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# CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK.

## IX.

IT is time now that we should pass on to the wide field of the Verb, which unless we reduce our scale will keep us busy for some time to come. It will be well to begin with a brief sketch of a subject which has not yet achieved an entrance into the grammars. For the last few years the comparative philologists—mostly (as usual) in Germany—have been busily investigating the problems of *Aktionsart*, the "kind of action" denoted by different verbal formations. The subject, naturally complex, has unfortunately been darkened not a little by inconsistent terminology, but it must be studied by all who wish to understand the rationale of the use of the Tenses, and the extremely important part which Compound Verbs play in the Greek and other Indo-Germanic languages. I may refer the English student to pp. 477 ff. of Mr. P. Giles's admirable *Manual of Comparative Philology*, ed. 2. He will find a fuller summary in pp. 471 ff. of Karl Brugmann's *Griech. Gramm.*, ed. 3, where the great philologist sets forth the results of Delbrück and other pioneers in comparative syntax, with an authority and lucidity all his own.

The student of Hebrew will not need telling that a Tense-system, dividing verbal action into the familiar categories of Past, Present and Future, is by no means so necessary to language as we conceive it to be. It may be more of a surprise to be told that in our own family of languages Tense is proved by scientific inquiry to be relatively a late invention, so much so that the elementary distinction between Past and Present was only developed to a rudimentary extent when the various branches of the family separated beyond the stage of mutual intelligibility.

As the language then possessed no Passive whatever, and no distinct Future, it will be realised that its resources needed not a little supplementing. But if they were poor in one direction, they were superabundant in another. Brugmann distinguishes no less than twenty-three conjugations, or present-stem classes, of which traces remain in Greek; and there are others preserved in other languages. We must add the aorists and perfect as formations essentially parallel. In most of these we are able to detect an *Aktionsart* originally appropriate to the conjugation, though naturally blurred by later developments. It is seen that the Aorist has a *punktuell* action—I wish the English *punctual* were a possible equivalent!—that is, it regards action as a *point*: it represents the point of entrance (*Ingressive*, as βαλεῖν "let fly," βασιλεῦσαι "come to the throne"), or that of completion (*Effective*, as βαλεῖν "hit"), or it looks at a whole action simply as having occurred, without distinguishing any steps in its progress (*Constative*, as βασιλεῦσαι "reign," or as when a sculptor says of his statue, ἐποίησεν ὁ δεῖνα "X. made it"). On the same graph the Constative will be a line reduced to a point by perspective. The Present has generally a *durative* action—linear, we might call it to keep up the same graphic illustration—as βάλλειν "to be throwing," βασιλεύειν "to be on the throne." The *Perfect* action is a variety by itself, denoting what began in the past and still continues: thus from the "point" root *weido*, "discover, descry," comes the primitive perfect οἶδα, "I discovered (εἶδον) and still enjoy the results," i.e. "I know." The present stems which show an ι-reduplication (ἵστημι, γίγνομαι) are supposed to have started with an *Iterative* action, so that γίγνομαι would originally present the succession of moments which are individually represented by ἐγενόμην. And so throughout the conjugations which are exclusively present. Other conjugations are

capable of making both present and aorist stems, as ἔφην compared with ἔβην, γράφειν with τραπεῖν, στένειν with γενέσθαι. In these the verb root itself is by nature either (*a*) " punktuell " (*b*) durative, or (*c*) capable of both. Thus the root of ἐνεγκεῖν, like our *bring*, is essentially a "point" word, being classed as "Effective ": it accordingly can form no present stem. That of φέρω, *fero, bear*, on the other hand, is essentially durative or "linear ": it can therefore form no aorist stem.[1] So with that of ἔστι, *est, is*, which has no aorist, while ἐγενόμην, as we have seen, had no durative present. An example of the third class is ἔχω, which (like our own *have*) is ambiguous in its action. "I had your money" may mean either "I received it" (point action) or " I was in possession of it " (linear action). In Greek the present stem is regularly durative, " to hold," while ἔσχον is a point word, " I received ": it is, for instance, the normal expression in a papyrus receipt—ἔσχον παρὰ σοῦ. The misapprehension of the action of ἔχω is responsible for most of the pother about ἔχωμεν in Romans v. 1.[2] The durative present of course means " let us enjoy the possession of peace ": δικαιωθέντες ἔσχομεν εἰρήνην is a premiss which is unexpressed, as St. Paul wishes to urge his readers to remember and make full use of a privilege which they *ex hypothesi* possess from their justification.

It is evident that this study of the kind of action denoted by verbal roots, and the modification of that action produced by the formation of tense and conjugation stems, will have considerable influence upon our lexical treatment of the many verbs in which present and aorist are derived

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[1] The new aorist (historically perfect) in the Germanic languages (our *bore*) has a constative action.

[2] Latest in Mr. McClellan's article in the September EXPOSITOR, p. 190; but much less old-fashioned scholars have fallen into the same snare. See S.H. *in loc.* (I use the epithet without prejudice ; but really one can only refer to a " stern, unbending Toryism " in scholarship, that robust faith in the Received Text, and other anachronisms, which prompts Mr. McClellan's onslaught on the Revised Version).

from different roots. Ὁράω (cognate with our "beware ")
is very clearly durative wherever it occurs in the New
Testament; and we are at liberty to say that this root,
which is incapable of forming an aorist, maintains its
character in the perfect, " I have watched, continuously
looked upon," while ὄπωπα would be " I have caught
sight of." Εἶδον " I discovered " and ὤφθην " I came
before the eyes of" are obviously point-words, and can
form no present. Εἶπον has a similar disability, and we
remember at once that its congeners ἔπος, vox, Sanskrit
vāc, etc., describe a single utterance : much the same is true
of ἐρρέθην, and the nouns ῥῆμα verbum, and word. On the
other hand λέγω, whose constative aorist ἔλεξα is replaced
in ordinary language by εἶπον, clearly denotes speech in
progress, and the same feature is very marked in λόγος.
The meaning has been developed in post-Homeric times
along lines similar to those which in Latin produced sermo
from the purely physical verb sero. One more example we
may give, as it leads to our remaining point. Ἐσθίω is
very obviously durative : ὁ ἐσθίων μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ, Mark xiv. 18,
is " he who is taking a meal with me." The root ed is so
distinctly durative that it forms no aorist, but the " point-
word " φαγεῖν (originally " to divide ") supplies the vacancy.
It will be found that φαγεῖν in the New Testament is in-
variably constative : [1] it denotes simply the action of ἐσθίειν
seen in perspective, and not either the beginning or the end of
that action. But we find the compound κατεσθίειν, κατα-
φαγεῖν, used to express the completed act, eating something
till it is finished. How little the preposition's natural
meaning affects the result, is seen by the fact that what in

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[1] There is one apparent exception, Rev. x. 10, where ὅτε ἔφαγον αὐτό is
"when I had eaten it up." But ἔφαγον is simply the continuation of
κατέφαγον in v. 9. Cf. John i. 11 f. παρέλαβον . . ἔλαβον, Rom. xv. 4 προ-
εγράφη . . ἐγράφη. The stock example of this Greek rule is Euripides,
*Bacchae* 1065, κατῆγον, ἦγον, ἦγον, which we translate " pulled down, down,
down," repeating the preposition instead of the verb. I do not remember
seeing this principle noted for the New Testament.

Greek is κατεσθίειν and in Latin "*devorare*" is in English "eat *up*" and in Latin also "*comesse*." In all the Indo-Germanic languages, most conspicuously and systematically in the Slavonic, but clearly enough in our own, this function of verb compounds may be seen. The choice of the preposition which is to produce this *perfective* action[1] depends upon conditions which vary with the meaning of the verbal root. Most of them are capable of "perfectivising" an imperfective verb, if the original adverb's local sense has been sufficiently obscured. We may compare in English the meaning of *bring* and *bring up, sit* and *sit down, drive* and *drive away* and *drive home*,[2] *knock* and *knock in* and *knock down, carry* and *carry off* and *carry through, work* and *work out* and *work off, fiddle* and *fiddle in* (Tennyson's "Amphion"), *set* and *set back* and *set at* and *overset, see* and *see to, write* and *write off, hear* and *hear out, break* and *tobrake* (Judges ix. 53, A.V.), *make* and *make over, follow* and *follow up, come* and *come on, go* and *go round, shine* and *shine away* (= dispel by shining). Among all the varieties of this list it will be seen that the compounded adverb in each case *perfectivises* the simplex, the combination denoting action which has accomplished a result, while the simplex denoted action in progress, or else momentary action to which no special result was assigned. In this list are included many examples in which the local force of the adverb is very far from being exhausted. *Drive in, drive out, drive off, drive away,* and *drive home* are alike perfective, but the goals attained are different according to the distinct sense of the adverbs. In a great many compounds the local force of the adverb is so strong that it leaves the action

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[1] One could wish that a term had been chosen which would not have suggested an echo of the tense-name. "Perfective action" has nothing whatever to do with the Perfect tense.

[2] "Prepositions," when compounded, are of course still the pure adverbs they were at the first, so that this accusative noun turned adverb is entirely on all fours with the rest.

of the verb untouched. The separateness of adverb and verb in English, as in Homeric Greek, helps the adverb to retain its force longer than it does in Latin and later Greek. In both these languages many of the compound verbs have completely lost consciousness of the meaning originally borne by the prepositional element, which is accordingly confined to its perfectivising function. This is especially the case with *com* (*con*) and *ex* (*e*) in Latin, as *consequi* " follow *out*, attain," *efficere* " work *out*," and with ἀπό, διά, κατά and σύν in Greek, as ἀποθανεῖν "die" (θνήσκειν " be dying "), διαφυγεῖν " escape " (φεύγειν = " flee "), καταδιώκειν " hunt *down* " (διώκω = " pursue "), κατεργάζεσθαι " work *out*," συντηρεῖν " keep *safe* " (τηρεῖν = " watch "). But many compounds with these prepositions have none of the perfective force, as διαπορεύεσθαι, καταβαίνω, ἀπ- and συν-έρχεσθαι, where the preposition is still very much alive. And many other prepositions on occasion exhibit the perfectivising power. I should be inclined, for example, to describe thus the function of ἐπί when compounded with γινώσκω. The simplex in the present stem is durative, " to be taking in knowledge." The simplex aorist has point action, generally *effective*, meaning " ascertain, realise," but occasionally (as in John xvii. 25, 2 Tim. ii. 19) it is constative : ἔγνων σε gathers into one perspective all the successive moments of γινώσκωσιν σέ in John xvii. 3. Ἐπιγνῶναι, " find out, determine," is rather more decisive than the former use of γνῶναι ; but in the present stem it seems to differ from γινώσκειν in the inclusion of the goal in the picture of the journey there—it tells of knowledge already gained. Thus 1 Corinthians xiii. 12 may be paraphrased, " Now I am acquiring knowledge which is only partial at best : then I shall have learnt my lesson, shall *know*, as God in my mortal life knew me."

The meaning of the Present-stem of these perfectivised roots naturally demands explanation. Since θνήσκειν is

" to be dying " and ἀποθανεῖν " to die," what is there left for ἀποθνήσκειν ? An analysis of the occurrences of this particular stem in the New Testament will anticipate some important points we shall have to make under the Tenses as such. Putting aside the special use μέλλω ἀποθνήσκειν,[1] we find the present stem used as an *iterative* in 1 Corinthians xv. 31, and as *frequentative* in Hebrews vii. 8, x. 28, 1 Corinthians xv. 22, Revelation xiv. 13, describing action taking place from time to time with different individuals, as the iterative describes action repeated by the same agent.[2] In John xxi. 23 and 1 Corinthians xv. 32 it stands for a future, a question to which we must return. Only in Luke viii. 42, 2 Corinthians vi. 9 and Hebrews xi. 21 is it strictly durative, replacing the now obsolete simplex θνήσκω.[3] The simplex, however, vanished only because the "linear perfective" expressed its meaning sufficiently, denoting as it does the whole process leading up to an attained goal. Καταφεύγειν, for example, implies that the refuge is reached, but it depicts the journey there in one view : καταφυγεῖν is only concerned with the moment of arrival. A very important example in the New Testament is the recurrent οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι " the perishing." Just as much as ἀποκτείνω, and its passive ἀποθνήσκω, ἀπόλλυμαι[4] implies the completion of the process of destruction. When we speak of a " dying " man we do not absolutely bar the possibility of a recovery, but our word implies death as the goal assured. Similarly in the cry of the Prodigal, ἀπόλλυμαι λιμῷ, and in that of the disciples in the storm,

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[1] Μέλλω c. pres. inf. comes eighty-four times in New Testament; c. fut. twice in Acts (μ. ἔσεσθαι); c. aor. six times (Acts xii. 6, Rom. viii. 18, Gal. iii. 23, Rev. iii. 2 (ἀποθανεῖν), 16, xii. 4; (also Luke xx. 36 in D and Marcion).

[2] Both will be (. . .), a series of points, on the graph hitherto used.

[3] Τέθνηκα of course is the perfect of ἀποθνήσκω: a perfect needed no perfectivising in a " point-word " like this.

[4] Note that in all three the simplex is obsolete, for the same reason in each case.

σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα, we recognise in the perfective verb the sense of an absolutely *inevitable* doom, even though the subsequent story tells us it was averted. In οἱ ἀπολλύμενοι, strongly durative though the verb is, we see its perfectivity in the fact that the goal is *ideally* reached: only a complete transformation of its subjects brings them out of the doom their state necessarily involves.

"The perfective *Aktionsart* in Polybius," the earliest of the great Κοινή writers, forms the subject of an elaborate study by Dr. Eleanor Purdie, of Newnham College, in Brugmann and Streitberg's *Indo-germanische Forschungen* for 1898 (pp. 63-153). A comparison of Miss Purdie's results with those derivable from the New Testament Greek gives much point to Brugmann's remark (*Griech. Gram.*³ p. 484) that research in this field is still in its initial stages. Miss Purdie shows that since Homer the aorist simplex has been progressively taking the constative colour, at the expense of its earlier *punktuell* [1] character ; and that there is a growing tendency to use the compounds, especially those with διά, κατά and σύν, to express what in the oldest Greek could be sufficiently indicated by the simplex. To a certain extent the New Testament use agrees with that of Polybius. Thus φυγεῖν is constative eleven times, "to flee," with no suggestion of the prolongation of flight (φεύγειν) or of its successful accomplishment (διαφυγεῖν or καταφυγεῖν). [2] Here the papyri are decidedly in agreement. Διῶξαι also is always con-

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[1] Miss Purdie calls this "perfective" also : Brugmann, following Delbrück, has since insisted on reserving "perfective" for the compound verbs. Unity of technical terms is so vital that I adapt the writer's phraseology to that of the highest authority.

[2] Matt. xxiii. 33 is, I think, "how are ye to *flee from* the judgment of Gehenna ? " (cf. iii. 7). The thought is not the inevitableness of God's punishment, but the stubbornness of men who will not take a step to escape it. Similarly, in Hebrews xi. 34 we have ἔφυγον for the *beginning* of action—not the goal of safety attained, but the first and decisive step away from danger. The perfective therefore would be inappropriate.

stative, while the perfective καταδιῶξαι, "hunt down,"
occurs once in Mark i. 36, where "followed after"
needs correction. Ἐργάσασθαι is certainly constative in
Matthew xxv. 16, 3 John 5, and Hebrews xi. 33 : it
surveys in perspective the continuous labour which is so
often expressed by ἐργάζεσθαι. In Matthew xxvi. 10, and
even 2 John 8, I think the same is the case : the stress lies
on the *work* rather than on accomplishment. This last
idea is regularly denoted by the perfective compound with
κατά. Φυλάξαι "guard" is, I think, always constative,
διαφυλάξαι "preserve" occurring in Luke iv. 10. Similarly
τηρῆσαι "watch, keep," a continuous process seen in
perspective : συν- and δια-τηρεῖν (present stem only) denote
watching which achieves its purpose up to the point of
time contemplated. Ἀγωνίζεσθαι is only used in the
durative present, but καταγωνίσασθαι (Heb. xi. 33) is a
good perfective. Φαγεῖν and καταφαγεῖν are quite on
Polybian lines (see above). On the other hand, in the
verbs Miss Purdie examines, there is decidedly less use
of the compound in the New Testament than in Polybius,
and the non-constative aorists which she notes as excep-
tions to the general tendency are reinforced by others
which in Polybius are not usually such. Thus ἰδεῖν is
comparatively rare in Polybius : "in several cases the
meaning is purely constative, and those exx. in which a
perfective meaning [1] must be admitted bear a very small
proportion to the extremely frequent occurrences of the
compound verb in the like sense" (*op. cit.* p. 94 f.). In
the New Testament, however, the simplex ἰδεῖν is exceed-
ingly common, while the compound (καθορᾶν, Rom. i. 20)
only appears once. It is moreover—so far as I can judge
without the labour of a count—as often *punktuell* (ingres-
sive) as constative : Matthew ii. 10, " when they caught sight

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[1] That is, *punktuell* : Miss Purdie does not distinguish this from
*perfective* proper (with preposition).

of the star," will serve as an example, against constative uses like that in the previous verse, " the star which they saw." (In very many cases it would be difficult to distinguish the one from the other.) There are in the New Testament no perfective compounds of θεάομαι, θεωρέω, λογίζομαι, πράσσω, κινδυνεύω, ἄρχομαι, μέλλω, ὀργίζομαι, δύνω, or μίσγω (μίγνυμι), to set by those given from the historian. Νοέω is somewhat obscure, and does not very easily conform to the Polybian rule. The present is probably "use the mind, understand," in durative sense ; the aorist in John xii. 40 and Ephesians iii. 4 may be the constative of this. But κατανοῆσαι on this principle should be "realise," with point action (effective) : this will suit Luke xx. 23, and in the present stem Matthew vii. 3 and Acts xxvii. 39 (? " noticed one after another "). Another perfective force might be " fix the mind on," which will with some pressure account for the other occurrences. Μαθεῖν is sometimes constative, summing up the process of μανθάνειν, but has often purely point action, " ascertain, learn " : so Acts xxiii. 27, Galatians iii. 2, and probably elsewhere, also often in the papyri. Καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα, Matthew vi. 28, is, I think, better rendered " understand ' (" take in this fact about "), which brings it into line : Luke's parallel κατανοήσατε will, as we have seen, bear nearly the same meaning. The use of τελέω differs widely from that in Polybius, where the perfective compound (συντ. greatly predominates, while in the New Testament the simplex is four times as common. In the latter, moreover, the aorist is always *punktuell*, " finish " : only in Gal. v. 16 is the constative " perform " a possible alternative. Ὀργισθῆναι is another divergent, for instead of the perfective διοργ. " fly into a rage " we six times have the simplex in the New Testament, where the constative aorist " be angry " never occurs.[1] Finally we

[1] Rev. xi. 18 might be translated " were angry," but the ingressive

note that καθέζεσθαι is always purely durative in New Testament ("sit," not "sit down," which is καθίσαι), thus differing from Polybian use.

The net result of this comparison may perhaps be stated thus, provisionally : for anything like a decisive settlement we must wait for some χαλκέντερος grammarian who will plod right through the papyri and the Κοινή literature with minuteness to match Miss Purdie's over her six books of Polybius—a task for which a year's holiday is a *condicio sine qua non*. The growth of the constative aorist is a feature of later Greek which may be regarded as undeniable : its consequences will occupy us when we come to the consideration of the Tenses, to which we turn next month. But the disuse of the " point " aorist, ingressive or effective, and the preference of the perfective compound to express its meaning, will naturally vary very much with the author. The general tendency may be allowed as proved; the extent of its working will depend on the personal equation. In the use of compound verbs, especially, we cannot expect the *negligé* style of ordinary conversation, or even the highest degree of elaboration to which Luke or the *auctor ad Hebraeos* could rise, to come near the profusion of a literary man like Polybius.

I hope that this brief account of recent researches, in a field hitherto almost untried by New Testament scholars, may suffice to prepare the way for the necessary attempt to place on a scientific basis the use of the tenses, a subject on which many of the most crucial questions of exegesis depend. I have, I trust, made it clear that the notion of present or past *time* is not by any means the first thing we must think of in dealing with tenses. For our problems of *Aktionsart* it is a mere accident that φεύγω is (generally) present and ἔφευγον, ἔφυγον and φυγών

" waxed angry " (at the accession of the King) suits the previous verse much better.

past: the first point we must settle is the distinction between φευγ and φυγ which is common to all their moods. The superstructure which grew up mainly through the intrusion of that little adverb ἐ-, still detachable as any other preposition in the earliest extant Greek, will be the subject of our next inquiry.

JAMES HOPE MOULTON.

## *THE REVISED VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: A REPLY.*

IN the September number of the EXPOSITOR, the Rev. J. B. McClellan, M.A., puts in "a new and earnest plea for hesitation" against "proposals urged from time to time for the more extended use of the Revised Version, whether in public or in private, in preference to the Authorised Version." He admits "that the R.V. advantageously removes various obsolete expressions and other minor defects of the A.V., and throws light on sundry obscure passages"; but adds that "it must still be firmly asserted that it is burdened with more serious inaccuracies than it removes, and that, upon the whole, it falls far short of the merits of the Old Version."

In support of this sweeping condemnation, Mr. McClellan appeals only, as specimens, to "*erroneous renderings*" of seven passages taken from the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Colossians; and endeavours to "indicate the seriousness of their character." The many changes in the Greek text adopted and translated by the Revisers, he dismisses with an unproved assertion that they were "unduly influenced . . . by an over-estimate, at that time, of certain ancient authorities." As the whole question is one of comparative value, he ought to have quoted, at least in these epistles, the chief passages in which the