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The Spatial Use of *kata* and *ana* with the Accusative in Homer

The Greek prepositions have long been neglected by scholars of Greek linguistics. While the standard handbooks all give useful compilations of examples, they do little to explore the interrelationships between them. Silvia Luraghi's recent monograph, *On the Meaning of Prepositions and Cases*, goes a long way towards addressing this odd lack of literature in schematizing the relationships between the different semantic roles that prepositions can express. But while she is right to take many of her examples from the poems of Homer, in which the underlying spatial meanings of the prepositions are most prominent, she pays too little attention to the constraints imposed on Homeric language by the rules of oral composition and the dactylic hexameter. In particular, this paper will focus on the spatial use of *kata* and *ana* with the accusative in Homer and will argue that meter cannot be ignored in determining the factors that explain which preposition is used in a given context.

The spatial significance of *kata* with the accusative is undeniably complicated. Two of its uses are relevant here. First, it can be used to mark an action that takes place at many points within the area marked by the preposition; in such passages, the preposition can usually be translated "in, throughout", e.g. *polloi gar kata astu mega Priamou epikouroi* (*Il.* 2.803). Second, *kata* is found in expressions where a soldier is struck in a particular part of the body, e.g. *kata stēthos balein*. In reference to these uses, Luraghi contrasts *kata* with *ana*: in expressions of the first type, *kata*, it is argued, denotes "throughout" in a less exhaustive way than *ana*, while in those of the second type, *kata* is viewed as indicating a less precise location than *ana* does. Unfortunately, neither of these explanations seems to work. First, *kata* can denote as exhaustive a motion as *ana*, as can be seen in *Od.* 1.144–5: *hoi men epeita / hexeiēs hezonto kata klismous te thronous te*. The adverb *hexeiēs* suggests a more regular procession than does *ephoita* in *Il.* 5.528, which Luraghi cites to illustrate the "exhaustive" use of *ana*: *Atreidēs d' an' homilon ephoita polla keleuōn*. Second, the locations specified by *kata* are no less precise than those marked by *ana*, as can be seen in *Il.* 11.108: *ton men huper mazoio kata stēthos bale douri*. Far from being a vague description of where the spear struck, the narrower specification *huper mazoio*, together with *kata stēthos*, provides a rather precise portrayal of the wound. Such additional details about the location of the wound are also found in other similar passages; *ana*, on the other hand, is not found in any comparable wounding scenes in the *Iliad*. Indeed, its most common objects denote places that are larger than a body part: *dōma*, *straton*, *astu*.

We might expect the difference between *kata* and *ana* to be brought into sharper relief in the few passages where they occur side by side, for example *ban d' ienai kath' homilon ana straton eurun Achaiōn* (*Il.* 4.209) and *tis d' houtos kata nēas ana straton ercheai oios* (*Il.* 10.82). But there is little that *homilon* and *nēas* have in common, as against *straton*, that would explain why the former occur with *kata* and the latter with *ana*. Instead, where the two prepositions differ is in the metrical contexts in which they are used: for instance, *kata straton*, found twenty-one times in Homer, occurs without fail just before the bucolic diaeresis, while *ana straton*, which occurs only ten times, is found in three

different places in the line. Given, then, that in such passages there is no clear semantic distinction between *kata* and *ana* and, further, that there are metrical restrictions on which preposition is used in which part of the line, we are left with the conclusion that, while certainly not always interchangeable, the two prepositions could be used as equivalent to one another in order to serve the metrical needs of the poet. We may compare *up the road* and *down the road* in English: in the context of a road that has a clear change in elevation, only one of the two would be admissible. But in describing motion along a level road, either may be used.