Verbal prefixation, actionality and aspect in Classical Greek

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Abstract: Greek is a satellite-framed (SF) language in Talmy's (1991, 2000) terminology. His typology is primarily based on the encoding of motion events: in a SF language, such as English, verbal root tends to encode Manner, while Path is expressed by morphosyntax, and particles called satellites (e.g., *Mary danced into the room*); in a verb-framed language, such as Spanish, Path is normally expressed by the main verb, while Manner is kept unexpressed or expressed by adverbials (*María entró en la habitación bailando*). At a preliterary stage - and partially still in Homer - satellites are independent words but in the classical period they have become blended with the verb root in form of prefixes (this is also the case in Latin, s. Baldi 1999: 358-60, Haverling 2000, Baltic and Slavic, s. Vaillant 1966). In Greek, as probably in all other SF languages, the same prefixes can have either spatial meaning (normally with Motion verbs, ἐμβαίνω 'to go on', ἐκβαίνω 'to step out, go out'), or actional-aspectual meaning (διαζάω 'to live for a while, to support life', κατακαίω 'to burn completely'). Greek has also an independent highly developed aspectual system (*imperfective*, *perfective*, i.e. *aorist*, and *perfect*) which, according to some authors, was originally strongly related to actionality (Napoli 2006, 2007, Moser 2008, 2017, etc.). This gives rise to some questions: 1. Can the aspect significantly influence the meaning of a given prefix, and if yes, to what extent (e.g., in διάγω 'pass time doing something' and διήγαγον 'carry across')? 2. Does a telic prefix (as κατά in κατακαίω) specifically encode the fulfillment of an endpoint or simply presuppose the presence of an endpoint, the expression of fulfillment being a property of the *perfective* (i.e. *aorist*)? Although some studies on verbal prefixes, transitivity and telicity occur (Romagno 2004), verbal prefixation and its relationship with perfectivity have not yet been studied in detail for Classical Greek, except for the pioneering, but now dated, Brunel's (1939) work. In this study, I will propose a sketch on the effects of verbal prefixation on actionality in various semantic classes and its relationship with grammatical aspect (*imperfective*, *perfective* (=*aorist*) and *perfect*), basing myself primarily on a limited corpus of four classical authors: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Plato.

Keywords: verbal prefix, satellite, actionality, aspect

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