

# Constructio praegnans and evolution of the goal vs. place differentiation

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## Introduction

*Constructio praegnans* is attested in a number of ancient Indo-European languages that are characterized as satellite-framed in terms of Talmy's typology (1985, 1991), i.e. use specialized "Preposition + Case" combinations to encode goals of motion (e.g., "eis / es + Acc" in Ancient Greek, "v + Acc" in Old Church Slavonic). This construction is characterized by one of two types of mismatch between the "P + Case" combination used and the meaning encoded:

- (1) **es** **Kurēnēn** esōthēsan (Thuc. 1.110)  
into Cyrene.ACC save.AOR.PASS.3PL  
'they were saved [by arriving] into Cyrene' (goal PP & static verb)
- (2) hò d' **en purí** bálle thuēlās (*Iliad* 9.220)  
3SG.NOM PRT in fire.DAT throw.IMP.3SG firstlings.ACC  
'he was throwing firstlings in the fire' (static PP & motion verb)

## Expansion of S-framing in Ancient Greek

Subject of study: gradual expansion of the specialized goal-encoding preposition *eis* / *es* 'into' (+Acc) in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (excluded: non-spatial goals, perfect participles, forms of the middle voice). Cf. the specialized *es*+Acc 'into X' in (3) vs. the static *en*+Dat 'in X' in (2):

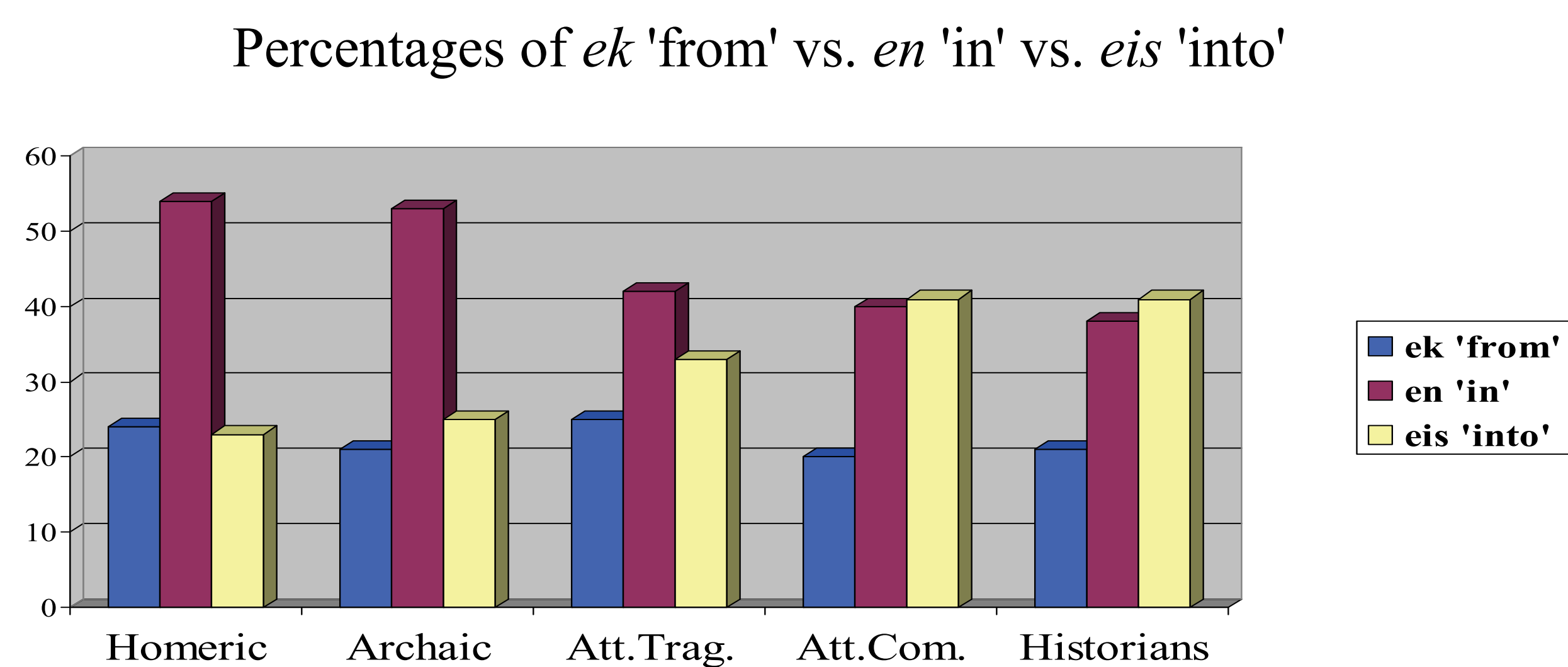
- (3) poiēsas dē tāuta heōutōn esēbale **es** tō pūr  
do.AOR.PRT.M PRT these.ACC REFL throw.AOR.3SG into the fire.ACC  
'having done these things he threw himself into the fire' (Hdt. 7.107)

Subcorpora used:

- Homeric (epic): *Iliad & Odyssey* 8-7(?) c. BCE.
- Archaic period: multiple authors (Hesiod to Pindar) 7-6 c. BCE
- Attic tragedy: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides 5 c. BCE
- Attic comedy: Aristophanes late 5 c. BCE
- Historians: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon late 5-4 c. BCE

Use of *ek* 'from' vs. *en* 'in' vs. *eis* 'into' in the subcorpora:

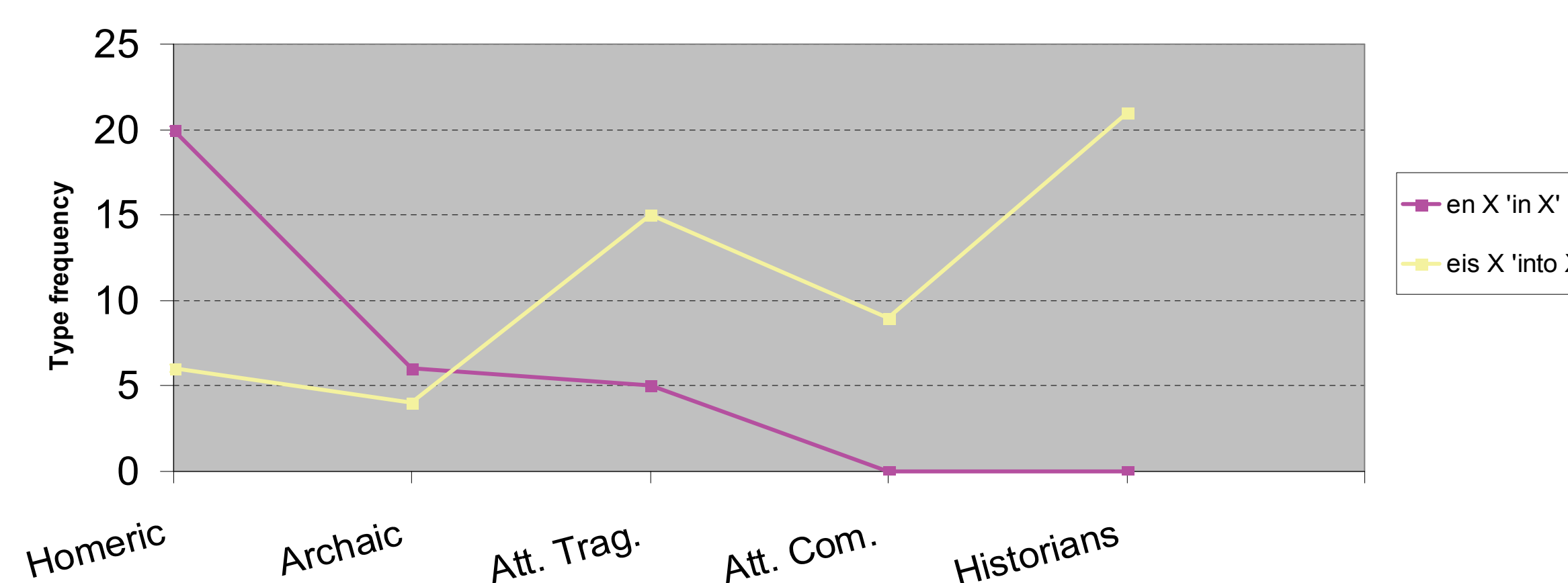
	Homeric	Archaic	Classical		
			Att.Trag.	Att.Com.	Historians
<i>ek</i> 'from'	926 (24%)	914 (21%)	1603 (25%)	289 (20%)	3426 (21%)
<i>en</i> 'in'	2112 (54%)	2317 (53%)	2671 (42%)	581 (40%)	6358 (38%)
<i>eis</i> 'into'	897 (23%)	1100 (25%)	2076 (33%)	600 (41%)	6734 (41%)
Total	3935 (100%)	4331 (100%)	6350 (100%)	1470 (100%)	16518 (100%)



Sample verbs of motion with *eis*+Acc 'into X' vs. *en*+Dat 'in X'

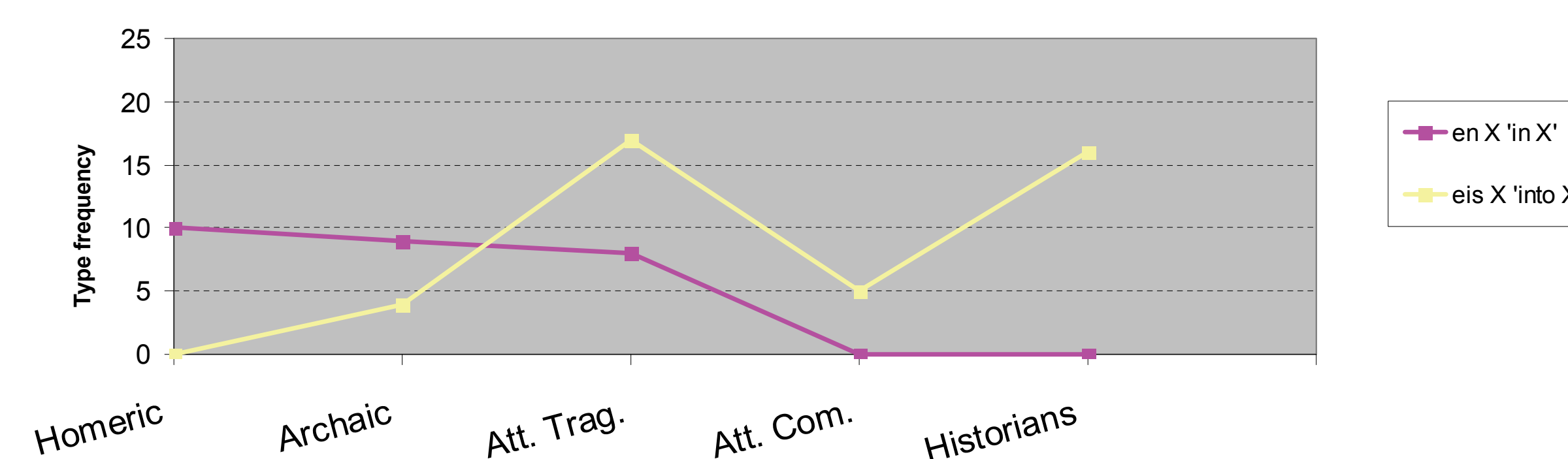
*bállō* 'throw, cast' (excl. 'strike'): types (tokens) of goal PPs

	Homeric	Archaic	Att. Trag.	Att. Com.	Historians
<i>en</i> X 'in X'	20 (35)	6 (6)	5 (5)	0	0
<i>eis</i> X 'into X'	6 (8)	4 (5)	15 (15)	9 (15)	21 (24)



*πίπτω* 'fall' (excl. 'die', 'attack')

	Homeric	Archaic	Att. Trag.	Att. Com.	Historians
<i>en</i> X 'in X'	10 (28)	9 (9)	8 (8)	0	0
<i>eis</i> X 'into X'	0	4 (6)	17 (18)	5 (5)	16 (19)



Goals marked by *en*+Dat 'in X' with sample verbs of motion:

	Homeric	Archaic	Att. Trag.	Cl.Hist.
<i>bainō</i> 'walk, step'	+	-	-	-
<i>thrāskō</i> 'leap'	+	-	-	-
<i>elaínō</i> 'drive (weapon into smb.)'	+	+	-	-
<i>bállō</i> 'throw, cast'	+	+	+	-
<i>πίπτω</i> 'fall'	+	+	+	-
<i>títhēmi</i> 'place'; <i>hístēmi</i> 'set up'; <i>kathístēmi</i> 'establish'; <i>hidrúo</i> 'make seat'; <i>hidrúesthai</i> 'be set'	+	+	+	+

## Cross-linguistic perspective

Strikingly similar process of gradual expansion of specialized goal-marking "P+Case" combinations occurred in Slavic (Toporov 1961, Stanisheva 1966).

Goals marked by the static *v*+Dat 'in X' with sample verbs of motion:

	Old Church Slavonic	Old Russ.	Modern Russ. (Nikitina f/c.)
<i>iziti</i> 'go out', <i>v"ziti</i> 'go in'	+	-	-
<i>priiti</i> 'come', <i>priēzditi</i> 'come (by vehicle)'	+	+	-
<i>v"z"nesti</i> 'carry up', <i>v"nesti</i> 'carry in'	+	+	-
<i>mētati</i> 'throw, cast'		+	-
<i>padati</i> , <i>pasti</i> 'fall'	+	+	(+)
<i>polagati</i> , <i>položiti</i> 'place, put'; <i>postaviti</i> 'set up, make stand'; <i>posaditi</i> 'make seat, establish'	+	+	+

## Conclusions

✓ The distinction between satellite-framed and verb-framed languages is a matter of degree; development of a S-framed system is a gradual process.

✓ The gradual expansion of specialized satellites is lexically conditioned.

✓ The same classes of verbs continue combining with locational (static), rather than with specialized directional expressions in Classical Greek and in modern Slavic languages, suggesting that the use of specialized satellites with new verbs is sensitive to the same lexical factors.

### Selected references

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