

## The Tension

In the article, Tittmann laments the “negligence and inconsideration” that has been paid to the issue of prepositions in general (45). Such ignorance of the nature and force of prepositions had led many lexicographers, grammarians and interpreters to label them pleonastic, often with the expression, “*haud raro redundant*” (lit. “not at all rare redundant”) or in other words, (my Latin is weak) “most often redundant.” He also notes that in regard to “prepositions which are common with verbs” the predominant view (of his time) is “that such prepositions often do not at all affect the force of the verbs; and that therefore the force and meaning of a compound verb differs frequently in no respect from those of the simple verb” (45-46).

The lack of a scholarly examination towards prepositions led to an almost schizophrenic attitude with some either denying any emphasis while others seeing too much. He writes,

Thus, in former times when it was the fashion to look for an emphatic meaning in many verbs where there is none, the most false interpretations were not infrequently brought forward on no ground whatever, except a certain supposed emphasis imparted to the compound verb by the accession of the preposition. Hence too it was, that other interpreters were led more decidedly to deny, that the force of the verb was in all cases affected by the preposition; in many cases, at least, they affirmed, no emphasis was to be sought in compound verbs (46).

Tittmann states up front his conviction that prepositions in compound verbs “do not always affect the significance of the simple verbs, and indeed are very frequently redundant” (46). However in this case he is no different than others who have opinions regarding the preposition. He writes, “It does not indeed require much study, to demonstrate by numerous examples, that prepositions in themselves *never* produce *emphasis*, and that they do not always *change* the signification of the simple verbs; but it is more difficult to shew precisely what force such prepositions really have, either constantly or in certain circumstances” (46). In other words, what is needed is a study which yields “certain and fixed laws” regarding prepositions affixed to compound verbs (46). This Tittmann sets out to do.

## Scope of study

Tittmann maintains that there are three major areas in which prepositions can be connected with verbs: “they are either subjoined to the simple verb as a complement, as ὀρμᾶν ἐπί τι,--or they are compounded with the verb, as ἐφορμᾶν,--or they are subjoined to a verb already compounded with the same or another preposition, as ἐφορμᾶν εἰς πόλεμον, ἀπέχεσθαι ἀπό

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<sup>1</sup> This article was first published in 1814, and was included in *The Biblical Repository*, v. 3, ed. Edward Robinson (Andover: Flagg, Gould, & Newman, 1833), 45-66. It was retrieved at the Hathi Trust Digital Library@ <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?seq=76&view=image&size=100&id=nyp.33433081751921&u=1&num=45>

τῆς πορνείας” (48). He sets out to examine the second of these three areas, or in other words, those in which prepositions are affixed directly to a verb forming a compound verb.

Tittmann makes a few preliminary observations about the nature of prepositions in compound verbs worth noting. One is that certain verbs, once affixed with a preposition, actually do take on a meaning completely new and sometimes opposite sense. For instance, the verb ἀπέχειν is used to show that the simple ἔχειν (“to have”), once affixed with the preposition ἀπό (ἀπέχω) has the gloss “to abstain, keep away” (53). It would be incorrect to argue then that a preposition affixed to a simple verb doesn’t ever influence the signification of the verb. Therefore they are not all redundant!

He also notes that the force of prepositions in compound verbs do one of two things: “it either *changes* the significance of the verb, so that the idea expressed by the compound is a different one from that of the simple verb” as he has already demonstrated above with the example ἀπέχειν, or “the preposition so *modifies* the meaning of the simple verb, that although the same idea is expressed, yet it is expressed under some certain relation and in a different manner” (54). Regarding these two options, the first one is not in question. Sometimes the preposition does completely change the meaning of the verb. The second option however creates the problem. He writes,

The only matter of dispute is, respecting the second class of compounds, viz. those in which the main idea is the same as in the simple verbs. And it is chiefly because the diversity in the relation of things is so manifold, and the modes of conception in respect to the same thing so various, and because these modes and relations again are sometimes so indefinite and abstruse, that the custom has arisen in regard to this class of verbs, of affirming as a rule, that compound verbs often signify nothing different from, or more than, the corresponding simple verbs. Hence also comes the habit of loosely affirming, sometimes that the prepositions do not change the meaning of the simple verbs, sometimes that no accession of meaning is made by them to the simple verbs, and again that no emphasis is produced in such cases by prepositions. This ambiguity needs to be removed (54).

## Thesis

Tittmann sets out to remove this “ambiguity” by first offering a working description of the role of prepositions in compound verbs when the preposition in compound makes no discerning change in the idea of the verb with classifications followed by examples for these headings.

He writes,

We suppose, then, that prepositions in this class of compound verbs, have this force, viz. that although the thing expressed by the compound verb, is the same with that, the notion of which is contained in the simple verb, yet in the compound verb it is conceived of or apprehended under a different relation and in a different mode. By *relation*, I here mean that relation which has place among the things or adjuncts which are connected with the

verb; by *mode*, I understand the way or manner in which the conception or apprehension of these adjuncts affects the mind” (54-55).

He then illustrates what he means by relation and mode.

### *Relation*

#### 1. Time

Certain prepositions in compound verbs “may serve...to mark the relation of *time* which exists between two things, or to indicate that one of them may be the antecedent of the other” (55).

See his example of προορίζειν in Rom 8:29, 30 for an interesting discussion.

#### 2. Place

Tittmann maintains that the relation of place or space is three-fold in that “we may conceive if any thing as *in* a place, as being removed *from* a place, and as coming *to* a place. It is the office also of the prepositions, when joined with verbs, to indicate one or the other of these relations. Nothing can be more obvious than this; for who will deny that the compound verbs ἀναβαίνειν, καταβαίνειν, ἀναβάλλειν, καταβάλλειν, ἀνάγειν, κατάγειν, ἀπέρχεσθαι, προσέρχεσθαι, signify more than the corresponding simple ones?” (55). However he argues that these compounds do not denote a change of meaning but relation. Again, the tension between those who see no change at all with the affixing of the preposition miss this issue of relation, he argues. He writes, in opposition to such interpreters,

Although the simple verb contains the notion of the same thing, so that whether the simple or compound verb be employed the mind receives the same general idea, and on this account in many phrases both the simple and compound verbs may be used promiscuously; yet this does not take place because the compound does not signify something more than the simple verb, but because the true force and meaning which the simple verb here expresses, is gathered from the other words of the sentence, or because the use of the simple verb, as is often the case, imparts strength to the expression (56).

In other words, Tittmann is arguing that it is the context that is supplying what some often think the compound verb is supplying. Most would appreciate such a minimalist approach to Greek studies.

See pages 56-60 for examples regarding the relation of time.

#### 3. Cause and Effect

Tittmann argues that this category is so extensive that it is not surprising that many errors occur by the hands of interpreters who seek to explain it. He explains it as “that relation, in which the thing signified by the verb, whether action or condition, stands connected either

with the object of the verb or with the person or thing of which the condition or action expressed by the verb is predicated, i. e. the subject of the verb,” using such examples as καταγγέλλειν, κατακρίνειν, ἐπινεῖν, κατανοεῖν, περινοεῖν, since in all these verbs “the preposition refers to the person or thing which is the object of the action” (62).

### *Mode*

By *mode* Tittmann means “the way or manner in which the thing that is the object of thought or conception, affects the mind” and he argues that prepositions have such a force in that “by changing the way or manner in which the mind itself is affected they occasion a different mode of conception or of apprehension” (63). He finds many too numerous to list but mentions a few.

1. To indicate a special *inclination*, or desire; e.g. καταφιλέω
2. To indicate a greater force or degree of action; e.g. διά διατηρεῖν, διακουεῖν, διαπονεῖν,
3. To indicate the imparting of the idea of efficacy; e.g. ἀποθνησκεῖν, ἀποθλιβεῖν, ἐκφυγεῖν

This dated article is an attempt to handle the issue of prepositions in compound verbs, an issue that still is seemingly not settled, even among Greek scholars. It takes a minimalistic approach to Greek in general and is fair in observing that in some compound verbs, there is a clear change in meaning. Yet, for most verbs, it is not a change in meaning but an emphasis that stresses a different relation and mode.

The article should be used with some caution given the evolution of Greek studies over the past 200 years, but it is a treatment of the preposition that those who dabble in Greek would be wise to have in their file.

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