



approach will be followed by many to come, so that his model could be further refined as other imperial portraits of both metropolitan and provincial produce are brought into the picture.

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## PREPOSITIONS IN BIBLICAL GREEK

ROSS (W.A.), RUNGE (S.E.) (edd.) *Postclassical Greek Prepositions and Conceptual Metaphor. Cognitive Semantic Analysis and Biblical Interpretation*. (Fontes et Subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes 12.) Pp. xii + 307, figs, ills. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022. Cased, £94, €102.95, US\$118.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-077404-7.

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Prepositions are difficult words. Sometimes they have clear semantic value, often spatial in nature (*above the sofa* vs *below the table*); sometimes they are reduced to signifying grammatical relations (*we gave the book to the student, they were hit by a car*). Usage can vary from one dialect to another (US *on Main Street* vs UK *in the High Street*). Even in expressions of what appears to be the same concept (e.g. location in time) seemingly arbitrary differences can be found (*in 2023, on April 1st, at 3 o'clock*). Accordingly, it is hardly a surprise that dictionaries find them challenging to handle, and, at some level, all the studies in this volume (the product of a workshop held in Cambridge, UK, in 2017) grapple with the problem of how to categorise their usage in biblical Greek as clearly as possible.

In doing so, they have followed the lead of S. Luraghi, whose 2003 work *On the Meaning of Prepositions and Cases* showed how effective a cognitive linguistic framework can be at elucidating the complicated networks of meanings expressed by Greek prepositions. In particular, it is profitable to assume that a basic spatial concept (say, that a particular item is *in* a container) underlies figurative extensions (that a person is *in* love), through the metaphorical understanding of love as a sort of container. The relationships between these extensions can often be best captured through the use of prototypes – the idea that some usages are especially central, and, the further a usage is from such a prototype, the fewer traits it will share with it. By prioritising such networks in the description of a preposition, one can avoid the trap (into which many dictionaries fall) of merely listing one gloss after another, suggesting a far more unstructured semantic chaos than is actually the case.

Thus, to take one of the clearer results of the volume, co-editor Runge's chapter, 'Land Forms, Weapons, and Body Parts: How Mismatches in Preferred Construals Have Shaped Our Understanding of Greek Prepositions', considers *inter alia* how biblical Greek describes events that take place on a mountain. In contrast to English, which views mountains as surfaces (hence, *on a mountain*), Greek treats them as containers (thus, *ἐν τῷ ὄρει* rather than *ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους*; correspondingly, *ἐκ* and *εἰς* are used for

place-from-which and place-to-which expressions with ὄρος). In handling the coexistence of both ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ('in the house') and ἐν τῷ ὄρει ('on the mountain'), a traditional lexicon might give two separate headings to cope with the two different glosses, *in* and *on*, whereas a more cognitively sophisticated account of ἐν would recognise that it signals location in a container in both phrases, and the difference in English arises not from a semantic split in the preposition itself, but from the fact that the latter involves an item that is less prototypically a container. Along similar lines, in the first of two chapters written by R.E. Aubrey and M.G. Aubrey, 'Spatial Profiling: ἐκ, ἀπό, and Their Entailments in Postclassical Greek', the choice of preposition in πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρός ('refined by fire'), as opposed to ἀπό τῆς θερμῆς ἐξελθοῦσα ('came out because of the heat'), is attributed to the construal of fire, but not heat, as a container (p. 80).

Unfortunately, such insights are not especially common in the collection, as most of the contributions seem more interested in explaining cognitive linguistic theory than in points of Greek usage. (The chief exception is P. James's chapter on the competing use of ἀπό and ὑπό in marking agents.) Reasonable people can disagree about the proper balance to strike here, but it is telling that in E.M. Heim's chapter, 'The "Ins" and "Outs" of Matthew 15:1–20: Insights on Prepositions from Prototype Theory and Metaphor Theory', the theoretical introduction extends over ten pages, the actual discussion of Matthew 15 over only five. Nor does the opening discussion deal as carefully with the Greek as one might like: when drawing on Matthew 5:34–6, Heim only quotes the three prepositional phrases with ἐν (ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ . . . ἐν τῇ γῆ . . . ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ σου), leaving out the parallel phrase εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, where the change in preposition surely deserves comment; and, in applying metaphor theory to this phrase, she foregrounds the conceptual metaphor CONTROL IS UP (metaphors are signalled by small caps), even though the preposition ἐν is not one that signals position on a vertical scale (p. 248). And when she proceeds to the analysis of Matthew 15, it is not clear why Prototype Theory or Metaphor Theory is needed for readers to understand that the preposition in ἀπό Ἱεροσολύμων 'shifts the center of religious activity from its sanctioned spot in Jerusalem' (p. 252).

Sometimes the contributions devote so much time to cognitive linguistic accounts of the prepositions that they do not answer the questions they ostensibly set out to examine. In 'Construals of Faith in ἐν and ἐκ Prepositional Constructions', co-editor Ross seeks to use Prototype Theory to work out the difference between the use of ἐκ, διά with the genitive and ἐν as prepositions linked with πίστις. While this is a laudable aim, much space is taken up, for instance, in categorising constructions with ἐν as either bounded container or graded container construals, or those with ἐκ as source or origin construals. But nothing definitive is said about why the New Testament reaches for one construal – and, thus, preposition – rather than another: on p. 148 Ross rightly questions the commentaries' readiness to say that ἐκ and διά are used interchangeably or as literary variants, but the chapter's conclusion on the next page goes no further than stating, 'Because choice implies meaning, variation in prepositional selection must likewise imply difference in meaning, difficult though it may be either to detect or represent in translation'.

In other chapters, technical jargon gets in the way of clear expression, as is most noticeable in T. Wright's 'The περί Preposition Phrase at the Grammar-Discourse Interface'. Perhaps it will make a contribution to cognitive linguistic theory, but it is unlikely that many whose chief interest is the Greek of the New Testament will learn much from such sentences as 'LOCATION belongs to the AROUND-REGION and can code PATH or endpoint focus in three-dimensional space' (p. 88), especially when the final conclusion, that περί had three distinct senses at this time – LOCATION (i.e. *around* a place), AREA (i.e. *near* a place) and TOPIC (i.e. *about* a subject) – will not greatly change

many readers' understanding of the preposition. Moreover, while the bibliography is indeed rich in general linguistic scholarship, it is strange that, in a chapter that devotes so much discussion to topics, important Greek-specific literature goes unmentioned: he does not engage with the relevant work of either D. Matic ( *Studies in Language* 27 [2003]) or R. Allan ( *Mnemosyne* 67 [2014]). In other articles the technical language does not so much obscure the thought as expose how little is really being said: since we already teach in first-year Greek that ἐκ, at a basic spatial level, means 'out of', I am sceptical that linguistic theory adds much to our understanding of Acts 3:2 when it does no more than simply specify that ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ draws on the metaphor 'WOMBS ARE CONTAINERS' (p. 78).

The way in which this prepositional phrase is quoted in the volume, where it is preceded by the words τις ἀνὴρ χωλός, also illustrates another shortcoming of the collection: occasional carelessness with the Greek. Here, where it involves stranding enclitic τις without its host word καί, it does not get in the way of comprehension, as is also the case with numerous typographical errors (on p. 18, admittedly an especially slipshod page, we find Γαλαία for Γαλιλαία, ἔχω for ἔξω, and, no fewer than four times, ὄδος for ὁδός). More problematic, however, are the places where the contributions have passed over complications in or simply misunderstood the Greek. For instance, R.A. Rhodes's opening chapter, 'Greek Prepositions: a Cognitive Linguistic View', moves without comment from giving examples of ἐπί governing the genitive on p. 25 to ἐπί with the accusative on p. 26. This is far from the only place where the volume pays insufficient attention to the case syntax. Two further chapters treat διὰ with the accusative as if it were a preposition denoting path ('through'), a meaning restricted to poetry (LSJ *s.v.* B.I.): on p. 158 διὰ τί; is translated 'Through what?'; on pp. 220–1 διὰ with the accusative is twice translated as 'through/because of', with the comment 'the cause construal maps overtly onto a path'. (As a different sort of mistake, the following page translates διὰ τινος τῶν ... δεδοκιμασμένων as 'by certain people', failing to notice that τινος is singular, with a partitive genitive following.) Nor does the use of linguistic theory always seem adequately supported: on pp. 140–1, in the discussion of ἐκ πίστεως phrases, Ross sees 'the addition of a CONTROL feature for the Landmark [i.e. πίστεως]', without explaining what CONTROL really means here, other than (as illustrated by the chevrons in the figure on p. 141) that it is a sort of force field emanating from the landmark – rather than for example the volitional ability to control the event, as one might more naturally suspect.

Finally, there is at times a curious failure in the volume to engage with the possibility that biblical Greek has been affected by Semitic usage. This is particularly noticeable in Runge's discussion of the use of ἐν as an instrumental marker with weapons, as in ἐν μαχαίρῃ 'with the sword' (pp. 202–5), in which he remarks merely that it is interesting that this does not occur in Herodotus, without offering any explanation. But one lies ready to hand: as J.T. Pennington notes in his concluding remarks (p. 264), ἐν is very frequent in the Septuagint because it translates Hebrew *bə*, regularly used for both 'in' and instrumental 'with'. Throughout the volume, emphasis lies on understanding how prepositions' usage extends organically according to the conceptualisation of their objects. But at what point has usage changed enough, potentially through language contact, that a preposition's underlying function has itself changed? The authors of these studies have raised some important questions, but much work remains to be done.

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