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**Michael Skiba, *Participial Prepositions and Conjunctions in the History of English*, Munich: utzverlag, 2021, 235 pp.
(Reviewed by RAFAŁ MOLENCKI, University of Silesia
in Katowice, Poland)**

The subject of medieval and modern English participial prepositions and conjunctions has not hitherto received much attention on the part of historical linguists, so Michael Skiba's study is a welcome contribution to this largely neglected field. The book is a modified version of the author's doctoral dissertation of 2019 successfully defended at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich.

The participial prepositions and conjunctions (e.g. *including, considering/considered, providing/provided (that), seen/seeing (that)*) are a relatively recent phenomenon in English. However, some of them, in particular *during, except, past*, are so common and well-established as grammatical words that most native speakers do not realize their deverbal origin. In the case of *during* there is no synchronic basis for treating the word as a participle after the verb *dure(n)* became obsolete in Early Modern English.

Michael Skiba rightly associates the appearance of participial prepositions and conjunctions with the language contact situation between English, French and Latin in late medieval England. He provides convincing arguments and evidence showing that the words had been originally grammaticalized in Old French (both continental and Anglo-Norman) with some symptoms of the new status found already in Latin. Then bilingual French and English speakers, and indeed writers, simply copied the Romance forms and uses first into their Middle English legalese and other educated varieties from the fourteenth century onwards. This paved the ground for the subsequent coining of new grammatical words also from native Germanic elements: some of them already calqued according to the Romance pattern in Late Middle English, e.g. *outtaking, outtaken, (not) withstanding*. And the process is still productive in Present-day English, as the author shows in Chapter Seven in the discussion of the new items which arose in the 20th century. The process appears to have become a consequence of the typological change from synthetic to analytic, which

affected both Romance and Germanic languages. The external factor was the increasing number of argumentative texts written in Late Middle and Early Modern English, which required more and more precise exponents of abstract relationships (cf. Kortmann 2012).

The language material for Skiba's study comes from both modern and diachronic corpora of English checked against the definitions and examples found in historical dictionaries. The first chapters introduce the theoretical concepts and the methodology of the study. The author goes back to ancient and medieval grammar books in order to show how the categories of prepositions, conjunctions and participles were presented there and later points to the difficulties of their identification, categorization and classification in modern linguistic research. In Chapter Three the status of these categories is discussed in detail in old and modern Germanic and Romance languages against the Indo-European background with special attention paid to the participial constructions in Old English and Early Middle English and also in Old French and Anglo-Norman. The author shows that the main source for the prepositional uses of participles were absolute constructions found in classical languages.

The most interesting data and the author's original analyses are found in Chapters Five and Six. The general tendencies are discussed in Chapter Five on the basis of a relatively limited Helsinki Corpus: we find here quantitative analyses presented in numerous graphs and charts. The results are then verified for each item by a detailed survey of the data, including the first attestations, from the lexicographic databases, especially the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Middle English Dictionary*, and historical corpora such as the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*, the *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts*. The discussion is lavishly illustrated with numerous examples showing how the participial prepositions and conjunctions functioned in the language.

The author has made references to most of the relevant and significant works published on the subject. His critical overview of the state-of-the-art literature in the first chapters of the book is most pertinent and exhaustive. For example, Skiba (pp. 26-28) does not hesitate to question the validity of the classifications offered in some standard reference grammars of English (Huddleston – Pullum 2002) and academic manuals of linguistics (e.g. Herbst – Schüller 2008). To the author's extensive bibliographical list one could add at least two more studies written by the present reviewer (Molenccki 2011, 2012), where some of the participial prepositions and conjunctions are discussed. Another thing that might facilitate the reader in interpreting the results of the author's research would be including a subject and author

index at the end of the book, which could be done by means of common software these days.

As I said at the beginning of this review, the book by Michael Skiba is a very solid corpus-based study of an emerging new type of grammatical words in Middle and Early Modern English. Particularly useful are the summary tables illustrating the first occurrences of participial prepositions and conjunctions in the history of English. I believe that this valuable work will certainly become an important point of reference for future studies in the history of English, language contact, word formation and grammaticalization. As signalled by the author in Chapter Seven, where recent developments are taken account of, Present-day English participles still have the potential to grammaticalize into prepositions and conjunctions. Following this, the methods of research developed by Michael Skiba may prove valid in future studies of new participial prepositions and conjunctions.

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