

# Koine Greek Aktionsart and the Preverb *Eis-*

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Aktionsarten are classes of propositions with distinct aspectual properties (Dowty, 1979). These classes are distinguishable in English and other languages using a battery of tests (Vendler, 1967; Kenny, 1963; Dowty). For example, atelic and telic aktionsarten can be distinguished by different entailments in the progressive: The realization of an event denoted by an atelic sentence is entailed in the progressive, but the realization of an event denoted by a telic sentence is not entailed in the progressive (Vendler, pp. 100, 102; Kenny, pp. 172-173; Dowty, p. 57). Examples (1) and (2) demonstrate this test.

- (1) a. Mark is running.  
b. Mark ran. (atelic)
- (2) a. Mark is building the house.  
b. Mark built the house. (telic)

Example (1a), using the atelic *run*, entails (1b), but example (2a), using the telic *build the house*, does not entail (2b).

Few of such tests are capable of assessing aktionsart in written languages which no longer have any speakers, and those that are need to be further developed and adapted if we are to have confidence in their accuracy when applied to texts (Evans, 2001, p. 20). This study considers options for doing so, specifically by analyzing the lexical aspect of one Koine Greek verb *erchomai* ‘go/come,’ one preverb *eis-* ‘into,’ and how the preverb affects the verb’s lexical aspect in the compound form *eis-erchomai* ‘go/come into.’ To determine the lexical aspect of *erchomai* and *eis-erchomai*, I annotated all instances of both verbs in the Greek New Testament. Several tests for lexical aspect which might be applied to texts are proposed. Applying the Imperfective Paradox and tests relating to certain interpretations the verbs have in different contexts, I analyze *erchomai* as an activity and *eis-erchomai* as telic, confirming the conclusions of Fanning (1990) and Olsen (1997) by applying rigorous methodology with respect to diagnosing aktionsart. To formalize this analysis of how *eis-*

affects the lexical aspect of *erchomai*, I adopt Dowty's 1979 aspect calculus, using his CAUSE and BECOME operators to account for the meaning of *eis-*, which denotes an endpoint to motion such that the subject must be at a given location at the end of an interval over which *eiserchomai* is true (Shain, 2009).

## References

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