυτο «he delivered his opinion» and γνώμην ἐτίθετο «he expressed his opinion», both anticipate a reaction, but the same cannot be said of ἔλεγε «he said» (which is accompanied by ταῦτα and is used at the end of Themistocles' speech).

13. *Greek honors to the Gods (§122)*

> πέμψαντες δὲ ἀκροθίνια οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐς Δελφοὺς <u>*ἐπειρώτων*</u> τὸν θεὸν κοινῇ εἰ λελάβηκε πλήρεα καὶ ἀρεστὰ τὰ ἀκροθίνια. ὁ δὲ παρ᾽ Ἑλλήνων μὲν τῶν ἄλλων <u>*ἔφησε*</u> ἔχειν, παρὰ Αἰγινητέων δὲ οὔ, ἀλλὰ <u>*ἀπαίτεε*</u> αὐτοὺς τὰ ἀριστήια τῆς ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ναυμαχίης. Αἰγινῆται δὲ πυθόμενοι ἀνέθεσαν ἀστέρας χρυσέους, οἳ ἐπὶ ἱστοῦ χαλκέου ἑστᾶσι τρεῖς ἐπὶ τῆς γωνίης, ἀγχοτάτω τοῦ Κροίσου κρητῆρος. (Hdt., VIII 122.1)

> Then when the Hellenes had sent first-fruits to Delphi, they *asked* the god on behalf of all whether the first-fruits which he had received were fully sufficient and acceptable to him. He *said* that from the Hellenes he had received enough, but not from the Eginetans, and from them he *demanded* the offering of their prize of valour for the sea- fight at Salamis. Hearing this the Eginetans dedicated golden stars, three in number, upon a ship's mast of bronze, which are placed in the corner close to the mixing-bowl of Crœsus.

After the Greeks have won at Salamis and the Persians have retreated, honors are awarded to the Gods. The Greeks send first-fruits to Delphi, and inquire whether this is sufficient. Since a reply is expected to their question,

it is hardly surprising that the verb ἐπειρώτων «they asked» should be in the imperfect tense. The reply by the Delphian god is twofold. Interestingly, in this twofold reply both the aorist and the imperfect are used: he replies that he has received enough from the Greeks (ἔφησε «he said»), but that an additional offering is desired from the Aeginetans (ἀπαίτεε «he demanded»). The variation between the aorist and the imperfect can be explained through the fact that only in the case of the Aeginetans a reaction is anticipated. This reaction is reported in the next sentence in the aorist tense: ἀνέθεσαν ἀστέρας χρυσέους «they dedicated golden stars».

## 14. *Alexander's ancestor Perdicas (§137)*

[3] ὅκως δὲ ὀπτῴη, ὁ ἄρτος τοῦ παιδὸς τοῦ θητὸς Περδίκκεω διπλήσιος ἐγίνετο αὐτὸς ἑωυτοῦ. ἐπεὶ δὲ αἰεὶ τὠυτὸ τοῦτο ἐγίνετο, <u>εἶπε</u> πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ἑωυτῆς· τὸν δὲ ἀκούσαντα ἐσῆλθε αὐτίκα ὡς εἴη τέρας καὶ φέροι μέγα τι. καλέσας δὲ τοὺς θῆτας <u>προηγόρευέ</u> σφι ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι ἐκ γῆς τῆς ἑωυτοῦ. [4] οἳ δὲ τὸν μισθὸν <u>ἔφασαν</u> δίκαιοι εἶναι ἀπολαβόντες οὕτω ἐξιέναι. ἐνθαῦτα ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ μισθοῦ πέρι ἀκούσας, ἦν γὰρ κατὰ τὴν καπνοδόκην ἐς τὸν οἶκον ἐσέχων ὁ ἥλιος, <u>εἶπε</u> θεοβλαβὴς γενόμενος «μισθὸν δὲ ὑμῖν ἐγὼ ὑμέων ἄξιον τόνδε ἀποδίδωμι», δέξας τὸν ἥλιον (Hdt., VIII 137.3-4)

And whenever she baked, the loaf of the boy their servant, namely Perdiccas, became double as large as by nature it should be. When this happened constantly in the same manner, she *told* it to her husband, and he when he heard it conceived forthwith that this was a portent and tended to something great. He summoned the farm-servants therefore, and *gave notice* to them to depart out of his land; and they *said* that it was right that before they went forth they should receive the wages which were due. Now it chanced that the sun was shining into the house down through the opening which received the smoke, and the king when he heard about the wages *said*, being infatuated by a divine power: «I pay you then this for wages, and it is such as ye deserve», pointing to the sunlight.

In the last part of the eighth book of the Histories, Herodotus narrates the events that occur during the next spring (479 BC). He concentrates in particular on Xerxes' general Mardonius, who sends ambassadors to both the Gods and men. A certain Alexander is sent to the Athenians, with the aim of convincing them to choose the side of the Persians. Before Alexander delivers his message, however, Herodotus sketches his ancestry and narrates how

his seventh ancestor, Perdicas, founded the Macedonian monarchy. He nar-
rates how three brothers (one of whom Perdicas) fled to Macedonia, where
they became farm-servants in the household of the King. There an unusual
event happens: whenever the wife of the King bakes bread, the loaf of Per-
dicas becomes twice as large as it should be. She informs the King of this
event, which is reported in the aorist (εἶπε «he said»), indicating that no
immediate reaction is expected. Such a reaction does follow, however[31]: the
King orders the three brothers to leave his land (προηγόρευε «he gave no-
tice»), to which the three brothers reply that they first want the wages which
are due (ἔφασαν «they said»). The King in turn replies that he does not intent
to give them these wages (εἶπε «he said»). From a textual point of view, it is
unsurprising that προηγόρευε and ἔφασαν are imperfects: in both cases a
reply is expected. The final reply by the king, on the other hand, which is
reported in the aorist, does not anticipate such a reaction.

## 15. *Athens' future allegiance (§§140-144)*

ἐγεγόνεε μὲν δὴ ὧδε ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Ἀμύντεω· ὡς δὲ ἀπίκετο ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας
ἀποπεμφθεὶς ὑπὸ Μαρδονίου, *ἔλεγε* τάδε … 141. Ἀλέξανδρος μὲν ταῦτα
*ἔλεξε*. Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ πυθόμενοι ἥκειν Ἀλέξανδρον ἐς Ἀθήνας ἐς ὁμολογίην
ἄξοντα τῷ βαρβάρῳ Ἀθηναίους, ἀναμνησθέντες τῶν λογίων ὥς σφεας χρεόν
ἐστι ἅμα τοῖσι ἄλλοισι Δωριεῦσι ἐκπίπτειν ἐκ Πελοποννήσου ὑπὸ Μήδων τε
καὶ Ἀθηναίων, κάρτα τε ἔδεισαν μὴ ὁμολογήσωσι τῷ Πέρσῃ Ἀθηναῖοι, αὐτίκα
τέ σφι ἔδοξε πέμπειν ἀγγέλους ... 142. ὡς δὲ ἐπαύσατο λέγων Ἀλέξανδρος,
διαδεξάμενοι *ἔλεγον* οἱ ἀπὸ Σπάρτης ἄγγελοι … [5] ... ταῦτα *ἔλεξαν* οἱ ἄγγελοι.
143. Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ πρὸς μὲν Ἀλέξανδρον *ὑπεκρίναντο* τάδε … 144. πρὸς μὲν
Ἀλέξανδρον ταῦτα *ὑπεκρίναντο*, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ἀπὸ Σπάρτης ἀγγέλους τάδε.
(Hdt., VIII 140.1/141.1/142.1, 5/143.1/144.1)

Thus then, I say, Alexander the son of Amyntas was descended; and when he
came to Athens sent from Mardonios, he *spoke as* follows… 141. Thus *spoke*
Alexander; and the Lacedemonians having been informed that Alexander had
come to Athens to bring the Athenians to make a treaty with the Barbarians,
and remembering the oracles, who it was destined that they together with the
other Dorians should be driven forth out of the Peloponnese by the Medes and

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[31] We are not necessarily dealing with a counterexample to my proposal, as one of the
reviewers suggests: Herodotus may simply be «playing» with the audience's expectations.

the Athenians combined, had been very greatly afraid lest the Athenians should make a treaty with the Persians; and forthwith they had resolved to send envoys. ... 142. So when Alexander had ceased speaking, the envoys from Sparta followed him forthwith and <u>*said*</u>: … Thus <u>*spoke*</u> the envoys … 143. And to Alexander the Athenians <u>*made answer*</u> thus … . 144. To Alexander they thus <u>*made answer*</u>, but to the envoys from Sparta as follows …

In this final scene, Alexander addresses the Athenians. After he has spoken, the Spartans (who want to prevent the Athenians from taking the Persian side) are also allowed to speak. An interesting parallel can be observed in how the words of both parties are introduced, and how they are concluded: first, an imperfect is used in (in the case of Alexander in combination with τάδε), stressing the great interest of what is to follow (ἔλεγε τάδε «he said the following», ἔλεγον «they said»). The words of both speakers are concluded by an aorist form accompanied by ταῦτα (ἔλεξε «he said», ἔλεξαν «they saud»), indicating that no reaction will follow immediately after the words of each respective speaker. When both parties have spoken, the Athenians first reply to Alexander, and then to the speaker. The reply of the Athenians to Alexander is introduced by the aorist ὑπεκρίναντο «they answered» in combination with τάδε (the same verb is repeated in §144 in combination with ταῦτα). Given the great importance of the Athenians' reply, one could have expected an imperfect form. However, Herodotus gives preference to the aorist, as it indicates that this is their final answer, and that no further reply is to be expected[32].

III.  CONCLUSION

I hope to have shown that aspectual choice with *uerba dicendi* is not a matter of indifference, as some scholars have suggested. Framing my observations within a «three-dimensional» theory of aspect in Ancient Greek, I have stressed the importance of the textual dimension for aspectual choice with this verb class. On the basis of an analysis of the eighth book of Herodotus' *Histories*, I have identified two relevant subdimensions, that is, (a) *whether the author wishes to draw explicit attention to what is said*; (b) *whether a reaction can be expected by the speaker (and by extension the reader).*

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[32]  Compare with our previous passage (4).

The passages discussed in the context of this article have shown that while aspectual choice is not random, it is a complex matter. On the one hand, we must take into account the interaction of the textual dimension with the two other dimensions. For example, we have encountered various passages where the choice for the imperfect seems to be primarily motivated by the wish of the author to present the events from an «internal» point of view (see (1), (3), (8), (12)). On the other hand, we must also consider possible conflicts between the two textual subdimensions that have been identified. This particularly concerns those cases where the contents of what is said is of some importance, but no reply is expected (see (4), (15)).

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