

## DIVISION OF LABOUR ACCORDING TO AGE: THE MEDIEVAL GREEK PREPOSITIONAL SYSTEM

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### Περίληψη

Στο σύστημα τῶν προθέσεων τῆς μεσαιωνικῆς ἑλληνικῆς, μπορεῖ νὰ διακρίνει κανεὶς δύο στρώματα: ἓνα παλαιότερων καὶ ἓνα μεταγενέστερων προθέσεων. Ἡ χρῆση καὶ τῶν δύο εἰδῶν ἐξετάζεται σὲ εἰδικὰ κομμάτια, ἀπὸ τὰ ὁποῖα διαφαίνεται μιὰ σαφῆς σημασιολογικὴ διαφοροποίηση: οἱ νεώτερες προθέσεις ἔχουν, γενικά, τοπικὴ σημασία, ἐνῶ οἱ παλαιότερες σταδιακὰ περιορίζονται στὴν ἀπόδοση ἀφηρημένων ἐννοιῶν – μὲ τὴν προϋπόθεση ὅτι ὑπάρχουν νεώτερα ὑποκατάστατα στὰ ὁποῖα μποροῦν νὰ μεταδώσουν τὴν τοπικὴ τους χρῆση.

### 1. The new generation of prepositions

The older (Schwyzer 1950:436-533) prepositions like ὑπό are being replaced by newer, 'improper' ones like κάτω, which once were just adverbs and now take objects (and are increasingly compounded – as even some old 'proper' ones are: ἐπάνω εἰς, παρὰ ἀπό). The question arises: are there semantic differences between the two sets?

### 2. The Medieval usage of improper (= newer) Prepositions

I have examined the use of the 'improper' prepositions in seven Medieval texts (see bibliography): ἀντικρυ, γύρω, ἐμπρός[θεν], ἐναντίον/-α, ἐντός, ἐνωπίον, ἔξω[θεν], [ἐ]πάνω[θεν], ἔσω[θεν], [ἀ-/ὑπο]κάτω[θεν], κοντά, κύκλω[θεν], μακροθεν, μέσα/-ον, πλησίον, ὀπίσω/-θεν. The results were:

(a) In 90% of instances (451 out of 502), these newer prepositions were used in spatial senses.

(b) The newest ones (e.g. γύρω, κοντά, κύκλω) were only spatial.

(c) Of the non-spatial 10% (51 instances), 19 instances were of μέσον, and they could be explained as due to the preexisting use of μέσον as a noun in many abstract senses. Interestingly, the new preposition ἀνά μέσον 'between', in my corpus, was only spatial.

(d) Many other non-spatial examples can be 'explained away' as taken from Biblical style (and, in turn, from Hebrew). E.g. Sphrantzes (XVIII.8): τίμιος ἐναντίον κυρίου occurs verbatim in Ps. 115.16, where it translates the original  $\text{הַיְיָ יְיָ בְּעֵינֵי בְּקִרְבֵּי}$  (Ps.116.15).

### 3. The Medieval usage of ‘proper’ (= older) prepositions

I have also analysed the use of older prepositions (ἀμφί, ἀνά, ἀντί, ἐκ/ἐξ, ἐν, ἐπί, κατά, παρά, περί, πρό, πρός, σύν, ὑπέρ, ὑπό) in Porphyrogenitus’ *De Administrando Imperio*, and I found that their use was as follows:

Spatial: 689      Non-spatial: 1308

Furthermore, none of these old prepositions had only spatial senses, while some had only non-spatial senses. The use of the old prepositions is therefore the counterpart of the use of the new prepositions: old prepositions are largely restricted to non-spatial senses – the senses that the ‘young’ prepositions cannot express. Bearing in mind the influence of archaising styles, the picture is remarkably coherent. Macroscopic exceptions are εἰς/σέ and ἀπό (secondarily, γιά and μέ). However, these had no newer synonyms – and they had a special status, being the only simplex prepositions that could appear as the second element of compound prepositions.

### 4. The pattern of replacement

Let us group ‘proper’ prepositions according to:

- whether they had a synonym (for their spatial sense);
- whether that synonym was new or old (because, if the latter, it was therefore already endowed with non-spatial senses, unlike the newer prepositions).

*Group A – old Ps with new replacements (for their spatial sense)*

ἀνά >	[ἀ-/ἐ]πάνω[θεν]
ἀντί >	ἐμπρός[θεν/-τά], ἐναντία/-ον, ἐνώπιον, ἄντικρυ
περί >	[τρι]γύρω[θεν], κύκλω[θεν] [also for ἀμφί]
πρό >	ἐμπρός[θεν/-τά], ἐναντία/-ον, ἐνώπιον, ἄντικρυ
ὑπέρ >	(ἀ-/ἐπ)άνω[θεν]
ὑπό >	[ὑπο]κάτω[θεν]

*Group B – old prepositions replaced (in their spatial sense) by both old prepositions and new ones*

There were prepositions (e.g. ἐκ) whose spatial sense was now expressed by newer rivals (ἐξω[θεν], ἐκτός[θεν]) but which (unlike those in the previous group) had also been supplanted by other old prepositions (ἀπό). The latter ones (like ἀπό) had no new substitutes

themselves, and so retained spatial senses. As a result, ἐκ (non-spatial in almost 3/4 of occurrences) was also used as lofty equivalent of ἀπό. All the prepositions which had been replaced (even partly) by ἀπό, εἰς or μέ, and had therefore come to be used as old-fashioned synonyms for them, can be expected to have some of the spatial meanings that εἰς, ἀπό and μέ retained. This occurs with:

- ἐν > ἐντός, ἔσω[θεν], μέσον but also εἰς  
 ἐπί > ἐπάνω[θεν]/ἀπάνω[θεν] but also εἰς  
 παρά > πλησίον, κοντά but also (in a different sense) εἰς  
 σύν > μέ and μετά

*Group G – old prepositions replaced (in their spatial sense) by both old and new ones – but not entirely:*

- κατά > in the sense of ‘down(wards)’ > κάτω, and in the sense of ‘to(wards)’ > εἰς. Yet, κατά remained, used in its other spatial sense, ‘in the region of’, because that meaning was not in the semantic range of κάτω or εἰς.  
 πρὸς > was also largely but not entirely replaced by εἰς: the spatial sense of ‘towards, somewhere near’ was not in εἰς, and made πρὸς (like κατά) not entirely dispensable.

*Group D – old prepositions for which no (recent or equally old) spatial replacement was available at all*

These were ἀπό, διά (γιά), εἰς (σέ); they retained both spatial and non-spatial senses throughout their history, and have therefore not been examined here.

## 5. Conclusions:

- (a) Old prepositions with no (new or old) rivals (e.g. ἀπό) retained their spatial senses (as well as their non-spatial ones);
- (b) Old prepositions with a new substitute (e.g. ὑπέρ) shed their spatial senses, ‘unloading’ them onto the new forms (e.g. ἐπάνω);
- (c) The same was done by the old prepositions (e.g. παρά) that had been replaced by both a new form (κοντά) and by another old but ‘unrivalled’ form – that therefore retained spatial sense (ἐν). However, they can be found used as archaic/learned equivalents of the latter, and therefore with its spatial meanings;

(d) Old prepositions (e.g. κατά) that had only a *partial* replacement (of whatever age), lost the spatial meanings that could be expressed by a substitute but retained the spatial senses that nothing else in the system could express;

(e) All old prepositions kept their non-spatial senses, because new prepositions could not have them; old prepositions lost their spatial senses according to whether (and to the extent to which) they had a newer substitute that could 'take over' that spatial meaning.

Thus, the first meaning of new prepositions was usually or primarily spatial – the newest prepositions (e.g. γύρω) were clearly only spatial – while the old prepositions (that once had both spatial and abstract meanings) were gradually restricted to abstract meanings (and if they developed new senses, these could only be abstract).

#### MEDIEVAL TEXTS USED AS CORPUS AND THEIR EDITIONS

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