Expressions of Agency in Ancient Greek

Ancient Greek expressed the agents of passive verbs by a variety of means, and this work explores the language’s development of prepositions which marked these agents. After an initial look at the pragmatics of agent constructions, it turns to this central question: under what conditions is the agent expressed by a construction other than ὑπό with the genitive? The book traces the development of these expressions from Homer through classical prose and drama, paying attention to the semantic, syntactic, and metrical conditions that favored the use of one preposition over another. It concludes with a study of the decline of ὑπό as an agent marker in the first millennium AD. Although the focus is on developments in Greek, translation of the examples should render it accessible to linguists studying changes in prepositional systems generally.

Coulter H. George is currently a Research Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge. He has previously taught at Rice University.
EXPRESSIONS OF AGENCY IN ANCIENT GREEK

COULTER H. GEORGE

Trinity College, Cambridge
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The abbreviations of classical Greek authors and works are those found in LSJ, except for the names of the books of the Bible, which are abbreviated as in The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd edn (1974) p. xxv. Fifth-century AD authors are referenced as in Hult 1990, sixth-century authors as in G. W. H. Lampe (ed.) A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford, 1961). Where available, Oxford Classical Text editions were used; editions used for other authors are indicated in the footnotes in the relevant sections.

NRSV = New Revised Standard Version
PAC = passive-with-agent construction