

The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



Tycho Mommsen on Greek Prepositions *Beiträge zu der Lehre von den Griechischen Präpositionen*, von Tycho von Mommsen. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung. 1895. 18 Mk.)

J. Donovan

The Classical Review / Volume 10 / Issue 01 / February 1896, pp 62 - 63
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X0020317X, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X0020317X

How to cite this article:

J. Donovan (1896). The Classical Review, 10, pp 62-63 doi:10.1017/S0009840X0020317X

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

TYCHO MOMMSEN ON GREEK PREPOSITIONS.

Beiträge zu der Lehre von den Griechischen Präpositionen, von TYCHO MOMMSEN. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung. 1895. 18 Mk.)

THE work before us is destined to rank high among the many valuable contributions to Historical Greek Grammar which are every day appearing from the ever fertile pens of German scholars. Prof. Tycho Mommsen has the honour of being one of the earliest workers in a field which has been most assiduously cultivated in Germany, and which is now yielding such fruits as Schanz's *Beiträge*, and the forthcoming Latin Grammar whose gigantic proportions may be gauged from the fact that the portion allotted to one collaborateur is the single subject of *Parataxis*. The title of the present volume does not convey an adequate idea of its contents. It naturally calls to mind minute distinctions between the various idioms connected with the different prepositions. The reader will look in vain for any such lists. It is a study of prepositions in general and a close investigation of 'with'-prepositions in particular. Thus the scope of the work is limited, being mostly taken up with a study of *σύν* and *μετά* and their equivalents *ἅμα*, *ἁπλοῦς* etc. About one-third of the whole is a reprint of Easter programmes or rather dissertations prefixed to the school calendar of the public gymnasium of Frankfort.

These parts appeared in 1874, 1876, and 1879. Notwithstanding the unity of subject, this difference in the date of composition gives a certain air of disjointedness to the whole, and involves repetition and cross-references somewhat tedious to the reader. Nevertheless the oneness of plan, which the author must have had in mind from the beginning, as well as the precise divisions adopted—historical and according to subject-matter—are sufficient compensation for the defect alluded to. Indeed the new essays fit in so admirably beside the old, that the patchwork might easily escape the reader's notice.

The first dissertation, or first section of the work in its present state, is perhaps the most valuable; certainly it is of the greatest moment to the Greek grammarian, as it states the general laws arrived at in the course of laborious researches, the details of which appear in the subsequent

portions. The chapters following from page 39 onwards are, with some exceptions, *pièces justificatives* for the general results propounded at the beginning. It may not be out of place to mention some of these here. First comes the law affecting *σύν* and *μετά*—one which nowadays has lost much of its novelty—namely that in the best days of Greek literature *σύν* is used only in poetry strictly so called, as also in Xenophon, whereas *μετά* is confined to prose and prosaic verse, and further, where both are used indifferently, *μετά* always clings to relatives and reflexives. To establish this thesis is the main object of the work. Tables are inserted containing statistics of the occurrence of these particles (as well as those of similar import *ἅμα*, *σύναμα*, *ἁπλοῦς* etc.) in the classical prose and poetry of Greece. Then the usage of each writer is examined in detail whether classical or post-classical. Not a single name is omitted of whom the author could find any fragments in the vast libraries of Germany. Hence the book will serve as a *repertoire* and book of reference as regards the use of 'with'-prepositions from Homer down to the latest Byzantine chronicler.

Moreover the task of finding and sifting examples involved an immense amount of reading, even from original MSS.; and the author has availed himself of the opportunity to touch on literary, bibliographical and critical questions outside the immediate scope of his inquiry. When dealing with the more obscure writers of later times, Prof. Mommsen has in most cases added short notices on the style and authorship of writings whose prepositional usage he is discussing. Hence these pages possess an historical and literary value quite independent of the stores of scholarship they contain. It may here be noticed in passing that the tone of the author in speaking of the great Fathers of the Greek Church is marked by a freedom from bias which one does not always meet with. The verdict to which his researches have led him seems to me on the whole strikingly just. He acknowledges the Attic purity of diction of the great pulpit orator St. Chrysostom. The language of St. Basil is found to be fairly good Attic, though less so than that of his contemporary Libanius. That of Gregory of Nyssa is admitted to be correct, if sometimes affected. A similar

favourable judgment is passed on Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzen and Cyril of Alexandria.

The next question of importance discussed is the general frequency of the use of prepositions in the different species of prose and poetry. The inquiry leads to the general law that prose is polyprothetic and poetry oligoprothetic. The gradual development from extreme oligoprothesis to considerable polyprothesis, in the Tragic writers, is especially dwelt on and fully demonstrated, according to the author's method, by statistical tables. This point is further minutely discussed for various groups of writers of all periods. An interesting chapter follows on the preponderance of particular cases governed by prepositions. As a general result of this investigation, it would appear that the dative predominates in the older and more poetical language; the accusative in that of later generations and in prose generally; the genitive prevails in the rhetorico-philosophical elements of prose and poetry. Thus the tendency of the accusative ultimately to oust its rivals shows itself already before the close of the classical period; in Modern Greek it is the only oblique case in use after prepositions in the language of the people. Space will not allow us to discuss the very interesting treatise on 'favourite prepositions' (*Lieb-lings-Präpositionen*) which must have cost the author immense labour.

In conclusion the question forces itself on us, What is the value of results thus laboriously won? Certain it is they must ever possess an interest of their own for the student of Greek as so many linguistic facts, apart from any ulterior use to be made of them. They help to determine and differentiate the styles of various classes of authors and of the different periods of Greek literature. They may also serve as implements of critical dissection, whereby to eliminate interpolated portions of works otherwise open to the suspicion of corruption. It may be admitted that the author's method

is on the whole safe, and his general results reliable, though in the majority of cases resting on a very incomplete induction. Thus for most of the later writers Prof. Mommsen restricted his researches in each case to an examination of from 40 to 50 pages of the smaller Teubner texts, and, in the case of the Epic poets, to from 750 to 1,500 lines. He himself has not failed to perceive the many objections which may be raised to this mode of inquiry, but nevertheless holds 'die Hauptresultate für gewiss.' So much may be conceded as regards the general results referred to. The particular conclusions however, which he has deduced from certain of his statistics are not so felicitous. Thus he would deprive St. Luke of the middle portion of his Gospel (9, 33—19, 23), because forsooth it has no *σύν*, whereas *σύν* and *μετά* occur side by side in the other parts. I am of opinion he ought not to stop there. The first five chapters of this same Gospel (at least 1-5, 9) contain only 4 *σύν* to 7 *μετά* whilst the last chapter (24) has 7 *σύν* to 4 *μετά*, i.e. in the inverse ratio. Hence our author ought to conclude that these portions also are not from the same hand. Further from 1, 58 to 2, 5 there is no *σύν* at all; consequently neither can this part belong to the same writer.

It follows that the Gospel of St. Luke must have had three different authors: so great is the power of statistics!

The eight valuable excursus appended to this bulky volume (it contains 824 octavo pages)—especially the lengthy dissertation on the peculiarities of the style of Euripides and also that on Anastrophe—will be most welcome to students. Lastly let me remind the reader that, inasmuch as the author spent upwards of twenty years in the compilation of this work, it is not to be wondered at if, within the narrow limits of a review, I have not succeeded in giving more than a very slight and inadequate sketch of the treasures of learning stowed away within these unpretentious pages.

J. DONOVAN.

GILDERSLEEVE'S *LATIN GRAMMAR*.

Gildersleeve's Latin Grammar. Third edition, revised and enlarged, by B. L. GILDERSLEEVE and GONZALEZ LODGE. (University Publishing Company: New York, etc. 1894. Macmillan & Co.: London. 1895.)

PROFESSOR GILDERSLEEVE's work as a grammarian has been before the world for more than a quarter of a century, and has exercised so important an influence on American scholarship that it might be