Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament
Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice

STANLEY E. PORTER
Dedicated to
Lorraine DeHaan Porter
and
Wendy J. Porter
Two Extraordinary Women of God
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All of the essays in this volume address matters of the Greek New Testament, especially in its linguistic dimensions, variously conceived and defined. There are some theoretical essays, but most of them are applied to particular problems and texts within the Greek New Testament.

None of the essays in this volume has been published before, although one of them draws on a paper published previously. However, the essays were written for a variety of original purposes. Most of them—somewhere around seventeen of them, if I have remembered and counted correctly—were originally delivered at conferences such as the Society of Biblical Literature or Society for New Testament Studies or as invited papers (sometimes both). I appreciated the responses that I received from those who attended, heard, and discussed the papers further. I am especially appreciative of one student at Westminster Seminary in Korea who took the time to go through one paper in detail and provide written comments. These were very helpful, and I am sure that if I read Korean, I would have benefited even further from additional comments he made. In any case, thank you to all who took these papers seriously and responded to them. I also am thankful for the fervent and continuous debate with my former colleague Professor Arthur Gibson about one of the papers. I deeply miss these discussions, and I wish we had been able to continue them over the years. I am sure I have not convinced you, Arthur, about proper nouns, but I have done my best. I am also thankful for comments made on various papers by several of my students, former students, friends, and colleagues, including (but not inclusively) Gus Konkel, Matthew Brook O’Donnell, Hughson Ong, Francis Pang, Andrew Pitts, Steven Studebaker, Randall Tan, and Cynthia Long Westfall, who have even gone so far as to suggest terms and wordings that I have adopted. I also thank Bryan Fletcher for compiling the indexes.
Getting these papers into publishable shape has required the work of two people in particular. I thank my former student and now colleague Christopher Land for initially editing and setting up most of these files for publication. He offered much editorial help and many useful comments on the various essays, from which I have greatly benefited. I also thank my former student Gregory Fewster for his similar help, especially with a couple of essays that were far from being in the complete form that they needed to be. Both of these colleagues have taken on this project with fervor and made the final product much better than it would have been. They not only paid attention to the many small things but also offered global comments and criticism, to the point of suggesting other words and adding words and sentences (and sometimes more!) here and there (many, if not most, of which I have gladly accepted and incorporated), along with rewriting numerous sections. I am very grateful to both for their excellent work.

These papers were mostly written during my time at two different institutions. The University of Surrey Roehampton (now Roehampton University) and McMaster Divinity College both provided the opportunity to complete the research and writing of these papers. Even though I am president of the latter institution, and that is truly my full-time day (and sometimes also night) job, I have been supported in my off-hours research pursuits.

I also thank my friends at Baker Academic for their help in making this project possible, especially James Ernest.

I conclude with thanks once again to my tremendous wife, Wendy, both for being an academic colleague extraordinaire and, far more importantly, for being the soul and spirit of our lives together.
## Abbreviations

### General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>chap(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td>col(s).</td>
<td>column(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>esp.</td>
<td>especially</td>
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<tr>
<td>ibid.</td>
<td>in the same source</td>
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<td>p(p).</td>
<td>page(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>rev.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIL</td>
<td>Summer Institute of Linguistics</td>
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<td>SFL</td>
<td>systemic functional linguistics</td>
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### Ancient Texts, Text Types, and Versions

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<td>Septuagint</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLG</td>
<td>Thesaurus linguae Graecae: A Digital Library of Greek</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Literature. University of California, Irvine, 1972–.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.tlg.uci.edu/">http://www.tlg.uci.edu/</a></td>
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<td>Authorized Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBE</td>
<td>The Bible in Basic English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEB</td>
<td>Common English Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEV</td>
<td>Contemporary English Version</td>
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<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNB</td>
<td>Good News Bible</td>
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<td>HCSB</td>
<td>Holman Christian Standard Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>JB</td>
<td>Jerusalem Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB</td>
<td>The Living Bible</td>
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<td>NASB</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
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<td>New English Bible</td>
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<td>NIV</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
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<td>NJB</td>
<td>New Jerusalem Bible</td>
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<td>NKJV</td>
<td>New King James Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLT</td>
<td>New Living Translation</td>
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Abbreviations

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<th>Revised English Bible</th>
<th>TNIV</th>
<th>Today’s New International Version</th>
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**Hebrew Bible / Old Testament**

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**New Testament**

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<td>1–2 Pet.</td>
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<td>Galatians</td>
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**Apocrypha and Septuagint**

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**Dead Sea Scrolls**

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<td>4QMMT</td>
<td>4QHalakhic Letter</td>
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**Greek and Latin Works**

**Aristotle**
- *Rhét.*  *Rhétorica (Rhetoric)*

**Dionysius of Halicarnassus**
- *Or.*  *Oration*

**Longinus**
- *Subl.*  *De sublimitate (On the Sublime)*

**Secondary Sources**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AARAS</td>
<td>American Academy of Religion Academy Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td><em>Acta classica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADP</td>
<td>Advances in Discourse Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJP</td>
<td><em>American Journal of Philology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td><em>Archivium linguisticum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>ALLS</td>
<td>Applied Linguistics and Language Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AnBib</td>
<td>Analecta biblica</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASCP</td>
<td>Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATANT</td>
<td><em>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>AUSSGS</td>
<td>Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis: Studia Graeca Stockholmiensia</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUSG</td>
<td><em>Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAGL</td>
<td><em>Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BAGL</td>
<td><em>Biblia und Alter Testaments: Theologie und Religion</em></td>
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<td>BECNT</td>
<td>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</td>
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<td>BETL</td>
<td>Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicaarum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
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<tr>
<td>BibSem</td>
<td>Biblical Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</td>
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<td>BILS</td>
<td>Berkeley Insights in Linguistics and Semiotics</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIS</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLG</td>
<td>Biblical Languages: Greek</td>
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<td>BLH</td>
<td>Biblical Languages: Hebrew</td>
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<td>BNTC</td>
<td>Black’s New Testament Commentaries</td>
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<td>BSLP</td>
<td>Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>The Bible Translator</td>
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<td>BZNW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neustamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAL</td>
<td>Cambridge Approaches to Linguistics</td>
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<td>CBC</td>
<td>Cambridge Bible Commentary</td>
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<td>CBQMS</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</td>
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<td>CBR</td>
<td>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</td>
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<td>CIP</td>
<td>Cambridge Introductions to Philosophy</td>
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<td>CL</td>
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<td>CPC</td>
<td>Collection de philologie classique</td>
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<td>CQ</td>
<td>Classical Quarterly</td>
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<td>CSCC</td>
<td>Comparative Studies in Cultures and Civilizations</td>
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<td>Cambridge Studies in Linguistics</td>
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<td>Eerdmans Critical Commentary</td>
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<td>ECHC</td>
<td>Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context</td>
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<td>EFN</td>
<td>Estudios de filología neotestamentaria</td>
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<td>EKK</td>
<td>Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</td>
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<td>ELS</td>
<td>English Language Series</td>
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<td>Grace Theological Journal</td>
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<td>HA</td>
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<td>HTB</td>
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<td>HvTSt</td>
<td>Hervormde teologiese studies</td>
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<td>IBC</td>
<td>Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching</td>
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<td>Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series</td>
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<td>Linguistic Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>Literary and Linguistic Computing</td>
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<td>LLL</td>
<td>Longman Linguistics Library</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>Linguistique nouvelle</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNTS</td>
<td>Library of New Testament Studies</td>
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<td>LPS</td>
<td>Library of Pauline Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSL</td>
<td>Lodz Studies in Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>LVC</td>
<td><em>Language Variation and Change</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>LW</td>
<td>Language Workbooks</td>
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<td>MJTM</td>
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<td>MNTC</td>
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<td><em>McMaster New Testament Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>NCBC</td>
<td>New Cambridge Bible Commentary</td>
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<td>NCUC</td>
<td>Nouvelle collection à l’usage des classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>NET</td>
<td>Neutestamentliche Entwürfe zur Theologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGS</td>
<td>New Gospel Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICNT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the New Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIGTC</td>
<td>New International Greek Testament Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLLT</td>
<td><em>Natural Language and Linguistic Theory</em></td>
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<td>NovT</td>
<td><em>Novum Testamentum</em></td>
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<td>NovTSup</td>
<td><em>Novum Testamentum Supplements</em></td>
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<td>NTD</td>
<td>Das Neue Testament Deutsch</td>
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<td>New Testament Guides</td>
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<td>New Testament Library</td>
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<td>New Testament Monographs</td>
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<td><em>New Testament Studies</em></td>
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<td>NTTS</td>
<td>New Testament Tools and Studies</td>
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<td>OLS</td>
<td>Open Linguistics Series</td>
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<td>OPTT</td>
<td><em>Occasional Papers in Translation and Textlinguistics</em></td>
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<td>ORP</td>
<td>Oxford Readings in Philosophy</td>
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<td>Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics</td>
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<td>OTM</td>
<td>Oxford Theological Monographs</td>
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<td>PasJ</td>
<td><em>Pastoral Journal</em></td>
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<td>PelNTC</td>
<td>Pelican New Testament Commentaries</td>
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<td>PFES</td>
<td>Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society</td>
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<td>PilNTC</td>
<td>Pillar New Testament Commentary</td>
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<td>PLB</td>
<td>Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td><em>Philosophical Review</em></td>
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<td>PAST</td>
<td>Pauline Studies</td>
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<td>PV</td>
<td>Papyrologica vindobonensis</td>
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<td>QULPM</td>
<td>Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters</td>
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<td>RB</td>
<td><em>Revue biblique</em></td>
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<td>RILP</td>
<td>Roehampton Institute London Papers</td>
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<td>RJ</td>
<td><em>Reformed Journal</em></td>
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<td>RNT</td>
<td>Regensburger Neues Testament</td>
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<td>RSL</td>
<td>Research Surveys in Linguistics</td>
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<td>Routledge Studies in Germanic Linguistics</td>
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<td>RTT</td>
<td>Research in Text Theory</td>
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<td>SBFA</td>
<td>Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta</td>
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<td>SBG</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Greek</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>SBLCP</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Centennial Publications</td>
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<td>SBLDS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</td>
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<td>SBLMS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series</td>
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<td>SBLRBS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study</td>
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<td>SBLSBS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study</td>
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<td>SCL</td>
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<td>Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics</td>
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<td>SJT</td>
<td>Scottish Journal of Theology</td>
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<td>SNTG</td>
<td>Studies in New Testament Greek</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNTSMS</td>
<td>Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series</td>
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<td>SNTW</td>
<td>Studies of the New Testament and Its World</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Sacra pagina</td>
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<td>Spap</td>
<td>Studia papyrologica</td>
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<td>SPIB</td>
<td>Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici</td>
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<td>SSCFL</td>
<td>Studies in the Social and Cultural Foundations of Language</td>
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<td>SSEJC</td>
<td>Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity</td>
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<td>Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation</td>
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<td>Studies in Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>SubBi</td>
<td>Subsidia biblica</td>
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<td>Sheffield Working Papers in Language and Linguistics</td>
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<td>TAPA</td>
<td>Transactions of the American Philological Association</td>
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<td>Texts and Editions for New Testament Study</td>
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<td>THNT</td>
<td>Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament</td>
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<td>TJ</td>
<td>Trinity Journal</td>
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<td>TLZ</td>
<td>Theologische Literaturzeitung</td>
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<td>TMEA</td>
<td>Travaux et mémoires: Études anciennes</td>
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<td>TMO</td>
<td>Travaux de la Maison de l’Orient</td>
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<td>Tyndale New Testament Commentaries</td>
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<td>Transactions of the Philological Society</td>
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<td>TSK</td>
<td>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</td>
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<td>TUGAL</td>
<td>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</td>
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<td>TynBul</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
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<td>TZT</td>
<td>Tübingen Zeitschrift für Theologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBSMS</td>
<td>United Bible Societies Monograph Series</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UISK</td>
<td>Untersuchungen zur indo-germanischen Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>USFISFCJ</td>
<td>University of South Florida International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism</td>
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<tr>
<td>VE</td>
<td>Vox evangelica</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBC</td>
<td>Word Biblical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLQ</td>
<td>Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>WUNT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZB</td>
<td>Zürcher Bibelkommentare</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZECNT</td>
<td>Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZNW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</td>
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Introduction

This volume of essays continues work done on Greek language and linguistics that I have been fortunate to be able to engage in from the very beginning of my academic career. My first published academic article was in the area of Greek language and linguistics, and, although I did not realize it at the time, it helped to set the course for at least one major strand of my subsequent research, writing, and teaching career. In that first article I examined the adjectival attributive genitive in ancient Greek, especially those instances within the less frequent syntactical patterns in the New Testament.¹ Later, what began as a complicated attempt to find a PhD thesis topic, and led to completing a PhD in the fields of both biblical studies and linguistics (systemic functional linguistics in particular), has continued to be a productive area of ever-expanding research. I firmly believe that matters of Greek language and linguistics are essential to understanding the Greek New Testament; in that sense, knowledge of Greek linguistics is a fundamental hermeneutical stance that should be pursued by every serious student of the New Testament.² By


knowledge of Greek,” I do not mean what some people claim is knowledge on the basis of finishing one or two years of Greek study (especially employing some of the widely used but inadequate pedagogical grammatical tools) or traditional grammar or the invocation of the work of outmoded and outdated reference tools. What I mean is a robust and insightful development of appropriate linguistically based methods for study of the Greek New Testament. Such work is the exception to most of what represents itself under the name of exegesis. It is disconcerting to see many of the latest commentaries and numerous journal articles make statements about the Greek New Testament and yet show absolutely no knowledge of any of the recent discussion of ancient Greek. They sometimes even use such naive and unfounded knowledge as the basis for what can only be called, as a result, highly tenuous exegetical conclusions. This volume is designed to help remedy this situation, at least in part, by providing some insights into various areas of Greek grammar and linguistics along with providing examples of application of linguistics to particular problems in Greek.

My first major work in Greek language and linguistics, a major monograph on verbal aspect theory and the Greek of the New Testament, led to linguistically related work in at least two major areas. The first was in areas more particularly linguistic in nature. Several of my earliest scholarly articles addressed matters of general linguistics, even if they had direct application to the work that I was doing in study of the Greek of the New Testament. This resulted in publications on vagueness and ambiguity, and on tense-form terminology. Another area of general linguistic interest came about first through the basic corpus-based approach of my original research on verbal aspect, and then later in the collaborative work of my then-student and later colleague Matthew Brook O’Donnell on corpus linguistics. The study of ancient languages raises a unique set of corpus problems, some of which we have addressed in our research. Since then, I have also contributed linguistic overviews of the


New Testament and Septuagint for a linguistic reference work. I have also attempted to formulate what the distinctives of linguistically based Greek grammatical study look like in relation to more traditional areas of Greek scholarship, such as traditional grammar and classical philology.

Within the field of New Testament Greek language and linguistic studies, my second major area, I have extended my initial studies on verbal aspect into five other major research areas. These lines are discussed in various ways within this fundamental research, though they have often been overlooked because they are overshadowed by the major topic of discussion, verbal aspect. The first area is continued discussion of verbal aspect, as well as tense and mood (the three together often referred to as “TMA,” or tense-mood-aspect), and their relationships to things such as temporal reference and even syntax. Verbal aspect is a topic to which I return in several of the chapters in this volume. One of the frequently heard though rarely supported responses to my theory of aspect is that choice of verbal aspect is influenced by the Greek verbal system itself or by lexical choice. In a corpus-based study of the Greek of the New

Testament, Matthew O’Donnell and I show, from a probabilistic standpoint, that the aspectual system within the Greek verbal system is for all intents and purposes completely independent.11 In an article on lexical choice, I also show that lexical influence on verbal aspectual choice is also very limited.12 Through this work, I (and others) demonstrate, I believe, that such counterclaims are simply not defensible, and that such arguments should be dropped, and with them theories (such as Aktionsart or lexical aspect), even of grammatical aspect, that are based upon them. Related to verbal aspect and other areas of Greek usage is the notion of prominence, the means by which language users indicate the salience of various linguistic elements. In an earlier work titled “Prominence: A Theoretical Overview,” I attempt to provide a system for determining Greek prominence in relationship to markedness and foregrounding.13

The second major strand I have continued to develop is general work on the history and development of the Greek language, where I have attempted to show the appropriate position of the Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament in relation to the varieties of Greek that came before it, and how study of the Greek of the New Testament—widely ignored by students of Classical Greek—has made significant contributions to our understanding of Greek.14 Related to this is my offering of extended critique of some of the

tools and approaches used in contemporary Greek study, including grammars and commentaries.\textsuperscript{15}

The third area is sociolinguistics, the specific topic of chapter 7 in this volume. Sociolinguistics is a major field of linguistic study, and the several intertwined subareas where I have made a contribution are diglossia, multilingualism, and historical sociolinguistics. Diglossia is related to the area of register study and is concerned with how various language users shift and adjust their linguistic choice within their potential repertoires for various socially and textually determined reasons.\textsuperscript{16} The second subarea of sociolinguistics, multilingualism, is directly relevant to the milieu in which the New Testament was written, especially in relation to matters such as style, register, and prestige languages.\textsuperscript{17} The Mediterranean world of the first century was multilingual, and this affects issues such as the language of Jesus and the use of language by a variety of New Testament writers, such as Paul, a Diaspora Jew who lived for a time in Palestine but traveled throughout the greater Mediterranean Greco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{18} This sociolinguistic work has significance for Greek Egypt as well.\textsuperscript{19} Historical sociolinguistics studies the sociolinguistic dynamics of the ancient world on the basis of historical evidence of the varieties of language used by various peoples.\textsuperscript{20} Within an SFL (systemic functional linguistics)


framework (itself a sociolinguistic theory), the notion of register is important since it provides a means for describing typical instances of language use within the context of situatiion of a discourse.\textsuperscript{21} Register studies continue to be underdeveloped in New Testament research (see chap. 13 in this volume), even though there has been some work that has paved the way in this regard.

The fourth area of continued research is concerned with the language of Jesus (closely related to sociolinguistics above).\textsuperscript{22} Within the context of Mediterranean multilingualism, I have examined the languages of Jesus and attempted to develop linguistically based criteria for determining the historical reliability of sayings of Jesus. To that end, I have developed three linguistically based criteria for authenticating the words of Jesus and applied them to various Gospel-recorded instances: Greek language and its context, Greek textual variance, and discourse features.\textsuperscript{23}

The fifth and final strand of New Testament linguistic research is discourse analysis.\textsuperscript{24} In some ways, discourse analysis has been an overriding concern of my work from the start, as I have tried to position my study of Greek within


larger discourse concerns. This has led to my writing the first grammar of New Testament Greek that utilized discourse principles within a strong linguistic framework,25 and to my being one of only a few to write on the grammar of the Gospel of Peter and the first to write a discourse analysis of that noncanonical gospel.26 With Jeffrey Reed and Matthew O’Donnell, I have also coauthored an elementary Greek grammar that incorporates a linguistic framework into its presentation and organization.27

Besides my work in New Testament Greek language and linguistics study, a second major field where I have undertaken serious research is the area of New Testament lexicography, including semantic-domain theory. My interests have been both theoretical and practical. I have written one of the only full-scale studies of a Greek lexeme within all of ancient Greek usage, a study of καταλλάσσω (“reconcile”) and its cognates from earliest usage to the sixth century AD.28 This is a further example of corpus-based study, in which I examined all of the contexts in which the lexeme appears and analyzed its major syntactical patterns. I followed this up with several related studies on particular New Testament passages.29 I also have been concerned with the more theoretical issues of lexicography, where I have become an overt proponent of lexical monosemy rather than the traditional polysemy,30 and

28. S. E. Porter, καταλλάσσω in Ancient Greek Literature, with Reference to the Pauline Writings, EFN 5 (Córdoba: Ediciones el Almendro, 1994).

Stanley E. Porter, Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament
have opposed the insidious tendency of New Testament studies toward theological lexicography. In this volume chapters 3 and 4 also figure into this discussion of lexicography by critiquing two standard lexicons and making some constructive proposals.

A third area of research and writing not already mentioned above is my work in translation studies, a field often excluded from discussion of linguistics “proper” (or improper, I would say). Beginning with my study of the Contemporary English Version and Mark 1:4, an important verse in translation theorizing, I have extended that research and developed a framework for examining various types of translations. This framework attempts to move beyond the usual bifurcation between literal and dynamic equivalence and to explore a fuller range of interlingual translational options, along with using discourse analysis as a means of translational analysis and evaluation.
Along the way, I have also written a number of linguistically framed articles on a variety of other topics in study of the Greek New Testament. This is actually the second volume I have published that includes a variety of my linguistic papers. The first one, however, contained mostly (though not only) previously published papers. These papers included an introduction to Greek language and linguistics, a treatment of the Greek verb (“become”) as a verb of location, an article on Romans 5 that discusses a number of linguistic matters, and a treatment of Wittgenstein’s classes of utterances in Paul with special reference to Galatians 3:28–29, among others that are less linguistic in orientation or that are mentioned elsewhere in this introduction. In individual studies, I have also continued to explore a range of topics in Greek language and linguistics. One of these is the area of linguistic determinism or relativity, what is sometimes known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, in which I critically examine the question of how one’s language influences one’s thought. Another of these areas is word and constituent order, also a topic that I take up in one of the chapters in this book. I am gratified to see that there has been some recent work on this topic: it remains an understudied area, full of unjustified suppositions. Another topic is the Greek case system, where I have responded to some research differentiating grammatical and semantic case by arguing for the need for a formally based approach. Andrew Pitts and I have also applied case grammar to the issue of (“faith of Christ”) and the genitive, and we believe, contrary to much theologizing, that a linguistic analysis can actually solve this enduring linguistic and hence theological problem. I believe that there is too much

45. S. E. Porter and A. W. Pitts, “with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the Discussion,” in *The Faith of Jesus*
invested in the theological issues for some to concede that such a solution is not only available, but also quite possibly correct. I have also written an essay that tackles some of the issues surrounding the notorious problem of the Greek middle voice. Along with Matthew O’Donnell, I have also written on the so-called vocative case, attempting to bring some clarity to a case that stands out in a variety of linguistically definable ways. We have also written on conjunctions, an area that has not been well discussed from a linguistic standpoint because of the failure to see the conjunctive system as just that—a linguistic system, and not comprising a mixed set of discrete elements. A major advancement of discourse-based study of language—Greek included—is examination of units above the clause. One of these units is the paragraph, which I have endeavored to define linguistically. Nevertheless, study of the paragraph (or equivalent) remains woefully underdeveloped. Future research in linguistics, whether ancient or modern, will need, I believe, to move to formalizing analysis of the paragraph. I, along with Matthew O’Donnell, have also applied the kind of linguistically oriented work noted above to the Greek of the documentary papyri. Even though I continue to work within the SFL


framework, I have also explored some other related topics in linguistics and utilized other approaches to linguistics than the SFL approach, for which I am perhaps best known.\(^{51}\) In the course of my work, and at periodic intervals, I have also offered several critical summaries of some of the major issues or the state of play within Greek grammatical study,\(^{52}\) as well as preparing the New Testament Greek bibliography for the Oxford On-Line Bibliographies.\(^{53}\)

I have also published a number of other studies that depend upon linguistics, even if linguistics does not figure as prominently as it does in most of the essays noted in this introduction.\(^{54}\)

This volume continues several of the major lines of scholarly research that I have indicated above and includes a number of papers delivered at a variety of conferences over the years or written for other purposes. Even though some of


the papers were written and delivered some time ago, I have not attempted to bring them up to date in every regard (especially by adding bibliography) but have let them stand as statements addressing particular issues. The volume is structured around three major organizational groupings of the essays. The first group comprises the text and tools necessary for linguistic analysis of the Greek New Testament. In this section, I first raise the question of who owns the Greek New Testament. By this, I mean to ask the question of who owns the modern eclectic Greek New Testament that is promoted and widely sold by a number of different people—all apparently purporting it to be the original Greek, or as close as we can come to it (otherwise, why undertake this particular project?). I also tackle some of the computer-related needs of those interested in serious study of the Greek New Testament, finding that, even with the surrounding hyperbole regarding computer technology, we have still not progressed as far as we need to. I close this section with two essays on matters of lexicography, one reviewing the Louw-Nida semantic-domains lexicon and the other the fairly recently revised Bauer lexicon by Frederick Danker. I believe that the Louw-Nida lexicon is an underutilized resource in New Testament studies, while the Bauer type of lexicon is probably best seen as reflecting an earlier day and age in lexicography.

The second part of this volume is concerned with ways to approach analysis—in other words, linguistic orientations to the Greek of the New Testament. Most of these approaches overtly reflect the SFL method that I have found so productive in most of the studies that I have done—although I have not used this method exclusively, as noted above, or simply attempted to impose categories developed for the study of English, a configurational language, on ancient Greek, a nonconfigurational language. This second group of essays includes an introductory exploration of the value of linguistics for biblical interpretation that outlines some of my views on lexicographical study; a discussion of how linguistics within a multidisciplinary orientation can contribute to exegesis; an exploration of some of the topics in sociolinguistics that I have pursued in other venues and that merit further exploration; an overview of discourse analysis applied to the study of the Greek New Testament; and an explanation of the ideational metafunction within a register framework (both metafunctions and register being essential concepts in SFL). The close of this section includes three essays that address criticisms of my approach to verbal aspect. The first is a response to a much earlier essay by K. L. McKay. Some may wonder why I have taken so long to respond to him. I have been asked this on several occasions, and I have asked myself as well. One of the reasons is that in most respects McKay and I agree, and so his article did not seem to warrant a confrontative response. Nevertheless, after further
thought and seeing references to his article by others, I include a few words
in response here. The next essay responds to comments first made by Buist
Fanning at a conference and then in printed form regarding my approach to
aspect, especially its relationship to temporality. I tackle his three objections
(concerning the augment, the performative present, and the arguments of
Daniel Wallace), as well as a further one regarding aspectually vague verbs, a
notion that I introduced into Greek language study. I show that there is little
to argue for on behalf of Fanning’s proposals, and in fact quite a bit to argue
against. The final essay tackles an area where I have followed and developed
the research of several important grammarians before me, especially J. P. Louw
and K. L. McKay, in defining the Greek perfect tense-form as grammati-
izing stative aspect. There are some other Greek grammarians who for various
reasons—either a restricted view of binarism or a confused notion of aspect
and Aktionsart—have hesitated to pursue a definition of the semantics of the
perfect tense-form as having its own semantic function. In this essay, I defend
my conception of stative aspect.

In the third and final section of this book, I include several essays that il-
lustrate linguistically informed biblical analysis being undertaken. The first is
a register analysis of Mark 13. I have previously used Mark 13 as an example
text when I developed a discourse-features criterion for historical-Jesus study.
In this volume, I use the notion of register as user-based variety of language
to explicate Mark 13. I follow this essay on Mark with one on Matthew’s
Gospel, in particular the so-called Great Commission in Matthew 28:19–20. I
examine the language of this important passage in order to determine through
grammatical analysis the organization of its thought. The next essay explores
alterations in verbal aspect in extrabiblical Greek and the Synoptic Gospels, as
an attempt to bring asceptual study to bear on the study of Synoptic relations.
The fourth essay surveys and critiques recent research in John’s Gospel and
suggests that a variety of linguistically based means of examining this Gospel
might prove more productive in the future than has some previous literary-
oriented research. Here I offer examples of three different types of linguistic
analysis, including literary stylistics, discourse analysis, and register analysis (all
admittedly influenced by SFL). In the next chapter I offer an examination of the
opponents in three of Paul’s letters—Philemon, Romans, and Colossians—by
drawing upon the structuralist and functional model of Karl Bühler, a member
of the Prague Linguistics Circle and predecessor of Hallidayan functionalism.
This chapter is followed by a short study of the grammar of 1 Timothy 2:8.
Then in the next chapter I revisit the state of play in word-order studies in New
Testament scholarship, attempting to clear the ground and offer some ways
forward in this still understudied and, unfortunately, underconceptualized area.
In the next chapter, going where previous philosophers of language have not dared to go, I explore the notion of a proper noun in Greek—what appears to be a straightforward topic made more difficult by the language itself. I close the volume with an essay that brings the linguistic category of hyponymy to bear on the question of the Trinity—at least on how God/Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are conceptualized lexically in the New Testament.

I realize that much more could be said at virtually every point in these essays. I have not written them to be definitive studies in any regard (certainly not regarding bibliography), but rather as steps forward in what I believe is an essential and developing discussion. As I mentioned above, I am troubled by exegesis that shows no apparent awareness of the complex issues involved in the study of the Greek of the New Testament. I do not in any way wish to minimize the complexity of such interpretive problems or pretend that all of them are easily solved simply by invoking a vague notion of linguistics. However, I believe that much more can and should be done in this field—we can never know its usefulness unless we make the effort. This volume is an attempt to establish some of the theory that might be usefully employed in such linguistic study, and to demonstrate its possibilities in some explorations of the Greek New Testament.