1. Introduction

Narrative is a mixed genre. Since Plato made the well-known distinction between διήγησις and μίμησις (Rep. 392c–394c), it has been recognized that narratives do not consist purely of narrative sentences. Typically, narrative discourse also includes a variety of non-narrative ingredients such as descriptions, character discourse and metanarrative elements. The various text types or narrative modes (the term I will use here) of which narratives are composed have been the object of both linguistic and narratological studies, such as Genette (1972), Chatman (1978, 1990), Bonheim (1982), Fleischman (1990), Chafe (1994), Longacre (1996), Fludernik (2000), Roulet, Fillietaz & Grobet (2001), Smith (2003) and Adam (2005). Within the field of Ancient Greek linguistics, however, the issue of narrative modes has not yet been addressed in a comprehensive manner. This paper aims to make a first step towards a typology of narrative modes in Ancient Greek narrative.

The narrative modes, in my conception, hinge on a central conceptual aspect of narration—the relation between the point of view of the narrator and the presentation of the text. Texts typically involve a range

---

1 I wish to thank Gerard Boter, Inez van Egeraat and Irene de Jong for their valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2 I owe this term to Genette (1972), Bonheim (1982), and Chafe (1994). Smith (2003) uses the more general term discourse mode.
3 Examples of studies touching on the issue of text types or related notions in Ancient Greek are Basset (1989b), who builds on Benveniste’s distinction between discours and récit to explain the occurrence of augmented verbs in Homer, and Bakker (1997b) who distinguishes two narrative modes, the mimetic and the diegetic mode, to account for certain aspect-alternations in Thucydides. With regard to Latin, Suzanne Adema is currently working on a Ph.D.-thesis on the discourse modes in Vergil’s Aeneid. See also Adema (2007) and Kroon (2002, 2007a).
Of different relationships between the narrator’s point of view and the world which is referred to verbally (e.g. Genette 1972, Bonheim 1982, Fleischman 1990 and Chafe 1994). The narrator may refer to a narrated world from an external retrospective point of view, or from a point of view internal to the narrated world. The narrator can also refer to the world outside the narrated world, shared by the narrator and the narratee. Furthermore, the relation between the narrator’s perspective and the narrated world is also relevant to the particular manner in which the text advances. For example, texts can display progress according to temporal change, or according to spatial change (Smith 2003).

In this paper, narrative modes are primarily approached as linguistic phenomena. The conceptual features of the narrative modes as they were described above are reflected in formal linguistic properties, such as tense and aspect, particles, and modality. Therefore text-segments which are marked by one particular narrative mode constitute discrete (textual) linguistic units. Although the narrative modes are primarily thought of as linguistic notions, they are also associated with a number of special narratological features.

In section (2) of my paper, I will introduce a typology of four distinct narrative modes, and I will discuss their specific linguistic and narratological properties. The four narrative modes which I distinguish are the displaced diegetic mode, the immediate diegetic mode, the descriptive mode, and the discursive mode. It will be shown that tense-aspect-marking is the most important distinctive linguistic feature of the narrative modes. The textual corpus on which my analysis is based consists of the Euripidean messenger speeches. My typology is however intended to account for all Ancient Greek narrative texts.

The third section of my paper addresses the relationship between the narrative modes and plot-structure. The linguistic units which are marked by the narrative modes have a certain rhetorical function in

---

4 My typology of narrative modes resembles that of Roulet, Fillietaz & Grobet (2001), who propose a trichotomy of discourse types: discours narratif (cf. my diegetic mode), descriptif and délibératif (my discursive mode). A difference between their typology and mine is my distinction within the diegetic mode between an immediate and a displaced subtype.

5 The crucial importance of tense and aspect as linguistic markers of the narrative modes or discourse modes has also been recognized by Weinrich (2001), Fleischman (1990), Chafe (1994), Smith (2003), and Adema (2007).

6 The corpus of Euripidean messenger speeches is based on De Jong (1990: 179). However, I exclude Hel. 605–621 from my corpus since it lacks a substantial narrative section.