Reply to Pietro Bortone

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I find Pietro Bortone’s acrimonious reaction amusing and his accusation of plagiarism simply ridiculous (allegedly, I copied the substance of my 363-page book on primary prepositions in Homer and Attic-Ionic from his book, which devotes a chapter of 63 pages to Homeric and Classical Greek, including various authors that were not in my corpus and several non-primary prepositions). Regarding our meeting in Paris two weeks after 9-11-2001, I have rather different recollections. I doubt having ever said that I dreamed of writing a book such as his: most likely, I said I was writing a book on Greek prepositions in Homeric and Classical Greek, which was indeed what I was doing at that moment (my 2003 book was submitted in the spring of 2002). I did express interest in his work as I am obviously interested in anybody else’s work related to mine; however, even though over three decades colleagues may have discovered errors in some of my publications, nobody has ever detected any plagiarism. The atmosphere was friendly and collaborative, as shown by Bortone’s answer to my inquiry about the book he had promised to send me. He wrote (3-18-2002): “I’m greatly embarrassed. After your email I made a phone call and discovered that my parents whom I had asked to send you the thesis haven’t done that .... You shouldn’t have been so kind as not to say anything for months!”

In my 2005 paper on metá that he says he peer-reviewed I did refer to his book, and not marginally: I mentioned his description of the semantic evolution exactly where I spoke of such evolution (e.g.: “As argued in Bortone (2000: 222), after the phonological reduction of metá = ‘with’ to me, there was space for another metá = ‘after’, since there was now a formal distinction between the two meanings.”). However, my central claim, i.e. that the formal split pointed to the existence of two homophones already in Classical Greek, is nowhere to be found in Bortone’s book. To say that I duplicated his material sounds imaginative, considering that I did my own corpus study of Byzantine and Middle Greek (which should reassure readers regarding my knowledge of Medieval Greek) and none of my examples are to be found in his book (Modern Greek examples
were, as acknowledged, the courtesy of a colleague, who had also received Bortone’s thesis after the Paris conference and, as many others, failed to discover plagiarism). The section on Homeric and Classical Greek did not draw on Bortone’s book, especially because his treatment of *metá* has serious flaws. On p. 159 (= Bortone 2000:181), he shows that *metá*+dative and *metá*+genitive could occur in similar contexts (omitting that *metá*+accusative could occur in similar contexts too) and concludes that “the dative was the weaker case” so it was eliminated. But he fails to show in what sense it was the weaker case, considering that the ratio of dative:genitive in Homer is 215:5 (Hagget 1902); I base my analysis on a wider consideration of usages with all three cases and in-depth semantic analysis, which I certainly couldn’t have taken from his book because it’s not there. (Remarkably, in a three-line addition to the 2000 version, Bortone manages to slip in a real mistake regarding *metá*. In Bortone 2010:167 he states that “the genitive appears in Homer with plurals and collective singulars.” This is simply false: the five occurrences with the genitive all feature count plurals; cf. Chantraine 1953:119. It is the accusative which, in the meaning ‘among’, only occurs with collective singulars and plurals modified by *pās* ‘all’; cf. Chantraine 1953:118.) Interestingly, when the paper was rejected by the journal, the report didn’t show much concern with the Greek data, and I was not surprised that the same paper, virtually unchanged, fared much better in a journal mostly devoted to Greek.

Often, Bortone eschews answering. Regarding *diá*, the point is not whether I did or did not mention Schwyzer, but rather that he (I can only repeat what I’ve already written) refers to the use of *diá*+accusative and *diá*+genitive in the PPs *diá nükta* ‘in the night’ and *diá nuktós* ‘during the night’ as “indiscriminate use of cases in PPs” (Bortone 2010:159), without considering that the first expression is only Homeric, and that after Homer *diá*+accusative denotes Cause, while the second is only post-Homeric, and that in Homer *diá*+genitive never denotes Time. So I am not the one who needs to refer to standard handbooks here, but rather he. Concerning the extension of *diá* to Beneficiary, again I based my observations on a corpus study (presented in Luraghi 2005; needless to say, none of the examples is to be found in Bortone’s book). What I had written to him was that I didn’t understand why he, though remarking that *diá* acquired a Beneficiary meaning (based on a single example from Jannaris 1897, hardly a new discovery, cf. Bortone 2010: 235), failed to consider the Purpose meaning. His answer (3-21-2002) was that, regarding this type of extension, “*diá* did not fall into the category” of prepositions he considered for the Medieval Greek period, so “I haven’t studied it at all.”

I, too, find unfortunate that someone failed to realize that the figure in Luraghi (2003:166) was by Bortone, as I made clear that I didn’t commit to that interpretation saying that it “cannot be demonstrated based on the literary