Dative Case Revisited

Until now we have mainly considered the dative case as the indirect object case (He hit the ball *to Elliot*). However, it is also used to express self-interest, means, location, and point of time.

εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Λύσατε   He said *to them*, "Destroy" (John 2:19)

The dative often accompanies the preposition ἐν.

Perschbacker (pp. 144-152), Wallace "Notes" (pp. 8-79), and Dana and Mantey (pp. 83-91) provide rich discussion that have been utilized here and which go beyond our present level of discussion.

Dative of Interest: may express advantage or disadvantage. When expressing advantage, it may be translated "to" or "for". When expressing disadvantage, "against" may be used (Wallance, Notes, p. 54).

Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς   Do not store up *for yourselves* treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19)

ὥστε μαρτυρεῖτε ἑαυτοῖς   so that you witness *against yourselves* (Matthew 23.31)

Dative of Location: is often used with the prepostion ἐν (in) and πρός (to, towards) to reference a particular physical location. However, the dative may also be used alone to indicate location.

οἱ . . . μαθηταὶ τῷ πλοιαρίῳ ἦλθον   the disciples came *in a small boat* (John 21:8)

ὁ δὲ δοῦλος οὐ μένει ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ   and the slave does not remain *in the house* (John 8:35)

Dative of Means/Agency: often indicates the means by which something happens. It can designate the instrument (impersonal) or agent (personal) that performs the action.

εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἐθνῶν, λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ   to the obedience of the Gentiles *by word* and deed (Romans 15:18)

χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι   it is *by grace* you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:5)

Dative of Time: may be used to refer to a particular point in time, in contrast to the genitive of time which describes time as time within which or during which.

Καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ γάμος ἐγένετο   and *on the third day* there a wedding took place (John 2:1)

Ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ.   And it was the Sabbath on that day (The day on which this took place was a Sabbath) (John 5:9)

Dative of Sphere refers to an abstract realm, whereas the dative of location refers to a specific physical location.

ἕκαστος καθὼς προῄρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ   let each one as he has purposed *in [his] heart* (2 Corinthians 9:7)

καὶ εὐθὺς ἐπιγνοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ   and immediately Jesus knew in His spirit (Mark 2:8)