

# Studies in Cognitive Classical Semantics

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## Preface

The present volume grew out of a two-year project entitled *The Lexicon of Embodied Experience in Latin* financed by the University of Genoa within the framework of a ‘Curiosity Driven’ funding call for researchers aged under 40 (<https://lexelat.unige.it>). The aim of the project was to explore the embodied basis of Latin figurative emotion language and to seek to understand how ancient Roman speakers ‘made sense’ of their bodily experience to express quintessentially abstract concepts such as feelings and emotions. The research was carried out within the field of Cognitive Classical Linguistics, recently established by the seminal book *Toward a Cognitive Classical Linguistics: The Embodied Basis of Constructions in Latin and Greek* (Short & Mocciaro 2019) and inspired by applications of the embodiment theory in cognitive semantics, which maintains that language structuring largely depends on humanly embodied imaginative mechanisms, frequently activated by metaphorical extensions.

The project generated lively discussion of topics within cognitive semantics relating to Classical languages with colleagues working at various universities in Italy and abroad. This volume has sprung from discussion with them on several occasions and from research they have developed in recent years, bringing together some results of this scientific exchange that revolve around three main closely intertwined thematic foci.

Three chapters deal with Latin collocations and their metaphorical structuring – a subject investigated in depth by José Miguel Baños and his research group at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Specifically, in his chapter José Miguel Baños illustrates the importance of metaphorical and metonymic processes with reference to the most frequent verb-nominal collocations with nouns denoting crimes and discusses to what extent these complex predicates are semantically motivated, and whether it is possible to formulate generalizations that make for a better understanding of their lexical constraints, also from a diachronic perspective. Guillermo Salas Jiménez shows that the use of *ineo* ‘to enter’ as an extension support verb is closely related to its metaphorization thanks to the interplay of three image schemas – OBJECT, CONTAINER and SOURCE-PATH-GOAL – which are interpreted metaphorically when *ineo* is combined with a time event noun, instantiating the mapping TO BEGIN IS TO ENTER. Cristina Tur deals with some abstract concepts

understood metaphorically through orientational embodied metaphors in a selection of (Greek-)Latin phraseological units from the *adagia* of Erasmus of Rotterdam, showing that the human body constitutes a fundamental interpretive key in Latin phraseology.

Three contributions deal with metaphor as a key organizing principle of conceptual and linguistic systems and as a part of the more general phenomenon of embodiment, and they show that cognitive metaphor theory produces wide-ranging effects in Classical languages' semantic systems. In their chapter, Luisa Brucale and Egle Mocciaro provide a description of the semantic network of the preposition *cum* 'with' + ablative in Plautus' comedies and motivate its polysemy through the principles of embodiment theory and of cognitive grammar, identifying three main paths of metaphorical extension that explain the semantic roles expressed by this preposition. Riccardo Ginevra broadens the scope of the discussion to include the role of etymology in reconstructing the semantic development of Ancient Greek *θνῆσκω* 'to die' and other Indo-European related verbs, illustrating the complex interaction of several cognitive processes, such as metonymy, image schemas and metaphor – specifically, DEATH IS DEPARTURE – in shaping the meaning of these figurative items over time. In her chapter, Irene De Felice starts from the assumption that metaphors can also have a structural role in the organization of a text that depends greatly on the textual genre and applies this theoretical tenet to the analysis of Latin emotion metaphors, showing that the distribution of the metaphors analyzed – special attention is paid to the OPPONENT and the ANIMAL source concepts – is not independent of the textual genre variable.

Finally, two chapters enrich the interpretation of linguistic data with insights drawn from embodied cognition theory as applied to emotion studies and recent developments in cognitive narratology. Roberta Leotta's chapter discusses potential developments in this line of research, analyzing the expression and enactment of a specific emotion, jealousy, using the tools of embodied cognition theory applied to the socio-culturally situated scenario of the Roman banquet as it is represented in two literary genres of Latin literature. Along similar lines, in her contribution Federica Colella provides a textual and linguistic-literary analysis of vulnerability in Ovid, exploring the metaphorical implications of lexemes that refer to the semantic field of wounding in the description of the poet's lived experience.

We would like to thank the contributors not only for their valuable chapters but also for the insights their studies have brought to the development of our project, inspiring it from its inception and guiding its realization over the years. Special thanks also go to Douglas Cairns (University of Edinburgh), Donncha O'Rourke (University of Edinburgh), Michele Prandi (University of Genoa) and William M. Short (University of Exeter) for stimulating discussions at different stages that helped us delve more deeply into the empirical and theoretical implications of our research.

Lastly, we are extremely grateful to the University of Genoa whose funding of this project has allowed us to explore such an exciting topic, making us increasingly aware that there is still much work to be done to investigate the metaphorical workings of cognition as they are reflected in Classical languages.

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