Verb Classes and Aspects:
Situation Type in Pre-Tang Chinese

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Summary: In this paper the relevance of the verbal category *situation type* (Aktionsart) for the aspectual interpretation of a verb phrase in Pre-Tang Chinese will be discussed and the semantic and syntactic constraints situation type readings of a verb or a verb phrase are subject to will be presented. The analysis will be based on a comprehensive study of situation types in Han period Chinese and on the evidence from one single verb, the verb *xing* 行 'to walk, to march, to put in motion', for which different but related meanings are provided in the literature. It will be shown that verb phrases built with this verb can—according to their syntactic environment—attain different situation type readings, namely an activity and two different event readings. On the basis of the syntactic constraints the different situation type readings of this verb are subject to it will be hypothesised that verbs in Chinese usually display one basic situation type, i.e. a set of basic syntactic features, which can shift due to the addition of other syntactic elements. Additionally, it will be shown that contrary to what has been assumed by many authors for Modern Mandarin, in Pre-Tang Chinese the category *accomplishment*, i.e. one of the four verbal categories proposed in VENDLER's seminal study, evidently exists for verb phrases consisting of a verb and its definite inner argument.

Introduction

In this paper the investigation of the verbal category *situation type*, also labelled *lexical aspect* or *Aktionsart*, in Pre-Tang Chinese (before the 7th century CE) is at issue. Lexical aspect is inherent in all verbal expressions and has to be distinguished from grammatical aspect which deals with the particular viewpoint a situation[1] is presented from. Since there is no obvious morphological system of the verb distinguishing different aspects—grammatical or lexical—in the transmitted written Classical Chinese language (5th c. to 2nd c. BCE), the aspectual interpretation of a verb depends mainly on the semantics, i.e. the situation type, the Aktionsart, of the verb phrase. In general, the lexical aspect can be realised either by the primary structure

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[1] Very often in the literature the term *event* is employed as a general term referring to all types of situations. But since *event* in most frameworks also refers particularly to telic situations, I prefer the term *situation* to refer to an unspecified situation and confine the term *event* to telic situations.

of the verbal lexeme or by derivation as e. g. in German, but often it is only derivable from the semantics of the verb, more accurate from the semantics of the predicate (including the verb and its arguments and adjuncts). Starting with Aristotle, many attempts have been made to distinguish the different ways how verbs depict different situations; for instance basic distinctions are made between static and dynamic situations, or bounded and unbounded situations. The classical quatripartition of verbs Vendler[2] proposed divides the different situation types into four different categories: states, activities, accomplishments and achievements. States and activities are both atelic or unbounded and focus neither on the initial nor the final point of the situation, but in contrast to states, activities are assumed to start and to end and they require an input of energy to be maintained. Accomplishments are telic or bounded; they include an activity with its final point while achievements focus only on the final point and are accordingly sometimes considered as punctual.[3] More recent analyses by Lyons distinguish only three different categories: states, processes and events, with states and processes being atelic (unbounded) and events being telic (bounded) respectively.[4] Accomplishments—which are assumed not to exist in Modern Mandarin—and achievements are both subsumed under events. The structure of situation types (Aktionsarten) is compositional, with individual predicates as well as various kinds of noun phrases—but also prepositional phrases—contributing to the overall aspectual structure of a particular sentence.[5] The interplay of the verb and its arguments and additionally the employment of adverbs play an important role in situation type shifts for example, from telic to atelic and vice versa; i. e. two different aspectual readings for one verb or verb phrase are available according to their syntactic environment.

Regarding the semantics of the verb in Modern Mandarin, the importance of the lexical aspect has long been taken into account to explain the constraints in the employment of aspectual morphemes, and in particular of the aspectual suffixes;[6] these studies are usually based on Vendler's quadri-

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[2]　Vendler 1967.

[3]　This analysis is presented in Comrie 1976, p. 46f.

[4]　Lyons 1977, p. 707. This tripartite subdivision is also assumed in Comrie 1976, Bach 1981 amongst others and was adopted by Verkuyl in the 1980s but modified later. Verkuyl 2005 (p. 205) confines the lexical aspect to the two features [+ADDTO] which refers to a dynamic, and [–ADDTO] which refers to a static situation. These features are regarded as the semantic contribution of the verb to the sentential aspect.

[5]　See e.g. Verkuyl 1993, 2005. A particular role in building up the aspectual value of a predicate has to be assigned to the internal argument of V as has been show e.g. in Verkuyl 2005 and in Krifka 1998.

[6]　Among many others these constraints have been discussed in Tai 1984, Smith 1991, Ross 1995, 2002, Tang 2001, Lin 2003, 2005.

partition. By contrast, no comparable studies have been undertaken for the Classical (5ᵗʰ c.–2ⁿᵈ c. BCE) and the Pre-Medieval language (1ˢᵗ c. BCE–1ˢᵗ c. CE), for the simple reason that aspectual suffixes do not yet exist: the source structures for the aspectual suffixes in Modern Mandarin do not appear until the Early Medieval (2ⁿᵈ c.–6ᵗʰ c. CE) period. But despite the lack of aspectual suffixes such as found in Modern Mandarin, in the language of the Pre-Tang periods fine grained aspectual distinctions can be expressed by syntactic means. In the following discussion, the relevance of the verbal category *situation type* for the aspectual interpretation of a VP will be demonstrated and the semantic and syntactic constraints situation type readings of a verb or a VP are subject to will be presented. The analysis is based on a comprehensive study on situation types in Han period Chinese (206 BCE–220 CE), and on the evidence from one single verb, the verb *xing* 行 'to walk, to march, to put in motion' for which different, but related meanings are provided in the literature. It will be shown that VPs built with this verb can—according to their syntactic environment—attain different situation type readings, namely an activity and two different event readings. Additionally, it will be shown that contrary to what has been assumed by many authors for Modern Mandarin, in Pre-Tang Chinese the quatripartition proposed by VENDLER evidently exists.

The data is taken from the Han period texts *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, and *Lunheng*, and the two Wei Jin Nanbei chao texts *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan*, a Buddhist text originally written in Chinese, and the *Miaofa lianhua jing*, a text translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva; both texts have been composed at the beginning of the 5ᵗʰ century CE.

Situation types in Han period Chinese

Based on VENDLER's subdivision of situation types and on the notification of SMITH[7] for Modern Mandarin, in the Chinese language of the period under investigation the general structure of situation types can be depicted as follows[8]:

(a) Events: Achievement: (I   ///////)   F; Accomplishment: (I)   ///////   F[9]

Event verbs can be divided into achievement verbs such as *ding* 定 'to establish', *mie* 滅 'to destroy', *si* 死 'to die' (and its synonyms), *zhi* 至 'to reach', *de* 得 'to attain, to get', *sha* 殺 'to kill', and many others and accomplishment

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[7] SMITH 1991, 1997.

[8] See also MEISTERERNST 2008.

[9] I refers to the initial and F to the final point of the situation. This notation is derived from SMITH 1991, 1997.

verbs such as e.g. *zhu* 築 'to build', *wang* 往 'to go to', *du* 渡 'to cross', *ju* 距 'to fend off'. All event verbs are telic or bounded and they include at least the final point (F) of the situation. While an achievement only consists of the final point of a situation, an accomplishment also includes the process leading up to the final point. But they both result in a change of state. A clear line of distinction between both situation types is very often difficult to draw and it necessitates a precise analysis of the semanto-syntactic constraints of the event verb or predicate in question.

The following two examples represent a typical achievement verb and a typical accomplishment verb respectively:

– Achievements (I   ///////)   F

(1) 襄王母蚤死, 後母曰惠后. *Shiji*: 4;152

Xiang wang   mu   zao si hou mu yue Hui hou
Xiang wang mother early die later mu say Hui hou

"Xiang wang's mother *died* early and the stepmother's name was Hui hou."

– Accomplishments[10] (I)   ////////   F

(2) 武王渡河, 中流, 白魚躍入王舟中, 武王俯取以祭.   *Shiji*: 4;120

Wu wang du he zhong liu bai yu yue ru wang zhou zhong
Wu king cross river middle float white fish leap enter king boat middle

Wu wang   fu   qu yi   ji
Wu king bow.the.head take with sacrifice

"Wu wang *crossed* the river and while they were floating in the middle a white fish leaped into the king's boat and Wu wang bent down to it to take it for a sacrifice."

(b) State: (I) _____ (F)

State verbs are those verbs that express a property such as *fu* 富 'rich', or verbs of perception such as *zhi* 知 'to know', verbs of possession or location such as *you* 有 'to have', or *zai* 在 'to be in', or emotive state verbs such as *ai* 愛 'to love', *zeng* 憎 'to hate' etc., which all exclude both the initial (I) and the final point (F). In contrast to activity verbs they do not entail a process

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[10] TAI (1984) and Ross (1990, 2002), for instance, argue that *accomplishments* do not exist in Modern Mandarin. This hypothesis is challenged in LIN (ms.) who assumes the existence of true accomplishment verbs like *hua* 'draw', or *xie* 'write' that have an in-built telos in their lexical semantics. In any case, the line between activities and accomplishments on the one hand and accomplishments and achievements on the other hand can be difficult to determine and usually depends to a high degree on the syntactic environment, the argument structure, the employment of adverbs etc. of the verb.

with perceptible stages. Apparently, states can be divided into those that can be considered changeable and those that cannot.[11] This differentiation can be based on the employment of adverbs and duration phrases.

Of the following two examples, the first represents the category of a changeable state whereas the second—with an emotive state verb—represents an unchangeable state.

(3) 一船之載當中國數十兩車，國富民眾． *Shiji*: 118;3087

  Yi chuan zhi zai dang   zhongguo shu shi liang
One boat ZHI load correspond middle.land several ten MEAS

  che, guo fu min zhong
carriage, state rich people many

"… and the load of one boat corresponded to that of several ten carriages of the middle lands; the state was *rich* and the people were *numerous*."

(4) 梁孝王者，孝景弟也，其母實太后愛之． *Shiji*: 107;2839[12]

Liang Xiao wang zhe Xiao Jing   di   ye qi mu
Liang Xiao king NOM Xiao Jing younger.brother FIN his mother

Dou   taihou   ai zhi
Dou royal.mother love him

"King Xiao of Liang was the younger brother of Xiao Jing and his mother, the royal lady Dou, *loved* him."

(c) Activity: (I) /////// (F) or (I /////// F)

In contrast to accomplishments, which always include a final point and a change of state, for activities the final point does not belong to the structure of the situation, although of course they can have temporal boundaries.[13] Activities are expressed by atelic process verbs that do not focus on either the initial or the final point, such as *xue* 學 'to learn', *shi* 食 'to eat', *zhan* 戰 'to fight', *jian* 見 'to see', and *xing* 行 'to go'. As far as verbs such as *jian* 見 and *xing* 行 are concerned, they can attain a telic reading as well: *jian* 見 'to meet' (telic), *xing* 行 'to put in motion' (telic).

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[11] Changeable states evidently correspond to stage-level state predicates and unchangeable states to individual level predicates. This distinction also holds for Modern Mandarin and can be evidenced by the compatibility of stage level predicates with the aspectual suffix *le* 了 leading to an telic reading, whereas individual level predicates are not compatible with *le* 了 (SMITH 1997, p. 70).

[12] A similar instance—not a literal quotation—is found in *Hanshu*, 52;2375.

[13] SMITH 1997, p. 23: "The termination of an Activity does not follow from the structure of an event. The arbitrary final endpoint of an Activity is a temporal bound, explicit or implicit. Activities *terminate* or *stop*, but they do not *finish*; the notion of completion is irrelevant to a process event."

In the following example the verb *xue* 學 'to learn' has been chosen to represent the category of activity verbs.

(5) 學長短縱橫之術，晚乃學易、春秋、百家言．   *Shiji*: 112; 2953

Xue chang duan zong   heng   zhi   shu,   wan nai xue
Study long short vertical horizontal ZHI technique, later then study

   yi   chun   qiu   bai   jia   yan
change spring autumn hundred school word

"He *studied* the military and diplomatic techniques of the Warring States period, and later he studied the *Book of Changes*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the teachings of the Hundred Schools."

Although there is general agreement that early stages of the Chinese language did have a morphology which also possibly concerned the category *situation type* among other semantic distinctions no coherent system has as yet been established. Accordingly, an analysis of the category *situation type* is confined to the syntax and the semantics of the verb phrase on the whole. As far as the lexical aspect is concerned apparently many verbs cannot be exhaustively defined by one single category of situation type, but seem to be able to easily shift from one category to another according to their syntactic environment.[14] The semanto-syntactic constraints of an assumed shift of situation type will be analysed in the following discussion and some linguistic means which can serve to determine the category *situation type / lexical aspect* in Pre-Tang Chinese will be presented. This is of particular relevance for the analysis of the Chinese language, since obviously the *situation type* of the verb has to be considered the basic verbal category of the categories *tense, aspect, and situation type / lexical aspect* in Chinese.

How to determine the category 'situation type' in Chinese

In this paper, those syntactic tests which can be applied to determine the situation type of a verb with particular regard to those verbs that seem to be able to easily shift between two different situation types will be presented. In this section I will shortly discuss some of the most relevant tests applicable. As already mentioned, the structure of the lexical aspect or the situation type of the verb or verb phrase is compositional; i.e. all arguments and adjuncts, but par-

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[14] This can of course partly be due to a formerly existing system of morphological derivation. In this case we in fact had to deal with different verbs and not with one single verb which assumes different situation types according to its syntactic environment. However, even if such a morphological system existed in the early stages of Chinese, it certainly was not productive any more during the Han period.

ticularly the inner argument can contribute to the aspectual structure of the predicate. A very famous example for the compositional structure of the lexical aspect is VENDLER's classical example of the isolated verb 'run' as an activity—neither initial nor final point indicated—versus the VP 'run a mile' as an accomplishment in which the activity 'run' itself and the final point which is obtained when having completed the measured situation 'running a mile' are focused on.[15] Additionally to arguments, all kinds of adjuncts—in particular aspecto-temporal adverbs and duration phrases—can contribute to or endorse the semantic structure of the predicate. In the following I will particularly focus on the interplay of these modifications with the verb. A comprehensive discussion of the influence of the arguments, particularly the inner argument in building up the aspectual structure of the predicate will be postponed to a separate study and will only be touched upon here. A study on the semantic features of the internal argument involves a clear distinction between different grades of definiteness of a noun phrase, an analysis of quantification during the period under investigation, and the distinction between mass nouns and count nouns, an analysis which goes beyond the scope of this study.

Adverbs which contribute to the situation type of the verb

The most relevant adverbs which contribute to the situation type or assert a particular situation type reading of the verb or the verb phrase are the aspecto-temporal adverbs. Herein after, the adverbs typical for the respective situation type will be listed.

Events can occur with:

1. The aspectual adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 'already', and the aspectual negative marker *wei* 未 'not yet'.[16] Event verbs are characterised by these aspectual adverbs which predominantly select an event as their complement focusing either on the final point, the change of state, or the state resulting from this change, or—with regard to the negative—on the non-occurrence of this change of state.
2. Purely temporal adverbs such as the adverbs indicating the future *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 and the adverb indicating the past *chang* 嘗 'once';
3. Aspectual adverbs expressing habituality such as *chang* 常 'regularly, usually' and *su* 素 'always, usually'. These adverbs only occasionally occur

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[15] According to VERKUYL (e.g. 2005, p. 204) the different aspectual values in the two predicates are not due to a change of the value of the verb which is kept constant, but to the particular characteristics of the complement of the verb, i.e. its being or not being of specified quantity: [+/-SQA] in his notation.

[16] These adverbs are comprehensively discussed in MEISTERERNST 2005 and 2008.

with event verbs; they are not typical for the situation type and are confined to event verbs that refer to a repeatable situation, namely a habitually reoccurring situation.

In general, event verbs are confined to those adverbs that do not violate the boundedness of the event they refer to.

The following examples represent a few of the aspecto-temporal adverbs usually employed with event verbs, namely the aspectual adverbs *ji/yi* 既/已, referring to a resultant state, the negative *wei* 未 and the temporal adverb *chang* 嘗 indicating—amongst other functions—past tense:

(6) 荊軻已死, 刺者有人, 一里之民, 何為坐之? *Lunheng*: 25.14.39

Jing Ke yi   si   ce   zhe you ren, yi   li   zhi min,   he   wei
Jing Ke already die, kill NOM have man, one village SUB people, what for

  zuo   zhi
punish OBJ

"Jing Ke *was already dead* and they had got the man who [tried] to kill [him]; why did he punish the people of a whole village?"

(7) 楚王英宮樓未成, 鹿走上階。 *Lunheng*: 48.6.4

Chu wang Ying gong lou wei cheng, lu zou shang jie
Chu king Ying palace story NEG complete, deer run above step

"The upper story of the palace of the king of Chu *had not been completed yet* when a deer ran over the steps."

(8) 嘗殺人, 亡之吳, 從袁絲匿. *Shiji*: 100;2732

Chang sha ren, wang zhi Wu, cong Yuan Si ni
Once kill man, flee go Wu, follow Yuan Si hide

"He *killed* someone *once*; he fled to Wu and followed Yuan Si to hide."

States have to be divided into *changeable* states and *unchangeable* states. *Unchangeable States* can only occur with:

1. Adverbs indicating habituality (not very frequent);
2. Adverbs of degree;
3. Modal adverbs (e. g. those indicating assertion);
4. Aspectually neutral negative markers.

Changeable States can additionally to all those adverbs modifying unchangeable states occur with:

1. Purely temporal adverbs (not very frequent);
2. The aspectual adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 'already', and the negative marker *wei* 未 'not yet': often implying a change of state reading.

The first of the following examples refers to an unchangeable state, modified by a habitual adverb:

(9) 「將軍素愛小女成君，欲奇貴之，願以累少夫．」 *Hanshu*: 97A;3966

Jiangjun su   ai xiao nü Chengjun, yu   qi   gui zhi yuan yi
General always love little girl Chengjun, wish unusual honour OBJ wish with

 lei   Shaofu
entrust Shaofu

"The general *always loved* little Chengjun, I wish to honour her particularly and I would like to entrust you, Shaofu, with it."

While the second refers to a changeable state, modified by the negative marker *wei* 未:

(10) 今王夫人幸而宗族未富貴， …   *Shiji*: 111;2929

 Jin Wang furen xing   er zong zu wei   fu   gui
Now Wang lady fortunate but clan kin NEG rich honoured

"Now, Lady Wang is fortunate but her clan and family *have not yet acquired wealth and honour*, …"

Activities are characterised by:

1. Purely temporal adverbials;
2. All adverbs indicating iterativity, habituality, duration, frequency, etc;
3. The adverb *fang* 方 'just now' which indicates that a situation is just happening or about to happen at reference time and which is typically employed with activity verbs;
4. The adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 'already' and the negative *wei* 未 'not yet' which are typical for event verbs are employed with activity verbs only by way of exception and entail a change of the situation type.

In general, activity verbs are confined to those adverbs that focus on the process of the situation they refer to as represented by the following examples.

(11) 臣嘗游海上，見安期生，安期生食臣棗，大如瓜． *Hanshu*: 25A;1217[17]

Chen chang you   hai shang, jian An Qi sheng, An Qi sheng si   chen
Subject once wander sea above, see An Qi master, An Qi master feed subject

 zao,   da ru gua
jujube, big as melon

"*Once*, I *wandered* along the sea to see master An Qi, and master An Qi fed me with jujubes as big as melons."

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[17] Also in *Shiji*: 1385a12, with *ju* 巨 'giant' instead of *chen* 臣.

(12) 漢王**方**食，曰：「子房前！」 *Shiji*: 55;2040

Han wang fang shi, yue: zi Fang qian
Han wang just eat, say: zi Fang before

"The king of Han *was eating just then* and said: 'Come in.'"

(13) 寡人**素**事南越三十餘年，其王君皆不辭分其卒以隨寡人。 *Shiji*: 106;2828

Guaren su   shi Nan Yue san shi yu nian, qi wang jun jie bu   ci
       I always serve Nan Yue three ten rest year, his king ruler all NEG refuse

fen qi   zu   yi   sui guaren
divide his soldier CON follow I

"I *have always served* Nan Yue for more than thirty years and none of its kings
and rulers refused to divide their troops to follow me."

These examples all represent adverbs typically employed with activity verbs,
namely the temporal adverb *chang* 嘗 'once' in (11), the aspecto-temporal ad-
verb *fang* 方 'just now' in (12), which often expresses a progressive perspec-
tive as shown by the English translation, and the adverb *su* 素 'always' in (13)
referring to a habitual situation. Contrastively, the following example with
the aspectual adverb *yi* 已 'already' implies a change of state: the situation is
viewed in its entirety from an external perspective and not as a continuing
process. The employment of the adverb *yi* 已 with activity verbs is a marked
employment and not the default one.

(14) 張儀**已**學游說諸侯． *Shiji*: 70;2279

Zhang Yi   yi   xue   you   shui   zhuhou
Zhang Yi already study wander advise feudal.lords

"*After* Zhang Yi *finished* his studies he travelled around and advised the feudal
lords."

Duration phrases and the situation type of the verb

Although the explicitly stated duration of a situation—*for X time*—is tempo-
rally bounded, it does not imply a change of state and is not considered telic.
Accordingly, the employment of duration phrases is usually confined to atelic,
namely activity or state predicates.[18] In Pre-Tang Chinese state predicates can
be subdivided into those referring to a genuine state which is expressed by a
genuine state verb and those referring to a resultant state which can be ex-
pressed by a genuine event—a change of state—verb without any additional
marking.[19] However, with regard to the employment of duration phrases the

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[18] SMITH 1997 (p. 113) remarks: "Durative adverbials also have an aspectual feature:
they state specific bounds of a situation. They are compatible with durative atelic verb
constellations and statives …"

different kinds of state predicates necessitate a differentiation in the interpretation of the duration phrase. With genuine state predicates the duration phrase refers to *situational duration*, namely the duration of the situation directly expressed by the verb; with resultant state predicates—predicates with event verbs—the duration phrase refers to *resultant state duration*,[20] namely to the duration of the state which results from the situation expressed by the verb.[21] With activity verbs, the duration phrase always expresses *situational duration*. The semantic constraints of the two different categories of duration phrases are mirrored in the syntactic constraints they are subject to. With genuine state predicates and with activity predicates the duration phrase can appear either in pre- or in post-verbal position. With genuine event verbs the duration phrase is confined to the post-verbal position always referring to a resultant state, namely to the state which results from the change of state expressed by the event verb: The situation type of the predicate built up with the original event verb is no longer event but state, the duration phrase explicitly marks a shift in the situation type of the verb phrase. In contrast to duration phrases, *time span* or *completive* adverbials—*in X time*—are telic and accordingly they are typical for event verbs and can identify the situation type of a verb or verb phrase as event, as will be shown below.[22] In the following a few examples will be given to demonstrate the semantic and syntactic constraints of duration phrases with regard to the situation type of the verb.

(a) Duration phrases with event verbs

In Pre-Tang Chinese, duration phrases can occur as the complement[23] of an event verb always referring to a duration which results from a preceding change of state. Although these cases are not infrequent, they cannot be considered as the most representative for the employment of duration phrases;

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[19] LIN 2007 states that in contrast to English that does not allow duration phrases—PPs with *for*—with change of state verbs, these are not unusual in Modern Mandarin. The same holds true for Pre-Tang Chinese, where duration phrases can also be employed to modify an event verb.

[20] In ERNST 1994 and LI 1987, these two different functions *situational duration* and *resultant state duration* are labelled *event duration* and *duration since completion of an event (SCE)* and in LIN 2007 they are labelled *R-related (result-related) duratives* and *P-related (process-related) duratives*.

[21] This distinction has been comprehensively discussed in MEISTERERNST 2003.

[22] SMITH 1997, p. 114: "Completive adverbials locate a telic event at an interval, at the end of which the event is completed. Their aspectual value is telic. Completive adverbials are compatible with telic events, and trigger a shifted interpretation with verb constellations of other types."

[23] As has been shown in MEISTERERNST 2003, they can also appear as the predicate of a sentential subject as in the following example where the duration phrase is modified by

additionally the situation type of the predicate changes from event to state. This is particularly true for achievement verbs which focus only on the final change of state point and accordingly do not provide a temporal structure a duration phrase expressing *situational duration* could refer to.

(15) 至月餘，匈奴斬山頭而去． *Shiji*: 122;3141

   Zhi   yue   yu,   Xiongnu zhan   Shan tou   er   qu
Arrive month more, Xiongnu cut.off Shan head CON leave

"He *had arrived [and was there] for more than a month* when the Xiongnu cut off Shan's head and left."

(16) 是時，單于立三歲矣． *Hanshu*: 94A;3782

 Shi shi,   chanyu   li   san sui   yi
This time, Chanyu establish three year FIN

"At this time the Chanyu had been *established for three years*."

(17) 佛以受天食三月故。身作天香不同世人。 T51,2085, p.0859c

   Fo   yi   shou   tian   shi   san   yue   gu,   shen zuo   tian
Buddha with receive heaven food three month reason, shen make heaven

   xiang   bu   tong   shiren
fragrance NEG same common.people

"Because the Buddha *had received* the heavenly food *for three months*, his body issued a heavenly fragrance and this was different from the common people."

Example (17) from the *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan* differs from the preceding examples since the complex predicate rather seems to refer to a repetitive activity than to a state; however, the verb is a typical achievement verb.[24]

(b) Duration phrases with state verbs

The occurrence of duration phrases with genuine state verbs is quite restricted. They cannot be employed to modify emotive state predicates with verbs such as *ai* 愛 'to love', *zeng* 憎 'to hate' etc., and they can co-occur only

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the aspecto-temporal adverb *yi* 已 'already' which clearly marks it as the predicate of the sentence:

(i) 時漢興已七八十年，離於全經   *Hanshu*: 36;1969

 shi Han xing yi   qi   ba shi nian   li   yu quan   jing
time Han rise already seven eight ten year separate at complete classic

"At this time it was *already seventy or eighty years* past that Han had risen, it was separated from the time when the Classics were still complete …"

[24] Examples for resultant state predicates in the two Buddhist texts at issue are extremely rare and frequently syntactically ambiguous. This might indicate a change in the employment of duration phrases with event verbs; however, in Modern Chinese event verbs are still compatible with resultant state duration phrases.

with some of the state verbs expressing a property. They are apparently confined to those state verbs that can be regarded as changeable.

With state verbs the duration of the static situation is specified, the duration phrase expresses situational duration.

(18) 於是上嘿然良久，曰： *Shiji*: 106;2831

Yu shi shang mo ran liang jiu, yue
At this above silent be good long, say

"Thereupon the emperor was *silent for a good while* and then he said: ..."

(19) 在位九歲，無能有所匡言． *Shiji*: 103;2767

  Zai   wei   jiu sui,   wu neng you suo kuang yan
Be.in position nine year, NEG can have REL correct word

"Although he had *been* in his position *for nine years* it had not been possible for him to correct the words."

(c) Duration phrases with activity verbs

With activity verbs duration phrases are most typically employed, they always refer to the *situational duration* of the activity in progress.

(20) 右將軍建、前將軍信并軍三千餘騎，獨逢單于兵，與戰一日餘，漢兵且盡．
Shiji: 111;2927

You jiangjun Jian qian jiangjun Xin bing   jun san   qian   yu ji,
Right general Jian front general Xin combine army three thousand more rider,

  du feng chanyu bing, yu zhan yi ri   yu Han bing qie   jin
alone meet Chanyu soldier, with fight one day more Han soldier FUT exhaust

"The general of the right, Jian, and the general of the vanguard, Xin, combined their armies of more than three thousand riders and they alone faced the soldiers of the Chanyu and *fought* with them *for more than a day* and the Han soldiers were close to exhaustion."

(21) 若有客比丘到悉供養三日． T51,2085, p. 0858a

Ruo   you   ke biqiu dao   xi   gongyang san ri
  If there.are guest monk arrive completely provide.for three day

"If there were guest monks arriving, they were completely *provided* for *for three days*."

As the examples have shown duration phrases can to a certain extent occur with all three basic situation types, but their semantics differ considerably according to the situation type of the verb they modify. Accordingly, they can serve to provide syntacto-semantic evidence to distinguish the different situation types of the verb or verb phrase in Pre-Tang Chinese.

Interrelations between activity and event verbs

Besides those verbs whose situation type can be clearly determined, there are apparently verbs that appear to belong to different situation types depending on their syntactic environment: these are for example activity verbs such as *xing* 行 'to go, to walk'.[25] The applied tests reveal that although verbs like *xing* 行 can also attain an event (telic) reading 'to put in motion, to set off',[26] they apparently differ syntactically from genuine event verbs which leads to the assumption that their basic lexical aspect is not *Event*. In general, it seems to be the case that, although a singular verb or verb phrase can assume different situation types according to its syntactic environment, it obviously is characterised by a set of basic semantic features assigned to it—probably including the situation type of the verb—which determines the syntactic and semantic constraints it is subjected to. Accordingly a possible shift of the situation type of the verb does not seem to concern the semantics of the verb as such but rather the semantics of the entire predicate. This fits well with the assumption of VERKUYL[27] that the lexical value of the verb keeps constant, and that it is the semantic nature of the complements which changes the situation type of the verb. In the following section this hypothesis will be supported by some evidence provided by the verb *xing* 行 'to go, to walk, to march; to put in motion, operate'. This verb has been chosen since it appears quite frequently in the Chinese literature during the time under investigation and since all of the relevant tests with temporal expressions as they are mentioned above can be applied to it.[28]

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[25]   For a discussion in favour of the constancy of the semantic value and against a shift of the situation type of the verb see e. g. VERKUYL 2005, who discusses DOWTY's (1972 and 1979) assumption of two different verbs 'walk', "one of which pertains to an activity, …, and one in which CAUSE and BECOME appear as operators". According to VERKUYL this leads to two options: "(a) to postulate two verbs *walk*; and (b) to choose one of the verbs as basic and to introduce rules operating on this basic meaning". (VERKUYL 2005, p. 206). In the literature following DOWTY, the second option has been given precedence. The question whether two different verbs *xing* 行 have to be assumed in Pre-Tang Chinese is also at issue in this paper.

[26]   These different two readings are listed in PULLEYBLANK (1991) under one lexical entry: besides the activity reading 'to walk, to go' an event reading 'to put in motion' is added which certainly accounts for cases like the ones presented below.

[27]   VERKUYL 2005, p. 205ff.

[28]   Different situation types can occasionally be marked morphologically reflected by different pronunciations of one and the same character resulting in two distinct verbs. The character 行 actually has different readings, i. e. a verbal reading in the *pingsheng ɣaijŋ* and a nominal reading in the *qusheng ɣaijŋʰ* (PULLEYBLANK 1991), but these do not concern a distinction of different situation types.

The verb *xing* 行 referring to an activity

Although recent discussions have clearly demonstrated that there is some dissent on how to determine situation type—e.g. as a semantic category assigned to the verb or rather to the entire predicate—in this paper I will start from the assumption that the category situation type can be directly assigned to the verb. First those cases in which a predicate with *xing* 行 refers to an activity will be discussed. As an activity verb, the verb *xing* 行 has the meaning 'to go, to march, to perform, to practise'. Often it occurs as a transitive verb in a VP with a direct object (the internal argument) expressing the thematic role of a THEME as e.g. in phrases such as *xing shi* 行事 'to carry out an affair / affairs'.[29] But this is not a necessary precondition for an activity reading; e.g. in its meaning 'to march' *xing* 行 usually appears as an intransitive verb still referring to an activity. In the following examples the different occurrences of the verb *xing* 行 in its activity reading will be discussed.

(a) Not marked by any adverbs, measure or duration phrases

> (22) 安國為御史大夫四歲餘，丞相田蚡死，安國**行**丞相事，奉引墮車蹇.
> *Shiji*: 108;2863
>
> *Anguo wei   yushi dafu   si sui   yu, chengxiang Tian Fen si, Anguo*
> Anguo be imperial.secretary four year more, chancellor Tian Fen die, Anguo
>
>   *xing   chengxiang shi,   fengyin   duo che   jian*
> perform chancellor affair, imperial.carriage.leader fall carriage lame
>
> "Anguo was imperial secretary for more than four years. When the chancellor Tian Fen died, Anguo *performed* the chancellor's duties and when he led the imperial procession, he fell off the carriage and injured his foot."
>
> (23) 二十八年，始皇東**行**郡縣，上鄒嶧山. *Shiji*: 6;242
>
>   *Er shi ba nian, Shihuang dong xing   jun   xian, shang Zouyi   shan*
> Two ten eight year, Shihuang east travel prefecture county, mount Zouyi mountain
>
> "In the eighteenth year, Shihuang *travelled* east through prefectures and counties and he ascended mount Zouyi."

In both examples (22) and (23) *xing* 行 appears in the same construction with a direct object referring to the THEME or a LOCATION respectively, but in two different meanings; in example (22) 'to perform sth.' and in example (23) 'to travel through sth.' This construction is representative for the first meaning 'to perform sth.' of the verb *xing* 行 whereas it occurs less

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[29] Since this paper focuses in the first place on the relevance of adverbial phrases for the aspectual interpretation of the predicate, the exact analysis of the semantic structure of the internal object will be postponed to a separate study.

frequently in the second meaning 'to march, to travel'. In the latter meaning, *xing* 行 predominantly appears as an intransitive verb; with a direct locative object usually the activity verb *you* 游 'to travel' is employed.[30] Both examples represent typical occurrences of the verb *xing* 行 referring to an activity and in both examples the internal argument (the direct object) is not of specified quantity.

(b) Modified by an adverb

As already mentioned, activity verbs are characterised by the employment of purely temporal adverbs and of adverbs indicating habituality, duration, frequency etc., since these adverbs do not focus on the boundaries (neither the initial nor the final point) of a situation. The employment of the aspectual adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 and the negative *wei* 未 is atypical for activity verb, since they usually select an event as their complement, and accordingly in a VP modified with one of these adverbs the situation type of the predicate usually changes. The following examples present those adverbs that are characteristic for activity verbs whereas the adverbs which are only exceptionally combined with activity verbs will be discussed in the next section.

> (24) 人民之眾，車馬之多，**日夜行**不絕，輷輷殷殷，若有三軍之眾.
> *Shiji*: 69;2254
>
> *Ren min zhi, zhong   che   ma zhi duo, ri ye xing   bu*
> Man people SUB multitude, carriage horse SUB many, day night march NEG
>
>   *jue, honghongyinyin, ruo you san jun zhi zhong*
> cut.off, rumbling.rattling, like have three army SUB multitude
>
> "The crowd of people and the great number of carriages and horses *are marching day and night* without end, rumbling and rattling as if they were as many as a whole army."

In this example the non-deictic temporal adverbs *ri ye* 日夜 'day and night' which usually indicate iterativity modify the intransitive verb *xing* 行 'to march, to travel'.

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[30] (i) 主父始為布衣時，嘗游燕、趙，及其貴，發燕事. *Shiji*: 112;2962

Zhu fu   shi wei bu   yi shi, chang you Yan, Zhao, ji   qi   gui,
Zhufu originally be linen dress time, once travel Yan, Zhao, as.soon.as his respectable,

   fa Yan shi
expose Yan affair

"In the beginning when Zhufu was a simple man, he once *travelled through Yan and Zhao*; as soon as he became respectable, he exposed the affairs of Yan."

(25) 此之不為，而顧彼之**久行**，故曰可為長太息者此也. Hanshu: 48;2258

Ci   zhi   bu wei er   gu   bi   zhi   jiu   xing,   gu   yue ke wei
This SUB NEG do CON but that SUB long perform, therefore say can be

chang tai   xi   zhe   ci   ye
long great sigh NOM this FIN

"This means: the one will not be done but the other one will be *carried out for a long time*, and therefore (one says that) it can be taken for a long and deep sigh."

In this example the preverbal duration adverb *jiu* 久 'long' can only refer to situational duration, an employment which is confined to genuine activity verbs and to a certain extent to state verbs, i. e. to verbs that do not focus a boundary. The VP is nominalised by the subordinating morpheme *zhi* 之 and it appears in the meaning 'to perform sth.' The THEME appears in subject position and accordingly the predicate attains a passive reading, but although a passive predicate can refer to both an activity and a state, in examples (24) and (25) it clearly refers to an activity.[31]

(26) 故盡衣冠，異章服，而民不犯者，此道**素行**也. Hanshu: 58;2615

Gu   hua   yi guan, yi   zhang   fu,   er   min   bu
Therefore paint clothes cap, differ decoration clothes, CON people NEG

fan zhe,   ci dao   su   xing   ye
violate NOM, this way always perform FIN

"Therefore, to dye clothes and caps and give clothes a different pattern to the effect that the people did not violate the law, this way / this rule *has always been performed*."

In this example the predicate is modified by the aspecto-temporal adverb *su* 素 which usually refers to a situation that has begun in the past and continues up to the time of reference and accordingly does not focus any boundaries of the situation expressed by the verb. In both examples (25) and (26) the verb appears as the transitive verb 'to perform sth.' and in both examples it is passivised. Although the subject NP (which is identical with the internal argument of the verb) is quantified by the demonstrative pronoun *ci* 此 'this', the situation type of the predicate does not seem to change from activity to event. The same lack of situation type shift is attested in example (32) where the demonstrative pronoun *ci* 此 appears as the internal argument of *xing* 行 in object position. The predicate in (32) contains a duration phrase referring to *situational duration* which clearly marks the predicate as atelic. This contradicts the general assumption in the linguistic literature that VPs

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[31] In German there is a clear distinction between a passive referring to an activity, this is the so-called *werden* (become)-passive, and a passive referring to a state, the so-called *sein* (be)-passive. In Chinese a comparable distinction cannot be made syntactically.

consisting of an activity verb such as 'write' or 'read'—these are verbs which semantically resemble to a certain degree the verb at issue in this paper—are not compatible with a duration phrase if they have an internal argument specified by a demonstrative.[32]

(27) 湯數行丞相事，知此三長史素貴，常陵折之，… Hanshu: 59;2645

Tang   shuo   xing chengxiang shi, zhi   ci   san   zhangshi
Tang frequently perform chancellor affair, know this three senior secretary

   su   gui,   chang ling zhe zhi
always honour, regularly bend break OBJ

"Tang *frequently performed* the chancellor's duties, he knew that these three senior secretaries had always been in high regard and regularly he insulted and humiliated them."

In this example the verb is modified by the adverb *shuo* 數 'frequently', indicating an iterative situation. This adverb is characteristic for activity verbs. The verb again is transitive as in example (22).

(28) 「始秦攻破天下，未嘗自行．今上常自行，是為無人可使者乎？」
Shiji: 98;2712

 Shi Qin gong   po   tianxia, wei chang zi xing. Jin   shang   chang
First Qin attack destroy empire, NEG always self do. Now emperor usually

 zi xing, shi wei   wu   ren ke shi zhe   hu
self do, this mean not.have man can send NOM FIN

"When previously Qin attacked and destroyed the empire, he *never did* it himself. And if now the emperor *regularly does* it himself, does this mean that there is none who could be sent to do it?"

In this example, in both sentences the verb is modified by an adverb indicating habituality: in the first sentence this is the adverbial *wei chang* 未嘗 'never', a combination of the aspectual negative marker *wei* 未 and the aspecto-temporal adverb *chang*, and in the second it is the habitual adverb *chang* 常 'regularly, usually'. Adverbials indicating habituality typically modify VPs referring to an activity.

   In all the preceding examples the activity verb *xing* 行 'to go, to perform etc' is modified by adverbs that are characteristic for activities. These are

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[32] However, RAPPAPORT HOVAV and LEVIN (2002, note 3) remark "In fact, traditional incremental theme verbs (*e.g. read, write, eat*) also show atelic readings with quantized objects … *Pat reads the newspaper for an hour* is certainly marginally acceptable, and some speakers even find it fully acceptable. In contrast, speakers agree that a potential incremental theme verb with a quantized object is perfectly acceptable with an atelic interpretation." According to this definition, an analysis of the VP in (26) and (32) as referring to an atelic situation is not problematic given the fact that the verb *xing* 行 in this construction does not belong to the incremental theme verbs in the strict sense.

particularly those that indicate iterativity as in (24), duration as in (25), habituality as in examples (26) and (28), and frequency as in (27). All these adverbs emphasise the process part of the activity without focusing the initial or the final point of the situation.[33]

(c) Modified by a duration phrase

As already mentioned above, duration phrases are most typically employed with activity verbs. They always directly express the duration of the situation the verb refers to. Duration belongs to the essential characteristics of activities.[34]

> (29) 行之五年，齊國之政皆歸田常． *Shiji*: 46;1884
>
>   *Xing zhi wu nian, Qi guo zhi zheng jie gui Tian Chang*
> Perform OBJ five year, Qi state SUB government all return Tian Chang
>
> "When he had *carried them out* (these principles) *for five years*, the governmental duties of the state Qi returned completely to Tian Chang."

> (30) 威行三十六年． *Shiji*: 126;3197
>
>   *Wei xing san shi liu nian*
> Power perform three ten six year
>
> "The powerful behaviour *had been carried out for thirty-six years*."

> (31) 商君遺禮義，棄仁恩，并心於進取，行之二歲，秦俗日敗．
> *Hanshu*: 48;2244
>
> *Shang jun yi li yi, qi ren*
> Shang prince leave.behind propriety righteousness, abandon goodness
>
>   *en, bingxin yu jin qu, xing zhi er sui,*
> benevolence, being.of.one.heart in advance take, perform OBJ two year,
>
> *Qin su ri bai*
> Qin custom day go.down
>
> "Shangjun neglected propriety and righteousness, he abandoned goodness and benevolence, and with all his heart he pressed forward and took [whatever he wanted], he *did* that *for two years* and the customs of Qin suffered a daily decline."

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[33] Additionally, in none of these cases the structure of the internal argument necessarily entails a telic reading of the predicate.

[34] SMITH 1997 (p. 44) notes that "Activities are Durative" and furthermore (p. 45f.): "Accomplishments are Durative and Telic and have properties associated with this combination of features."

(32) 行此三年，海內晏然，天下大洽，陰陽和調，萬物咸得其宜；
Hanshu: 65;2872

　Xing　ci　san nian, hai　nei　yan ran, tianxia da　　qia,　yin yang
Perform this three year, sea within quiet be, empire great harmony, Yin Yang

　　he　　　tiao,　　　wan　　　wu xian de qi　　　yi
harmony in.accord, ten thousand thing all get its appropriate

'He *performed* this *for three years* and all areas between the seas were quiet, the empire was in great harmony, Yin and Yang were harmonised and in accordance and the ten-thousand beings all got what was appropriate for them.'

In the preceding examples (29)–(32), the verb *xing* 行 appears in its transitive meaning 'to perform, to carry out sth.' always referring to the duration of the situation itself, whereas in the following examples (33), (34), it appears in its intransitive meaning 'to march, to travel'.

(33) 陵且戰且引，南行數日，抵山谷中． *Hanshu*: 54;2453

Ling qie zhan qie yin,　nan xing　shu　ri,　di　　shan　　gu zhong
Ling either fight or retreat, south march several day, arrive mountain valley middle

"Ling by turns fought and retreated, they *marched* south *for three days* until they reached a valley in the middle of the mountains."

(34) 龐涓行三日，大喜，曰： *Shiji*: 65;2164

Pang Juan　xing　san　ri,　da　　xi,　yue
Pang Juan march three day, great happy, say

"When Pang Juan *had marched for three days*, he was very happy and said:"[35]

(35) 行十七日計可千五百里。得至鄯鄯國。 T51,2085, p. 857a

　Xing shi　qi　ri　ji　ke　　qian　wu　bai　li, de　zhi
March ten seven day reckon can thousand five hundred li, can arrive

Shanshan guo
Shanshan state

"After they had marched for seventeen days, and they reckoned for about one thousand five hundred li, they managed to reach the state Shanshan."

In all preceding examples (29)–(35) the post-verbal duration phrase unambiguously refers to *situational duration*, namely to the duration of the activity itself. This employment is stipulated for activity verbs and accordingly argues for a characterisation of the verb *xing* 行 'to go, to perform' as a verb the basic situation type of which is *Activity*. With a genuine event verb (or event predicate), the duration phrase cannot refer to the situational dura-

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[35] This translation is contrary to NIENHAUSER's (1994, p. 41) who analyses the NP *san ri* 三日 'three days' differently: "On the third day of P'ang Chüan's march, [P'ang] rejoiced."

tion itself but has to refer to resultant state duration as e. g. in example (16).[36]
Based on this constraint, a characterisation of *xing* 行 as a genuine event verb
in the first place can be excluded with certainty. But, as the following exam-
ples will demonstrate, the verb *xing* 行 can also appear in event predicates.

The verb *xing* 行 referring to an event

As this section will demonstrate, two different event readings are available
for the verb or a verb phrase with *xing* 行: 1. a telic reading which focuses
the final point of the situation and 2. a telic reading which focuses the initial
point of the situation.

The verb phrase with *xing* referring to the final point of the situation

The first event reading which focuses the final point of the situation is de-
rived from the activity reading of *xing* 行 'to march, to travel' by adding an
internal argument of specified quantity, as is exemplified in example (36). In
this example no additional marking by aspecto-temporal adverbs or dura-
tion phrases is present, but since the VP 'march X miles' clearly refers to
a telic situation, namely an accomplishment, comparable to English 'run a
mile', no further support for a telic reading is necessary.[37]

(a) The verb *xing* 行 with an internal argument of
specified quantity without any further marking

> (36) 遲明，**行**二百餘里，不得單于． *Shiji*: 111;2935
>
> *Chi   ming,   xing   er   bai   yu   li,   bu   de chanyu*
> Slow bright, march two hundred more mile, NEG get Chanyu
>
> "When dawn came, they had *marched more than two hundred miles*, but they
> had not overtaken the Chanyu."

This reading can be endorsed by a temporal adverbial referring to a span of
time.

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[36] This is certainly true for achievement verbs which only focus on the final point of
the situation, no process, a situational duration phrase could refer to, is expressed in the
verb. Assuming the category accomplishment as an independent category, the question
has to be raised whether accomplishment verbs or verb phrases were allowed to combine
with duration phrases; and if this were the case whether they would rather focus the pro-
cess or the change of state part of the verb. So far I did not find any convincing examples
in the literature to support one or both of the two theoretical possibilities.

[37] For a logical representation in algebraic terms of a VP such as 'march X miles' see
KRIFKA 1998.

b) Modified by a temporal adverbial

In the following examples (37)–(39) the predicate is modified by a temporal adverbial referring to the time the process takes until reaching its final point: 'in X time'. These temporal adverbials are typical for telic/event verbs[38] and accordingly they can serve to identify the verb or verb phrase as telic in contrast to duration phrases, which can identify a verb as atelic.

Although in the following examples the verb *xing* 行 or, more correctly, the VP with *xing* 行 unambiguously refers to an event, these cases differ from those presented below as examples for the second event reading of *xing* 行 with the meaning 'to set off'. Examples (37) and (38) represent accomplishments derived from the activity verb 'to march, to walk' by adding an internal argument NP of specified quantity.

(37) 吾騎此馬五歲，所當無敵，嘗**一日行**千里，不忍殺之，以賜公.
Shiji: 7 ;336

Wu qi ci   ma wu sui, suo   dang   wu   di,   chang yi   ri
  I ride this horse five year, REL correspond not.have equal, regularly one day

xing qian   li,   bu   ren sha zhi, yi   ci   gong
  go thousand mile, NEG bear kill OBJ, with give prince

"I have ridden this horse for five years; he has no equal and he always *has run a thousand miles in a single day*, I cannot bear to kill him, so I give him to you."

(38) 舫船載卒，一舫載五十人與三月之食，下水而浮，**一日行**三百餘里，
Shiji: 70;2290

Fang chuan zai   zu,   yi fang zai wu shi ren yu   san yue   zhi
boat ship carry soldier, one boat carry five ten man and three month SUB

 shi, xia shui er   fou, yi ri xing san   bai   yu   li
food, down water CON float, one day go three hundred more mile

"When a two-hulled boat carries troops, one part of it can carry fifty men and provisions for three months, and when it floats down the river, it can *travel more than three-hundred miles a day*."

(39) 西北至都護治所二千二百五十八里，北接尉犁，南至小宛可**三日行**.
Hanshu: 96A;3879

 Xi   bei   zhi   du   hu zhisuo er   qian   er   bai   wu shi
West north reach capital guard office two thousand two hundred five ten

 ba   li,   bei   jie   Weili, nan zhi Xiaoyuan ke san ri xing
eight mile, north connect Weili, south reach Xiaoyuan can three day go

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[38] See e.g. Filip 1999, p. 5. The domain of application of time-span adverbials like *in an hour* is restricted to telic predicates, while that of durative adverbials like *for an hour* to atelic predicates.

"In the northwest it was 2258 miles to the office of the guards of the capital, in the north it was connected to Weili, and in the south one could *reach* Xiao-yuan *within three days.*"

In examples (37) and (38) the VP—independently of the time-span adverbial—unambiguously refers to a bounded event due to the semantics of the internal argument which is of specified quantity.[39] According to VERKUYL, it is the complement that should be held responsible for the different aspectual values a VP can attain, and an internal argument of specified quantity is responsible for a terminative, a bounded VP.[40] This can be evidenced by an example for a corresponding VP without a time span adverbial as is presented in (36). In contrast to the examples presented above with *xing* 行 in its activity reading 'to perform, to walk etc.' in (36), (37) and (38), the internal argument is clearly the incremental theme of the verb which entails a telic reading of the VP. Accordingly, it is not the time span adverbial as such that coerces the event reading of the predicate. But since the time span adverbial only selects event predicates, it provides further evidence for an event reading of *xing* 行 with an internal argument of specified quantity. Accordingly, in parallel cases, as in (39), the time span adverbial can—in absence of an internal argument of specified quantity—as the only syntactic means support the event reading of the predicate.

The verb *xing* 行 referring to the initial point of a situation

While in the first reading the activity *xing* 行 expresses is bounded by its internal argument and accordingly the final point of the situation is focused, in its second telic reading 'to set off, to start' the verb *xing* 行 refers to the initial point of the situation. Although this event reading does not necessarily require any syntactic support, without any additional modification it is not always very evident as in the following example (40).

(a) Not marked by any adverbs, measure or duration phrases

(40) 行未至彭城, 疽發背而死.   *Shiji*: 7;325

Xing   wei   zhi Pengcheng,   qu   fa   bei   er   si
Set.off not.yet reach Pengcheng, ulcer start back CON die

"He *set off*, but he had not yet reached Pengcheng when an ulcer arose on his back and he died."

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[39]   This term is employed according to VERKUYL 2005: [+SQA] refers to items of specified quantity and [–SQA] refers to items of unspecified quantity.

[40]   This analysis is based on the differences already shown by VENDLER 1967 between the two VPs 'run' and 'run a mile' and has been supported by strong evidence in the linguistic literature.

In this example, a pure activity reading 'he marched / he was on the road' is conceivable as well. There is no syntactic evidence for either an activity or an event reading.

In most of the following marked examples, *xing* 行 'to set off, to start' clearly refers to the initial point of the activity 'to walk, to march' and not to its final point: the verb attains an inchoative reading. This shift of situation type is comparable to the one attested with *changeable state verbs* which also focus on the initial point when changing to event verbs and attain an inchoative reading.

(b) Modified by an adverb

The inchoative event reading can be supported and be made evident by the employment of those adverbs that usually select an event as their complement as particularly in examples (41)–(43). These are predominantly the adverbs *ji* 既, *yi* 已 'already' and the negative marker *wei* 未 'not yet'.

(41) 已行，非不思也，祭祀則祝之曰『必勿使反』… *Shiji*: 43;1823

Yi   xing, fei bu si   ye,   ji   si   ze zhu zhi yue
Already set.off, NEG NEG think FIN, sacrifice sacrifice then pray OBJ say

bi   wu   shi   fan
certainly NEG send return

"*After* she *had departed* (She *had already departed*), you always thought of her, and when you performed the sacrifices you prayed, saying: 'May she never be sent back' …"

(42) 是時漢兵已踰句注，二十餘萬兵已業行． *Shiji*: 99;2718

Shi shi Han bing   yi   yu Juzhu, er shi yu   wan   bing
This time Han soldier already cross Juzhu, two ten more ten thousand soldier

yiye   xing
already set.off

"At this time the Han forces had already crossed the Juzhu mountain and more than 200 000 soldiers *had already set off*."[41]

(43) 琅邪王既行，齊遂舉兵西攻呂國之濟南． *Hanshu*: 38;1994

Langya wang ji   xing, Qi sui ju   bing si gong Lü guo zhi Jinan
Langya king already set.off, Qi then raise soldier west attack Lü state SUB Jinan

"After the king of Langya *had already set off*, Qi conscribed an army and in the west he attacked Jinan in Lü."

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[41] The same sentence is attested in *Hanshu*: 43;2121.

As the examples demonstrate, in combination with one of the adverbs at issue here the verb *xing* 行 quite obviously has to be analysed as telic (bounded) 'to depart, to set off', focusing on the initial point of the situation. The inchoative event reading is never attested with a duration phrase which is probably due to the fact that the initial point of the activity is focused on and not the final point—but the first, the accomplishment, reading likewise never occurs with a duration phrase. Although a change of state is implied in this reading of *xing* 行 'to start to move', it does not change into a resultant state—as it would be the case if the final point was focused on. Accordingly, the *resultant state duration* event verbs are usually confined to[42] is not compatible with activity verbs such as *xing* 行 which attain an event reading by focusing on the initial and not on the final point of a situation. However, as example (44) demonstrates, adverbs selecting an event do not necessarily stipulate a reading which focuses on one of the boundaries of the situation. In example (44) the verb *xing* 行 is in its activity reading 'to perform, to carry out' modified by the adverb *yi* 已 to the effect that the situation is represented as completed from an external perspective, and although the situation clearly has to be considered bounded, none of the boundaries is focused on.

(44) 今大禮已行，助祭者畢辭，… *Hanshu*: 99A;4071

  Jin   da   li   yi   xing,   zhu   ji   zhe   bi   ci
Now great rites already carry.out, help sacrifice NOM finish word, …

"Now the great rites *have already been carried out*, those who assist at the sacrifices have finished their speeches, …"

In this example the internal argument *li* 禮 appears in subject position, which causes a passive reading of the verb. In examples like these, the adverb *yi* 已 evidently evokes a temporal interpretation of the predicate, the activity is viewed as a completed whole with clear boundaries from a reference time posterior to the time the situation took place.[43]

In example (45), the verb *xing* 行 'set off', is modified by the adverb *fu* 復 'again' indicating a repeatedly occurring situation. This adverb is not confined to a particular situation type and accordingly it does not necessarily stipulate a particular reading of the verb or the verb phrase.[44]

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[42] The question how exactly accomplishment verbs behave in this respect has not been answered satisfactorily yet and requires further studies on the subject, in particular a clear distinction between achievement and accomplishment verbs in Pre-Tang Chinese. Since they also denote events it should be expected that they do not differ considerably from achievement verbs.

[43] A similar case was already presented in section 2, example (14).

[44] But apparently it does not occur with unchangeable state verbs.

(45) 於是貳師後復行, 兵多, 而所至小國莫不迎, 出食給軍. *Shiji*: 123;3176

Yushi Ershi   hou   fu   xing,   bing   duo,   er   suo   zhi   xiao
Then Ershi afterwards again set.off, soldier many, CON REL arrive small

guo   mo   bu   ying,   chu   shi   ji   jun
country none NEG welcome, bring.out food supply army

"Then afterwards the Ershi *set off again*, his soldiers were numerous and all the small countries they arrived at brought food to supply the army."

Conclusion

1. The analysis of the employment of the verb *xing* 行 which is assumed to represent a typical activity verb in Classical and Han period Chinese clearly confirms the general constraints activity verbs are subject to. These are:

- With an the internal argument of unspecified quantity, or with an argument that is not the incremental theme of the verb, or without an internal argument in an intransitive reading, the default reading of *xing* 行 is the activity reading focusing on the process of the situation represented by the structure:

(a) (I) /////// (F)

- Activity predicates with *xing* 行 combine with adverbs indicating iterativity, habituality, duration, frequency, since they all focus the process part of the situation and exclude its boundaries.
- Duration phrases in predicates with an activity verb such as *xing* 行 can only refer to *situational duration*, never to *resultant state duration*: This is the typical employment of duration phrases with activity verbs.

All these modifications form unmarked (default) constructions with the verb *xing* 行.

2. The verb *xing* 行 has two possible *event* readings. These are:

1) An accomplishment reading derived from the activity reading by adding an internal argument of specified quantity (incremental theme) resulting into the structure:

(b) (I) /////// F

- Time span adverbials can combine with *xing* 行 in its accomplishment reading in focusing on the time the process takes to reach its final point. This reading can also be considered unmarked.

2) An inchoative reading, focusing on the initial point of the activity, resulting into the structure:

(c) I (/////// F)

– In its inchoative reading, *xing* 行 can combine with adverbs which usually select an event as their complement: the initial point of the situation is focussed on. If unmarked by one of these adverbs, this event reading is difficult to determine. The inchoative reading can be considered a marked reading and not the default reading of the verb.

3. Not all cases marked by one of the adverbs selecting an event as their complements receive the inchoative reading. These adverbs can also be chosen to view the situation as a bounded and completed event from a perfective perspective without focusing one of its final points. These constructions always involve a temporal notion and indicate that the situation has ended before, i. e. is anterior to speech time. This is an employment generally possible with activity verbs and has to be considered temporally marked. It results into the structure:

(d) (I /////// F)

The evidence provided by the verb *xing* 行 suggests that in Pre-Tang Chinese, activity verbs can clearly obtain a telic reading by being combined with an internal argument of specified quantity. In these cases the VP is turned into an accomplishment where both the process part and the final point are part of the temporal structure of the situation and they clearly demonstrate that the category accomplishment—if it can be considered an independent verbal category—exists in Pre-Tang Chinese. Additionally, activity verbs can obtain an inchoative reading which is made evident by the fact that they not infrequently occur modified by the aspectual adverbs *ji* 既 and *yi* 已 'already' and by the aspectual negative marker *wei* 未 'not yet'. In this construction they show semantic characteristics similar to state verbs which also when modified by one of the adverbs mentioned focus on the initial point of the situation. In these cases only the change of state part—the initial point—of the situation is focused, but not the process part. This is the only construction in which the process part is not part of the semantics of the verb, although it still determines it. Modified by a duration phrase, these verbs always refer to the duration of the situation itself and not to the *resultant state duration* as genuine achievement verbs do; this suggests that the inchoative reading—which is an achievement reading—has to be regarded as marked and as being subject to constraints different from those genuine

achievement verbs are subject to. Regarding the question whether we have to conceive one single verb which can according to its syntactic environment—independently or in combination with its arguments or adjuncts—express different situation types or if we in fact have two different verbs which have been morphological distinct formerly, the following hypothesis will be proposed: Unless there is morphological support for the assumption that we have to deal with two different derivations of one verb, verbs such as *xing* 行 will be regarded as one single verb which can form VPs belonging to different situation types.[45] Apparently, the semantics of verbs such as *xing* 行 which can be assumed to have the basic situation type *Activity*, includes all parts of the situation, the initial point, the process, and the final point and the syntactic environment determines which part or parts of the situation is under focus; as we have seen all possible parts of the situation can be focused; the initial and the process part can be focused alone, while the final point of the situation apparently can only be focused in combination with the process part. This study reveals the importance of the category situation type for the analysis of the semantics of verbs and VPs in Pre-Tang (Han period and Wei Jin Nanbei chao) Chinese, i.e. during a period where the source structures of the aspectual suffix only start to develop. It is the basic verbal category in the Chinese language of this period, and due to the lack of morphological distinctions in the verb it serves among other syntactic means as the main means to display temporal and aspectual distinctions. But further studies on the subject taking more verbs into account to exactly distinguish the particular constraints the different situation types are subject to are required. Of particular interest would be the interrelation of achievements and accomplishments and as the examples have shown those between activities and changeable states.

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[45] As already mentioned above the different readings of the character 行 do not concern a distinction of different situation types.

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