GREEK VERBAL ASPECT IN SYNOPTIC PARALLELS:
ON THE METHOD AND MEANING OF DIVERGENT TENSE-FORM USAGE IN THE
SYNOPTIC PASSION NARRATIVES

by

Wally V. Cirafesi, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of McMaster Divinity College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts (Christian Studies)

McMaster Divinity College
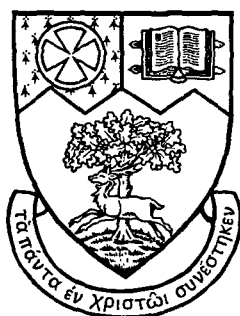Hamilton, Ontario
2012

Master of Arts (Christian Studies)
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Greek Verbal Aspect in Synoptic Parallels: On the Method and Meaning of
                  Divergent Tense-form Usage in the Synoptic Passion Narratives

AUTHOR: Wally V. Cirafesi

SUPERVISORS: Professor Stanley E. Porter and Dr. Cynthia L. Westfall

NUMBER OF PAGES: xi + 203pp.

McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

Upon the recommendation of an oral examining committee,

this thesis by

WALLY V. CIRAFESI

is hereby accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Christian Studies)

Primary Supervisor: Stanley E. Porter, Ph.D.

Primary Supervisor: Cynthia Long Westfall, Ph.D.

Academic Dean: Phil C. Zylla, D.Th.

Date: March 19, 2012

iii

ABSTRACT

"Greek Verbal Aspect in Synoptic Parallels: On the Method and Meaning of Divergent Tense-form Usage in the Synoptic Passion Narratives"

Wally V. Cirafesi
McMaster Divinity College
Hamilton, Ontario
Master of Arts (Christian Studies), 2012

Typical approaches to analyzing the parallel material of the Synoptic Gospels have primarily been concerned with studies in form, source, and redaction criticism. However, these sorts of studies have tended to lack any significant treatment of the fundamental linguistic issues that are relevant to a discussion of Synoptic parallel texts, particularly the issue of divergent tense-form usage. For example, in the temple cleansing episode of Matt 21:13//Mark 11:17//Luke 19:45, Matthew uses the Present form ποιεῖτε ("make") to recount Jesus' statement to the buyers and sellers, while Mark uses the Perfect πεποιήκατε and Luke the Aorist ἐποιήσατε to communicate the same event. By employing the insights of Systemic-Functional Linguistics and Stanley E. Porter's model of verbal aspect theory, this work argues that different tense-forms are used in the parallel material of the Synoptic Passion Narratives because each Gospel uses verbal aspect as a means to structure their discourses according to various levels of prominence.

Acknowledgments

This thesis has benefited from the help and guidance of many individuals. The McMaster Divinity College Faculty, both within and outside of the Biblical Studies Department, has provided immense spiritual, emotional, and intellectual support throughout the duration of the project. In particular, however, Professor Stanley Porter and Dr. Cynthia Westfall have provided excellent supervision—supervision that has shaped my ideas considerably but has also given me the freedom to develop as an independent critical thinker. Their expertise, guidance, and friendship have not only made my research and writing experience enjoyable but have also caused the experience to be foundational to my growth as a young academic. Many thanks to them both, and I look forward to four more years of working with them in the Ph.D. program at McMaster.

I also wish to thank the vibrant graduate student community at the Divinity College for its invaluable contribution to my personal and academic formation. I firmly believe that the greater part of graduate-level learning comes outside of the lecture hall and takes place in personal conversation and engagement—at least it has for me. My student colleague, Gregory Fewster, has been especially influential in the process of digesting topics in the fields of modern linguistics and biblical studies. Many thanks to him.

No one has influenced my studies and deserves more thanks and appreciation than Jessie Lynn Cirafesi, my wife. She has sacrificed and endured much during our two years in Hamilton, yet her love and support have overflowed in abundance. Her friendship has brought great joy and laughter to my life, and her tenderness and care have brought much comfort. My hope and prayer is that I might provide for her the same strength and support she has provided for me as we move on to the next few phases of our life together. Many more thanks to her, to whom this thesis is dedicated. May we always be τοὺς ἐπὶ βίου κοινωνίᾳ συνιόντας (Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 138:C:2–3).

Wally V. Cirafesi
Hamilton, Ontario
February, 2012

v

Contents

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

Abbreviations

ABRL   Anchor Bible Reference Library

ABC   Anchor Bible Commentary

ASCP   Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology

BDAG   Frederick William Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3rd ed., revised and edited by F.W. Danker

BECNT   Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

BAGL   *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics*

BHGNT   Baylor Handbooks to the Greek New Testament

BI   *Biblical Interpretation*

Bib   *Biblica*

BICS   *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*

BIS   Biblical Interpretation Series

CB NTS   Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series

CBQMS   Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series

CGTC   Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary

CQ   *Classical Quarterly*

CTL   Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics

EKKZNT   Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament

FCI   Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation

FL   Foundations of Language

FN   *Filología Neotestamentaria*

NTL   New Testament Library

NTM   New Testament Monographs

NTS   *New Testament Studies*

NTSCE   New Testament Studies in Contextual Exegesis

ODL   Outstanding Dissertations in Linguistics

OTM   Oxford Theological Monographs

RBL   *Review of Biblical Literature*

SBG   Studies in Biblical Greek

SBL   Society of Biblical Literature

SL   *Sophia Linguistica*

SNTG   Studies in New Testament Greek

SNTSMS   Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series

SSL   SUNY Series in Linguistics

SUNY   State University of New York

THZNT   Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament

TLL   Topics in Language and Linguistics

TSL   Typological Studies in Language

WBC   Word Biblical Commentaries

WUNT   Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

In this study, I will argue that an approach to the Greek verbal system that is based on verbal aspect theory has more explanatory power than the traditional temporal and *Aktionsart* approaches for answering the question, why do the Synoptic Gospels at times employ different tense-forms in recounting the same narrative event? In line with the work of Stanley E. Porter, I will suggest that understanding the Greek verb as operating within a systemic network of semantic relationships, from which an author/speaker can make a subjective formal choice (whether conscious nor not) that can result in a range of discourse highlighting functions, helps to explain Synoptic tense-form differences on the basis of normal Greek usage, rather than in terms of anomaly or unexplainable irregularity, and thus provides interpreters of the New Testament with a significant exegetical resource.

In view of the stated thesis, this work has three main goals: (1) to give insight into the individual tendencies of discourse structure within selected portions of the Synoptic Passion Narratives (PNs) via a comparison of verbal aspect choice, (2) to provide objective criteria for evaluating discourse prominence in Synoptic parallels, and (3) to demonstrate the overarching exegetical value of a rigorous understanding of the textual function of Greek verbal aspect.

I have chosen episodes within the Synoptic PNs as test cases for the thesis due to several reasons. First, on a practical level, the PNs contain a large amount of parallel

material, and so are conducive for conducting the present inquiry. Second, some scholars

have noted that the PNs—specifically the crucifixion episodes—represent the narrative

and theological climax of the Gospels, both in the Synoptics and in John.[1] Thus an in-

depth investigation into a major linguistic component of the narratives themselves (i.e.,

Greek verbs) seems fitting in order to seek connections between the language and

theology of the PNs. Third, in view of their narrative and theological significance, the

PNs have been the center of much historical debate. The debate has focused on discerning

what material within the PNs reflects actual historical events and what material represents

the early church's theological reflection on, or interpretation of, the meaning of Jesus' life

and death.[2] The present work is *not* intended to engage these historical issues specifically,

or to discuss Synoptic relations in general. Rather, I state here—and I will say this in

more detail below—that the debates over historicity frequently overshadow other issues

in Gospel studies, particularly linguistic ones, which have not yet been fully, or

appropriately, addressed; verbal aspect choice in the Synoptic parallel material is one of

those issues. Whether or not research into verbal aspect choice is able to advance our

understanding of the historical/source relations between the Synoptic Gospels is quite

---

[1] For example, Wright, *Jesus*, 61 and ch. 12; Wright, *Climax*, 151–3; Cuvillier, "Die 'Kreuzestheologie' als Leseschlüssel zum Markusevangelium," 117, who, although he is specifically referring to the narrative climax of Mark 10:32–34, says this about Jesus foretelling his suffering and death: "Jesus und diejenigen, die ihm folgen, sind diesmal, 'auf dem Weg hinauf nach Jerusalem.' Er geht ihnen 'voran' (προάγων αὐτούς) und sie 'erschrecken' (ἐθαμβοῦντο) und 'fürchten sich' (ἐφοβοῦντο): Der Erzähler hat den dramatischen Aspekt der Szene verstärkt. Die Erzählung erreicht hier einen Höhepunkt: ein irreversibles Geschehen ist im Gange" ("Jesus and those who follow him are this time 'up on the way to Jerusalem.' He 'goes before them' and they 'are amazed' and 'afraid': The narrator has reinforced the dramatic aspect of the scene. The story reaches a climax here: an irreversible event is underway." Jörg Frey, "Die 'theologia crucifixi' des Johannesevangeliums," 191, says this about the crucifixion of Jesus in John's Gospel: "Kompositionell ist Jesu Kreuzestod 'Ziel und Höhepunkt des ganzen Buches'" ("Compositionally, the crucifixion of Jesus is the 'goal and climax of the whole book'"). See also , Dahl, "The Crucified Messiah," 13; Morris, *The Cross of Jesus*, 1.

[2] See, for example, Dalh, "The Crucified Messiah," 13; Crossan, *Jesus*, 375.

another issue; thus this study will focus primarily on the exegesis of texts in their final form.

In any case, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to orienting the reader to the ongoing discussion over the Synoptic parallel material and Greek verbal aspect theory. This will include (1) a very brief review of how Synoptic parallels have been traditionally handled, (2) a review of recent linguistic approaches to Gospel studies in general, and (3) a slightly more thorough review of past and present discussions on the Greek verbal system and aspect theory.

2. The Historical Context for the Present Study

The emergence of higher criticism within biblical studies beginning in the mid-eighteenth century caused a considerable increase of interest in the historical analysis of the Synoptic Gospels. In the light of this, European scholars such as Hermann Reimarus, Johann Hess, Franz Reinhard, David Friedrich Strauss, and Ludwig Feuerbach—now known as members of the "Old Quest" (1778–1906)[3]—began a new movement subsequently labeled *Leben Jesu Forschung*, or Life of Jesus Research. Their goal, of course, was to uncover the true identity of the historical Jesus of Nazareth, and to do this, scholars began establishing certain historical criteria in effort to determine the "authentic" and "inauthentic" deeds and sayings of Jesus.[4] Through various historical deconstructions and subsequent reconstructions of Synoptic texts,[5] some were quite optimistic that a portrait of the "real" Jesus could be painted, however strange he might end up looking

---

[3] See Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 32–36.
[4] For a thorough, historically-based discussion on the development of such criteria, see Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, ch. 2.
[5] The Gospel of John, of course, has historically been excluded from life of Jesus research. Note, for example, that Wright deliberately neglects John in his reconstruction of Jesus.

(e.g., Schweitzer, although, according to Porter, he was at the turning point between

"Old" and "No Quest"). As time progressed, others who became a part of the so-called

"No Quest"(1906–1953)[6] were determined that no such portrait was even possible (e.g.,

Wrede)—the early church had hidden the true identity of the historical Jesus by imposing

later theological developments onto what are now known as the canonical Gospels.[7]

Studies of the No Quest sort swelled (particularly in Germany) at the beginning of

the twentieth century along with the development of other historical-critical methods

such as form criticism.[8] Inherent in these developments were attempts to answer the

question of Synoptic relations, which eventually yielded numerous source-critical

theories—the two most influential ones being Markan priority and the hypothetical

existence of a Q document. Currently, both Markan priority and Q appear to be the

dominant source theories in Gospel scholarship, even though there is a significant amount

of disagreement and uncertainty over the nature, content, and supposed community

behind Q.[9] However, even a cursory sampling of the major works that deal with Synoptic

relations, especially contemporary commentaries, demonstrates that these traditional

---

[6] See Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 36–47.

[7] For a basic but helpful survey of the early questers, see Wright, *Jesus*, 3–27.

[8] Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 65, who particularly notes the growth of form criticism.

[9] For example, in *Jesus*, 41–44, Wright poses several difficulties to the hypotheses that Q should be treated itself as a "gospel" and that there is such thing as a Q community. Arguing specifically against Kloppenborg, he notes that it is difficult to refer to Q as a "gospel" in the sense of it being "good news" about "Israel's god bringing her history to its appointed goal," because this is precisely what Kloppenborg suggests the writers of Q did not believe. Further, Wright comments that even among those who hold to a reconstructable Q document, there are no agreed upon historical, geographical, or theological locations for it within early Christianity, nor is there agreement on its "supposed stages of redaction." Wright's goal is not to dismantle the Q hypothesis altogether, but rather to show that there are a lot of uncertainties surrounding its origins.

source-critical approaches to the parallel material have tended to neglect any substantial

treatment of fundamental linguistic issues that are quite pertinent to the discipline.[10]

The specific linguistic issue to which the present work will devote its attention is

the question, why do the Synoptic Gospels at times employ different tense-forms in

narrating identical episodes in their parallel material? For example, in the episode of

Peter's denial of Jesus, Matthew and Luke employ the Aorist Indicative form ἔκλαυσεν

("weep") to recount Peter's weeping, while Mark's Gospel uses the Imperfect ἔκλαιεν to

refer to the same event.[11] How are such differences in tense-form usage to be explained? I

will show in this study that past attempts at an explanation have been rooted in an

outdated understanding of the Greek verb and are in need of reassessment in the light of

recent linguistic research into verbal aspect theory.

For clarification, the above observations are not meant to downplay the continued

use of historical-critical methods in biblical studies. Rather it suggests that, at present, a

significant gap exists between the various conclusions that are often drawn about the

---

[10] A recent, large-scale example of such a work is Robinson, et al., *The Critical Edition of Q*, an entire commentary on the hypothetical Q document. Perhaps this is to be expected in the light of the Hermeneia series' intention of producing commentaries that are rooted in the historical-critical tradition. A few other examples of major commentaries on the Synoptics that lack any substantial linguistic analyses of parallel material based on modern research are (for the purpose of demonstration, the page numbers noted concern each work's treatment of Peter's denial of Jesus): Green, *Luke*, 785–90 (although he does include elements of discourse analysis in other places [cf. pp. 278, 316]; Boring, *Mark*, 415–16; Collins, *Mark*, 707–10; Nolland, *Luke*, 1094–97, whose discussion of the Greek is almost entirely about Luke's redaction of the Markan material; Evans, *Mark*, 463–67; Hagner, *Matthew*, 806–7; Turner, *Matthew*, 643–44; Bock, *Luke*, 1782–88; France, *Mark*, 619–23; and Marshall, *Luke*, 838–45. Additionally, much of the "linguistic" study that has been done over the past century on the Synoptic Gospels has revolved around the nature of the Greek in which they were written. In other words, the debate over whether the Gospels represent translations of earlier Aramaic sources or some other type of "Jewish Greek" has been the primary concern. However, such studies do not seem interested in applying the insights of modern linguistic research to the Greek text of the Gospels in their final form, and certainly do not implement any linguistic criteria for comparisons between parallel passages. For helpful surveys and critiques of these studies, see Porter, "The Greek of the New Testament"; Porter, "Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek?"; and Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, ch. 3.

[11] Following Porter, I use capital letters to distinguish between the form of a verb from its function. Thus, for example, a "Present" refers to a verb that is so only on the basis of its form (e.g., λέγει). This says nothing about how it is functioning within a certain context (e.g., past time use of the Present). On the use capital letters to identify tense-form, see Porter, "Tense Terminology," 39–48.

Synoptic parallel material and the amount of attention that linguistic matters receive in arriving at those conclusions. In other words, there are certain questions in Gospel studies, divergent tense-form usage being one of them, that historical criticism has not answered, and perhaps it is unable to.

3. The Rise of Modern Linguistic Approaches to Gospel Studies

Within the last two decades or so, attempts have been made to bridge the gap between historical-critical investigations of the Gospels and linguistic studies (to lesser or greater degrees of success). The following are very brief comments on only three examples of such studies. The goal here is not to critique the quality of the works themselves. Rather, I wish to simply provide examples of studies—particularly in the case of the latter two—that have attempted to move beyond "authentic vs. inauthentic" concerns of historical-critical methods and towards a serious treatment of the language of the Synoptic Gospels.

E.J. Pryke's work on the redactional style of Mark is, broadly speaking, an early linguistic venture into the relationship between the source and redactional material contained in the Gospel.[12] While he includes chapters on matters such as the "linguistic criteria for redaction" and "Markan syntax," Pryke's study is very much in the vein of traditional approaches to Greek grammar, and evinces little awareness of modern linguistic research.[13] It seems Pryke's work is primarily a historical-critical study of Mark under the guise of a linguistic methodology.

---

[12] Pryke, *Redactional Style of the Markan Gospel.*

[13] For example, much of his syntactical analysis seems to be based on the comparative work done by grammarians such as Blass-Debrunner and J.H. Moulton. Pryke should not be faulted for this, since these were two of the major grammars of his time. However, this shows that fresh analyses are needed, especially ones that incorporate insights from recent research in modern linguistics.

Stanley Porter's monograph, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research*, has done much to add a linguistic element to the historical Jesus discussion with reference to criteria for authenticity. The first section of his book is devoted to an insightful historical survey of modern Jesus research, while in the second section he introduces three new criteria related to Greek language studies that he argues can be isolated and used apart from the traditional criteria. The criteria are: Greek language and its context,[14] Greek textual variance,[15] and discourse features.[16] This is not the place to offer a critical analysis of Porter's criteria and assess their validity. It is sufficient to note that his work marks a significant alteration of the patterns and results of classic historical criticism by means of linguistic analyses of the Greek text of the Gospels.[17]

Whereas Pryke's work on Mark primarily concerns redactional-critical issues, Paul Danove's study on Mark, in my opinion, represents a truly linguistic analysis. His express purpose is to develop a case-frame model that is (1) useful for "analyzing the syntactic, semantic, and lexical attributes of Greek words," and (2) serviceable for the exegesis of Markan passages.[18] Again, this is not the place to engage or critique Danove's analysis. I simply wish to show that, unlike Pryke's, Danove's work utilizes recent developments in general linguistic theory in order to analyze the text of Mark, and

---

[14] Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, ch. 4.
[15] Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, ch. 5.
[16] Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, ch. 6.
[17] See also Porter, "The Role of Greek Language Criteria," 361–404.
[18] Danove, *Linguistics and Exegesis in Mark*, 7.

develops a clear linguistic methodology that provides him with an effective tool to accomplish his goals.[19]

While these works certainly demonstrate a rise in linguistic analyses of the Gospels, there is still a noticeable void concerning the specific treatment of Synoptic parallels with regard to divergent tense-form usage.[20] Even Catherine Smith, who seeks to establish a model for reassessing the Synoptic Problem on the basis of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), does not deal specifically with the meaning and function of the differing tense-forms used in parallel texts.[21] Thus, although the above studies (and others) have advanced the discussion of the Gospels on a linguistic level, there is still much work that needs to be done. At this point, I wish to offer an overview of past and present discussions surrounding the Greek verbal system and verbal aspect theory, which is the specific issue concerning this work.

4. The Greek Verbal System and Verbal Aspect Theory: Past and Present Discussions

Over the past twenty years or so, the world of New Testament scholarship has seen the publication of at least nine monographs dealing with the semantics of the Greek verb in the New Testament and related literature.[22] This is not to say that such research

---

[19]This can be seen in Danove's interaction with modern linguists such as Chomsky (pp. 14–16), Fillmore (pp. 13–20), and even Halliday (p. 35). But see Telford's insightful review of Danove in *BI* 13.2 (2005) 209–11. For several other linguistic studies of the Gospels (and Acts), see Longacre, "Narrative Analysis"; Longacre, "Mark 5:1–43"; Black, *Sentence Conjunctions*; Black, "The Historic Present"; Martin-Asensio, *Transitivity-Based Foregrounding*; Porter, "Verbal Aspect and Synoptic Relations"; Smith, "Casting Out Demons and Sewing Seeds"; and Kwong, *The Word Order of Luke*.

[20]This sort of analysis of aspectual differences in parallel material has been done in Classical Greek texts by Michel Buijs ("Aspectual Differences and Narrative Technique," 122–53). In his study, he compares the instances in Xenophon's *Hellenica* and *Agesilaus* where the only difference is that in one text Xenophon uses the Aorist and in the other he uses the Imperfect. Buijs's argument is similar to that of the current work, since he suggests the motivation for the aspectual differences is primarily due to Xenophon's desire to structure his narratives in a particular manner.

[21]Although it is important to note that this is not the intent of her study.

[22]Porter, *Verbal Aspect*; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*; McKay, *A New Syntax*; Olsen, *Aspect*; Decker, *Temporal Deixis*; Evans, *Verbal Syntax*; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect* (2 vols.); Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*.

has taken place only within the past two decades. Indeed, the last century has witnessed a slow and steady evolution in the way Greek grammarians have attempted to explain the inner-workings of the verb, particularly with reference to its temporal value.[23]

In the late nineteenth century, grammarians began to recognize that an understanding of Greek verbs in terms of absolute temporal categories (*Zeitart*)—characteristic of scholarship during the Enlightenment period—was insufficient for describing the actual patterns of verb usage in Greek literature, where, for example, Present tense-forms are not always used to recount an action in present time, and Aorist tense-forms do not always recount an action in past time. In view of the many apparent "exceptions" to the rules of temporal categories, the theory of *Aktionsart* was developed, perhaps most thoroughly by Karl Brugmann (ca. 1885),[24] which emphasized the notion that Greek verbs expressed *kind* of action (e.g., "durative" or "punctiliar") rather than *time* of action. The theory argued that the tense-forms functioned in such a way as to portray an action as it objectively occurred,[25] and so, as a result, a rather convoluted method arose of attaching a meaning to a tense-forms that rested solely on the subjective interpretation of the exegete instead of on any verifiable linguistic criteria.[26] To a large degree. Greek grammars continue to abide by such an *Aktionsart* framework today.[27]

---

[23] For a comprehensive history of how the Greek verbal system has been understood, see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, ch. 1.

[24] So Porter, *Idioms*, 27.

[25] See Porter, *Idioms*, 27.

[26] Thus the formation of categories such as "punctiliar" Aorist, "iterative" Imperfect, or "resultative" Perfect.

[27] For example, Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*.

However, as time has shown, some scholars have been left uneasy (if not entirely

unsatisfied) with the *Aktionsart* approach to the meaning of Greek verbs.[28] The reason for

this is because it has proved unable as a linguistic theory to provide an adequate

explanation—on the level of semantics—as to why the Greek tense-forms appear in a

broad range of temporal contexts and do not always follow a "punctiliar/durative"

scheme.[29] Furthermore, the idea that an action can be described in objective terms alone

is enough to call the theory into question, especially since different tense-forms are used

to describe the same event in the New Testament.[30] This last point will be demonstrated

throughout the current work.

This, then, brings us to the recent discussion concerning verbal aspect theory and

its relation to the meaning of the Greek tense-forms. With the publications of Stanley

Porter (1989) and Buist Fanning (1990) in such close succession, discussion of the Greek

verb quickly reached new grounds of interaction.[31] While the two works differ in several

significant ways,[32] they both agree that verbal aspect is crucial to an understanding of

---

[28] For example, Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 11; McKay, *New Syntax*, 27; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:10–12; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 19–22.

[29] For examples, see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 83; Porter, *Idioms*, 29–45; Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 34–37, 50–52; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 51–114.

[30] See Porter, *Idioms*, 27. Porter also gives an example from the use of the verb ἐγείρω in 1 Cor 15, where both the Perfect ἐγήρεται and the Aorist ἤγειρεν are used to speak of the resurrection of Jesus (*Verbal Aspect*, 262). This makes the attempt to objectify how the action occurred in the "real world" quite difficult.

[31] This is not to neglect the fact that McKay had been publishing on issues related to the semantics of the Greek verb, focusing on aspect studies beginning in 1965 ("The Use of the Ancient Greek Perfect"), but especially in the 1970s and early 1980s (see, e.g., his "Aspect in Imperatival Constructions"; "Aspects of the Imperative"; "Further Remarks"; *Greek Grammar for Students*; and "On the Perfect").

[32] See Porter and Carson, eds., *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics*, 18–82 for extended interaction.

how the verb works in Greek. Subsequent works have followed in their footsteps to varying degrees.[33] However, all of them concur that aspect is key.

In what is the most thorough and systematic treatment of Greek verbal aspect to date. Porter argues on the theoretical basis of SFL that the Greek tense-forms do not grammaticalize time, but rather synthetic (i.e., tied to morphology) verbal aspect. In other words, the primary semantic component of verbs is neither *Zeitart* (time of action) or *Aktionsart* (kind of action), but aspect. This Porter defines as the reasoned subjective choice an author/speaker makes in expressing his or her internal conception of an action.[34] The language user has three verbal aspects from which to choose: perfective (Aorist form), which views an action as "a complete and undifferentiated process"; imperfective (Present/Imperfect forms), which views an action as being "in progress"; or stative (Perfect/Pluperfect forms), which views an action as "a given complex state of affairs."[35] All of the aspects operate within a system network of relations, and so for Porter, they relate to one another on the level of marked equipollent binary oppositions.[36] Thus the first aspectual opposition from which the language user must choose is +perfective (least marked form) *vs.* -perfective. If -perfective is chosen, then the next opposition becomes +imperfective (more marked) *vs.* +stative (most marked).[37] Porter, then. suggests that the aspects function in discourse according to the following

---

[33] McKay. Olsen, and Campbell are theorists in their own right, and so while they engage the work of Porter and Fanning. they are primarily concerned with developing their own distinct aspectual models. Decker and Mathewson, however, represent applications of Porter's model to biblical texts (Mark and Revelation, respectively).

[34] See Porter. *Idioms*, 21; idem., *Verbal Aspect*, 83–97.

[35] Porter, *Idioms*, 21–22.

[36] On markedness theory, see ch. 2.

[37] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 90.

visualization scheme[38]: the least marked Aorist is a backgrounding form, the more

marked Present/Imperfect are foregrounding forms (with the option of +remoteness), and

the most marked Perfect is a frontgrounding form. I will further explain (and slightly

modify) Porter's grounding scheme in ch. 2 of this work.

Fanning, while not possessing as rigorous a theoretical basis for his project,

defines verbal aspect similar to Porter: "[A]spect is concerned with the speaker's

viewpoint concerning the action in the sense that it implicitly sets up a relationship

between the action described and a reference-point from which the action is viewed."[39]

However, there are clear divergences between him and Porter. The two main differences

between them concern (1) what each deems as the core, uncancelable semantic feature of

the Greek verb, and (2) the functional role that verbal aspect plays in discourse. On the

one hand, Porter argues, via the principle of contrastive substitution,[40] that the

uncancelable meaning of the tense-forms is verbal aspect, not time, regardless of a verb's

temporal context and associations with mood or other grammatical features.[41] He also

believes that the aspects play a significant role in establishing prominence in discourse

(see the visualization scheme noted above). On the other hand, Fanning sees Greek verbs

in the indicative as retaining the semantic element of absolute time.[42] Additionally, he

explicitly states that "aspect has nothing inherently to do with...prominence in

---

[38] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92–93; idem., *Idioms*, 23–24.

[39] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 84–85.

[40] On contrastive substitution, see ch. 2 of this work.

[41] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 86, ch. 7 and 8. Because of this, Porter is able to maintain the distinction between the form of a verb (to which the semantic feature of aspect is attached) and its function in a particular temporal context—a distinction that will be important for the current work. Also important to note is that rather than on the basis of tense-form, temporal categories are established on the basis of co-texutal temporal deixis, or indicators, such as νῦν, ἄρτι, or ἐπαύριον (Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 98–102).

[42] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 198–99.

discourse."[43] Further, he describes the pragmatic functions of the various tenses using the

terminology of *Aktionsart*. So, while Fanning's understanding of aspect proper comes

close to Porter's, he is ultimately unwilling to set aside traditional temporal and

Aktionsart associations concerning the semantics of Greek verbs.[44]

K.L. McKay perhaps did the most work in the area of Greek verbal aspect in the

pre-Porter/Fanning era. Drawing on his previous publications on aspect, in his major

monograph published in 1994, McKay argues vociferously (1) that Greek verbs to do not

realize time, but rather aspect, and (2) that one must approach the verbal system

pragmatically (i.e., use in context), and not simply on a theoretical plane. While McKay

defines "aspect" similarly to Porter, his categories and terminology are a bit different—

imperfective aspect "expresses an activity in process," aorist aspect "expresses an activity

as a whole action or simple event," perfect aspect "expresses the state consequent upon

an action," and future aspect "is best regarded as a fourth aspect of intention."[45] The

categories themselves remain quite similar to Porter's.

Mari Olsen's published dissertation on aspect theory (1997) relegates only one

chapter to aspect in Koine Greek.[46] Nevertheless, her work has entered the discussion.

For her, "aspect" is a broad term that encompasses the "'internal temporal constituency'

of situations."[47] She thus divides aspect into two sub-categories—grammatical and

---

[43] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 85.

[44] For example, see Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 119 where he defines the Perfect along traditional lines as "a state which results from a prior occurrence" (see also pp. 29 n. 71, 185, 198). Fanning's model of aspect also has a significant lexical semantic component, characteristic of *Aktionsart* theory as well (see *Verbal Aspect*, 42–50 and 126–96), which Porter points out ("Defense," 31; see also Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 87).

[45] All of these definitions are in *New Syntax*, 27. Porter, however, concludes that the Future is neither fully aspectual nor fully attitudinal, and so assigns it the semantic value of +expectation (*Verbal Aspect*, ch.9).

[46] Olsen, *Aspect*, ch. 6.

[47] See Olsen, *Aspect*, 8 and ch. 6.

lexical, both of which are expressed in the Greek verbal system. The former is closer to how aspect has already been defined, that is, as a speaker/writer's *view* on an action's internal temporal constituency. But the latter expresses what has been termed *Aktionsart*, being concerned with the *nature* of an action's internal temporal constituency. The two main points to note about Olsen's work are (1) for her, Greek verbs possess *both* tense (i.e., time, which is important for attaining a verb's lexical aspect) and aspect, although not all verb forms possess both,[48] and (2) aspectual meaning is compositional, i.e., the entire clause must be considered to ascertain the full aspectual meaning of a verb.[49] This second point is in stark contrast to Porter, who emphasizes that aspect is only grammaticalized by a verb's morphological form, whereas *Aktionsarten* are established on the basis of context and deictic indicators.[50]

In 2001, T.V. Evans published his monograph on verbal syntax in the Greek version of the Pentateuch. While his understanding of verbal aspect in particular does not differ greatly from Porter and Fanning[51] (except, e.g., concerning the meaning of the Perfect[52]), the overall scope of his project does. That is, Evans, being diachronically focused, seems mainly concerned with the historical development of the Greek verbal system and with what the Greek Pentateuch can tell us about the nature of the Koine

---

[48] For example, the Present and the Aorist do not have tense, only aspect. But the Imperfect and the Perfect have both aspect and tense.

[49] Olsen, *Aspect*, 14–17.

[50] This difference between Porter and Olsen is perhaps illustrative of their fundamentally different approach to language, with Porter taking a systemic-functional approach, while Olsen appears to take a generative one, although this is not explicit in her work.

[51] For example, see Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 18–19 where he defines verbal aspect along the lines of "viewpoint" (Fanning) and a speaker/writer's conception of an action (Porter).

[52] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 26–32, where he defines the Perfect as "a special type of imperfective, expressing stativity" (p. 32).

vernacular used at that particular time period.[53] Evans is also highly interested in

comparing the translation Greek of the LXX with its underlying Hebrew, and so wishes

to address the issue of bilingual interference. In the light of his goals, then, Evans is

really not an aspect theorist so much as he is a comparative philologist who makes use of

recent research into aspectology. This is perhaps also seen in that the only tense-forms to

which Evans devotes significant discussion are the "problematic" Perfect and Future

forms.

Constantine Campbell's Ph.D. dissertation on verbal aspect—done under the

supervision of Evans—is the most recent, major treatment of the subject on a theoretical

level (2007, 2008). In many ways, he is similar to several of his Greek aspect

predecessors (especially Porter and McKay), namely, in his conviction that the Greek

tense-forms do not primarily grammaticalize time (the exception, for him, being the

Future).[54] However, a notable divergence, particularly from Porter, concerns his

perspective on the Perfect. Campbell includes the Perfect within the category of

imperfective aspect, and says its semantic contribution is that of "heightened spatial

proximity."[55] Consequently, he rejects the notion of a third aspect, i.e., the stative,[56] and,

as hinted to above, rather than adopting Porter's markedness and grounding scheme,

Campbell introduces spatial categories as part of the core semantic component of verbs.[57]

---

[53] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 2. He says, "The central argument is that verbal syntax in these translation documents represents essentially idiomatic Greek, which needs to be viewed in the light of contemporary Koine vernacular usage."

[54] See Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:14–17.

[55] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1: 195–99.

[56] He especially criticizes Porter's view on the stative by arguing (1) that the stative resembles more closely the "resultant perfect," which critics have regarded as depicting the state of its object rather than its subject, and (2) that the notion of "stativity" is closer to an *Aktionsart* rather than an aspect (see Campbell, *Verbal Apsect*, 1:169–74).

[57] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:14–17.

So, for example, he suggests that the idea of spatial proximity (and imperfective aspect) explains the meaning of the Present, while "remoteness" (and perfective aspect) explains the Aorist. However, Campbell's main contribution to aspect theory lies in his attempt to analyze and categorize each tense-form with reference to its occurrences in different types or "strands" of discourse, those being, mainline (Aorist), offline (Present/ Imperfect), and direct discourse (Perfect).[58]

Rodney Decker's work on verbal aspect (2001)—his Th.D. dissertation— represents the first attempt to systematically apply Porter's model of aspect theory to a unified text, that being, Mark's Gospel. His goal is to offer an analysis of the Greek verb in Mark while paying particular attention to the pragmatic category of temporal reference. Decker ultimately argues in favor of Porter's non-temporal scheme for the verbal system and concludes that it is the use of temporal deixis in context (e.g., the adverbs νῦν, ἄρτι) that determines the temporal situation in which tense-forms are used.[59] Decker also offers a very insightful and what seems to be a fair review of the various perspectives on Greek aspect as it pertains to the New Testament around the time he wrote his monograph.[60] Although his work does not intend to deal specifically with the role of verbal aspect in discourse shaping (i.e., prominence and grounding, see my ch. 2 below), Decker's research on the non-temporal reference of verbs provides helpful support as to why the Synoptics may differ in their choice of verbal forms in communicating the same event.

---

[58] See Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 241.
[59] Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 1–2.
[60] Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 5–28.

David Mathewson's work on Revelation (2010) is the latest monograph-length

treatment of the function of verbal aspect. In it, he applies aspect theory (primarily

Porter's model)[61] to Revelation's so-called enigmatic use of Greek tense-forms,

attempting to explain why a range of verbal forms can appear in a range of temporal

contexts. For him, the tension is resolved in that Greek verbs do not grammaticalize time

or *Aktionsart*, but aspect.[62] Further, Mathewson adopts Porter's model of prominence,

that is, his discourse grounding scheme, and thus argues, successfully in my opinion, that

Revelation uses verbal aspect to background, foreground or frontground its narrative

discourse material according to three levels of salience, regardless of a verb's temporal

context.[63]

The works of Decker and Mathewson demonstrate two things that I believe are

important for the current work. First, on a general level, both monographs show the

exegetical significance of applying verbal aspect theory to New Testament texts, which is

the primary goal and concern of my work here. Second, while some will surely argue to

the contrary, both Decker and Mathewson represent successful applications of Porter's

theory to whole texts. This has not been the case—at least not yet—with the other major

theorists working in Greek aspect. This certainly does not mean that there is nothing to be

gained from other theories. But, as the next chapter will lay out in a more detailed

argument, I, too, will primarily adopt Porter's theory of verbal aspect and its role in

creating discourse prominence in order to explain the meaning of divergent tense-form

---

[61] Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 17–18.
[62] Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 16–17. Thus, Mathewson believes that scholars need not resort to notions of a "semitized" Greek for Revelation's use of tense-forms.
[63] Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 40–45. For a fuller discussion of Mathewson's work, see my review in *JGRChJ* 8 (2011–12) R66–R70.

usage throughout the Synoptic PNs. Therefore, it is to a more detailed treatment of the

theoretical underpinnings of this study that I now turn.

CHAPTER TWO

LINGUISTIC THEORY AND METHODOLOGY
PART I

1. Introduction

Chapters 2 and 3 of this work make explicit the theoretical framework and the

method of investigation that will be used to explore the use of Greek tense-forms in the

Synoptic PNs. That is, it will form the methodological groundwork for chapters 4–6,

which are more concerned with analyses demonstrating the exegetical significance of

verbal aspect choice in the Synoptic parallel material.

The chapter at hand constitutes (1) a more in-depth treatment of the limitations of

temporal and *Aktionsart* approaches to Greek verbs, and (2) a critical evaluation of verbal

aspect theory that will engage the central issues related to a primarily aspectual

understanding of the Greek verbal system. Examples of such issues are the use of the

principle of "contrastive substitution," the concept of cancelability, the relationship

between semantics and co-textual reference, and the actual semantics of the primary

Greek tense-forms.

2. The Limitations of Temporal and Aktionsart Approaches to the Greek Verb

As the survey in ch. 1 noted, understanding of the Greek verbal system has

undergone a steady transformation throughout the past hundred years or so. This

transformation, beginning in the late nineteenth century, has its roots in the gradual

movement away from time-centered approaches to the theory of *Aktionsart*. Proponents

of temporally oriented theories have typically understood the Aorist and Imperfect forms

as past tenses, the Present form as a present tense, the Future from as a future tense, and

the Perfect form as a combination of both past and present tenses. On the other hand,

proponents of *Aktionsart* suggest that the element of time, while still present in a verb's

core meaning, is subordinate to the *kind* of action taking place.[1] Thus in his grammar,

Moule says, "Generally speaking, the first question that the Greek writer seems to ask

himself is not 'When did (or will) this happen?' but 'Am I conceiving of it as protracted

or as virtually instantaneous?'"[2] Porter, a major critic of *Aktionsart*, describes the theory

as "a scheme whereby certain values are attached to the verb tense-forms, such as

punctiliar to the aorist. durative or linear to the present."[3] Fundamentally, then. *Aktionsart*

works within a time-based understanding of Greek verbs and attempts to objectively

describe how an action has occurred by assigning the verb to one of three procedural

categories:[4] punctiliar (Aorist). durative/linear (Present/Imperfect), or resultative (Perfect/

Pluperfect), with the addition of durativity or punctiliarity in future time for the Future

---

[1] For example, Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 825 says: "Even in the indicative the time element is subordinate to the kind of action expressed. A double idea thus runs through tense in the indicative (kind of action, time of the action)." Moule, *New Testament Greek*, 5 says similarly: "The *ethos* of English verbs concentrates attention mainly on the *time* to which an event is referred—past, present, or future. In Greek, on the other hand, this is probably not the most fundamental question; and the interpretation of many N.T. passages depends not a little on the recognition that, to the Greek mind, another consideration appears to have presented itself first—namely the *nature* of the event. or [...] the *Aktionsart* ('the kind of action')" (all italics are original). For other examples, see Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 108, where he seems to subordinate tense in Greek since it "is proved by scientific inquiry to be a relatively late invention." See also Croy, *Primer of Biblical Greek*, 7; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 499.

[2] Moule, *New Testament Greek*, 5.

[3] Porter, *Idioms*, 27.

[4] Brugmann. who, as Porter notes (*Verbal Aspect*, 29), coined the term *Aktionsart*, says in his *Griechische Grammatik*, 538: "Das System der sog. Tempora des idg. Verbums diente von Haus aus nicht dazu. die subjektiven, ausserhalb der Verbalhandlung selbst liegenden Zeitstufen der Gegenwart, Vergangenheit und Zukunft auszudrücken. Vielmehr dienten sie zur Charakterisierung der Aktionsart, d.h. der Art und Weise, wie die Handlung vor sich geht ("The system of so-called tenses of the verb were not originally used to refer to the subjective. to express themselves outside of the verbal action of the present, past and future tenses. Rather. they served to characterize the action type. i.e.. the manner in which the action is going on"). However, under the subtitle "Die Aktionsarten." Brugmann lists six procedural classes: (1) Punktuelle Aktion. (2) Kursive Aktion. (3) Terminative Aktion. (4) Iterative Aktion. (5) Perfektische Aktion. and (6) when a verb form has a preposition attached to it. it can be considered "Perfektivierung" ("perfection").

form.[5] It thus seeks to capture the essential meaning of the tense-forms based on their

range of uses in particular contexts.[6] Grammars and other studies that advocate this

approach typically put forth a plethora of other terms in attempt to describe the various

kinds of actions that verbs can express (e.g., inceptive, iterative, constative,

comprehensive).[7]

However, in the light of Porter's work in particular, as well as the several

publications that have more or less followed his lead,[8] both temporal and *Aktionsart*

schemes have proven rather ineffective for ascertaining the core semantic component of

the Greek tense-forms. That is, neither theory is able to account for the fact that in the

New Testament identical tense-forms appear in a range of contexts (temporal and

procedural), and conversely, a range of tense-forms appear in identical contexts. This

observation is referred to as the principle of contrastive substitution.[9] Several examples

from Porter's work illustrate the point.

> *Present tense-form used in different pragmatic contexts:*[10]
> Matt 8:25: κύριε...ἀπολλύμεθα ("Lord...we are perishing," present)
> Mark 11:27: καὶ ἔρχονται πάλιν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ("And they came again to
> Jerusalem," past)
> Matt 26:18: πρός σε ποιῶ τό πάσχα μετά τῶν μαθητῶν μου ("with you I
> will make the Passover with my disciples," future)

---

[5] See Moulton, *Prolegomena,* 109–10, who, as Moule notes (*New Testament Greek,* 5),
popularized the terms "punctiliar" and "linear."

[6] See also Porter, *Idioms,* 28; Decker, *Temporal Deixis,* 7–11; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect,* 20–21.

[7] See, for example, Wallace, *Greek Grammar,* 496–586; Robertson, *Greek Grammar,* 830–910;
Thorely, "Subjunctive Aktionsart in New Testament Greek," who deals specifically with the range of
Aktionsart in the use of Present and Aorist subjunctives in the New Testament.

[8] For example, Decker, *Temporal Deixis;* Campbell, *Verbal Aspect;* and Mathewson, *Verbal
Aspect.*

[9] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect,* 77; Decker, *Temporal Deixis,* 34; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect,* 21.
Decker's explanation (following Porter) of the principle is quite helpful. He says, "Contrastive substitution
is a linguistic method that notes either the occurrence of identical forms (in this case, verbal forms) in
different contexts or different forms in the same context. If the same verb form can be used in different
temporal contexts, and if different verb forms may be substituted in the same time context, and this without
changing the temporal reference of the statement, then there is strong evidence that temporal reference is
not the proper explanation of the meaning of the form" (p. 34).

[10] Porter, *Verbal Aspect,* 75.

2 Cor 9:7: ἱλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός ("For God loves a cheerful giver," temporally unrestricted)

Different tense-forms used in the same pragmatic context:[11]
Luke 21:10: Τότε ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ("Then he said to them)
Luke 20:41: εἶπεν...πρὸς αὐτούς ("He said to them")
Acts 20:38: τῷ λόγῳ ᾧ εἰρήκει ("with the word which he spoke")
Mark 5:19: ἀλλὰ λέγει αὐτῷ ("but he said to him")[12]

These examples show that it is quite difficult to identify temporality as the essential meaning of Greek verbs, since the same form appears in multiple temporal contexts, and the converse is true as well. Temporal reference, then, is a cancelable element in the verb and should be understood as a feature that is determined by various co-textual constraints (e.g., temporal deixis such as νῦν, ἄρτι, τότε, etc.[13]).[14] In other words, for example, present time is not *always* characteristic of the Present tense-form and thus cannot be seen as part of the form's basic, uncancelable semantic make-up.

While the examples above are particularly effective for dismantling temporal associations with Greek verbs, a further set of examples can be given that speaks more directly against the idea that verbal forms can objectively describe how an action takes place (i.e., *Aktionsart*). The following examples represent instances where *different* tense-

---

[11] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 83.

[12] This example is taken from Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 21.

[13] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 98–102; Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 52–59, who gives lists on pp. 56–59 of many of the different kinds of temporal indicators in Greek, such as adverbial indicators (ἀεί "continually," ἅμα "at the same time," ἐξαίφνης "suddenly"), adjectival indicators (αἰώνιος "eternal, without end," μικρός "a short time, young"), prepositional indicators (ἀπό "since, from," ὀψέ "after"), conjunctive indicators (ἕως "until, while"), lexical indicators (nominal: ἀρχή "beginning"; verbal: ἄρχω "to begin"), and composite indicators and temporal particles (ἐν τάχει "quickly, soon," ἐν ᾧ "while," ὅταν "whenever, while").

[14] Campbell gives a concise definition of the notion of "cancelability" when he says, "This principle is related to semantics in that semantics is concerned with the values that are inherent in grammatical forms, and are therefore not cancelable" (*Verbal Aspect*, 1:26). That is, whatever values of a grammatical form that are not *always* present in the form itself are said to be "cancelable." See also Olsen, *Aspect*, 17–22 who uses the concept as a key criterion for distinguishing between semantics and pragmatics, and Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 45–48 who uses it to argue specifically against Olsen's temporal understanding of the Imperfect and Perfect tense-forms.

forms are used to express the *same* action or event. The latter two examples are found in an episode within the Synoptic PNs, Peter's denial of Jesus.

> *Perfect and Aorist tense-forms used to express the resurrection of Jesus:*[15]
> 1 Cor 15:4: ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ("that he was raised on the third day")
> 1 Cor 15:15: ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν ("because we testify against God that he raised Christ")

> *Aorist and Imperfect tense-forms used to express Peter's second denial of Jesus and his weeping:*
> Matt 26:72: καὶ πάλιν ἠρνήσατο μετὰ ὅρκου ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον ("And again he denied it with an oath, 'I do not know the man'")
> Mark 14:70: ὁ δὲ πάλιν ἠρνεῖτο ("and again he denied it")
> Matt 26:75 (cf. Luke 22:62): καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς ("and going outside, he wept bitterly")
> Mark 14:72: καὶ ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιεν ("and reflecting on this, he wept")

In the light of these examples, the specific question becomes, how is it that Greek verbs can objectively describe the nature of an action as durative/progressive (Present/Imperfect), resultative (Perfect), punctiliar (Aorist), iterative, inceptive, or whatever, when different verbal forms are used to communicate exactly the same event? For example, if Peter's act of weeping objectively occurred as a punctiliar or instantaneous event in Matthew and Luke, how could it be described objectively as a progressive or continuous event in Mark? While some may wish to answer this question by means of source criticism, perhaps by relegating the discrepancy to Matthew and Luke's use of Q, or simply by labeling it a contradiction between the accounts, there is a better way of handling the issue that does not require resorting to theories for which there is close to no

---

[15] This example comes from Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 262.

real evidence.[16] In any case, following Porter, I suggest that "kind of action" (*Aktionsart*),

like time, is not expressed in Greek verbs, i.e., it is not part of the essential semantic

make-up of the tense-forms. Thus in response to the question asked above concerning

Peter's weeping, the answer is that Greek tense-forms do not on their own objectively

describe the nature of an action to begin with.

More explicitly, there are three major methodological problems with *Aktionsart*

theory. First, there is no quantifiable criterion by which to evaluate a tense-form's

supposed *Aktionsart* value. It is a completely subjective judgment that lies in the hands of

the interpreter.[17] Second, as noted, *Aktionsart* schemes are unable to ascertain the

uncancelable meaning inherent in every use of a tense-form. For example, the durative/

punctiliar framework simply cannot account for the full range of uses that we see in the

New Testament of the Present and Aorist forms.[18] Third, similarly, the theory does not

appropriately distinguish between the semantics of Greek verbs and the ability that verbs

have to appear in a range of procedural contexts. Porter says, "Therefore, though Greek

---

[16] Porter's essay, "Verbal Aspect and Synoptic Relations," which was read at the 2009 SBL Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics section, shows how at this point in Synoptic research it is hard to say what tense-form change means for Synoptic relations. This is because it is difficult to ascertain meaningful patterns of tense-form change that give a definitive direction to which text is functioning as a source-text.

[17] This is what Porter is getting at when he says, "A recognizable shortcoming of this perspective is its ambivalence toward the relation between tense-forms and their abilities to characterize action objectively. For example, Greek does not have an iterative tense-form, and often aorist action is not punctiliar. The result is frequent, major alterations in the system to accommodate deviations, often explained in terms not of a given tense-form but of the underlying root of the verb as either punctiliar or durative. This analysis has difficulty explaining description of the same event using, for example, the aorist and the present tenses, since the objective measurement of kind of action cannot be defined solely in terms of verbal usage" (*Idioms*, 27–28; see also Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 33–35).

[18] For example, 2 Cor 11:24–25: ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων πεντάκις τεσσεράκοντα παρὰ μίαν ἔλαβεν, τρὶς ἐραβδίσθην, ἅπαξ ἐλιθάσθην, τρὶς ἐναυάγησα, νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποίηκα (Five times I received forty minus one, three times I was beaten with a rod, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent night and day in the deep), where the Aorist is used to recount actions that happened five times, once, and three times. See Matt 3:17//Mark 1:11//Luke 3:22: σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα, where it is unlikely that the Aorist refers to God's one-time or punctiliar act of being pleased with Jesus as his son (see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 126–29, 234, who correctly argues that the Aorist is timeless).

may appear to have many *Aktionsarten*, these are better viewed as contextual abstractions

on the basis of lexis (i.e. attempts to describe each action objectively) and their use must

be subsumed under tense forms though *not* temporal categories" (italics original).[19] In

short, the distinction between semantics (based on a verb's morphology) and contextual

abstraction (based on lexis) allows one to isolate the core semantic value of a tense-form,

which is embedded in every instance of use. At the same time, the distinction allows for

the form to appear in a range of linguistic contexts without the need to consider its use

anomalous. Thus, for example, the tension between an Aorist form and its use in a non-

past or non-punctiliar context can be resolved.

3. The Semantics of the Major Greek Tense-Forms: An Aspectual Model

If neither time nor kind of action represents the primary meaning of Greek verbs,

then what does? Below, I set forth a model that sees verbal aspect as the main semantic

contribution of each of the major tense-forms. The treatment will begin with a definition

of verbal aspect and then proceed to a critical analysis of current scholarly opinion

concerning the aspectual value of each tense-form. Before doing this, however, three

preliminary notes should be mentioned. First, the treatment below will consider primarily

finite verb forms. Other non-finite forms, such participles, will receive attention along the

way in Part II of this work. Second, because the Pluperfect occurs so rarely in the

Synoptic Gospels—thirty-two times in all, most often as a form of οἶδα—it too will

receive its specific treatment in Part II. Third, while the aspectual model below draws on

---

[19] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 35. In this way, we can say that lexical aspect (to use Olsen's terminology) is "compositional," i.e., it is established as a verb interacts with the other linguistic components of the clause. On deictic indicators, particularly on how they influence temporal reference, see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 98–102 and Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, ch. 3.

the insights of most of the major contributors to Greek aspect theory, the reader will

recognize that it has been most influenced by Porter.

3.1. Defining Verbal Aspect

While those who have worked on aspect theory in ancient Greek remain divided

over several important issues,[20] a somewhat unified definition of verbal aspect has

emerged. Porter defines it as, "a synthetic semantic category (realized in the forms of

verbs) used of meaningful oppositions in a network of tense systems to grammaticalize

the author's reasoned subjective choice of conception of a process."[21] McKay and

Fanning have nearly identical definitions: "Aspect in ancient Greek is that category of the

verb system by means of which an author (or speaker) shows how he views each event or

activity he mentions in relation to its context,"[22] and, "Verbal aspect in NT Greek is that

category in grammar of the verb which reflects the focus or viewpoint of the speaker in

regard to the action or condition which the verb describes."[23] Campbell gives the most

concise definition when he says, "The simplest way to define aspect is as 'viewpoint'."[24]

Thus, the notions of authorial "conception," "viewpoint" or "representation" of an action

seem to capture the essence of what verbal aspect means.[25] And, as Mathewson notes,

---

[20] E.g., the relationship between tense and aspect, the semantics of the Perfect tense-form, Greek verbs and markedness theory.

[21] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 88.

[22] McKay, *New Syntax*, 27.

[23] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 84.

[24] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:8. He goes on to say on the same page, however, that "[t]his refers to the way in which the author/speaker chooses to depict an activity or state, the usual opposition being 'internal' (*imperfective*) and 'external' (*perfective*)." Cf. Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 18, 23.

[25] Bernard Comrie, working in general linguistic theory, also stresses the understanding of "viewpoint" when he describes the distinction between "perfective" and "imperfective" aspect: "Another way of explaining the difference between perfective and imperfective meaning is to say that the perfective looks at the situation from the outside, without necessarily distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation, whereas the imperfective looks at the situation from inside" (*Aspect*, 4).

with regard to semantics, these notions stand in stark contrast to the notions of time or kind of action.[26]

Two points in the above definition are worth highlighting, which will better our understanding of aspect theory itself as well as demonstrate its validity as an approach to the semantics of the Greek verbal system. The first concerns Porter's description of verbal aspect as a "synthetic semantic category." The "synthetic" nature of a verb's aspectual value means that it is realized in the formal characteristics of the verb itself. That is, aspect in Greek is tied to a verb's morphology.[27] Verbal aspect as a "semantic" category implies that it represents the core meaning of a tense-form, and so is an uncancelable feature in Greek verbs. Perhaps already one can see the advantage of primarily aspectual approach to the meaning of Greek tense-forms, since a verb's aspect is always the same no matter what its context. In other words, an aspectual approach is able to maintain the crucial distinction between a verb's semantics (its uncancelable meaning that is tied to morphology) and its use in a particular context.

The second point concerns the role that an author's subjective choice plays in the realization of a verb's aspect.[28] As will be considered in more detail below, according to Porter's model, an ancient Greek speaker/writer had three aspects from which to choose: perfective, imperfective or stative, each of which is represented by the various tense-forms. This choice of a tense-form, i.e., how an author wishes to conceive of an action, can be made by a language user irrespective of when the action takes place. As Porter

---

[26] Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 23.
[27] See 3.2–3.6 below on specific forms and their aspectual value.
[28] The concept of "choice" will be dealt with more thoroughly on a theoretical level in ch. 3 on SFL.

notes, "The semantic category of verbal aspect can be imposed upon a process by a

speaker, no matter when it may have occurred or how it may have actually occurred."[29]

However, Porter was criticized early on for allegedly overemphasizing the element of

"subjectivity" in an author's choice of verbal aspect.[30] Fanning, although he wishes to

distinguish between the viewpoint of an action and its procedural characteristics, stresses

the close interaction of aspect with *Aktionsart*, and suggests that the latter has a strong

bearing on the former and often restricts its use.[31] Thus, for him, while the notion of

"choice" figures prominently in his discussion on the structural relations between the

aspects,[32] it is not usually understood as fully subjective or free.[33] In essential agreement

with Fanning, and writing nearly a decade later, Evans (2001) also poses this criticism to

Porter. He says, "Choice of aspect is probably never conscious and is controlled to a

significant extent by a verb's lexical semantics and the demands of linguistic context. The

environments within which there operates a 'free' choice between perfective and

imperfective are limited."[34]

Yet Porter did go on to clarify his understanding of the subjective nature of aspect

choice by stressing two things.[35] First, in his terminology, "choice" primarily has do with

---

[29] Porter, "Defense." 37.

[30] See Fanning, "Approaches," 60; Carson, "Introduction," 25; Schmidt, "Verbal Aspect," 72.

[31] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 50.

[32] See Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 50–54.

[33] From my perspective, it is difficult to reconcile this point with Fanning's statement made in close proximity that, "Aspects pertain instead to the focus of the speaker with reference to the action or state which the verb describes, his way of viewing the occurrence and its make-up, without any *necessary* regard to the (actual or perceived) nature of the situation itself" (*Verbal Aspect*, 50, italics his).

[34] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 24. Further, I have difficulty with the view of Fanning and Evans that, while aspect and *Aktionsart* must be kept separate and distinct, *Aktionsart* should be seen to influence and even restrict the use of the aspect. First, such a view presupposes that *Aktionsart* is a valid theory to describe the Greek verbal system. Second, to allow such a close relationship between the two as Fanning does makes any attempt to fully distinguish between them superficial. However, I would certainly agree that aspectual use is (1) not random (see below) or completely "limitless" (see Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 52–53), and (2) influenced by patterns of usage in various discourse types (so Porter, "Defense," 27).

[35] See Porter, "Defense," 27.

the task of the language user to choose from the semantic options[36] that are available to

him or her, since these choices are required by the systemic nature of the language,

whether or not they are consciously made.[37] And second, "choice" does not necessarily

imply that tense-form usage is random: "The subjective factor involved means that the

choice of verbal aspect rests upon the user, although patterns of usage, for example in

various discourse types, mean that choice of verbal aspect is *not* random."[38] In the light

of these qualifications, then, Porter seems to be somewhat on the same page as Fanning,

although he rightly holds a much stronger (and clearer) distinction between aspect and

Aktionsart. Nevertheless, the important point to mention here is that there *is* an element

of subjectivity involved in the choice of verbal aspect. That is, while choice is neither

arbitrary nor illogical, when there is a full range of aspectual choices available to a

language user, s/he is able to select the aspect that best communicates his or her

conception of the action, *and this choice might differ from author to author regardless of*

its temporal context or Aktionsart value.

Before moving on to consider each of the tense-forms and their aspectual values,

two further comments are needed. First—and an issue that will be further addressed in

section 3.5 on the Perfect form—is the question, how many aspects are there? This issue

has been the center of substantial debate among theorists, as some have argued for a two-

aspect model and others a model based on three aspects. For example, Fanning and   ·

Campbell work within a two-aspect system: perfective aspect, which is realized in the

---

[36] That is, choices of "meaning" that are realized in morphological features.
[37] Porter, "Defense," 27.
[38] Porter, "Defense," 27 (italics his).

Aorist, and imperfective aspect, which is realized in the Present/Imperfect forms.[39]

Porter, Decker and Mathewson (the latter two essentially following Porter) have

identified three aspects: perfective (=Aorist), imperfective (=Present/Imperfect) and

stative (=Perfect).[40] McKay, who considers the Future to be an aspect as well, has a four-

aspect model, although he is in essential agreement with Porter on the other three.[41] The

current work will follow the three-aspect formulation of Porter (see 3.5), but whether a

third (or fourth) aspect exists or not, the meaning of the perfective and imperfective

aspects appears to be an area of wide-spread agreement. Brief definitions of each is as

follows: the perfective aspect is generally understood to portray an action as a complete

(not necessarily completed)[42] whole in the mind of the author, being seen from an

external viewpoint without regard for the internal make-up of the action.[43] In opposition

to the perfective is the imperfective aspect, which portrays an action as in-progress in the

mind of the author. The action is viewed internally and is seen as transpiring before the

language user's eyes.[44]

The second comment that needs to be made is that there is a class of Greek verbs

that lacks a fully developed morphological paradigm, and thus does not offer a full range

of meaningful aspectual choices. Porter calls these verbs "aspectually vague."[45] That is to

---

[39] See Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 27; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 8–9, 35–126. Campbell also includes the Perfect tense-form in the imperfective category, following Evans (*Verbal Syntax*, 30–32).

[40] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 105–7. McKay uses the corresponding terms "aorist aspect," "imperfective aspect," and "perfect aspect" (see *New Syntax*, 27–34).

[41] McKay, *New Syntax*, 27.

[42] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:11; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 30 n. 52.

[43] See Comrie, *Aspect*, 4, 16; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 85; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 105; idem., *Idioms*, 35; Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 18–19; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:8–9.

[44] See Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 27; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 105; McKay, *New Syntax*, 29–30; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 8–9.

[45] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 442–47; Porter, *Idioms*, 24–25. Although Fanning does not have a category for aspectually vague verbs, he does note that aspectual choice may be equally motivated by the lack of an aspect that would have produced a better meaning for the author (*Verbal Aspect*, 53). For a differing opinion, see Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:27–28.

say, the ability to make a meaningful choice of aspect for such verbs is absent, and so

when they are chosen they do not carry the same semantic significance as non-vague

verbs. Verbs in this class are primarily of the -μι conjugation, with εἰμι being the main

example.[46] Thus, vague verbs will not be considered in the exegetical chapters of this

work. I turn now, however, to a somewhat abridged discussion of the Greek tense-forms

themselves and their semantic (i.e., aspectual) values.

3.2. The Present Tense-form

That the Present tense-form in Greek realizes the semantic category of

imperfective aspect is apparently a settled matter in Greek language studies. Campbell

notes that "[T]he imperfective aspectual value of the present tense-form in the Greek of

the New Testament is uncontested in recent literature; it is one of the few areas in which

there is complete agreement."[47] Imperfective aspect is typically defined in terms of an

author's internal viewpoint of an action, and is thus concerned with the action's

movement and progress from the author's standpoint.[48] The action is seen as unfolding,[49]

though neither its beginning nor its end is in view. This is the case no matter when or how

the action takes place in the "real world," since imperfective aspect is the uncancelable

semantic feature of the Present form.

While the major aspect theorists may be in relatively complete agreement, it is

clear that Campbell is particularly drawn to Fanning's articulation of imperfectivity.

---

[46] Porter, *Idioms*, 25.

[47] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:35. Mathewson agrees (see *Verbal Aspect*, 30).

[48] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 105; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 103; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:35–36. Olsen defines imperfective aspect as "ongoing at the RT [i.e., reference time] and the coda as temporally subsequent" (*Aspect*, 65–66). Clearly there is a significant element of time in her understanding of aspect, which is rejected in this study (see section 2 above).

[49] Porter, *Idioms*, 21.

When explaining grammatical aspect and the relationship between the action and the

reference-point from which the action is viewed, Fanning says, "This relationship...is not

primarily a *chronological* one, even though it can produce that effect. If the relationship

must be pictured in any dimension, a *spatial* one fits better, since the distinction is one of

proximity vs. distance."[50] However, Campbell has apparently taken this spatial

correlation[51] and made it the center-piece of his aspectual model, in which he defines, for

example, the imperfective aspect of the Present form in terms of spatial "proximity."[52]

That is, the Present grammaticalizes spatial "nearness" with regard to a speaker/author's

viewpoint on an action.

While I am not in complete disagreement with Campbell—there are certainly

features of his spatial-semantics that coincide with the model adopted here—there are

questions that are raised as a result of his analysis. I mention only two here, since further

comments are made in 3.5 concerning his view on the Perfect.

First, it is not entirely evident that spatiality in general—and "proximity" in

particular for the Present tense-form—is to be reckoned as a semantic category.[53] It may

be better, as is the case with temporal categories, to see spatiality as a feature that is

established (at least in part) on the basis of spatial deixis, e.g., οὗτος ("this"), ἐκεῖνος

("that"), ἐγγύς ("near"), μακράν ("far").[54] The possibility of a separation of semantic

[50] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 27 (italics original).
[51] It should be noted that the idea of spatiality and aspect did not originate with Fanning. There is a clear spatial element in Porter's analyses of the Imperfect and Pluperfect tense-forms (i.e., "remoteness," see e.g., *Verbal Aspect*, 207–11), and one could certainly arrive at spatial categories from Comrie's definitions of perfective and imperfective aspect (see note 19).
[52] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:37.
[53] See Fanning's review of Campbell in *JETS* 51.2 (2008) 394–7 and Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 32 n. 66, who accuse Campbell of overdoing the spatial notion rather than treating verbal aspect *per se*.
[54] Admittedly, for Campbell, the spatial concepts of "nearness" or "far-ness" can be physical/locational *or* mental/logical, i.e., non-physical.

and deictic categories becomes an issue for Campbell in view of the fact that, while there is a distinction in spatiality for the Present and Perfect forms (proximity *vs.* heightened proximity), there is no distinction in their aspectual categorization, i.e., they are both imperfective. This prompts the question that if both aspect and spatiality are the two main semantic components of these forms and are realized in their morphology,[55] how does Campbell explain the difference in spatial value but the commonality in aspectual value for the Present and Perfect? A second question along the same lines logically follows: if the degree of proximity is different between the Present and Perfect forms, but they possess the same aspect, what in Campbell's model counts as criteria for evaluating different levels of proximity?[56] Campbell does not address this issue explicitly, but if his answer is "morphology," it would then become quite difficult for him to answer a third question: why does the Perfect not constitute a third, distinct aspect if, in all, there are three distinct spatial categories in his model (remoteness, proximity and heightened proximity)?

As will become more evident throughout the current work, I believe a major strength of Porter's model is that the semantics of Greek verbs are directly associated with their formal features, which thus allows for objective analysis of the form's aspectual value.[57] With regards to the Present and Perfect, objective aspectual analysis seems impossible for Campbell in view of the divergence of spatial and aspectual meaning for these forms.

---

[55] See, for example, Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 49–53. Also, Campbell seems to agree, or is at least willing to embrace, that aspect is grammaticalized in a verb's morphology (see *Verbal Aspect*, 1:9, 21–22).

[56] This question is particularly important, since Campbell clearly sees aspect and spatiality as semantic values that, while related, are independent of one another (e.g., see *Verbal Aspect*, 1:118–19).

[57] Porter, "Defense," 27.

In any case, for our purposes the crucial point to highlight concerning the meaning of the Present is that, rather than present time or a durative *Aktionsart*, the form grammaticalizes imperfective aspect, meaning that it expresses an action that is in-progress from the (subjective) viewpoint of the author.

3.3. The Imperfect Tense-form

Similar to the status of discussion on the Present tense-form, there seems to be basic agreement on the aspectual value of the Imperfect: it grammaticalizes imperfective aspect.[58] Thus its meaning also centers upon an author's conception of an action in terms of its internal make-up—its "in-progress-ness"—yet without regard its beginning or end. But, while the Imperfect shares the same aspectual value as the Present, several scholars have argued that the form possesses the additional feature of "remoteness."

Porter and Campbell especially stress the concept of remoteness for the Imperfect.[59] However, Porter uses the term primarily as a means to avoid temporal associations and sees it as an organizational feature of the text, while Campbell sees it as a semantic feature and uses the term to introduce the spatial opposition of proximate-imperfectivity (Present) *vs.* remote-imperfectivity (Imperfect). Campbell quotes Roy Millhouse's description of remoteness to support his point:

> A variety of different factors could classify as remoteness. Obviously, there is temporal remoteness. There is also logical remoteness, which a non-temporal view gives to conative situations. An action did not reach its expected end. The remote Imperfect Remoteness in narrative could be a speaker's intent to add important details outside the main flow of the story. Anything that has a tendency

---

[58] See, e.g., Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 199, 207; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:77–78. See also Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 240–41, although Fanning argues that the Imperfect "moves this aspect-value into the past-time frame, since it indicates *past* tense (i.e., occurrence antecedent to the time of speaking)." Fanning's is not the perspective taken here.

[59] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 207; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 84–85. See also Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 46–47.

to distance or diminish the context in the eyes of the speaker from some other feature (usually the Present form) is remoteness.[60]

However, it is difficult to determine what precisely Campbell and Millhouse mean by saying that remote forms "distance or diminish the context in the eyes of the speaker." Rather, it would seem that if the Imperfect is in fact used to highlight important features of a discourse (see my ch.3), it would be wrong to say that these features are being "diminished." Porter's understanding of remoteness is more accurate: "It is about the positioning [of a writer/speaker]—here and there, now and then, and hence about textual organization by the user of the processes."[61] In any case, remoteness does seem to provide the distinguishing semantic feature of the Imperfect, so long as "remoteness" is broadly understood to include factors such as mental processes (i.e., logicality) and discourse development.

In view of the comments made above in 3.2, one will note here that Campbell again assigns the same aspectual value to two tense-forms (i.e., imperfectivity to the Present and to the Imperfect), while at the same time he distinguishes between their spatial values (proximate vs. remote). This sort of categorization is an unaddressed problem with reference to the Present's relationship to the Perfect.[62] However, Campbell is on safer ground in this categorization of the Present/Imperfect opposition. As Porter notes, the reason is that the Present and Imperfect, in reality, originate from the same verbal stem. That is, the Imperfect is part of the Present's morphological paradigm, with

---

[60] Millhouse, "Use of the Imperfect," 58–59, as quoted in Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:85.

[61] This quotation is from personal communication with Dr. Stanley Porter on 23 February 2012.

[62] A similar, but converse, challenge will be posed in 3.4 with reference to Campbell's assigning of similar spatial values to two tense-forms that he regards as having different aspectual values. That is, although he notes the imperfective *vs.* perfective aspectual opposition between the Imperfect and the Aorist, he does not offer a rigorous evaluation of the different sorts of remoteness expressed in these forms, if there is any at all.

the added features of an augment and secondary endings.[63] Thus, the fact that the forms

share a verbal stem allows them to share the same verbal aspect, though the additional

formal features of the Imperfect allow for a further selection +/-remoteness. As is

obvious, this is not the case concerning the Present's morphological relationship to the

Perfect.

There remain two somewhat unresolved issues surrounding the Imperfect tense-

form. The first concerns the lingering question of the Imperfect's relation to past time.

The second is closely related and concerns the function of the augment. I will briefly

address the second issue first, and then, in consequence, return to the question of the

form's temporal reference.

The relationship between the augment—which appears on Imperfect, Aorist and

Pluperfect forms in the indicative mood—and past time has been long debated.[64] The

traditional approach typically labels the augment as a past time indicator, pointing to the

fact that the overwhelming amount of Imperfect usage is in past-referring contexts.[65]

Porter and McKay have challenged this position. Porter argues against the augment's

temporal associations on the basis of its omission in Homeric Greek.[66] Thus, in the clause

ὅσσα δὲ μερμήριξε λέων ἀνδρῶν ἐν ὁμίλῳ δείσας ("and just as a lion, having become

fearful, is anxious in a crowd of men"),[67] the Aorist indicative μερμήριξε lacks the

---

[63] Porter, *Idioms*, 21; idem., *Verbal Aspect*, 207.

[64] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 208.

[65] For example, see Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 128–9; Dana and Mantey, *Grammar*, 177–8; Schmidt, "Verbal Aspect," 71; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 240–1; Black, *Linguistics*, 78, 81–82; and Olsen, *Aspect*, 270 n. 59.

[66] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 208–9; Porter, *Idioms*, 35; McKay, *Greek Grammar*, 223, who says, "it is quite clear that by the classical period it was simply a formal feature of the imperfect, aorist and pluperfect indicative. By the Hellenistic period it was so devoid of special significance that it ceased to be attached to the pluperfect, and in later centuries it disappeared altogether except when accented."

[67] Homer, *Od.*, 4.791.

augment yet retains its other defining formal features. For Porter, such a pattern can be detected throughout Homer, which "reinforces the non-temporal and scansional nature [i.e., for purposes of poetic rhythm] of the augment and illustrates [...] the importance of deictic indicators for determining temporal reference in Greek."[68]

Evans argues vehemently against Porter in favor of the traditional view of the augment. After offering a thorough diachronic analysis, noting the augment's inconsistency in Pre-Classical Greek, its stabilization in Classical Greek and its "new instability" in Post-Classical Greek with regard to its absence in Pluperfect forms, Evans essentially contends that, "Homeric language provides no reliable evidence for the diachronic development. In addition, choice of form is not made purely for metrical purposes, but also for stylistic effects. The omission of the augment in Homer is an archaism."[69]

In contrast, writing at nearly the same time as Evans, Decker observes—and he stresses this—that the traditional view of the augment seems to be based on an *assumption* that is predicated on a temporal view of the Greek verb.[70] If this is true, he says, then the argument that the augment is a past-time indicator is circular: "the Greek verb expresses time because the augment is a past time marker; the augment is a past time marker because it is used on past time verbs."[71] This sort of "assumption" can be detected in Evans' critique of Porter in that, while he goes to great lengths to show that the augment in Homer does not provide sound evidence for its development and function, he

---

[68] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 208–9, who bases his argument on the work of Drewitt, "The Augment in Homer," 44–59 (see below).
[69] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 48–49. For his entire discussion on the augment in Greek, see pp. 45–50.
[70] Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 39.
[71] Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 39.

in no way proves that the augment indicates past time.[72] In other words, his critique is wholly negative, an attempt to demonstrate that "Porter fails to convince,"[73] even though he himself offers no positive evidence in favor of his position. After concluding that Homer is not a viable source, Evans simply asserts, "In my view the introduction of the augment signposts introduction of an additional value—which is interpreted here as temporal reference—to the semantic baggage of indicative forms."[74] While Evans' analysis is an interesting diachronic study, it is simply unhelpful for ascertaining what the augment actually means in the Greek of the New Testament.[75]

I argue here that Porter's position regarding the non-temporal meaning of the augment is correct, a position that is supported by the earlier work of J.A.J Drewitt and the recent work of Egbert Bakker. In an article from 1912, Drewitt begins by listing what he considers to be four facts concerning Homer's use of the augment:[76]

(1) Present-[referring] aorists, such as those used in the similes and gnomes, take the augment *idiomatically* [i.e., augmentation is normal].
(2) Iteratives do not take the augment.
(3) In the narrative proper both the aorist and the imperfect are relatively much less often augmented than they are in speeches.
(4) Within the speeches themselves there is a curious difference of treatment. (a) What may be called the *present-reference* aorist [...] nearly always takes the augment. For example the aorist with νῦν shows hardly any unaugmented forms except such as

---

[72] Even Campbell, who in the end agrees with Evans' argumentation though not his conclusion, acknowledges the element of assumption in Evans (see *Verbal Aspect*, 1:89).

[73] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 49.

[74] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 49.

[75] Here, it is worth noting Campbell's perspective on the augment. In essence, what many scholars believe concerning temporality, i.e., that the element of time exists only in the indicative mood and thus the augment is a past time indicator, Campbell likewise believes concerning the augment as an indicator of remoteness (*Verbal Aspect*, 1:90–91). In other words, for him, the augment signals the semantic feature of remoteness in indicative verbs, but this feature drops out in non-indicative verbs because of the augment's absence. His argumentation, however, is quite weak. He thinks that since the traditional perspective on the augment is based on the assumption that Greek verbs grammaticalize time, it is equally valid for him to assume his position based on the assumption that Greek verbs do not grammaticalize time but rather spatiality and aspectuality (see *Verbal Aspect*, 1:90). Unfortunately, while Campbell may be right that his theory is as equally valid as the traditional approach, his assumption is unhelpful for understanding the meaning of the augment and makes neither his nor the traditional approach necessarily correct.

[76] Drewitt, "The Augment in Homer," 44.

βουλεύσατο or ἱκόμην. (b) On the author hand, true *preterite* aorists [i.e.. past referring]. can very well dispense with the augment even in speeches. Augmented forms are indeed commoner here than in narrative proper, but in the *Iliad* not very greatly so.

These points lead Drewitt to conclude that "[i]t is not the augment that creates or

emphasizes the past meaning in any tense."[77] Writing nearly a hundred years later on the

same topic, Bakker comes to a somewhat similar conclusion, though it is more nuanced

than Drewitt's.[78] The connection Drewitt sees between the use of the augment in present-

referring contexts (direct speeches, similes, etc.) and its less common use in narrative

leads him to suggest that the augment actually marked present time originally. Bakker,

however, identifies a range of criteria that suggests there is more detailed variation of

augment usage in Homer.[79] According to him, "Augment is favored in discourse

pertaining to a speaker's 'now'; speech introductions; similes; [and] proverbs and general

statements."[80] In contrast, the augment is disfavored in: "verbs denoting events other than

narrative, time-line events; verbs in ἐπεί-clauses in narrative and in temporal ἐπεί-

clauses in discourse; negated verbs; and verbs with the distributive-iterative suffix -σκ."[81]

For Bakker, this distribution of augment usage indicates that time—especially past time

—is not the augment's distinguishing feature:

> Instead, I suggest that in Homer there are clear traces of an original function in which the augment expressed the actual occurrence of an event in a specific time and place. In other words, I am suggesting that *verbal augment originally was a deictic suffix marking an event as 'near' with respect to the speaker's present and immediate*

---

[77] Drewitt, "The Augment in Homer," 44. In actuality, Drewitt goes the opposite direction, suggesting that the augment was originally "an interjection or particle, which would mark some connexion with, or reference to, the present."

[78] Bakker, "Language of Immediacy," 1–23.

[79] Bakker, "Language of Immediacy," 6–14.

[80] Bakker, "Language of Immediacy," 14.

[81] Bakker, "Language of Immediacy," 14.

situation. The augment marks not so much present tense as closeness, positive, observable occurrence.[82]

Therefore, four concluding remarks can be made about the augment. First, Evans is correct in noting that the augment was influenced by factors such as meter and style and that absence of the augment is an archaic feature in Homeric Greek, which suggest that augmentation is a later development in the language.[83] Second, however, as Bakker's statistically rigorous analysis suggests, this does not mean that Homeric language is completely unreliable for discerning aspects of the augment's development and meaning. Third, as the research of Drewitt and Bakker makes clear, it is difficult to say the augment had an original meaning of past time. Drewitt, of course, has argued the exact opposite.[84] Fourth, consequently, in view of Porter and McKay's reassessments in favor of a non-temporal approach,[85] it seems that the augment in Hellenistic Greek came to represent a morphological feature of the Imperfect, Aorist, and Pluperfect forms that marked neither tense nor aspect. As Decker notes, it may have performed a role in specifying the use of secondary personal endings, or it may have served some sorts of phonological purposes.[86] However, an even more likely suggestion is, in the light of its affinity for the Imperfect, Aorist, and Pluperfect forms, that the augment is marker of narrative discourse, which is why it occurs so often in past time contexts. In any case, is seems that the augment

---

[82] Bakker, "Language of Immediacy," 15 (italics original).

[83] Bakker, "Language of Immediacy," 2 says that this point has been "obvious to many."

[84] The findings of Drewitt and Bakker may also call into question Campbell's view on the augment being an indicator of remoteness, although as Bakker himself asserts, the historical development of the augment from Homer to the Hellenistic period is quite complicated ("Language of Immediacy," 18); therefore, Campbell's view cannot be dismissed solely on a meaning the augment may have possessed in Homer.

[85] Even though I disagree methodologically with Campbell's substituting of time with remoteness (see note 68), he perhaps should be included with Porter and Decker as one who advocates a non-past time understanding of the augment.

[86] Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 40.

eventually lost all its significance, being discontinued in the Pluperfect and then dropping

out of the Greek language entirely in later centuries.[87]

This brings us to a final remark regarding the Imperfect's relationship to temporal

reference. In the light of the comments made above on the augment and the fact that the

Imperfect appears in non-past referring contexts (see below), I follow Porter, Decker and

Campbell in suggesting that the element of time is a cancelable feature in the Imperfect

and is thus not part of the semantics of the form. Two examples of Imperfect usage in

non-past contexts are:

> John 11:8: λέγουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί, Ῥαββί, νῦν ἐζήτουν σε λιθάσαι οἱ
> Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ πάλιν ὑπάγεις ἐκεῖ ("The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews
> are now seeking to stone you, and you are going there again?")
> Gal 4:20: ἤθελον δὲ παρεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι καὶ ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου,
> ὅτι ἀποροῦμαι ἐν ὑμῖν ("And I wish to be present with you now and change my
> voice, because I am at a loss with you")

In both cases, temporal deixis (νῦν, ἄρτι) suggests that the verse be read as

present-referring[88] but with the added element of remoteness—perhaps on the levels of

discourse development for John 11:8 and logicality for Gal 4:20. Nevertheless, in

summary, the most crucial point to note here about the semantics of the Imperfect is that

it grammaticalizes imperfective aspect—similar to its morphological mate, the Present—

but with the added feature of remoteness, which can be understood as logicality,

---

[87] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 209; McKay, *Greek Grammar*, 223. This view has been criticized, most notably by Schmidt and Silva, since it supposedly retracts on its commitment to an equation of morphology with semantics (see Schmidt, "Verbal Aspect," 71 and Silva, "Response," 77 n. 1). However, the augment seems to be a cancelable feature of Imperfects (and other tense-forms), both on a morphological level (i.e., the augment is not *always* formally present) and a semantic level (i.e., when present it does not *always* indicate past time). Therefore, while the augment eventually became a part of the formal features of several of the Greek tense-forms, it could be that its fluctuating and developmental character prevented it from having an impact on the actual meaning of the forms themselves. In other words, the augment as a morphological element is on different grounds than, say, the -σα suffix that apparently distinguished a class of Aorist forms throughout most, if not all, of the history of the Greek language.

[88] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 210 (see for more examples) *contra* Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 44–45.

discourse development or "[a]nything that has a tendency to distance or diminish the

context in the eyes of the speaker from some other feature."[89]

3.4. The Aorist Tense-form

Like the Present, the aspectual value of the Aorist tense-form is well-agreed upon,

and needs only a couple of comments here. To begin, rather than past tense or

punctiliarity (or some other *Aktionsart* value, see section 2 above), the Aorist

grammaticalizes perfective aspect and expresses an action as a complete whole from the

perspective of the author, i.e., as an "undifferentiated process" without regard for the

action's internal make-up.[90] As Porter states, "Perfective verbal aspect has least concern

from a speaker's standpoint for the movement, development, [and] progress of a

process."[91] He also gives the illustration of perfectivity as the viewing of a street-parade

from the vantage-point of a helicopter pilot: the pilot sees the parade as a complete and

less contoured entity,[92] which from his or her perspective may not even appear to be

moving forward.[93]

Further, while a perfective aspectual meaning for the Aorist is a fairly settled

matter in Greek aspect studies, it is worth offering a bit of interaction with Campbell's

spatial analysis, which is by no means a settled matter. Along with aspectual perfectivity,

---

[89] Millhouse, "Use of the Imperfect," 59. See also Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 34–35 for a helpful synthesis of the aspectual meaning of the Imperfect.

[90] The above definition is an amalgamation of the definitions given in Comrie, *Aspect*, 16–21; Porter, *Idioms*, 21, 35; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 97; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:103–4.

[91] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 105.

[92] Mathewson points out that it is unhelpful, and potentially misleading, to view the Aorist as "undefined," a meaning that comes from its Greek name, ἀ-όριστος. This is because one may take this to mean that the Aorist is devoid of semantic content (e.g., see Mounce, *Basics*, 126 n. 2). This is incorrect, since the Aorist does indeed contribute positive meaning as a verbal component in a clause (i.e., +perfective).

[93] Porter, *Idioms*, 24.

Campbell assigns the semantic value of "remoteness" to the Aorist tense-form.[94] He does

this for two reasons: (1) because of the presence of the augment in the indicative mood,

which for him is a marker of remoteness (see note 69), and (2) the fact that the Aorist

most often occurs in remote narrative contexts, i.e., in the formation of mainline narrative

material, which an author typically recounts from an external viewpoint. Campbell says,

"Remoteness contributes to the function of the aorist indicative in narrative mainline, as

does perfective aspect. The core reason for this is that narrative mainline is an inherently

remote feature of narrative proper."[95]

Though Campbell's model for the Aorist is a provocative one and is perhaps

helpful for an overall understanding of the inner-workings of Greek narrative, there are at

least three unaddressed issues that I will attempt to expose here in the form of questions.

First, on a methodological level, is Campbell correct in using his understanding of

the nature of narrative (and its various components, e.g., narrative proper, direct

discourse, etc.) to determine the *semantic* value of the Aorist? That is, he points to the

overwhelming amount of Aorists that occur in narrative proper—and which carry the

narrative mainline—and concludes that since narrative proper, by nature, forms remote-

perfective contexts, "conceiving the aorist as a remote-perfective tense-form naturally

accounts for its attraction to such contexts."[96] However, if the Aorist gives the narrative

mainline, how and from what is it remote? And what about the Aorist outside of narrative

literature? That is, how does the supposed semantic value of remoteness account for

---

[94] See Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:117.
[95] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:117.
[96] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:119.

Aorist usage in non-narrative texts, such as in expository literature,[97] where the relative

values of the tense-forms shift, the Present dictating the mainline and the Aorist giving

offline information?[98] Are we to understand "offline" material as remote-perfective in

expositional material, whereas in narrative it is the mainline that is remote-perfective?

These questions point to the need for Campbell to clarify how he defines "remoteness" in

the first place.

Second—and this relates more broadly to Campbell's entire spatial model—what

is the relationship between semantics, remoteness, and the augment in the Aorist tense-

form? Campbell believes that aspect and remoteness are related yet distinct semantic

categories that operate independently of one another in Greek verbs.[99] But by labeling

"remoteness" (and perhaps all of his spatial categories) as a *semantic* feature, he

contradicts his own understanding of semantics as representing the core, uncancelable

component of meaning in a given form.[100] This contradiction becomes quite clear when

he attempts to defend his view of the augment much like advocates of temporal

frameworks defend their view:

> I believe that outside the indicative mood remoteness is not grammaticalized and
> therefore there is no augment. While aspect itself is fully operational across
> non-indicative verbs, remoteness as its own distinct category is restricted to the

---

[97] Non-narrative portions of the Gospels could also be included (see Porter, "Prominence," 58).

[98] See Porter, "Prominence," 57–58. Mathewson has noted that a major weakness of Campbell's model is that, as of now, it only applies to narrative literature (see Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 33). Additionally, the terms "mainline" and "offline" are not to be confused with the terms "frontground" and "background," which I will use below in section 5.

[99] Campbell, *Verbal Asepct*, 1:118–19.

[100] See Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:26, where he says, "[Cancelability] is related to semantics in that semantics is concerned with values that are inherent in grammatical forms, and are therefore not cancelable." On the same page he goes on to say, "The principle of cancelability, therefore, has implications for the type of model that is put forward to explain verbal phenomena. A model will be deemed more successful than another on the basis that it more successfully demonstrates the non-cancelability of its semantic content; in other words, the model with the least 'exceptions' will win the day."

indicative mood, just as past tense has been so regarded within traditional approaches.[101]

Thus Campbell himself seems to admit that remoteness is a cancelable feature in Greek verbs, since it is absent in non-indicative forms. I find it particularly interesting that Campbell highlights the fact that the principle of cancelability has been used most frequently in attempt to debunk time-oriented approaches.[102] Yet, according to his understanding of cancelability, the principle may in turn be used to undermine his argument that remoteness is a semantic feature of the Aorist: remoteness is not *always* present in the form, thus cannot be part of its essential semantic make-up.[103] The fact that he affirms aspect as the all-present semantic feature, suggests that he should make this the focus of his semantic analysis rather than spatial notions.

Lastly, Campbell distinguishes between degrees of proximity for the Present and Perfect;[104] why does he not distinguish between degrees of remoteness for the Imperfect and the Aorist? Presumably, the reason is because aspect is the distinctive for the Imperfect (imperfective) *vs.* Aorist (perfective) opposition, while the Present (imperfective) *vs.* Perfect (imperfective) opposition needs a further element to differentiate each form's semantic contribution. This, nevertheless, is left unaddressed in his work.

To summarize, then, the current study will focus on the Aorist as grammaticalizing a perfective aspectual value rather than remoteness, which is a feature that seems to be more characteristic of the Imperfect. Thus, the Aorist as perfective aspect

---

[101] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:90–91.
[102] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:26.
[103] See Mathewson's similar critique of Campbell's view on the Perfect (*Verbal Aspect*, 32–33).
[104] That is, proximity (Present) *vs* heightened proximity (Perfect).

means that an author has chosen to express his or her conception of an action as a complete process without regard for either its internal structure or its end or beginning.

3.5. The Perfect Tense-form

Unlike the tense-forms treated thus far, the Perfect has represented somewhat of an enigma for Greek aspectual research. In the light of the number of difficulties and debates surrounding the form, I am only able to briefly summarize the major positions and then set forth what I believe to be the one that best accounts for the available data.

The traditional perspective on the Perfect tense-form is articulated well in Wallace's grammar: "The force of the perfect tense is simply that it describes an event that, completed in the past..., has results existing in the present time..."[105] However, this approach, which often labels the Perfect as a "resultative" tense-form, has been strongly argued against, particularly by Porter, McKay, and Campbell.[106] Porter rightly points out that "[w]hether a previous event is alluded to or exists at all is a matter of lexis in context and not part of aspectual semantics."[107] Porter's comment validates Evans' complaint against the traditional view that "it operates only on the pragmatic level and does not adequately describe the grammatical category."[108]

---

[105] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 573. It is notable that for his definition, Wallace draws primarily on the dated grammars of Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 96–99; Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 140–48; and *BDF*, 175–78. Further, he says that the Perfect combines perfective and imperfective aspect, but this approach to the form's aspectual value is essentially adopted to fit a temporal understanding of it: perfective aspect accounts for the form's past-time value, while imperfective aspect accounts for its "resultative" value. This position is basically restated by Randall Buth in "Verbs of Perception and Aspect," 191.

[106] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 258–59; McKay, *Greek Grammar*, 139–40; McKay, *New Syntax*, 31–34; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:162–66.

[107] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 259, followed by Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:162 n.6.

[108] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 27–28.

Fanning's approach to the Perfect does not seem very different from the

traditional view.[109] His is a quite complex model—perhaps too complex as Evans,

Campbell and Mathewson each note—that regards the form as combining the triad of

Aktionsart (stative action),[110] tense (anterior action) and aspect (summary viewpoint

concerning the occurrence).[111] Fanning's view has been thoroughly critiqued

elsewhere.[112] Here, it suffices to say that it falls victim to the major criticisms of the

traditional view, and especially suffers from (1) the failure to distinguish between lexical

and grammatical categories, i.e., he conflates *Aktionsart* and aspect, and (2) an inability

to account for (the many) examples in Greek where, for example, the value of anteriority

is clearly not present in the form's use (e.g., in the use of the verbs οἶδα or ἕστηκα).[113]

The positions of Evans and Campbell can be taken together in the light of the fact

that they both consider the Perfect as grammaticalizing imperfective aspect.[114] Evans

provides surprisingly little evidence for his position other than the possibility that old

Indo-European (IE) languages may point to the Perfect as an originally present tense,[115]

but he himself notes that this evidence must be treated with caution. Oddly, while Evans

disagrees with Porter that the Perfect expresses a third aspect (i.e., stativity), he

---

[109] For example, see Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 119, where he says, "The perfect in NT Greek is a complex verbal category denoting, in its basic sense, a state which results from a prior occurrence."

[110] Whether the value of "stativity" is an *Aktionsart* value or an aspectual value seems to be at the heart of the debate about the Perfect. This issue will be addressed a bit more below in my discussion of Porter's understanding of the Perfect as grammaticalizing stative aspect.

[111] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 119–20; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:189–90; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 30.

[112] For example, see Evans. *Verbal Syntax*, 29–30; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:189–91.

[113] Similar criticisms can be leveled against Olsen's view of the Perfect (see *Aspect*, 202, 232–4, 250–1). Like Fanning, she believes the Perfect encodes perfective aspect, but is a present tense rather than past tense.

[114] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 30–32, ch. 6; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:184–7.

[115] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 31. Most, if not all, of his chapter 6, which is wholly on the Perfect, is devoted to a diachronic study of the form and to the question of Hebrew interference concerning its use in the Greek Pentateuch. That is, the chapter is hardly a rigorous treatment of the semantics of the Perfect.

nevertheless says that the form is "a special type of imperfective, expressing stativity."[116]

Apparently, siding with Fanning, he attempts to discern stativity as an *Aktionsart* as

opposed to an aspect,[117] but this point becomes quite diluted because of the language he

uses to discuss the Perfect's meaning: "The usage [of the Perfect in the Greek Pentateuch]

agrees with the developing theory of the perfect from as essentially *stative*, focusing

always on the condition of the subject and without inherent reference to prior

occurrence."[118] Such language would seem to put Evans in essential agreement with

Porter.

What distinguishes Campbell's position from Evans' is his added feature of

heightened proximity. For him, the Perfect shares the imperfective aspectual value of the

Present because both are primarily found in direct discourse, which by nature creates

proximate-imperfective contexts.[119] However, the Perfect differs from the Present in that

it possesses a higher level of proximity, understood as spatial closeness, concerning an

author's viewpoint on an action.[120]

---

[116] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 32.

[117] Porter has recently refuted Campbell's criticism that "the consensus among Greek linguists and general linguists alike" is that stativity is more an *Aktionsart* rather than an aspect (Campbell, *Verbal Apsect*, 1:172). Porter argues that, in reality, this is not the consensus at all. He says: "Those Greek linguists who have endorsed the notion of stative aspect (or equivalent, such as state) include at least Pierre Chantraine (with some reservations), Paul Friedrich, McKay, Louw, Porter, Rodney Decker, Paula Lorente Fernandez, and Toshikazu Foley, among others. Those general linguists who also do so include T.F. Mitchell and Shahir El-Hassan, Laura Michaelis, Henk Verkuyl, and James Clackson, among others. The label 'stative aspect' is an understandable one for those analyzing Greek, a language that morphologically encodes, as Clackson so clearly states, three major morphologically based aspectual distinctions (excluding the future form from discussion), including the perfect and pluperfect forms" (Porter, "Greek Linguistics," 48). On the following page, Porter, following Lyons, says that "there may well be languages that grammaticalize stative aspect. Linguists who confine themselves to bi-aspectual languages (such as modern Russian), or English translation, may well miss the grammaticalization of other languages, and hence fail to appreciate the aspect system of a language such as Greek" (Porter, "Greek Linguistics," 49).

[118] Evans, *Verbal Syntax*, 174 (italics mine).

[119] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:185–6.

[120] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:195–9.

While Campbell's understanding of the *function* of the Perfect is quite interesting

and will arise later in the discussion, there are at least three major problems with his

model.[121] First, according to Campbell's own understanding, the so-called semantic value

of heightened proximity drops out outside of the indicative mood. So, for example, while

imperfectivity is retained, heightened proximity is not a semantic value in Perfect

participles.[122] This suggests that, like temporality, heightened proximity is in fact *not* a

semantic component of Greek Perfects, since it is a cancelable feature.[123] Second, like his

treatment of the Aorist and the notion of remoteness, his treatment of the Perfect is

limited to its function in narrative literature, which is far too small of a corpus to

ascertain the core meaning of a tense-form.[124] Third, and perhaps most problematic, is

that, while positing a third distinct spatial category for the Perfect, Campbell nowhere—

at least explicitly—puts forth criteria for evaluating the different levels of proximity that

supposedly exist between the Present and the Perfect (see 3.2 above).[125] This, I believe—

and Porter has noted this recently as well—exposes the fundamental weakness of

Campbell's scheme. That is to say, Campbell fails to address the fact that there are *three*

separate verb forms in Greek,[126] a fact that makes it difficult for him to establish a

bipartite aspectual model, while at the same wishing to establish a *tripartite* spatial

---

[121] Criticisms two and three below can also be leveled against Evans' model. See also my comments on the Present tense-form above (3.2). For a fuller treatment, see the recent critique by Porter in his "Greek Linguistics," 46–54.

[122] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 2:28–29.

[123] I made a similar point concerning Campbell's understanding of the augment and remoteness.

[124] Mathewson (see *Verbal Aspect*, 32–34) and Porter ("Greek Linguistics," 49–50) offer the same criticism. Further, I find the movement of Campbell's function-to-semantics method backwards. That is, he uses the discourse function of the tense-forms to determine their meaning.

[125] Porter notes that Campbell isolates morphology as a final factor to discern "heightened proximity" (see "Greek Linguistics," 53–54).

[126] I.e., the Present, Aorist and Perfect, with the Imperfect being part of the Present stem and the Pluperfect part of the Perfect stem. The Future will be briefly discussed below.

model.[127] It seems that by doing this, Campbell wants to have his cake and eat it too; he wants a two-aspect model, but at the same time needs some value to distinguish between the Present and Perfect. Thus, he opts for "heightened proximity," yet does so without offering any formal evidence for the upward spatial jump. As I will note below, Porter's three-pronged aspectual model, which is thoroughly grounded in verbal morphology, is sounder.

Within Porter's model, the Perfect tense-form grammaticalizes stative aspect, in which "the action is conceived of by the language user as reflecting a given (often complex) state of affairs."[128] In contrast to Campbell's notion of heightened proximity, "[t]he stative aspect distances itself from the process itself, referring to the state of the represented process."[129] That is to say, stative aspect has less to do with the conceptualized development or internal make-up of an action that is "in-progress"—this is what imperfective aspect does—than it does with the action's grammaticalization of a given state of affairs.

Porter has recently defended his view on the Perfect, so at this point I will offer only one further comment.[130] I find the minimalist formalized semantic model that Porter

---

[127] This excludes the Pluperfect, which, for Campbell, represents "heightened remoteness." See Comrie, *Aspect*, 62, where he says, "In Ancient Greek, the morphology of the Perfect precludes combination with the Aorist/Imperfect aspectual distinction, since different stems are used for the three verb forms, e.g., *élūon* (Imperfect)...*élūsa* (Aorist)...*léluka* (Perfect)..." Note Porter's criticism as well ("Greek Linguistics," 49).

[128] Porter, *Idioms*, 21–22; See also, Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 258–9. Porter's is rather similar to McKay's view on the Perfect, although he would probably distance himself from the middle part of this definition: "The perfect aspect expresses the state or condition of the subject of the verb, as a result of an action (logically a prior action), but most often with comparatively little reference to action itself" (McKay, *New Syntax*, 31).

[129] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 401. Mathewson has also noted that this description of stative aspect puts Campbell and Porter's view at odds with one another (*Verbal Aspect*, 34).

[130] For a fuller defense, see Porter, "Greek Linguistics," 46–54. Particularly helpful are his comments that address the argument that stativity is regarded by "most" linguistics as an *Aktionsart* category and not an aspect (pp. 48–49). It is interesting that in spite of this argument, many still find the Perfect as expressing some sort of stativity.

applies to the Greek verbal system particularly advantageous for handling the difficulties

surrounding the Perfect tense-form.[131] That is, Porter's model takes seriously the fact that

there were *three* major verbal stems in Hellenistic Greek. Therefore, since, according to

John Lyons, language in general is efficient by nature, it seems very likely that ancient

Greek had three distinct verbal forms because each possessed different meanings and

served different purposes in the language.[132] Thus, the stative aspect provided a Greek

speaker with a third aspectual choice, which was to be grammaticalized in the

characteristic formal features of the Perfect.[133]

3.6. The Future Tense-form

The Greek Future, like the Perfect, has caused a certain level of difficulty for

scholars working in aspect theory. While it, too, deserves its own monograph-length

treatment, here I will offer a brief survey of different perspectives and then set forth the

model I will adopt.[134]

Those generally taking the traditional approach to the Future (i.e., future time

reference) include Fanning, Olsen, Evans and Campbell.[135] For such authors, whether or

---

[131] Porter defines the model as follows: "The minimalist agenda I am advocating here [...] entails that an explanation of a given meaningful element, and consequently of a given larger unit of structure as one moves up the various grammatical levels, always contributes semantic features as warranted by the particular form. In other words, formal categories are not to be multiplied without formal realization, and semantic categories that are propounded by these formal units are not to be multiplied or made more complex than is warranted by their use within the discourse structure...[T]his is a model of description, fundamental to both functionalists and others, that takes seriously the notion that form equals meaning and function..." ("Greek Linguistics," 45).

[132] Lyons, *Introduction*, 43.

[133] It is interesting to note that in a recent article ("Breaking Perfect Rules," 139–55), Campbell is noticeably less vigorous in his promotion of the Perfect tense-form as imperfective aspect and less aggressive in his attack on the notion of stative aspect. Rather than dismissing the stative approach altogether, it appears that he groups the stative and imperfective approaches together as being both preferable to the traditional understanding of the Perfect.

[134] I depend largely on Mathewson (*Verbal Aspect*, 36) for the nature and structure of this survey.

[135] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 122–3; Olsen. *Aspect*, 202, 234–6; Evans. *Verbal Syntax*, 39–40; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:157.

not the form possesses an aspectual value remains secondary in view of its temporal

value. Others, recognizing the Future's apparently close relationship with the subjunctive

mood, opt for understanding the form primarily as a mood rather than as a tense.[136] The

discussion becomes even more complex in the light of McKay's primarily aspectual

approach. He believes that the Future represents a fourth aspect that realizes the meaning

+intention.[137] Porter, on the other hand, denies that the Future is a tense, and further,

believes that it is neither fully aspectual nor attitudinal (i.e., not a mood).[138] Rather, it "is

reduced to the single label of +expectation."[139]

Although, admittedly, there is still a great amount of uncertainty that surrounds

the Future form, this work will adopt Porter's non-aspectual, non-attitudinal position,

which essentially views the form as grammaticalizing "a marked and emphatic

expectation toward a process."[140] The reason for this is two-fold. First, his position seems

to best balance the fact that while the Future does often occur in future-referring contexts,

it frequently occurs in non-future contexts as well. For example, it is used gnomically, in

commands, in relative clauses and in conditional statements.[141] Second, a non-aspectual,

non-attitudinal approach helps to explain the lack of paradigmatic choices that exist for

the Future. That is, the form cannot be labeled as either a pure mood or a pure tense, since

there are no other formal options available in the language system besides the Future

indicative.[142]

---

[136] For examples, see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 406 n. 4.
[137] McKay, *New Syntax*, 34.
[138] Porter, *Idioms*, 24; idem, *Verbal Aspect*, 414.
[139] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 414. See his entire ch. 9.
[140] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 414.
[141] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 411.
[142] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 408, 414.

4. Summary

The approach adopted in this work to the semantics of Greek verbs is first and foremost an aspectual one. That is, rather than time or *Aktionsart*, Greek tense-forms grammaticalize one of three verbal aspects: perfective (Aorist), imperfective (Present/ Imperfect) or stative (Perfect/Pluperfect), with the Future being somewhat of an anomaly in that it realizes neither aspect nor attitude, but rather the semantic feature of expectation. However, what have not yet been made explicit are the relationships that the tense-forms have with one another. This leads us to the following chapter in which we will consider (1) the underlying theory of language that provides the foundation for the aspectual model already presented, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and (2) how a systemic-functional approach is useful for explaining the function of verbal aspect in adding shape, contour and levels of salience to a discourse.   .

CHAPTER THREE

LINGUISTIC THEORY AND METHODOLOGY
PART II

1. Introduction

Thus far I have established my basic approach to the meaning of the Greek tense-

forms. However, this chapter is devoted to accomplishing two further aims. The first is to

clearly set forth the linguistic theory upon which this work is built—Systemic Functional

Linguistics (SFL).[1] I will offer a brief introduction to SFL as a theory and describe its

usefulness not only for an understanding of Greek verbal aspect but, more importantly,

for an understanding of how verbal aspect functions in the creation of discourse

prominence, particularly in a narrative, which is a chief overall concern of this work. The

main issues I will engage here will be (1) how SFL helps to establish a network of

meaningful oppositions for the Greek verbal system, (2) the concepts of markedness,

markedness assimilation and prominence with relation to the textual metafunction of

Greek verbs, and closely related, (3) verbal aspect and discourse visualization (i.e.,

discourse grounding).

The second aim of this chapter is to briefly clarify issues pertaining to the

procedure I will use in analyzing instances of divergent tense-form usage in the Synoptic

PNs. This will include establishing criteria for choosing significant occurrences of

divergence and addressing questions such as the following: (1) can the use of different

---

[1] I have found that such discussion is somewhat lacking in Mathewson, and to a lesser extent, in Decker's work. While both authors do make mention of SFL, it is primarily in recounting Porter's use of it for developing his theory of verbal aspect (Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 37–39; Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 12–14, 21–22). That is, they (especially Mathewson) offer little interaction concerning SFL itself and why it is a useful model for studying language, particularly Greek verbal aspect.

tense-forms be analyzed when they are not identical lexically? (2) How are tense-forms

to be treated when they occur in embedded clauses? And (3) how does the content of a

text impact the use of various tense-forms at specific points?[2]

2. Systemic Functional Linguistics, Verbal Aspect, and Discourse Analysis

Mathewson has noted that much of past grammatical discussion concerning the

Greek tense-forms has tended to isolate the forms from one another.[3] Not only is this

methodologically unhelpful for ascertaining the meaning and function of Greek verbal

forms, but it is also not the way language itself works. That is, as language users, we

typically do not understand elements of our language as individual or isolated items, but

rather in terms of how they relate on the level of meaning to other items within our

language system. This notion—that language is comprised of systems of meaning

relations from which language users make semantic choices for functional purposes—is

one of the essential tenets of Systemic Functional Linguistics.

2.1. The Fundamentals of SFL

As its name suggests, SFL is structured upon two main pillars. The first of these is

the concept that human language operates as a vast network of semantic relationships.

That is, the notion of "system" primarily refers to the network of semantic choices within

a given language that are available for a speaker or writer to draw upon.[4] Thus, a

language user begins with a set of semantic paradigms that, once choices are made, are

---

[2] By using the phrase "the content of a text" I am simply referring to what is happening on an intra-linguistic level within a text—the interplay of its subject matter, participant roles and references, and its cohesive character. My intent in asking this question is to determine how what an author wishes to recount in a portion of text (in the case of this study, through narrative) influences his or her aspectual choices.

[3] Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 37.

[4] Berry, *Introduction to Systemic Linguistics*, 1:142–92.

realized through linguistic forms.[5] As Michael Halliday notes, "A language is treated as a

system of meanings, with forms attached to express them. Not grammatical paradigms

with their interpretation, but semantic paradigms with their realization."[6] This is

somewhat of a reversal of traditional grammatical study, which typically begins its

analysis with grammatical forms and then moves towards meaning.[7] Further, such a

model that recognizes the semantic networks at play in a language is particularly

serviceable for the analysis of discourse. As Reed mentions:

> Semantic networks are useful for analysing the microstructures of discourse. The
> analyst can often identify patterns of semantic choices that then reveal larger
> macrostructures. In addition, they force the analyst to be specific about his or her
> description of textual meanings and to relate those meanings to other semiotic
> choices.[8]

Moreover, within an SFL framework, semantic choices are understood

fundamentally in functional terms—formal grammaticalization expresses what a

language user desires to accomplish through his or her communicative act. This notion of

"functionality" is the second major tenet of SFL: language is used by individuals (or

groups) to do or accomplish things.[9] However, the concept of functionality has two

components. First, it takes into consideration the semantic function that a grammatical

form has in an instance of language use. The focus here is on what the form, via the

---

[5] Reed, *Philippians*, 36.

[6] Halliday, "Categories," 43.

[7] Traditional approaches to grammar seem to have difficulty explaining how it is that several different formal expressions can be called upon to realize a certain function. Grammatical number provides a rudimentary example of how the Greek of the NT operates as a system. In order to express the semantics of number, a Greek language user was faced with the paradigmatic choice of either singular or plural. Thus, he or she had two semantic options from which to choose: either [+singular] or [+plural]. If [+plural], then the language user realized this choice through the use of appropriate formal features (e.g., -οι for a plural second declension masculine noun) and vice versa for [+singular].

[8] Reed, *Philippians*, 36. In the same vein, Halliday remarks, "The main reason for studying the system is to throw light on discourse" (Halliday, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, xxii). Additionally, identifying patterns of semantic choices will be an especially important task performed in this work, as it will attempt to detect patterns of tense usage in a Synoptic parallel text.

[9] Berry, *Introduction to Systemic Linguistics*, 1:22–23 and Butler, *Systemic Linguistics*, 148–49.

meaning it expresses, is doing in its co-text.[10] For example, in Greek narrative, the Aorist

tense-form typically functions as the "backbone" for storyline advancement (see below).

Its essential semantic component of +perfective aspect portrays an action as a complete,

undifferentiated whole from the perspective of the language user, and lends itself well to

the basic movement (logical or sequential) of a narrative.[11]

The second component of functionality is the idea that the semantic roles encoded

in linguistic forms also relate to linguistically constructed situational contexts. Crucial at

this point is the concept of "register/genre." According to Reed, register "refers here to *a*

configuration of meanings that is associated with a particular situation," and is "one of

the most important ways of relating language to the context of situation."[12] In other

words, here, there are two questions to answer: (1) how does the semantic function of a

form in turn affect its function in a linguistic situation? and (2) conversely, how does the

situation itself impact the choices that a language user has and makes within his or her

semantic network?

Halliday attempts to answer these questions by means of his three metafunctions

of language: the ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction refers

to the use of language for the purpose of understanding the environment of one's human

experience.[13] As Reed notes, this function is sometimes termed "experiential." It focuses

---

[10] "Co-text" is here defined as "linguistic units that are part of a discourse and, more specifically, linguistic units that surround a particular point in the discourse" (Reed, *Philippians*, 42).

[11] Porter, *Idioms*, 21.

[12] Reed, *Philippians*, 54 (italics original). See Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 245–46. Further, Reed uses the terms "register" and "genre" interchangeably, saying "the only difference being that register concerns specifically the social context of a 'way of speaking' and genre has more to do with the spoken or written manifestation of that context" (*Philippians*, 53 n. 46).

[13] Halliday, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, xiii. See also Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 238. Reed (*Philippians*, 59) also mentions Halliday's three metafunctions.

on a language's ability to relate the different "processes, events, states, actions. ideas. participants, and circumstances, of our experience, including both phenomena of the external world and those of one's consciousness."[14] Furthermore. and closely related, is the contextual category of "field."[15] Whereas the ideational function concerns the use of language to establish a participant's relationship to his or her environment, the "field" of a discourse communicates through the use of language what is actually happening in a particular situation.[16]

With regard to verbal aspect, I suggest that the primary functional purpose for a language user's choice of Greek tense-form lies here in the realm of the ideational, since Greek verbs first and foremost grammaticalize an author's conception of a verbal process. However, as I will demonstrate throughout this work, how an author conceptualizes a process—whether as perfective, imperfective, or stative action—has significant implications for the textual metafunction, which is elucidated below.

The second of Halliday's metafunctions is the interpersonal. This metafunction has mainly to do with the identifying of social relationships between participants in a discourse.[17] It considers the manner in which language is used by a communicator to express certain attitudes towards his or her environment. This is likewise associated with

---

[14] Reed, *Philippians*, 59.

[15] "Context" here is an extra-linguistic category that refers to "the extra-linguistic factors that influence discourse production and processing" (Reed, *Philippians*. 42, who is primarily working with Halliday's definitions; Halliday, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 27; Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*. 1; Lyons, *Introduction*, 413). However, while register ("context type") may influence the instantiation of the language system in particular "texts" (i.e., specific occurrences of language), this top-down approach should be balanced by the bottom-up understanding that it is individual, textual instantiations that. by patterns of textual organization, determine registers.

[16] Halliday and Hasan, "Text and Context." 12, who Reed also follows (cf. *Philippians*, 60).

[17] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 26–27.

the contextual category of "tenor," which also evaluates how language connects discourse

participants to their function within a situational context.

The third and final of Halliday's metafunctions is the textual, which is a sort of tie

that brings the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions together as a whole. The textual

metafunction deals with the semantic and grammatical continuity, informational

organization, and the thematic elements of a discourse in such a way as to provide the

discourse with linguistic cohesion.[18] Reed, in commenting on this aspect of Halliday's

definitions, says,

> That there is a relationship both *semantically and grammatically* between the
> various parts of a text (cohesive ties) and that there is some *thematic element*
> which flows through it (information flow) results in cohesive discourse rather
> than a jumble of unrelated words and sentences.[19]

Further, textual meanings are also directly associated with their particular

situational context. In this sense they are related to the category of "mode." "Mode"

refers to whether communication is taking place through speech or writing, as well as the

role that language use is playing in a certain communication situation, i.e., the register of

a discourse. Therefore, how a text is organized semantically and grammatically

determines its situational context.[20]

2.2. Systemic Oppositions, Verbal Aspect, and Markedness Theory

More detailed treatments concerning the nature of SFL and its use in discourse

analysis have been given elsewhere.[21] Nevertheless, the above provides a solid

---

[18] Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 27.

[19] Reed, *Philippians*, 60.

[20] Halliday and Hasan, "Text and Context," 12. For fuller treatments on the impact of a text's context of situation on its semantic components, see Porter, "Dialect and Register"; Porter, "Register in the Greek of the New Testament."

[21] See especially Halliday, *Introduction to Functional Grammar* and Berry, "Systemic Linguistics and Discourse Analysis," 120–45. For treatments by biblical scholars, see Reed, *Philippians*, 34–122 and Westfall, *Hebrews*, 28–78.

framework for understanding the semantic relations that exist within the Greek verbal system. With regard to the systemic nature of the tense-forms, I contend here that there are two sets of binary oppositions from which an ancient Greek speaker/writer had meaningful choices, the first opposition being primary and the other secondary.[22] The first and most basic aspectual choice was between the opposition of perfective (=Aorist) vs. non-perfective. If the language user selected non-perfective, that person was then faced with a second choice of aspect, the opposition of imperfective (=Present/Imperfect) vs. stative (=Perfect/Pluperfect).[23]

An essential task, however, is determining the nature of the oppositions that exist within the Greek verbal network. This requires answering two questions. First, what determines the aspectual oppositions proposed above? That is, what criteria can be applied that establish the perfective vs. non-perfective and imperfective vs. stative oppositions? Below, I answer this question in terms of markedness theory and the markedness values of the individual Greek tense-forms. The second question asks, in the light of their markedness values, how ought these aspectual oppositions be described? That is, should the oppositions be described as privative, gradual, or equipollent oppositions?[24]

---

[22] See Battistella, *Markedness*, 16–17 where he discusses Roman Jakobson's thesis that all oppositions can be reduced to binary ones. Battistella, while recognizing some of the apparent difficulties to Jakobson's thesis, basically agrees with him.

[23] Each of these choices provided a further, though non-aspectual, opposition of +/-remoteness. See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 90.

[24] Ruipérez (*Aspectos*, 15) and Olsen (*Aspect*, 19–20) advocate for privative oppositions. Ruipérez holds to both privative *and* gradual: "Por nuestra parte, estimamos que hay oposiciones morfológicas privativas y graduales" ("For our part, we estimate that there are privative and gradual morphological oppositions"). Porter (*Verbal Aspect*, 89–90), Fanning (*Verbal Aspect*, 71), and Campbell (*Verbal Aspect*, 1:20–21) advocate for equipollent oppositions.

Regarding the first question concerning criteria for establishing aspectual oppositions, while there has been a certain degree of debate, most aspect theorists have drawn on markedness theory to address the issue. The concept of markedness finds its origins in the Prague School of structural linguistics, and at its earliest stages, was applied strictly to the realm of phonology and dealt primarily with privative oppositions (see below).[25] The two key figures in the theory's development were Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1890) and his friend, Roman Jakobson (1896), although apparently it was Jakobson who became the more well-known proponent of the theory after Trubetzkoy's death in 1938. According to Andrews, while Jakobson was the first to propose the oppositional nature of markedness, Trubetzkoy was the first to use and apply the terms "marked/unmarked" in an article in German from 1931, "Die phonologischen Systeme."

Markedness as a theory focuses on the idea that language is structured around a hierarchy of "polar oppositions" that "show an evaluative nonequivalence that is imposed on all oppositions."[26] Thus, linguistic items operate on two poles in a relationship of opposites: the general *vs.* the more specific, the simpler *vs.* the complex, the expected *vs.* the less expected. In other words, an essential characteristic of language is its apparent capacity to express items in either a basic, simple, and undefined manner (what is called the *default* or *unmarked* item), or a more specific and complex manner (what is called the *marked* item).[27] This hierarchy is expressed in what Battistella says is "the dominance of more general terms over less general."[28] Thus, terms that have a wider breadth of usage,

---

[25] For a historical survey of the development of markedness theory, see Andrews, *Markedness Theory*, 13–19; Henning, "Markedness Theory," 11–46; Battistella, *The Logic of Markedness*, 19–34.
[26] Battistella, *Markedness*, 1.
[27] Battistella, *Markedness*, 4.
[28] Battistella, *Markedness*, 21.

that is, in a variety of contexts and numerical frequency (unmarked), are more prevalent

than those terms with a more narrow breadth of usage (marked). A good example of

markedness theory applied is in the opposition between the singular and the plural used

of nouns.[29] In English (as well as Greek), the singular may be used (1) to encompass both

the notions of singular and plural, e.g., the words "everyone," "team," or "crowd," and

(2) in a wider range of usage than the plural. Thus, the plural is rightly called the

"marked" item.

More pertinent to the current work, however, is the notion that the markedness

values of the Greek tense-forms are determined by, as Porter and O'Donnell note, "a cline

of combined factors."[30] In other words, the tense-forms operate on a continuum of

markedness, ranging from the least heavily marked Aorist to the most heavily marked

Perfect. These values can be established by applying four general categories that function

as criteria for markedness: (1) material, (2) implicational, (3) distributional, and (4)

semantic.[31]

The first criterion, material markedness, has to do with the formal structure of a

word. The more substantial the morphology of an item is, the greater its markedness

value will be. Conversely, morphologically simpler forms will be less heavily marked.[32]

The second criterion, and somewhat closely related on the level of morphology to

---

[29] Battistella, *Markedness*, 4.

[30] See Porter and O'Donnell, "The Greek Verbal Network," 15–16.

[31] In what follows, I am largely dependent on Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 178–81 and Porter, "Prominence," 55–56. See also Comrie, *Aspect*, 111–22; Lyons, *Semantics*, 1:305–11. For a helpful discussion on several approaches to the criteria of markedness determination, see Battistella, *The Logic of Markedness*, 13–16.

[32] This is very similar to Battistella's criterion of "amount of structure." Within this criterion is the concept of "simplicity." He says, "Simplicity refers to the idea that unmarked elements are less elaborate in form than their counterparts" (*Markedness*, 27). See also Comrie, *Aspect*, 114–15.

material markedness, is implicational markedness. This criterion concerns the patterns of regularity and irregularity in a set of forms. The forms that evidence the least amount of irregularity are more marked than those with more irregularity.[33]

Distribution is the next criterion for determining an item's markedness value. Two notions are subsumed under it. First, it refers to a term's ability to appear in a broad range of syntagmatic relations with other linguistic items. And second, it refers to a term's breadth of usage, i.e., its frequency in a language. Frequency has not always been seen to be a reliable criterion for an item's markedness value—it has the potential to vary from writer to writer, and is dependent on the existence of an adequate literary corpus from which to draw statistics. Nevertheless, at least for the the Greek of the New Testament, it does appear that statistical patterns can be established that provide this criterion with a steady ground for application.[34]

The fourth criterion employed here is termed semantic markedness. This criterion highlights the fact that semantic oppositions exist in which a marked lexicogrammatical realization represents a further, more delicate choice within the semantic selection process. A choice that is less semantically marked has a broader scope of meaning and can appear in a broader range of syntagmatic environments. While such a choice can

---

[33] Comrie, *Aspect*, 114–15.

[34] See Porter and O'Donnell, "The Greek Verbal Network," 3–10 for a history of statistical studies in traditional grammar and modern linguistics. Since their entire study (pp. 3–41) is devoted to an analysis of the frequency probabilities of the tense-forms in the New Testament, one should consult the article for a more in depth treatment of the criterion of distribution. Also to be noted here is Battistella's criterion of "prototypicality" (*Markedness*, 27). As I understand it, this deals with the basic patterns of an item's use within a language. It relies on the cognitive element of expectancy: the more an element departs from normal patterns of experienced usage, the higher degree of markedness it has. Conversely, the more expected an item is, the lower its markedness value will be. It seems to be a very similar point that Porter and O'Donnell make (see "The Greek Verbal Network," 16–17) as does Halliday himself when he describes prominence in general as "departures from some expected pattern of frequency" (Halliday, *Explorations*, 112). See also Lyons, *Introduction*, 413–14; Comrie, *Aspect*, 116–17; Andrews, *Markedness Theory*, 136–39), who also caution on the use of frequency as a criterion for determining markedness.

encompass the meaning of a more semantically marked choice, this remains undetermined.[35] As an example of semantic markedness. in narrative the third person functions as the most basic choice within the system network of PERSON.[36] In contrast, the second person, and the first person even more so, represent more delicate choices within the system network, thus being more semantically marked.

Therefore, in the light of these four criteria, we can say that the perfective aspect —realized by the Aorist—is least marked tense-form. and thus forms the most basic, least marked choice within the Greek aspectual system. This is confirmed for the Aorist on the basis of all four criteria, although the criterion of distribution is not particularly definitive for the form. According to Porter, the Aorist has the least amount of morphological bulk and the highest occurrence of formal irregularities. Although it has an equiprobable distributional relationship with its Present/Imperfect counterpart, frequency does favor the Aorist as the lesser marked form, even if the difference is not great.[37] and, being the first and most basic choice within the aspectual system network, the perfective is the least semantically marked of all the aspects. On the other hand, the imperfective aspect (=Present/Imperfect) has slightly more morphological substance than the perfective. It evidences fewer irregularities and occurs slightly more frequently. Because imperfective verbs represent choices further along in the system network, they are more delicate and semantically more defined than perfective verbs. Thus, the forms grammaticalizing imperfective aspect are more heavily marked than the Aorist, and represent a more

---

[35] See Comrie's examples from Italian and Spanish, where, while the marked terms *sto scriviendo* and *estoy escribiendo* ("I am writing") can be replaced by the unmarked non-progressives *scrivo* and *escribo* ("I write"), the more marked meaning is necessarily excluded (*Aspect*, 112).

[36] This example is taken from Battistella, *Markedness*, 28 who cites Jakobson on the concept of semantic markedness. See also Westfall, *Hebrews*, 62; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*. ch. 4.

[37] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 179–80; Porter and O'Donnell, "The Greek Verbal Network," 20–23.

marked semantic choice that stands in opposition to the stative aspect, provided that "non-perfective" was the first aspectual choice made.

As to be expected, then, the stative (=Perfect) is the most heavily marked of the three aspects. It has the greatest morphological material, while having the least amount of irregularity (e.g., consistency in displaying reduplication or augment). It is the least occurring of the tense-forms,[38] and its placement in the system network suggests significantly more delicacy and semantic complexity.[39] Thus, the stative aspect completes the second binary opposition—in tandem with the imperfective aspect—and represents the most heavily marked choice within the network.

The second question—how are these aspectual oppositions to be described and understood?—involves defining three possibilities: privative, gradual, and equipollent oppositions. A privative opposition is one in which an item of a linguistic set is characterized on the basis of the presence of a specific feature (marked) or the absence of it (unmarked).[40] In this opposition, only the marked member has an uncancelable semantic meaning.[41] As an English example, in the opposition "bird" vs. "birds," the latter is marked for number due the to the presence of the number marker -s, while the former is unmarked due to the absence of the defining feature.

A gradual opposition is one in which items of a linguistic set are described on a graded scale with reference to the same property. As a phonological example of this sort

---

[38] Porter and O'Donnell, "The Greek Verbal Network," 23. Here the authors note the "skewed" probability relationship between the imperfective and stative aspects. As can be seen, the probability of the imperfective occurring is far greater than the stative.

[39] See Westfall, "Prominence," 80 who notes that the Perfect is more "definite and contoured."

[40] Battistella, *Markedness*, 16; Porter, "Prominence," 48.

[41] Olsen, *Aspect*, 31.

of opposition, Battistella notes the French consonant system.[42] In part of the analysis he notes that the seven articulatory positions (bilabial, labiovelar, apical, alveolar, alveopalatal, prepalatal, and velar) represent a gradual opposition. This means that bilabial consonants *m* or *p/b* are marked phonologically to a lesser degree than the velar consonants *k/g*.

Although the two kinds of oppositions mentioned above may occur, they do not adequately describe the oppositions of markedness that exist within the Greek verbal system. Porter has successfully argued that the tense-forms should be understood as equipollent oppositions.[43] This sort of opposition refers to items that are characterized neither in terms of the presence or absence of a feature, nor in terms of a graded scale of the same property. Rather, items in a set each possess positive features that contribute in some way to its semantic weight, while still operating as "opposites" within that set. In other words, compared to privative oppositions, which are described as A *vs.* non-A, equipollent oppositions are described as A *vs.* B.[44]

The notion of equipollence suggests that each of the Greek tense-forms possesses some distinguishing feature, formal or semantic (e.g., the -σα suffix, perfective aspect for the Aorist, or reduplication, stative aspect for the Perfect), that causes each of the tense-forms to contribute semantically to the verbal component of a clause by means of its verbal aspect. In this sense, an "unmarked" or "default" use of the Aorist, for example,

---

[42] Battistella, *Markedness*, 15, although his goal is to demonstrate, as Jakobson did, how gradual oppositions can be reduced to binary ones. See also Andrews, *Markedness Theory*. 14.

[43] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 89–90. Fanning agrees (*Verbal Aspect*, 71).

[44] Comrie, *Aspect*, 111; Battistella, *Markedness*, 16; Porter, "Prominence," 48. Battistella gives the helpful example of the opposition that exists between the terms "male" and "female." Should they be seen as privative oppositions (female and nonfemale), or equipollent (both contributing characteristic features)? The latter seems more favorable, due to the positive conceptual features that both terms put forth, despite the possibility of understanding the terms as privative oppositions in a morphological sense.

should not be equated with idea that the form carries no meaning, as is the case within privative and gradual oppositions.[45] Rather, "unmarked" or "default" simply expresses that no specific attention is meant to be drawn to the undifferentiated form. Therefore, I suggest that the Aorist, as used in narrative discourse as the "default" tense-form, is better labeled as a *less heavily marked* form rather than simply "unmarked."[46] This communicates the idea that, while the form contributes to the semantics of a clause via the perfective aspect, it represents the more basic, less contoured choice of tense-form.

Furthermore, it is helpful to stress that the equipollence of the Greek tense-forms operate within a system of *binary* oppositional choices.[47] In general, this framework establishes two items in a set as functioning on opposite poles of meaning. In the case of Greek, the verbal system is structured around two sets of binary distinctions with reference to aspectuality.[48] As noted above, the first opposition exists between the perfective aspect and the non-perfective aspects. The selection of "non-perfective" is the necessary condition for a second opposition between the imperfective (Present/Imperfect) aspects and stative aspects (Perfect/Pluperfect).[49]

---

[45] That is, in the example of the privative opposition "bird *vs* birds," the former completely lacks the meaning +plural. In contrast, in the opposition perfective *vs* non-perfective, neither option lacks an aspectual meaning—any choice would represent a positive semantic contribution of verbal aspect.

[46] The phrase "less heavily marked" is, of course, not to be understood in terms of a gradual opposition.

[47] For general comments on binary systems, see Lyons, *Introduction*, 85–87, 127. For a defense of Jakobson's thesis, see Battistella, *Markedness*, 16–17. Additionally, the terms "binary" and "privative" need to be kept distinct. I do not believe that a binary opposition is the presence or absence of a feature, but rather is the opposition that exists between two poles of meaning. Thus, for example, the opposition of perfective/non-perfective is not structured around the presence or absence of a particular formal or semantic feature but around the polarity that exists between the perfective aspect and the non-perfective aspects.

[48] Battistella mentions that analysis based on "binary *sets*" (italics mine) can at times help resolve apparent nonbinary oppositions (see *Markedness*, 16).

[49] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 89.

2.3. Markedness, Grounding, Prominence: The Function of Verbal Aspect in Discourse

It was noted above that from a systemic-functional perspective, semantic choices

are made first and foremost for functional purposes. To explain the textual motivations

behind choice of verbal aspect,[50] Porter has developed a visualization scheme within

which the aspects operate on three levels of discourse grounding according to their

markedness values. These levels are background, foreground, and frontground.[51] Within

this scheme, the least marked perfective aspect (=Aorist) functions as a backgrounding

device, and relates information such as "subsidiary characters or events that are of lesser

importance which support by way of comment, elaboration, or summary."[52] With

reference to its function specifically in narrative discourse, the perfective aspect typically

lays down the narrative "backbone" or "mainline," and drives the very basic storyline of

the discourse forward.[53] Thus, frequently, chronological and geographical transitions in a

narrative are communicated by means of backgrounded material.[54] Westfall perhaps gives

the most succinct definition of "background" when she says that it, "provides the relevant

[linguistic] context for the foreground."[55]

The more marked imperfective aspect (=Present/Imperfect[56]) functions as a

foregrounding device. Foregrounded items introduce information that an author or

---

[50] It may be helpful to reiterate what I suggested above, namely, that the primary function of verbal aspect choice is ideational; however, the result of such choices have significant textual implications, which I am most concerned with here.

[51] See Porter, *Idioms*, 23. This work contends that these discourse functions are the main functions of Greek verbs as opposed to temporal or *Aktionsart* functions.

[52] Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 41, though see Wallace, "Figure and Ground," 208. This certainly does not mean that information communicated by the perfective aspect is unimportant. Rather it suggests that the information is secondary to and more foundational for other elements in the discourse that are highlighted and meant to stand out.

[53] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 198.

[54] See Reed, "Identifying Theme," 77.

[55] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 34.

[56] Within the scheme presented here, the Present is slightly more heavily marked than the Imperfect.

speaker wishes to highlight against the backdrop created by backgrounded elements. This

certainly makes sense in the light of Longacre's comment that "[t]he very idea of

discourse as a structured entity demands that some parts of discourse be more prominent

than others."[57] Likewise, Wallace notes that, "Almost by definition, foreground in

discourse is more salient than background."[58] Thus, foregrounded material often

highlights the introduction of new characters and important transitions in narrative,

describes circumstances surrounding an event and makes "climactic references to

concrete situations."[59] A foregrounded item that is used as a transition device differs from

a backgrounded item used in a similar way in that it typically attributes a greater level of

prominence to some shift or progression in a narrative, which an author/speaker believes

is important to the development of his or her story. This sort of foregrounding function is

often attributed to the so-called "historic" (or "narrative") Present.[60]

The most heavily marked stative aspect (Perfect/Pluperfect)[61] is used to

frontground certain elements in a discourse, causing them to stand out even further than

its perfective and imperfective counterparts. It is the most definite and contoured of the

aspects, and so when used it is usually meant to draw special attention to the action it

---

[57] See Longacre, "Discourse Peak as a Zone of Turbulence," 81–98.
[58] Wallace, "Figure and Ground," 213.
[59] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92.
[60] However, as will be discussed later in this work concerning the "historic" Present, prominence is primarily established through its imperfective aspectual value, not a temporal transfer of the past into present time (so Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 227; rather, see Black, "The Historic Present," 123–24).
[61] Similar to the Present/Imperfect, in the current scheme, the Perfect is slightly more marked than the Pluperfect in the light of the element of remoteness.

expresses.[62] The idea here is that a language user possesses the ability to focus his or her

attention on a particular element in the discourse in such a way that is even more salient

or pronounced than foregrounded material. Westfall describes frontgrounded information

as "an element that is highlighted with a spotlight."[63]

The concept of "semantic patterns" is important to a discussion on

frontgrounding. Often times frontgrounded components can be identified as instances

where an author or speaker departs from his or her syntactical or semantic pattern, i.e.,

where the author employs some unexpected feature.[64] In this sense it can be said that

what is most expected is less salient and what is least expected is most salient or

frontground material. This idea is linked with the criterion of distributional markedness

mentioned above.

It should be recognizable that in this grounding scheme there is a direct

correlation between the markedness values of the tense-forms and their grounding

functions. However, three questions yet remain that need to be answered sufficiently. The

first is, what is the difference, if any, among the concepts of markedness, grounding and

---

[62] Westfall, "Prominence," 80; Porter, *Idioms*, 23; McKay, "On the Perfect," 318–22; Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 44. Even Wallace notes that the Perfect is usually used by a Greek author for a reason and often has exegetical significance (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 573). Further, it is noteworthy that, although they differ at many points theoretically, both Porter and Campbell arrive at the similar conclusion that the Perfect is often used in prominent places in discourse (Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 206; cf. Porter, "Greek Linguistics," 54). Also important to note here is Fanning's rejection of the idea that the various aspects primarily function in discourse to highlight a particular portion of text over and against another (i.e., "prominence," Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 72). Fanning, however, fails to provide adequate linguistic criteria to form the basis for his assertion. His primary evidence is that "the aspects are used often in non-narrative ways exhibiting aspectual-values quite apart from any foreground/background distinction" (p. 75). He then lists the Aorist and Present infinitives συμπαραλαβεῖν, συμπαραλαμβάνειν in Acts 15 as an example. However, this example seems to prove the opposite. While the Aorist infinitive may not be advancing the narrative backbone, the opposition between the perfective and imperfective aspects actually creates discourse prominence. Barnabas's wish to take John Mark along on the journey is thrown into the background of the narrative scene, while Paul's wish not to take John Mark is pulled to the foreground. This choice by the author makes good sense in the light of the fact that as the narrative continues, Barnabas and John Mark disappear, while Paul and Silas take center-stage.

[63] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 35.

[64] Reed, "Identifying Theme," 80; Westfall, *Hebrews*, 35 (esp. where she quotes Halliday).

prominence? The definitions of these terms have at times lacked precision, so their use in this work will be clearly delineated. Second, is Porter's grounding scheme always accurate? In other words, is one always able to say, for example, that wherever there is a Perfect tense-form used the action expressed is to be understood as the most salient item in the co-text? This challenge has been put to Porter's grounding model and so needs to be considered.[65] Third, what is the relationship between the markedness values of Greek tense-forms, their grounding function, and the genre of literature in which they appear?

To answer the first question, some linguists evidently use the terms markedness, grounding and prominence synonymously. That is, less marked items are equated with background material, also at times simply called the "ground," while more marked items are equated with foreground material, and are sometimes called the "focus" or "figure." Foregrounded elements are also in turn labeled "prominent."[66] However, while a close

---

[65] Most recently in Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:233–7; see also Reed and Reese, "Verbal Aspect," 190. In an article from 2006 ("Is Verbal Aspect a Prominence Indicator?" 3–29), Jody Barnard sets out to evaluate Porter's grounding model by discerning through form critical analysis whether his model fits the patterns of climactic and emphatic junctures found in various episodes in Luke. Barnard concludes that Porter's model is generally not accurate. However, three objections to Barnard's analysis can be raised. First, overall, Barnard's analysis lacks linguistic sophistication. This is evidenced by the fact that the study has virtually no citations of any theoretical linguists. Second, the validity of using traditional form-critical analysis to determine the grounding (or prominence) values of the Greek tense-forms is highly questionable: what determines that a given pattern is the pattern for this or that "form," and why would it be necessarily different from the tense form pattern? Third, Barnard's criteria for determining "climactic junctures" are linguistically suspect. For example, he says concerning Luke 23:27–31, "Bultmann *et al.* have identified this episode as a pronouncement, the main point being Jesus' declaration in vv. 28b–31. Interestingly, Jesus' speech is introduced with aorist tense forms [...] but reported with present tense forms [...], which is accompanied by emphatic linguistic features (πλήν, ἰδού). Thus Porter's theory could explain the use of verbal aspect in vv. 28b–29a. But when the tense changes to future [...] and aorist [...] his theory is more difficult to maintain since it is the fact that childless mothers will be considered blessed that makes the coming days significant. It is also possible that the phrase ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ἡμέραι is an attempt to indicate prominence by echoing the Prophets [...] rather than by selecting the present tense" (pp. 25–26). Linguistically speaking, what makes Barnard judge that "it is the fact that childless mothers will be considered blessed that makes the coming days significant"? Likewise, even if ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ἡμέραι is an echo from the Hebrew Bible, what formal features in the text suggests that it is "prominent." It seems as though Barnard is guilty of allowing form-critical presuppositions to drive the analysis of the text and its linguistic features, rather than allowing formal features to determine the so-called "form." And after all, it is very unlikely to begin with that form-critics were actually concerned with emphatic or climactic points in a text.

[66] Battistella, *Markedness*, 4; Greenberg, *Language Universals*, 60.

relationship exists, it is suggested here (following Westfall) that a distinction be made

between the three concepts. Throughout this work, I will use the term "marked" or

"markedness" to refer to emphasis at the word-level.[67] That is, marked items are the

individual units that are typically used by an author or speaker to "build" the various

levels of grounding. In other words, the use of marked words can lead to foregrounded or

frontgrounded clauses or clause-complexes.

The concepts of grounding and prominence are especially connected as both are

discourse-level terms rather than word-level. Westfall describes grounding as "a standard

syntactical pattern or norm of a given author."[68] Thus, any deviation from the author's

standard pattern signals foreground or focus material. Reed gives this definition of

prominence: "the semantic and grammatical elements of discourse that serve to set aside

certain subjects, ideas, or motifs of the author as more or less semantically or

pragmatically significant than others."[69] While grounding and prominence may seem to

be identical notions, it may be helpful to view prominence as a superordinate term under

which the various levels of grounding function within discourse: prominence is

established as the planes of discourse function in relation to one another, and the resulting

levels of grounding are the functional effects of the markedness values of the tense-forms

at work within a particular co-text. Admittedly, this may appear to be splitting hairs with

regard to terminology, but if these distinctions are not made it is quite easy for the terms

to become blurred, with confusion as the consequence.[70]

---

[67] Following Westfall, *Hebrews*, 34–35; Westfall, "Prominence," 76.
[68] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 34. For the current work's purposes, the description above is extended to include detectable *semantic patterns* as well as syntactical ones.
[69] Reed, *Philippians*, 106.
[70] For a thorough discussion by a biblical scholar on prominence, see Reed, *Philippians*, 105–21.

Answering the second question concerning the validity of Porter's planes of

discourse model leads to further comments on the relation between markedness and

prominence noted above. Several scholars have argued somewhat adamantly against

Porter's model, particularly as it pertains to the role of the Perfect tense-form in

establishing discourse prominence.[71] The point of debate seems to be over whether it can

be said that prominence is formally grammaticalized in the Perfect.[72] That is, should the

Perfect, every time it is used, be interpreted as the most prominent element in a section of

discourse? Porter's model seems to suggest that the answer is "yes."[73] Others have said

that prominence is a pragmatic category and cannot be established on the basis of a tense-

form alone,[74] even though it is conceded that the Perfect does often occur in prominent

portions of discourse.[75] For these authors, then, prominence is determined by the

circumstances of a linguistic context.

Two remarks can be made in effort to bring balance to this ongoing debate. First,

scholars like Silva, Campbell, Reed and Reese, and Westfall are likely correct in

identifying prominence as a category determined by the circumstances of a linguistic

context. This is essentially what I am attemptting to highlight in labeling prominence as a

discourse-level term, which is similar to the concept of grounding. In other words, the

Perfect tense-form does not create discourse prominence *on its own*, since prominence is

an above-the-word-level term. This point *does not* negate the markedness value of the

---

[71] For example, Silva, *God, Language, and Scripture*, 115; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:234–35. Reed and Reese, "Verbal Aspect," 190 and Westfall, *Hebrews*, 34 also disagree with Porter in this regard.

[72] The grammaticalization of prominence in the other tense-forms has also been questioned (Reed and Reese, "Verbal Aspect," 190).

[73] Perhaps the reason for this is because the model does not distinguish very clearly between the values of markedness, grounding, and prominence.

[74] See esp. Silva, *God, Language, and Scripture*, 115.

[75] For example, see Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:235.

Perfect as the most heavily marked form. Yet it does postpone assigning its role in

creating discourse prominence until an analysis of its co-textual relations has been

performed (see below). Thus it is on this level of distinguishing between markedness and

prominence that I believe Porter's discourse model could benefit. That is, the markedness

values he proposes are correct, but more features in the co-text need to be identified if

one is to interpret a tense-form's functional role as prominent. An item can be formally

marked, but this is not necessarily equated with prominence,[76] since marked items can at

times be used simply for other functional purposes (e.g., ideational) without the intention

of highlighting a major point in a discourse.

However, this would appear to leave the interpretation of prominence on a very

subjective plane: what determines if the circumstances or co-text lends itself to

interpreting an occurrence of the Perfect tense-form as prominent?[77] Further, this co-

textual dependent approach to prominence does not explain theoretically why it is that the

Perfect tense-form is indeed often used at prominent places in discourse. Here, the

principle of markedness assimilation—as originally presented by Andersen and advanced

by Battistella—can both provide objective criteria for evaluating prominence and explain

Perfect (and other tense-form) usage in the creation of prominence. That is, it may

provide an effective and quantifiable link between the markedness values of the tense-

forms (word-level) and their use in structuring discourse along various levels of salience.

Battistella defines the basics of the principle when he says, "Marked elements tend to

---

[76] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 34; Reed and Reese, "Verbal Aspect," 190.

[77] Campbell notes this and concedes, "Admittedly, there is no objective test as to the prominence or otherwise of these verbs; subjective appreciation of context must be our guide" (*Verbal Aspect*, 1:235).

occur in marked contexts while unmarked elements occur in unmarked contexts."[78] The

only modification I wish to make to this definition concerns the notion of "marked

contexts." I would nuance this idea by substituting the term "marked" with "prominent."

This alteration perhaps communicates more clearly the ideas that (1) markedness is

primarily formally based (at the word-level), and (2) formally marked words typically

combine to create structures above the word-level that stand out within their larger

linguistic co-text, i.e., they create structures that are "prominent."[79] In this sense, and as

noted above, the markedness values of the Greek tense-forms do not function on their

own to construct the different levels of discourse grounding and prominence. Rather, this

happens as the forms work together with and influence other elements in their co-text.[80]

This point will be important to remember in my analysis of Synoptic parallel texts, as I

attempt to move beyond simple word differences to their influence in larger structures,

within which the tense-forms play a central role. As an example, the Perfect, being the

most heavily marked form, frequently—but not always—occurs in the most prominent

section of a discourse. But to quantify and asses this assertion, one would ideally find

other marked items in the co-text such as the marked use of person and number (e.g.,

second person plural), mood (subjunctive and optative), case (the genitive and dative),

the use of markers of attention (e.g., ἰδού), temporal or social deixis, or marked

---

[78] Battistella, *Markedness*, 7. Although, see Andrews, *Markedness Theory*, 146, who cautions the use of the principle, saying "markedness assimilation can be demonstrated only if one assumes in an a priori fashion what is marked and what is unmarked. In other words, every item, feature, and category must be previously ordered in the hierarchy for the principle of markedness assimilation to find support. Hence, a circular argument occurs." However, the principle appears to be legitimate for the purposes of this study, since the linguistic features of Hellenistic Greek, verbal aspect being a major one, have indeed been placed within a hierarchy by means of applying the criteria of material, implicational, distributional, and cognitive/ semantic markedness.

[79] See Westfall, "Prominence," 75.

[80] See Westfall, *Hebrews*, 34 and Reed, *Philippians*, 114–15.

conjunctions and particles.[81] The interpreter attempts to construct an entire "domain of prominence" in which a tense-form operates at its core.[82] Thus, in the current work, while Porter's discourse grounding model is essentially adopted, markedness assimilation will serve as an evaluative measure for the interpretation of prominence.

The third question concerning markedness and genre can be answered more briefly. The markedness values of the Greek tense-forms should not be understood as contingent upon the discourse-type in which they are found (i.e., narrative, expository, predictive, etc.). The reason for this is that differentiations in discourse-types are not always very clear. Writers/speakers can move seamlessly in and out of different discourse-types, which makes it unlikely that markedness values would be switched and inverted on the basis of these movements. Thus, there could be a danger of imposing typological markedness that does not reflect actual usage. Perhaps a better understanding is that a shift in the relative values of the tense-forms occurs when the discourse type changes.[83] Hence, as an example, in expository discourse, while the Present remains the more heavily marked form, it, instead of the least marked Aorist, is typically used to carry the mainline of an argument.

2.4. Verbal Aspect and Discourse Cohesion

Having placed the Greek tense-forms within a workable discourse model, a few further comments should be made on the notion of textual cohesion and the role of verbal aspect in establishing it. "Cohesion" refers to the linguistic ties in a text that provide a

---

[81] Westfall, "Prominence," 79–93; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, ch. 4.
[82] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 35.
[83] See Porter, "Prominence," 57–58.

formal and functional "map" that helps guide a reader or listener's processing of a text, which is typically unified around a common thematic element.[84] These ties connect the various parts of a unit and pull them together to form an instance of coherent communication for the recipient. The formation of what Halliday and Hasan call "cohesive chains" are a good example of this—the use of co-referring anaphoric pronouns in a sequence of sentences ties the sentences together and gives the unit a common thematic element that runs throughout:

> Wally likes football. *He* watches it every weekend. *He* used to play all the time. *His* favorite team is the Indianapolis Colts.

While every other component changes, the chain of third person pronouns adds the element of similarity to the sentences, and allows them to hang together as a coherent instance of communication.

However, as Reed mentions, if this sort of cohesiveness (the cohesion of similarity) meant that all discourse had to appear as the above example in order to be unified and understood, then communication would be considerably "flat, monotone, uninformative."[85] This is the value of noting the relationship between the concepts of discourse prominence and cohesion: whereas cohesive chains operate on the principle of similarity or repetition, prominence operates on the principle of dissimilarity or variation. Therefore, when some pattern is broken—for example, a string of backgrounding Aorists broken by the use of an Imperfect or Present—attention is drawn to the variation, often resulting in a prominent portion of discourse.[86]

---

[84] See Reed. *Philippians*, 89–101
[85] Reed, *Philippians*, 106.
[86] On several other concepts related to cohesion that will be used at points throughout this work. see Reed, "The Cohesiveness of Discourse," 28–46.

3. Procedure

I wish to make several points clear concerning my procedure for analyzing aspectual choice in the Synoptic PNs. First, I have chosen three portions of text in which I will identify the most significant instances of divergent tense-form use and attempt to explain these differences on the basis of the aspectual discourse model presented above: (1) Jesus enters Jerusalem (Matt 21:1–22//Mark 11:1–25//Luke 19:28–48), (2) Peter's denial of Jesus (Matt 26:69–75//Mark 14:66–72//Luke 22:54–65), and (3) the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt 27:1–61//Mark 15:1–47//Luke 22:66—23:56). The treatment of the crucifixion will include several smaller episodes: Jesus before Pilate, the crucifixion proper, and the burial of Jesus. Aspectual analysis will begin with general comments on each episode's content in terms of its subject matter, participant roles and relations, and cohesiveness as a discourse unit. These comments will provide an overarching map for the the aspectual choices and patterns that are seen in the text itself, as I will suggest that an episode's content has an analyzable impact on its aspectual realizations.

Second, I will include in my analyses occurrences of divergence in verbal forms that are not identical lexical items. That is, if it can be reasonably determined that (1) the two verbs, though different lexically, are used by the authors to communicate the same action (e.g., προσῆλθεν *vs.* ἔρχεται in Matt 26:69//Mark 14:66), and (2) there is a full range of aspectual choices available for each lexeme, then the instance of divergent tense-form use will be deemed worthy of analysis. Third, I will include instances where tense-form choices diverge in embedded, secondary clauses as well as direct discourse. The reason is that while the relative values of the tense-forms may change in such places,

meaningful aspectual choices are nonetheless made, with the forms retaining their

markedness values and ability to create prominence within their co-textual environment.

4. Summary

The theory and method section of this thesis has attempted to establish a solid

theoretical framework through which the question of divergent tense-form usage in

Synoptic parallel texts may be analyzed. I have proposed that an aspectually-based

understanding of the Greek verbal system provides the most effective model for

answering this question. As will be seen, focusing on the textual function of the aspects,

based upon their markedness values and their usage in discourse, allows differences in

formal choices between Synoptic authors to be reconciled without resorting to claims of

anomaly or unexplainable irregularity. The capability of the tense-forms to shape and add

contour to a discourse, as well as highlight points that are uniquely significant to each

gospel through the use of verbal aspect will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem:
The Triumphal Entry, the Cleansing of the Temple, and the Cursing of the Fig Tree
Matt 21:1–22//Mark 11:1–25//Luke 19:28–48

1. Introduction

While much has been written on the triumphal entry and temple cleansing[1]

narratives in the Synoptics,[2] few treatments have considered the discourse function of

verbal aspect within them, and even fewer have compared the differences in aspectual

usage in the parallel material.[3] The following chapter will consider three such differences

and attempt to explain their significance for shaping the discourses in which they are

found according to various levels of salience. But before performing these analyses, the

cohesiveness of each Synoptic discourse will be established and the content of the

episodes will be outlined in terms of their subject matter and participant roles and

relations.

2. The Cohesiveness of the Episodes

In performing my aspectual analyses, there is a potential difficulty with regard to

the different manner in which the narratives have been constructed. The challenge lies in

that Mark has split Jesus' cursing of the fig tree into two separate scenes: the initial

---

[1] I acknowledge here the debate over the term "cleansing" with reference to Jesus' actions in the temple. Whether or not they represent a purification/cleansing (so, e.g., Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 91–111; cf. Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings*, 57–63) or prophetic judgment about the coming destruction of the temple (so, e.g., Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 61–76) is not directly relevant to this study, although I tend to sympathize with the former position (see Cirafesi, "The Priestly Portrait of Jesus," 102–5, although the article is specifically devoted to the Gospel of John and not the Synoptics).

[2] On the history of research up to 1980 on the fig tree pericope in Mark, see Telford, *The Barren Temple*, ch. 1; Wright, *Jesus*, 418.

[3] Recent works by Fanning ("Greek Presents, Imperfects, and Aorists," 167–86) and Porter ("Prominence," 59–61; see also *Idioms*, 302–3) treat aspect usage and its significance in Mark 11:1–11, although they are not solely devoted to these episodes and do not handle the parallel material.

cursing of the tree comes before the cleansing of the temple (11:12–14), while the

discovery of the tree being withered comes after the cleansing (11:20–25). Matthew, on

the other hand, places the entire fig tree incident after the temple cleansing (Matt 21:18–

22), while Luke does not include the fig tree at all.[4] Thus, the question is, how ought the

varied placement (or lack) of the cursing of the fig tree influence the analysis of verbal

aspect? Despite the chronological discrepancy, aspectual choice in the parallel material of

Matthew and Mark can indeed be compared, particularly Mark's second fig tree scene

(11:20–21) with Matthew's only fig tree scene (21:18–20). In other words, that Matthew

has recounted the cursing and the withering of the fig tree as happening in immediate

sequence while Mark has inserted a span of time between them will not in any way

hinder comparing specific choices of verbal aspect in Matt 21:19–20//Mark 11:20–21.

A further, and more important, question concerns how the selected episodes form

larger cohesive units of discourse. Rather than isolating smaller pericopes, I have chosen

to analyze larger portions of text (i.e., both the triumphal entry and temple cleansing

episodes), which include within them smaller narrative scenes that, when taken together,

comprise the first events of Jesus' last days in Jerusalem.

All three of the Synoptics signal a transition in their narratives by delimiting the

triumphal entry episode as a new unit through the use of temporal and spatial-locational

---

[4] About these different narrative structures of Matthew and Mark, France, *Mark*, 447 says "It is not easy, and perhaps not important, to decide whether Matthew has telescoped an originally more extended event, and has capitalised on this foreshortening by then introducing παραχρῆμα, or whether Mark has stretched out a perviously single incident in order to fold it around the protest in the temple." On the other hand, Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 39 says that "[t]he framing of the temple demonstration with the fig tree is also unique to Mark [...] [T]his points to the salience of the fig tree for Mark's narrative flow." Nolland, *Matthew*, 850, Luz, *Matthew*, 3:21, and Evans, *Mark*, 2:149 relegate the different narrative structures to Matthew's use of sources. However, the range of explanations and opinions given do not affect how I handle the differences of verbal aspect choice in Matt 21:19–20//Mark 11:20–21 where I compare the Aorist ἐξηράνθη in Matthew with the Perfect ἐξηραμμένην in Mark, which are used to recount the same exact action.

deixis: Jesus is now gradually—but purposefully—moving toward Jerusalem.[5] Mark's

account of the triumphal entry ends with Jesus entering Jerusalem briefly and then exiting

the city as he returns to the town of Bethany to stay the night with the Twelve (11:11).

The cursing of the fig tree forms a sub-unit for Mark (Mark 11:12–14), but the temporal

indicator τῇ ἐπαύριον ("on the next day") and the genitive absolute construction in v. 12

ἐξελθόντων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ βηθανίας ("when they went out from Bethany") provide

formal cohesive ties that suggest vv. 12–14 be read without much narrative disjunction

from vv. 1–11.[6] The initial καί + narrative Present ἔρχονται in 11:15 transitions the

reader from the fig tree to the temple cleansing episode, and also signals continuity with

its preceding content; that is, it brings Jesus and his disciples immediately back to

Jerusalem and sets the stage for Jesus' actions in the temple.[7] The Markan cleansing

episode ends in 11:19 with another geographical shift that moves Jesus and his followers

---

[5] Mark 11:1: καὶ ὅτε ἐγγίζουσιν εἰς Ἰεροσόλυμα εἰς βηθφαγὴ καὶ βηθανίαν ("And when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany"); Matt 21:1: καὶ ὅτε ἤγγισαν εἰς Ἰεροσόλυμα καὶ ἦλθον εἰς βηθφαγὴ ("and when they drew near to Jerusalem, they also came to Bethphage"); Luke 19:28–29:καὶ εἰπὼν ταῦτα ἐπορεύετο ἔμπροσθεν ἀναβαίνων εἰς Ἰεροσόλυμα. καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἤγγισεν εἰς βηθφαγὴ ("And after saying these things, we went up ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it happened that as he drew near to Bethphage...").

[6] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 198 and Reed, "The Cohesiveness of Discourse," 32 also note that the genitive absolute can have this function. For a similar structuring, see Gould, *St. Mark*, 210–11; Evans, *Mark*, 2:149. See also France, *Mark*, 442 who says about Mark 11:11: "This verse is often bracketed with vv. 1–10 rather than with what follows. But by bringing Jesus inside the city (in contrast with the scene outside the walls in vv. 1–10), and specifically into the ἱερόν, it points forward rather than back, forming the first member in the alternate focus on the two narrative scenes [i.e., the temple incident and the fig tree]." France goes on to say on p. 443 concerning καὶ τῇ ἐπαύριον (and other temporal links between episodes) that since such temporal links are so infrequent in Mark before the passion narrative, the markers of temporal sequence in 11:11–20 are all the more significant. Evans, *Mark*, 2:150, agreeing with Bultmann's form-critical analysis, notes that 11:12–14, 20–21 probably formed an original unit into which the temple incident of vv. 15–19 was inserted later. However, even if vv. 15–19 represent a later insertion into the tradition, the linguistic features noted here suggest that the redactor did a fine job of shaping the fig tree and the temple cleansing traditions into a cohesive unit (*contra* Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 127 who says "Die ungleiche Verteilung der erzählerischen Gewichte verrät die redaktionelle Überarbeitung der Perikope" ["The unequal distribution of narrative weight reveals the editorial revision of the pericope (i.e., vv. 15–19)].

[7] On καί as a conjunction of unmarked continuity in narrative discourse, see Black, *Sentence Conjunctions*, 111–14.

outside of Jerusalem once again when nighttime arrives.[8] However, the transition to

11:20–25 is not a major disjunctive one, as is indicated by the use of initial καί +

participle (παραπορευόμενοι, "when they passed by") and temporal deixis in v. 20

(πρωί, "in the morning"). These formal features serve to closely connect Jesus' temple

cleansing with the lessons he is to teach the disciples in vv. 20–25.[9] Verse 27a, which

reads καὶ ἔρχονται πάλιν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ("And they came again to Jerusalem"),

signals the beginning of a new Jerusalem-based unit (11:27–12:12)—a key formal

indicator of this being the lexeme πάλιν. While the transition to this new unit may not be

a major disjunctive one (cf. initial καί + narrative Present ἔρχονται), its introduction of

new participants (i.e., οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, οἱ γραμματεῖς, and οἱ πρεσβύτεροι) and its focus

on Jesus' conflict with the Jewish leaders marks 11:27–12:12 as a new section.[10]

Therefore, Mark 11:1–25 is best read as a cohesive unit of discourse with at least four

subunits contained within it.

The triumphal entry and temple cleansing stories in Matthew and Luke also form

cohesive units of discourse. Without the intervening of the cursing of the fig tree, their

cohesion is more apparent. As noted above, like Mark, both Matthew and Luke signal

Jesus' movement toward Jerusalem as a new narrative development by means of certain

---

[8] Καὶ ὅταν ὀψὲ ἐγένετο, ἐξεπορεύοντο ἔξω τῆς πόλεως ("And when evening came, they went outside of the city"). There is rather strong manuscript support for reading ἐξεπορεύοντο as third person singular, ἐξεπορεύετο (ℵ C D Θ *f*[1).13] 33 𝔐 lat sy[s h] co). See France, *Mark*, 447 where he says the departure from the city "allows Mark to return us to the story of the fig tree [...], so that its lesson in relation to what Jesus has just done in the temple may be learned."

[9] Several ancient witnesses include the sentence εἰ δε υμεις ουκ αφιετε ουδε ο πατηρ υμων ο εν τοις ουρανοις αφησει τα παραπτωματα υμων, which are referred to here as "v. 26": A (C, D) Θ *f*[1).13] 33 𝔐 lat sy[p h] bo[pt]; Cyp.

[10] Although he is working from a redaction-critical perspective, Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 127 also sees disjunction at v. 27: "Obwohl die Frage in 11,28 diesen Anschluss zu empfehlen scheint, ist 11,27ff dem Evangelisten als isolierte Einheit zugekommen" ("Although the question in 11:28 seems to suggest this connection, 11:27ff has come to the evangelist as an isolated entity").

spatial and geographic deixis. Matthew closes the triumphal entry subunit (21:1–11) in v.

11 with a quotation from the crowd: "This is the prophet, Jesus, the one from Nazareth of

Galilee."[11] Luke, on the other hand, closes the scene (19:29–44) with Jesus' prophetic

lament-announcement over Jerusalem and the temple (19:41–44).[12] Yet both Matthew and

Luke transition to their temple cleansing subunits in much the same way, as they are both

characterized by unmarked continuity with the preceding content: Matthew 21:12 uses an

initial καί + a least marked Aorist form, εἰσῆλθεν, while Luke 19:45 also uses an initial

καί + a least marked Aorist participle, εἰσελθών. A major difference, however, is the

manner in which they close the temple cleansing subunit. Matthew, similar to Mark, has

Jesus moving away from Jerusalem in 21:17, that is, to Bethany where he spends the

night. This movement away from Jerusalem—in conjunction with the temporal setting

indicated by the use of the verb ηὐλίσθη ("to spend the night"[13])—prepares the reader to

transition seamlessly to the fig tree episode (Matt 21:18–22), which takes place when

Jesus is heading back toward Jerusalem early the next morning (πρωῒ δε ἐπαναγαγὼν

εἰς τὴν πόλιν, "Now, early in the morning, when he was returning to the city...").

Matthew closes the subunit with Jesus teaching the disciples a lesson from the withered

fig tree, and transitions to new unit in 21:23 through the use of a genitive absolute and the

introduction of new participants: καὶ ἐλθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ

---

[11] Nolland, *Matthew*, 839–40 and Luz, *Matthew*, 3:4 group Matt 21:10–11 together as forming their own separate subunit. This grouping seems unlikely since vv. 10–11 (1) may indicate action taking place while Jesus is still in the process of arriving in Jerusalem, and (2) are the direct response of the people to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Against this structuring and in support of mine, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:111; Hagner, *Matthew*, 591–93.

[12] Nolland, *Luke*, 3:921 identifies the structure similarly. Mason, *Luke*, 214–15 and Marshall, *Luke*, 709 seek 19:28(or 29)–40 as forming one unit and vv. 41–44 as forming another smaller unit that helps Luke transition into the following section on Jesus' teaching ministry in the temple.

[13] Louw-Nida, *Lexicon*, 67.194.

διδάσκοντι οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ λέγοντες ("And when he

came to the temple, the chief-priests and elders of the people approached him while he

was teaching, saying...").

In contrast, Luke omits the fig tree story completely and keeps Jesus in Jerusalem

after his cleansing of the temple, noting that Jesus was teaching in it daily (19:47).[14] The

unit closes with the Jewish leaders being frustrated at their inability to destroy Jesus in

the light of his favor among the people (19:48). Luke's comment on Jesus' teaching in the

temple then sets the stage for the next major unit, which is signaled by a familiar Lukan

phrase, καὶ ἐγένετο ("And it happened that..."), and concerns "one of the days he was

teaching the people in the temple" (20:1). Thus, Matt 21:1–22 and Luke 19:28–48 also

form cohesive discourses, being comprised of three smaller subunits for Matthew and

two subunits for Luke.

3. The Content of the Episodes

Having discussed their structure as a larger unit, I now turn to the content of the

episodes themselves. Here the main question to answer is, what is happening in the

respective discourses in terms of the general processes (actions) and interpersonal

relations that are contained within them? The goal is to identify a relevant narrative

framework that will be taken into consideration as aspectual choices are analyzed in all

three of the Gospel accounts.

---

[14] Luke's omission of the fig tree episode might be due to his inclusion of Jesus' prophetic words of judgment against Jerusalem and the temple in 19:39–44, which on a theological level may accomplish the same purposes as the fig tree incident (see Wright, *Jesus*, 418–28).

Jesus has just spent time in the vicinity of Jericho, having healed a blind man

named Bartimaeus (Matt 20:29–34//Mark 10:46–52//Luke 18:35–43).[15] Luke's account

of his time in Jericho includes two additional pericopae: (1) Jesus' encounter with

Jericho's chief tax collector, Zaccheus (19:1–10), and (2) the parable of the minae (Luke

19:11–27), a version of which appears later in Matthew and perhaps Mark as well (Matt

25:14–30; Mark 13:34–37). As Jesus comes closer to Jerusalem, Matthew and Mark

explicitly note the presence of disciples through the use of the third person plural

ἤγγισαν/ἐγγίζουσιν (Matt 21:1//Mark 11:1),[16] while Luke's concentration is

specifically on Jesus (cf. ἤγγισεν), although the presence of the disciples is probably

implied. This contrast in grammatical number is significant since it establishes Matthew

and Mark's slightly sharper focus than Luke on Jesus' interaction with the disciples

throughout the discourse.[17] This difference of focus is shown by (1) Matthew, but

especially Mark's, inclusion of the fig tree episode(s), which highlight Jesus teaching the

disciples about the fate of Israel and what it means to have faith in God (Matt 21:18–22;

Mark 11:12–14, 20–25[18]). (2) Matthew's notation that the two disciples who retrieved the

donkey and the colt were actually functioning to fulfill prophecy (Matt 21:4–5), and (3)

[15] While it does not have a direct influence on this work, there has been significant debate over the supposed contradiction between Luke 18:35 and Mark 10:46 (//Matt 20:29–34). It is thought that the contradiction lies in Luke's use of the phrase ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν αὐτὸν εἰς Ἰερειχὼ to mean "while he [Jesus] was approaching Jericho," indicating that the healing of Bartimaeus took place on Jesus' way into the city, whereas Mark (and Matthew) have the healing taking place on Jesus' way out of the city. For a thorough evaluation of the issue and a (convincing) proposal, see Porter, "'In the Vicinity of Jericho'," 125–38, who suggests that the word ἐγγίζειν is used as a spatial-locational marker, not a directional marker.

[16] The precise subject of ἤγγισαν (Matthew) and ἐγγίζουσιν (Mark) is uncertain. Regarding Mark, France suggests that the subject be understood as including the ὄχλος ἱκανός ("large crowd") mentioned in 10:46 (Mark, 430). The same suggestion could be made for Matthew (cf. 20:29).

[17] See Marshall, Luke, 711, although he treats this point in no detail. Additionally, the comment above is not to suggest that Luke has no interest in noting Jesus' interaction with the disciples or that Matthew and Mark are not interested in Jesus as an individual. The difference concerns the writers' focus.

[18] For a defense in favor of understanding the phrase ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ as Jesus' command to "have faith in God," see Cirafesi, "ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek," 22–24.

Luke's unique record of Jesus' soliloquy as he weeps over the impending doom of

Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44).

In any case, once in Bethphage and Bethany,[19] Jesus sends two of his disciples to

obtain a colt for him (Matthew adds "a donkey" [ὄνον]) on which he rides into the heart

of Jerusalem (Matt 21:2–10//Mark 11:2–10//Luke 19:30–38). These verses help paint the

kingly portrait of Jesus that Gospel scholars often draw out regarding the triumphal

entry.[20] However, in Matthew and Luke, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem sparks a significant

response from the members of the city (Matt 21:10) and the Pharisees (Luke 19:39).

Matthew has the citizens of Jerusalem asking a question that has already been answered

in the Gospel: "Who is this man?" (Matt 21:10; cf. 16:15–16), while Luke has Jesus

responding to the Pharisees in a way that resembles John the Baptizer's earlier words: "I

say to you, if these people should be silent, the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40).[21] Mark

has Jesus simply looking around in the temple and then leaving for Bethany that evening.

The triumphal entry segues into Jesus' intense conflict with those buying and

selling in the temple, whom Jesus "casts out" (ἐκβάλλειν) (Matt 21: 12//Mark 11:15//

Luke 19:45) and whose tables he "overturns" (κατέστρεψεν) (Matt 21:12//Mak 11:15). It

is debated whether Jesus' actions are to be understood symbolically as a prophetic

judgment against the temple and its coming destruction,[22] or whether they are to be seen

---

[19] France notes that here in Mark these cities are treated as a single unit.

[20] See, for example, Turner, *Matthew*, 493 n. 1; France, Mark, 431.

[21] Luke 3:8 records John the Baptizer as saying "for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham."

[22] Two main proponents of this view are Wright, *Jesus*, 421 and Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 61–76. See also, for example, Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*; Nolland, *Matthew*, 844; and Evans, *St Luke*, 686–87.

as purificatory or restorative regarding the temple's corrupt state at the time.[23] Whatever

the nature of the conflict was, it does not seem to have kept Jesus away from the temple

for long, since he returns to it the next day (Matt 21:23//Mark 11:27//Luke 19:47). At the

very least, on the level of narrative development, Jesus' actions set the stage for later

conflict with the Jewish chief priests and scribes. In all three of the Synoptics it is they

who are the first to oppose Jesus (Matt 21:14–15//Mark 11:18//Luke 19:47) and

eventually challenge his authority at length.

The fig tree episodes in Matthew and Mark closely cohere with the temple

cleansing scene and serve as a platform for further interaction between Jesus and his

disciples (Matt 21:18–22//Mark 11:12–14, 20–25). Mark's first fig tree scene does not

include any dialogue between the two parties, but the presence of the disciples is noted in

the statement "his disciples heard" in 11:14, and in the light of Peter's comment in

11:21.[24] But in Mark's second scene (and the latter part of Matthew's), Jesus uses the fig

tree to teach the disciples about the necessity of faith and prayer.

4. Aspectual Analyses

There are three significant occurrences of divergent tense-form usage in the

triumphal entry and temple cleansing narratives. While it is difficult to separate the

---

[23] Proponents of this view are, for example, Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus*, 91–111; Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings*, 57–63; Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthaus*, 613, where he says Jesus' proclamation represents a protest against the Jerusalem priesthood; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2:128–29, where he proposes the eschatological hope of a new temple in apocalyptic literature as a background for Jesus' actions; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:138–39. Evans, *Mark*, 2:178–79, however, stresses the fact that Jesus call's the temple a "house of prayer *for all nations*." In this way, Jesus' actions are not merely prophetic symbolism, but rather reflect "a Solomonic understanding of the purpose of the temple" (cf. 1 Kgs 8:41–43 where Solomon declares that the foreigner "will come and pray to this house"). For a helpful survey of the various interpretations, see Luz, *Matthew*, 3:10–12.

[24] Mark 11:21 reads: "And Peter, being reminded, said to him, 'Rabbi, behold, the fig tree that you cursed is withered."

results of the analyses from one another, for organizational purposes, the following

subsections will isolate each occurrence and discuss its exegetical influence on the text.

4.1. Tense-form Analysis 1

The first analysis concerns Mark's use of the narrative Present ἀποστέλλει in

11:1 in contrast to Matthew and Luke's use of the Aorist form ἀπέστειλεν (Matt 21:1//

Luke 19:29).

Matt 21:1	Mark 11:1	Luke 19:29
Ἰησοῦς ἀπέστειλεν δύο μαθητάς	ἀποστέλλει δύο τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ	ἀπέστειλεν δύο τῶν μαθητῶν
"Jesus sent two disciples"	"he sent two of his disciples"	"he sent two of the disciples"

Table 1

The narrative Present, being quite common in both Matthew and Mark, has

received a considerable amount of attention over the years from Greek grammarians, and

deserves some attention here as well.[25] The traditional view of its use in narrative

literature has been that the form functions to create vividness by means of recounting a

past event as if it is taking place in present time before the eyes of the author.[26] Black and

others have effectively argued against this, saying that the notion of vividness due to

temporal transfer is difficult to maintain. This is because the narrative Present at times

---

[25] For a thorough review and discussion of the historic (i.e. "narrative") Present, particularly in Matthew, see Black, "The Historic Present," 120–39. It is interesting to note that Evans (*Mark*, 2:141), even though he translates the narrative Presents in the passage as present time, mentions nothing about Mark's use of the narrative Present in his comment on Mark 11:1.

[26] Examples of this view are Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 866–69; Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 526–27; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 227. Fanning builds on Buth's work on the narrative Present in Mark and identifies its various discourse functions, but does so not on the basis of its aspectual value. Additionally, Fanning rejects assigning it any prominence value.

appears in a series of tense-form changes that would involve an author "thrusting one action within the pericope into the present time (rhetorically) and then bringing his audience back into a subsequent action which is narrated as occurring in past time."[27] In other words, there are too many verb-form shifts in too little narrative space to see temporal transfer as a legitimate explanation.

As a response to the traditional view, some have identified the narrative Present as a "zero tense/aspect." Essentially, this position equates the function of the Present with the aspectual meaning of the Aorist, since the narrative Present occurs in "aoristic" contexts.[28] In this view, the Present is simply a substitute for the Aorist. This understanding of the narrative Present, however, must be rejected; it offers no positive explanation as to why the Present form is used in such contexts. Further, this approach will not do in the light of the formally-based approach to the Greek verbal system taken in this work: the core aspectual meaning of a verb is expressed in its morphological features, and thus a verb form will not take the meaning of another verb that represents another available choice within the aspect system network.

Runge notes that both the vividness and zero aspect approaches share the presupposition that the narrative Present represents a marked divergence from the expected norms for the Present tense-form.[29] However, it seems better to say that, more fundamentally, the shared presupposition between the approaches is that Greek verbs

---

[27] Black, "The Historic Present," 124.

[28] See Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 865–69. Although Wallace fits within the traditional temporal view, his statements appear similar to the "zero aspect" approach: "The *aspectual* value of the historical present is normally, if not always, reduced to zero. The verbs used, such as λέγει and ἔρχεται, normally introduce an action in the midst of aorists without the slightest hint that an internal or progressive aspect is intended" (*Greek Grammar*, 527).

[29] Runge, "The Historical Present," 196.

grammaticalize time; that is, the foundational reason why grammarians have felt the need to posit these "solutions" is because of the assumption that the Present tense-form means present time. However, if temporal notions are not inherent in the form, then there is no reason to suggest that it signals "vividness" through temporal transfer or merely acts as a substitute for the Aorist in narrative contexts.

In his more recent work on Greek narrative, Campbell argues that due to the imperfective and spatially proximate nature of direct discourse, narrative Present verbs that introduce speech are the result of an "aspectual spill."[30] That is to say, the aspectual character of direct discourse influences ("spills") the choice of tense-from used to introduce the speech material. Concerning verbs of motion and propulsion (e.g., ἔρχεται), narrative Presents may be used to heighten the sense of transition that is communicated by the verb. With regard to non-speech verbs, Campbell's theory seems essentially congruent with Porter's theory.[31] However, the concept of "aspectual spill" is unconvincing, the primary reason being that it does not explain why the imperfective, spatially proximate nature of direct discourse does not *always* spill over into verbs of speaking that introduce it. Indeed, even in Matthew and Mark, the Aorist is frequently used to introduce direct speech.

Runge's study is, to my knowledge, the most recent treatment of the issue.[32] Based upon his "discourse processing hierarchy," he argues that the narrative Present represents marked "non-typical" usage of the Present tense-form, and thus functions as a

---

[30] Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 75.

[31] See Porter, *Idioms*, 31.

[32] Runge, "The Historical Present," 191–223. While the title of Runge's essay suggests that he is working on the verbal aspect of the narrative present, in reality his work is more in the field of discourse studies (hence the title of the book in which his essay is included).

cataphoric highlighting device, which draws attention to a following speech or action.[33]

For Runge, the non-typical character of the form is identifiable by means of a semantic

"mismatch" that occurs between what a reader normally expects to see in a narrative and

what is actually seen in the core semantic component of the Present tense-form.[34] It is the

present time/proximity and the imperfective aspect of the Present found in the past time/

remote and perfective aspect of narrative that causes this unexpected mismatch. Runge's

emphasis on the non-typical usage of the narrative Present leads him to reject both the

traditional temporal view and the tense-less aspectual view held by Porter and others; for

him, the so-called "semantic mismatch" between the form and its narrative context is on

the level of temporality *and* aspect.

Runge's comments on the expectancy of the narrative Present are helpful. In some

ways, this notion is similar to Porter's criterion of distribution concerning a form's

markedness value.[35] That the form represents a marked departure from normal patterns of

tense-form usage does not seem to be at odds with Porter's model. The discrepancy

between Runge and Porter concerns the *basis* for the narrative Present's markedness.

Whereas Runge bases its markedness on the semantic mismatch between it and its

narrative context, Porter bases it on the markedness inherent in the Present tense-form

itself.

Overall Runge's study lacks clarity and rigor, and is ultimately unconvincing.

Three points support this conclusion. First, the "semantic mismatch" that Runge stresses

is dependent on a (presupposed) understanding of the core semantic component of the

---

[33] Runge, "The Historical Present," 199.
[34] Runge, "The Historical Present," 213–14.
[35] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 181.

Present tense-form, something for which he does not argue. Runge assumes that Greek is

a mixed tense/aspect system, and only points to general patterns of temporal distribution

to support his case.[36] In other words, he does not establish the core semantic component

of the Present in any rigorous way, and fails to explain how tense can be present in one

use of the form but not another, and still be considered an essential semantic feature.

Second, while the notion of expectancy can be useful (as noted above), Runge does not

provide any observable criteria for determining whether or not the narrative Present is

indeed "unexpected." It is only the supposed temporal and aspectual mismatch that

provides a foundation for this decision. This stands in stark contrast to the quantifiable

criteria for markedness that Porter proposes. Third, Runge's entire discourse processing

hierarchy is likewise overly subjective. About his own model he says:

> [T]he hierarchy is simply a prioritized list of assumptions which readers and
> speakers of a variety of languages appear to utilize in processing discourse. These
> assumptions have little to do with the specific idiosyncrasies of a given language,
> and instead seem based upon how human beings cognitively process the world
> around them.[37]

While this point is not necessarily meant to devalue a cognitive method, it does

suggest that an approach firmly rooted in the observable formal features of a text is more

helpful, especially for studying an ancient language. Thus, the approach taken in this

work to the narrative Present is one that fits within the aspectual model presented in ch. 2

and the markedness/prominence model presented in ch. 3. At the word level, the form

represents a more heavily marked item in its clause. For the form to be prominent at the

discourse level, other formal features should be present, such as the redundant use of a

---

[36] Runge, "The Historical Present," 215.
[37] Runge, "The Historical Present," 203.

pronoun, a marked conjunction or conjunction complex, or additional Adjunct phrases that modify the verb. The imperfective aspect of the narrative Present functions as a foregrounding device, and thus can highlight a transition in the narrative, introduce new and important characters, mark the beginning of the new pericope, or perform some other discourse function.

In light of this approach to the narrative Present, I turn to the use of ἀποστέλλει in Mark 11:1 as compared to ἀπέστειλεν in Matt 21:1//Luke 19:29. To my knowledge, none of the major commentators mention this divergence in tense-form choice.[38] However, I argue that there is good reason to believe that Mark has intentionally chosen to foreground the more marked narrative Present at the onset of the episode, thus here creating a heightened level of discourse prominence, while Matthew and Luke have chosen not to do so.[39] The evidence for this assertion is two-fold. First, Mark 11:1–3 is structured around three narrative Present tense-forms: ἐγγίζουσιν and ἀποστέλλει in v. 1, and λέγει in v. 2. The use of the more marked Present forms not only causes the forms to stand out in their respective clauses at the word-level, but also work together as a tense-form complex to (1) create cohesion on the level of aspectual semantics, and (2) generate a heightened level of discourse prominence for vv. 1–3. That is, through the

---

[38] For example, see Marshall, *Luke*, 712; Bock, *Luke*, 1552; France, *Mark*, 430; Stein, *Mark*, 503; Turner, *Matthew*, 494; Evans, *Mark*, 2:141, who agrees with Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 350 that ἀποστέλλει is a "futuristic present" (see p. 137).

[39] See ch. 5 of this work for Fanning's full outline of the discourse functions of the historic Present in Mark. However, it is worth mentioning here that he sees the form as having four primary functions: (1) to begin a paragraph, (2) to introduce new participants in an existing paragraph, (3) to show participants moving to new locations within a paragraph, and (4) to begin a specific unit after a sentence introducing the general section in which it falls (Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 227).

stacking of Present forms,[40] the foregrounded position is established for the movement of

Jesus and the disciples toward Jerusalem (ἐγγίζουσιν).[41] Jesus' sending of the two

disciples to retrieve the colt (ἀποστέλλει), and the commands that Jesus gives them

before they go (λέγει).

The second piece of evidence that Mark has purposely chosen to foreground

Jesus' act of "sending" in v. 1 through the more marked Present is the presence of other

marked aspectual choices in the immediate co-text. These choices suggest that Mark

wishes to spotlight Jesus' interaction with the two disciples and their subsequent

obedience to him in retrieving the colt. In 11:2, again in distinction from the Aorist forms

used in Matthew and Luke, Mark uses the Present imperative φέρετε to express Jesus'

command to retrieve the unridden colt. The use of imperfective aspect draws an

intentional contrast between it and the preceding Aorist imperative λύσατε. The act of

"loosening" is put in the background, while the act of "bringing" is brought to the fore.[42]

This observation is put on solid ground in view of the use of the most marked Perfect

participle δεδεμένον in v. 2, which modifies πῶλον adjectivally and makes the "colt" the

---

[40] The notion of tense-form "stacking" was brought to my attention through personal communication with Dr. Stanley Porter. This concept coincides well with the principle of markedness assimilation, which was introduced in ch. 3 of this work and states that marked items often occur in prominent contexts.

[41] France, *Mark*, 430, notes that the subject of ἐγγίζουσιν in Mark 11:1 is ambiguous, and suggests that the "they" are "not only Jesus and his disciples, but also the accompanying ὄχλος ἱκανός of 10:46." While this may be true, it seems more likely that the implied third person plural refers to Jesus' disciples in light of the fact that immediately after the temporal reference indicated by ὅτε ἐγγίζουσιν, Jesus sends δύο τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ.

[42] Some may wish to attribute the Aorist imperative/Present imperative contrast in Mark 11:2 to differences in *Aktionsart*: the Aorist denotes the punctiliar action of "loosening," while the Present denotes the durative action of "bringing" the colt to Jesus. This scheme is untenable in view of Matthew and Luke both using Aorists to denote the "leading" of the colt (ἀγάγετε; cf. Elliott, *Language and Style*, 14 where he notes the change in Matt and Luke from φέρειν). This point also argues against the notion that the Aorist imperative represents a command to start an action, while the Present imperative represents a command to continue an action (see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 335–63).

focal part of this section.[43] In other words, the use of ἀποστέλλει in 11:1 highlights the

shift in focus as the stage is set for Jesus' interaction with the two disciples, who, while

remaining unnamed, play a pivotal role in the narrative. Jesus commands them to go into

a certain village where they will find and retrieve that which becomes the centerpiece of

the entire triumphal entry episode and which is identified by the use of the Perfect form

δεδεμένον—a tied-up colt. However, at this point in the narrative, it is still left to be seen

whether the disciples obey and whether Jesus gets the colt he has requested.

Nevertheless, in vv. 4–7, Mark confirms the obedience of the disciples through the

additional use of the lexemes λύω (v. 4) and φέρω (v. 7), although this time both words

appear as third person plural narrative Presents.[44] These forms, coupled with the use of

two marked Perfect participles—δεδεμένον, once again, in v. 4 and ἑστηκότων in v. 5—

provide lexical and semantic (i.e., aspectual) cohesion between vv. 1–3 and vv. 4–7, and

again point to the likelihood that Mark wishes to foreground Jesus' act of "sending" the

disciples, his commands to them, and their obedient response.[45]

Conversely, Matthew and Luke's use of the Aorist form ἀπέστειλεν suggests that

they do not wish to semantically mark the sending of the two disciples nor create a

heightened level of discourse prominence at this point in their narratives. This is

---

[43] See also the similar analyses of Mark 11:1–11 given in Porter, *Idioms*, 302–3 and Porter, "Prominence," 59–61. Fanning has objected to these analyses in a recent article ("Greek Presents, Imperfects, and Aorists" 177–78), and believes that it is implausible that Mark would want to highlight points such as the tied-up colt and the people standing nearby. However, his argument is very weak, since, rather than giving a rigorous linguistic argument and providing evidence for his claims, he merely states "[s]urely these things are at the other end of the scale of prominence in this story" (p. 177).

[44] See Elliott, *Language and Style*, 13–15 for a description of the various uses of the verb φέρειν in Mark.

[45] It is interesting to note that after the use of the narrative Present φέρουσιν in v. 7 there are no other tense-forms used in the duration of the triumphal entry scene that would suggest a desire to create discourse prominence. The only possibility is the use of the more marked yet remote Imperfect form used in 11:9 in order to foreground the response of "crying out" given by the crowd that is following Jesus while riding on the colt.

supported in that neither Gospel employs any other formal features that would indicate a

desire to shine special light on the disciples or their act of retrieving the colt. Rather,

Matthew's focus appears to be on the fulfillment of Scripture itself.[46] This is supported by

the fact that the "approaching" (ἤγγισαν) and "sending" of the disciples (ἀπέστειλεν)[47]

in 21:1 provide the background for the frontgrounded statement τοῦτο δὲ γέγονεν ἵνα

πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος (v. 4). The use of the most heavily

marked Perfect form γέγονεν in conjunction with τοῦτο suggests that Matthew intends

to highlight that Jesus' interaction with the two disciples happened expressly for the

purpose of fulling Scripture.[48]

Like Mark, Matthew and Luke also use a Perfect participle to describe the

donkey/colt (Matt 21:2 ὄνον δεδεμένην; Luke 19:30 πῶλον δεδεμένον).[49] At the word

level, the Perfect participles are the most heavily marked items in their clauses. However,

in Jesus' preceding command to the disciples, a shift occurs from the use of simple

imperatives—πορεύεσθε (Matt) and ὑπάγετε (Luke)—to the use of the more marked

Future form εὑρήσετε (Matt and Luke). According to Porter, compared to the imperative,

the command use of the Future represents "a stronger command, on the basis of its formal

---

[46] See Hanger, *Matthew*, 2:592.

[47] Note that Jesus' speech to the two disciples in both Matt 21:2–3 and Luke 19:30–31 are introduced by the Present participle λέγων in contrast to Mark's use of the Present indicative λέγει. This raises the question of how the use of an aspectually marked participle differs from the use of an aspectually marked finite verb. I suggest that Porter's system network of the Greek verbal system is the best means for answering this question. That is to say, finite verbs are more marked than non-finite verbs because the language user is faced with more choices to make from the system network of +finite than -finite (e.g., regarding the PERSON system). In other words, -finite forms are less delicate than +finite forms, and the more choices there are to make, the more semantically complex (i.e., marked) the lexicogrammatical instantiation becomes (see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 94–96, 109).

[48] See Hanger, *Matthew*, 2:593–94; Luz, *Matthew*, 3:7–8; Nolland, *Matthew*, 834–35. On Matthew's fulfillment citations in general, see Hagner, *Matthew*, 1:liii–lvii; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:210–12.

[49] On the discrepancy between Matthew and Mark/Luke concerning the presence of both an ὄνον and a πῶλον, see Turner, *Matthew*, 496.

and semantic distinctions [...]"[50] Therefore, this marked shift from imperative to Future

functions in tandem with the marked Perfect participles to highlight the role of the

donkey/colt. Matthew sharpens this focus with the use of γέγονεν in 21:4. The evidence

for this assertion is two-fold. First, the marked Perfect γέγονεν is used in combination

with the connective δέ, which signals narrative development and discontinuity with the

preceding content.[51] Second, γέγονεν is followed by a formulaic quotation from the Old

Testament in v. 5, with the content of v. 6 being introduced, again, by the marker of

narrative development δέ.[52] This, coupled with the emphasis in v. 2 on the "bound

donkey," points to the likelihood that vv. 4–5 are meant to be read as a "zone of

turbulence," that is, as the most prominent section within Matthew's triumphal entry

narrative.[53]

In contrast to both Matthew and Mark, the parallel material of Luke's entry

episode (19:28–35) appears rather uncontoured—except for v. 30 (see above)—since the

episode is predominately carried along by Aorists.[54] However, this pattern is interrupted

in v. 36 through the use of a genitive absolute clause (πορευομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ) plus an

Imperfect main verb (ὑπεστρώννυον).[55] The use of the more marked Imperfect here

contributes to an elevated level of discourse prominence by highlighting the act of

"spreading out garments." Those following Jesus are brought into sharper focus as Jesus

---

[50] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 420.

[51] Black, *Sentence Conjunctions*, 144.

[52] On the formulaic quotations in the Gospel of Matthew, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:573–77.

[53] "Zone of turbulence" is taken from Longacre, *Grammar of Discourse*, 38, and is roughly synonymous with "discourse prominence."

[54] Except for the Imperfect ἐπορεύετο in v. 28, see: ἤγγισεν (19:29), ἀπέστειλεν (19:29), εὗρον (19:32), εἶπαν (19:33), ἤγαγον (19:35).

[55] Compare Luke's use of this Imperfect with Mark and Matthew's use of the cognate Aorist form ἔστρωσαν (Mark 11:8//Matt 21:8).

begins his journey toward Jerusalem on a previously-bound colt with garments being laid out on the road in his honor.[56] On a textual level, the presence of two genitive absolutes at the start of v. 36 and v. 37 establishes cohesive ties between the verses. Thus, v. 36 emphatically introduces the multitude and its actions toward Jesus while he is traveling; v. 37 maintains the spotlight on the multitude as it "rejoices" (χαίροντες) and "praises" (αἰνεῖν) God when Jesus arrives at the descent of the mountain.

Assigning importance to the multitude in Luke is further substantiated in that Luke includes more content surrounding the multitude's interaction with Jesus. For example, the "rejoicing" of the crowd leads into a short conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees (vv. 39–40), and this conflict then leads into Jesus' soliloquy of judgment directed toward Jerusalem (vv. 41–44). Both of these short pericopes are not included in Matthew or Mark. Thus, while Luke does not wish to highlight the "sending" of the disciples in 19:29, he does seem to highlight the actions of the crowd once Jesus begins moving toward the city. This could be due to the possibility that, in the end, the crowd contains two examples of how one might respond to the ministry of Jesus, i.e., those who rejoiced in it vs. the Pharisees who opposed it. It could also be due to Luke's desire to set the crowd's positive actions (ὑπεστρώννυον, χαίροντες, αἰνεῖν) against the backdrop of Jesus' pronouncement of judgment; that is, the very people who welcome Jesus into Jerusalem are those for whom Jesus weeps.

---

[56] Marshall takes the ambiguous subject of ὑπεστρώννυον in Luke to be the disciples, i.e., the Twelve, even though Matthew and Mark make explicit that this action is carried out by either ὁ πλεῖστος ὄχλος (Matt 21:8) or the πολλοὶ (Mark 11:8) (Marshall, *Luke*, 714). I take the implied subject to be τὸ πλῆθος, which, while absent in v. 36, is introduced as the main Actor in v. 37.

To conclude Analysis 1, the argument that Mark draws attention to Jesus' interaction with the two disciples and their subsequent actions by using the narrative Present ἀποστέλλει (as well as through other aspectual choices) seems to fit well with other themes found in Mark's PN. For example, throughout the Markan PN Jesus' authority is repeatedly rejected (e.g., 11:27–33; 12:13–40). At least in 12:10–12, Jesus relates this rejection of his authority to Scripture by quoting Ps 118:22–23 as a proclamation against the Jewish leadership. Similarly, Peter's denials in ch. 14 reflect disobedience to Jesus, but instead of being related to Scripture, his denials stand in direct fulfillment of Jesus' own prophetic words (cf. 14:30). Thus, in contrast to this theme— even if it is a minor one—the two unnamed disciples in 11:1 represent followers of Jesus who willingly obey his commands and publicly identify with him (cf. 11:6). While the disciples as a whole may be slow to understand Jesus' actions and teachings throughout the Gospel,[57] their actions here in retrieving the colt aid in a positive way the fulfilling of Scripture, as Jesus rides on the colt into Jerusalem, which likely echoes the prophecy of Zech 9:9.[58] This latter point further suggests why in Mark the colt itself plays a central role in the episode and is modified by the Perfect participle: it is the focal point of fulfilled Scripture.

4.2. Tense-form Analysis 2

Perhaps the most interesting case of divergent tense-form usage in the Synoptic PNs occurs in the use of the verb ποιέω in Matt 21:13//Mark 11:17//Luke 19:46, which

---

[57] See Evans, "Mark," 272.

[58] See Stein, *Mark*, 503–4; France, *Mark*, 431, who notes that Mark's use of πῶλος plus the qualifying phrase ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεὶς οὔπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν is "a clearer echo of LXX Zc. 9:9—πῶλον νέον—than if he had specified that it was a donkey."

Jesus uses in his statement against those who have made the temple "a den of robbers."[59]

While few commentaries mention the difference,[60] even fewer attempt to explain why all

three Gospels employ different indicative forms to recount Jesus' statement against those

buying and selling in the temple:[61]

Matt 21:13	Mark 11:17	Luke 19:46
ὑμεῖς δὲ αὐτὸν ποιεῖτε σπήλαιον λῃστῶν	ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτὸν σπήλαιον λῃστῶν	ὑμεῖς δὲ αὐτὸν ἐποιήσατε σπήλαιον λῃστῶν
"But you yourselves make it a den of robbers"	"But you yourselves make it a den of robbers"	"But you yourselves make it a den of robbers"

Table 2

Temporal and *Aktionsart* approaches to the Greek verbal system will have

difficulty explaining this difference without putting the texts at odds with each other.

Nolland and Bock, however, reflect these traditional approaches in their commentaries.

Writing on Matthew, Nolland says, "Mark's perfect tense πεποιήκατε ('you have made')

becomes a present tense ποιεῖτε ('you are making')—pointing more sharply to present

activity."[62] Bock says more on the issue:

> Matthew has present ποιεῖτε (*poieite*, you are making); Mark has perfect
> πεποιήκατε (*pepoiēkate*, have made), which stresses the temple's appalling

---

[59] On various recent approaches to the meaning of the phrase σπήλαιον λῃστῶν, see Gray, *The Temple in Gospel of Mark*, 36–38.

[60] For example, Nolland, *Matthew*, 844; Bock, *Luke*, 2:1579; Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, 296. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:139 note the tense-form difference between Matthew and Mark, but incorrectly identify the form in Mark as an Aorist. Gould, *St. Mark*, 213 simply notes it as a textual matter that Mark has πεποιήκατε rather than ἐποιήσατε.

[61] Matthew has two variant readings for ποιεῖτε: ἐποιήσατε in C D W *f*[13] 33 𝔐 ; and πεποιήκατε in *f*[1] Or[pt]. However, the reading ποιεῖτε has stronger external support: ℵ B L Θ 0281. 892 *pc* bo; Or[pt] Cyr. Mark, too, has a variant reading for πεποιήκατε αὐτόν: εποιησατε αυτον in ℵ C D W *f*[13] 33 𝔐. A similar but transposed reading appears in A Θ *f*[1] 33. 565. 579. 700. 1424 *al.* πεποιήκατε αὐτόν is found in B L Δ Ψ 892. (2427) *pc*; Or. Luke has no variant readings for ἐποιήσατε. The texts of Matthew and Mark as they stand in the NA[27] are the best readings here for at least two reasons: (1) in both cases the readings possess strong external manuscript support, and (2) the variant readings can be best explained as later attempts at harmonization, thus making the texts as they stand the more difficult readings.

[62] Nolland, *Matthew*, 844.

state; Luke has aorist ἐποιήσατε (*epoiēsate*, you made). None of these slight differences are [sic] significant to the basic charge, but are stylistic variations that summarize the event well.[63]

The translations Bock offers in parentheses demonstrates his belief that temporality distinguishes the meanings of the forms, and his comment that the Perfect πεποιήκατε "stresses the temple's appalling state" portrays his indebtedness to *Aktionsart*.[64] As will be argued below, the form does indeed possess a "stressing" function, i.e., it contributes to creating discourse prominence at this point in Mark's temple cleansing narrative. However, it is likely that Bock does not mean "stress" in the linguistic sense with reference to markedness or prominence as the terms are used in this work. Rather, his assertion is almost certainly based on an understanding of the so-called "resultative perfect," which Wallace says "may be used to *emphasize* the results or present state produced by a past action."[65] This has led Bock to an object-centered approach to the meaning of the form; that is, he has transferred the emphasis of the verb to the verb's grammatical object (αὐτόν). Porter and McKay have argued convincingly against this approach to the Perfect tense-form;[66] however, it suffices to say here that a proper understanding of the semantics of the Perfect must be subject not object-oriented. This concept, then, undercuts Bock's comment concerning πεποιήκατε in Mark 11:17

---

[63] Bock, *Luke*, 2:1579. Pointing to Swete's work on Mark, Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, 296 says, "le parfait πεποιήκατε est plus exact que le prés. ποιεῖτε (Mt.) ou l'aor. ἐποιήσατε (Lc.). Voilà donc ce que vous avez fait de la maison de Dieu! ("the perfect πεποιήκατε is more accurate than the present ποιεῖτε (Mt.) or the aorist (Lc.). So, here it is 'What have you done with the house of God!'"). However, it is uncertain what Lagrange (or Swete) means by saying the Perfect is "more accurate."

[64] Additionally, it is quite a stretch to personify the temple's decay as an "appalling state." I am indebted to Dr. Stanley Porter for this comment.

[65] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 574 (italics his).

[66] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 273–81; McKay, "On the Perfect," 296–97. See also Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:163–66, who emphasizes the subject-oriented approach to the Perfect, but accuses Porter's concept of "state of affairs" as tending toward an object-oriented understanding. Porter has responded to Campbell in "Greek Lingusitics," 47–48.

and exploits its very weak methodological foundation—πεποιήκατε does not stress the state of the temple, but rather the "complex state of affairs" in which the buyers and sellers are portrayed.

Far from being insignificant, as Bock asserts, these distinct aspectual choices represent three different perspectives on the action (from the authors' points of view) inherent in the verb ποιέω. Matthew, using the Present, expresses the action from an internal point of view; Mark, using the Perfect, expresses it from the perspective of a state of affairs; and Luke, using the Aorist, expresses the action from an external view point. This aspectual approach is more plausible than assigning different temporal/ *Aktionsart* qualities to the three uses of the verb and avoids causing unnecessary tension between the Gospel accounts.

The discourse function of each form seems to further suggest that the tense-form differences are indeed significant and are not merely stylistic variations. But before considering these functions, two preliminary remarks are in order. First, ποιεῖτε // πεποιήκατε // ἐποιήσατε occur in direct speech. This means their functions (and their potential contribution to discourse prominence) need to be analyzed in relation to other aspectual choices within the reported speech itself. That is, since direct discourse is considered offline material, aspectual choice within this material should not be considered initially in relation to mainline narrative material (i.e. narrative proper). For example, in offline material, while the Aorist continues to give background information, it no longer carries the backbone (mainline) of the narrative. It retains its markedness value (least marked) but loses its narrative function of propelling the basic story line

forward. In direct discourse, this function is usually carried out by the Present.[67] This

point, then, influences the way one understands how the tense-forms shape and contour a

narrative as a whole (mainline and offline together).

Second, despite the comment just made, this does not mean that aspectual choices

in narrative proper have no relation to choices made in direct discourse.[68] Even though

there is a mainline/offline distinction, authors still possess the ability to structure their

speech material according to various levels of discourse salience. Thus, I suggest that

tense-forms used in narrative proper can at times work together with tense-forms used in

direct speech in order to create an overall discourse framework in which verbal aspect

may function to background or foreground/frontground certain actions, whether in

mainline or offline material. This point will come into clearer focus in the comments

made below concerning πεποιήκατε in Mark 11:17. The following analysis will first

consider the role ποιέω plays within Jesus' speech frame specifically and then consider

its function within the broader discourse.

Jesus' reported speech in Matt 21:13//Mark 11:17//Luke 19:46 contains embedded

quotations from two Old Testament texts, Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11.[69] In all three Gospels, the

heavily marked Perfect tense-form γέγραπται is used to frontground the citation from

Isa 56:7 within the speech frame, with the emphasis being on its state as written

---

[67] Porter, "Prominence," 57–58.

[68] This is what Culy et al., seem to suggest, as they prefer Campbell's discourse-based approach to verbal aspect (see *Luke*, xxvi).

[69] That is, the quotations from the Old Testament come in Jesus' direct speech. The Old Testament texts are: Isa 56:7 (LXX): ὁ γὰρ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; and Jer 7:11 (LXX): μὴ σπήλαιον λῃστῶν ὁ οἶκός μου, οὗ ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομα μου ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἐκεῖ, ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν;

Scripture.[70] However, I suggest that what is particularly important to recognize within

Jesus' speech is the relationship that γέγραπται has to the forms of ποιέω. Although

ποιέω does not appear in formulaic quotations, here it does seem to "introduce" the

second quotation from Jer 7:11. The juxtaposition of γέγραπται with the different forms

of ποιέω indicates that while all the Synoptics wish to frontground Jesus' citation of Isa

56:7 concerning the temple—that it will be a "house of prayer"—how they relate this

statement to Jesus' pronouncement of judgment on those in the temple differs in each

Gospel.

Luke's use of the least marked ἐποιήσατε attributes less discourse saliency to the

charge Jesus makes against the actions of those in the temple. This assertion is supported

in that the Lukan temple cleansing episode receives very little attention and contains little

detail in comparison to the Matthean and Markan accounts. The overturning of tables and

chairs (Matt 21:12//Mark 11:15) and the comment made in Mark 11:16 that Jesus did not

allow anyone to bring a σκεῦος through the temple are omitted in Luke.[71] Only a brief

---

[70] On the use of γέγραπται to introduce quotations from Scripture in Mark, see Evans, *Mark*, 2:173–74. On γέγραπται in Matthew, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:241, 363–4. Porter, "Scripture Justifies Mission," 115 n. 57 says a similar thing with regard to the use of the Perfect form πεπλήρωται in Luke 4:21: "The emphasis is upon this particular Scripture being fulfilled." Further, in arguing for the Perfect as a primarily (direct) discourse form in Luke, Campbell notes that there are two exceptions: "The only two perfects *not* in discourse are instances of γράφω, introducing scriptural citations, as do the other perfects of γράφω that occur within discourse" (*Verbal Aspect*, 1:176). Thus, these two examples (Luke 2:23; 3:4) are "exceptions to the rule" for Campbell, which "are used for the well-established Lukan function of introducing scripture" (1:177). Unfortunately, Campbell offers no explanation for them. However, one can assume that his spatial model would apply, giving γέγραπται the value of "heightened spatial proximity."

[71] While it is not essential to this thesis, Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 28–30 notes that there has been considerable debate over the meaning of σκεῦος in Mark 11:16. Ford argues that it refers to "money bags" by tying σκεῦος to the money-changers and the fact that the temple was used as a bank (Ford, "Money Bags in the Temple," 249–53. Holmén suggests that the word's meaning in ambiguous (*Jesus and Jewish Covenant Thinking*, 309). Gray, however, offers a convincing argument for understanding σκεῦος as "cultic vessel." In this sense, Jesus was interrupting the entire cultic process of offering sacrifices in the temple. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 129 also interprets σκεῦος in a cultic sense.

reference is made to the casting out of "the sellers" (τοὺς πωλοῦντας), which quickly transitions into the speech frame of v. 46. All of this points to the likelihood that the temple cleansing is, as a whole, rather insignificant in Luke's narrative. It appears that what matters most to Luke in these two short verses (vv. 45–46) is Jesus' declaration from Scripture (γέγραπται) that God's house will be known as an οἶκος προσευχῆς.[72]

Luke's desire to emphasize Jesus' positive affirmation of the temple over and against the pronouncement of judgment is further identified in that vv. 45–46 lead directly into a lengthly section that has the temple as its setting (19:47—21:38). Here, the temple is not the locus for judgment, but rather the locus for at least five of Jesus' activities. These include (1) teaching (19:47; 20:1), (2) telling parables (20:9–18), (3) being challenged by the Jewish leaders (20:19–47), (4) endorsing the small tribute of a widow (21:1–4), and (5) giving specific eschatological teaching (21:5–38).[73] Admittedly, the temple is only explicitly mentioned in 19:47 (ἦν διδάσκων τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ), 20:1 (ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν διδάσκοντος αὐτοῦ τὸν λαὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ), and 21:1 (εἶδεν τοὺς βάλλοντας εἰς τὸ γαζοφυλάκιον τὰ δῶρα αὐτῶν πλουσίους).[74] However, there is nothing in the text that suggests another location besides the temple for any other activities mentioned in the section. Furthermore, the statements made in 19:47

---

[72] Marshall, *Luke*, 719; Nolland, *Luke*, 3:935 who says, "Luke severely abbreviates in a way that draws the emphasis strongly onto the biblical citations in 19:46." For an investigation into the rise of οἶκοι προσευχῆς in and throughout post-exilic Judaism, see Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue*, 429–36; Wong, *Temple Incident*, 104–111; Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 32–33.

[73] Evans, *St. Luke*, says "Luke is concerned with the temple courts (*hieron*) as the place of prayer (18:10) and prophecy (2:27, 37), but especially of teaching (2:46, Jesus among the teachers), now of the teaching of Jesus until his arrest (19:47; 20:1, 21; 21:37)." Evans goes on to say on the same page, "Thus the temple mount or courts are 'cleansed' by Jesus so that he may take them over for his own purposes of teaching at the centre of Judaism for the remainder of his ministry to Israel and under the shadow of his coming rejection."

[74] On the term γαζοφυλάκιον and its specific location on the temple grounds, see Bock, *Luke*, 2:1645; Marshall, *Luke*, 751–52.

and 21:37[75] provide the discourse with an element of cohesion concerning Jesus' daily

teaching in the temple and formally demonstrate the likelihood that the temple is the

setting for all of 19:47—21:38. This solidifies the decision to see γέγραπται (and the

citation it introduces) as the frontgrounded element and ἐποιήσατε (and the judgment it

pronounces) as the backgrounded element in Luke's temple cleansing episode.[76]

The speech frame in Matt 21:13 is syntactically identically to Luke, but it

contrasts the heavily marked Perfect γέγραπται with the Present form ποιεῖτε, a form

less marked than the Perfect yet more marked than the Aorist. In the light of this contrast,

I contend that Matthew, like Luke, means to highlight Jesus' positive declaration about

the temple more so than his proclamation of judgment. But, in contrast to Luke, Matthew

does this while still attributing a foregrounded level of significance to Jesus' charge

against the buyers and sellers. That ποιεῖτε possess this foregrounding function is

established by two co-textual observations, one with reference to a feature within the

speech frame and one outside of it.

The first observation concerns the marked use of the nominative case in the

second person plural pronoun ὑμεῖς.[77] Since the pronoun is not needed to grammaticalize

---

[75] ἦν διδάσκων τὸ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ· ἦν δὲ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων.

[76] Culy et al., *Luke*, xxvi wrongly suggest that "[t]he perfect tense, on the other hand, plays little or no role in marking the status of information in Luke's narrative, since '58 out of 60 perfects occur within discourse' rather than in narrative proper" (citing Campbell's work). They go on to say a similar thing on the same page:"[T]he key thing to remember at this point is that the perfect tense is largely irrelevant in helping us to understanding the flow and status of information in Luke's narrative." There are two major shortcoming concerning their statements. First, the authors simply assume that the discourse distribution of Perfect forms in Luke is what determines the Perfect's meaning, and subsequently, its function in narrative. They ought to have dealt first with the form's semantic value and then move to its range of functions within discourse. Second, there is absolutely no discussion on the markedness value of the Perfect form. Whether or not the authors agree with Porter's model, the lack of such a discussion, and their subsequent dependence on Campbell's model, weakens their overall discourse scheme.

[77] See Porter, *Idioms*, 295–96 where he refers to this use of the nominative as the "expressed subject."

the subject of the second person plural ποιεῖτε, the grammaticalized second person plural indicator emphasizes the subject of the clause. The marked Subject, then, works in tandem with the marked Predicate to create a more definite and contoured foregrounded clause.[78] The second observation is that, outside of the speech frame (but in what can still be called the immediate co-text), it is likely that Matthew's use of ἐποίησεν in v. 15 to denote "the wonderful things that Jesus did" (τὰ θαυμάσια ἃ ἐποίησεν) constitutes a lexical chain intended to link by contrast the corrupt "doing" of the buyers and sellers in v. 13 to the wonderful "doing" of Jesus in v. 15.[79] Therefore, the interaction between ποιεῖτε, the marked use of the nominative case, and the cohesive lexical chaining of ποιεῖτε/ἐποίησεν puts the foregrounding function of ποιεῖτε on solid ground.

The foregrounding function of ποιεῖτε is also identifiable as one considers its relationship to the broader discourse. Three brief comments can be made. First, based on the amount of detail alone included in Matthew's account, one may deduce that Matthew considers Jesus' act of cleansing the temple to be of more significance than does Luke. Matthew, like Mark, includes a note about "the buyers," but, different from Mark, portrays the buyers and sellers as overlapping groups instead of separate entities.[80] In distinction from Luke, Matthew includes the turning over of tables and chairs. At the same time, however, it lacks the Markan comment that Jesus did not permit anyone to bring a σκεῦος through the temple.

---

[78] Luke's episode has the marked nominative as well. However, only the Subject is marked at the clause level, not the Predicate.

[79] On the concept of lexical chaining (and the diversity of ways it functions), see Westfall, *Hebrews*, 47.

[80] This is indicated in Matthew by the fact that πωλοῦτας and ἀγοράζοντας are governed by a single article (τοὺς) and joined by the copulative καί, while in Mark each substantive is governed by its own article (see Porter, *Idioms*, 110–11, although he is working with the categories proposed in Wallace, "Semantic Range," 59–84).

Second. one may view Matthew's entire speech frame as a foregrounded unit in the light of the marked use of the narrative Present λέγει that introduces it. This suggests that the speech itself is foregrounded on the narrative discourse level but contains within it both frontgrounded and foregrounded elements (i.e., γέγραπται and ποιεῖτε). In any case, the marked use of the narrative Present represents another co-textual feature that contributes to the foregrounding function of ποιεῖτε.

Third, as I insinuated above about the cohesive linkage of ποιεῖτε/ἐποίησεν, I argue that in Matthew's presentation there is a deliberate contrast drawn between the actions of the buyers and sellers performed "in the temple" (ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, v. 12) and the actions of Jesus also performed "in the temple" (ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, vv. 14–15).[81] In material not included in the Markan or Lukan records, Matthew presents the temple as a place of great renewal and restoration for God's people (v. 14) and the locus of the messianic healing ministry of Jesus as the "Son of David" (v. 15).[82] For Matthew, the activity taking place in the temple—however we are to understand it[83]—was evidently an obstruction of

---

[81] See Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:599 for similar comments.

[82] Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd*, 319–23, especially p. 320 where Chae says "The close connection between the cleansing of the temple and the coming forward (προσῆλθον) of the blind and the lame to Jesus in the cleansed temple seems to suggest that the sick, i.e., the outcast and the lost, are *finally found, brought back to, and healed at the center* of YHWH's covenantal community" (italics original). Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus*, 614 also notes the association of healing with the temple. See also Luz, *Matthew*, 3:12–13; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:140; Nolland, *Matthew*, 846–47. While the connection between Jesus' healing and the cleansing of the temple does not seem to be a matter of great debate, such debate does surround whether or not the sick and the lame were permitted in the temple during Jesus' day. Luz and Davies and Allison are examples of each side of the debate. Luz, *Matthew*, 3:12–13 argues that rabbinic regulations did not prohibit the sick and the lame from entering the temple and that texts such as 2 Sam 5:8 ("The blind and the lame shall not come into the house") where never used in Judaism to enact this kind of restriction. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:140 argue the exact opposite and point to early Jewish texts that, according to them, prohibited the sick from entering the temple (e.g., 1QSa 2:8–9; 1QM 7:4–5; 4QMMT; CD 15:15–17; LXX 2 Βασ 5:6–8). In this light, they suggest that a Matthew draws a contrast between David. who did not let the sick enter the temple, and Jesus, to whom the sick come in the temple for healing and restoration.

[83] Scholars have noted that the buying and the selling themselves were probably not what Jesus condemned, since these financial activities were necessary to follow the regulations of the Mosaic Law (e.g., Turner, *Matthew*, 499–500; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 61–71; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 636–40).

Jesus' messianic vision and a distortion of the role that the temple played within that vision. Therefore, the assertion that Jesus' pronouncement of judgment is more prominent in Matthew's discourse (foregrounded ποιεῖτε) than in Luke's (backgrounded ἐποίησεν) seems to fit the flow of Matthew's broader discourse. That is to say, Matthew wishes to emphasize, most of all, a positive affirmation of what the temple is through the invoking of written Scripture; however, this affirmation is brought into clear focus by the foregrounding of Jesus' judgment on the corrupt actions of those in the temple, which are then contrasted with his own action of healing and restoration.

Concerning πεποιήκατε in Mark's account, it is worth briefly noting the recent monographs by Gray[84] and Wong,[85] which both treat Mark 11:17 in some detail. Gray, unfortunately, mentions Mark's use of πεποιήκατε sparingly, giving it only two sentences. He says, "Moreover, Jesus' teaching makes certain that the temple has indeed been turned into a den of thieves, thus providing an answer to the question posed by God in Jeremiah. This is evidenced by the fact that the verb here πεποιήκατε, 'have made,' is stative."[86] Despite his use of the term "stative," it is quite obvious that Gray is not referring to the form's aspectual value.[87] In view of his translation of the form, he is most likely using "stative" to denote the traditional understanding of the Perfect as a past action with present effects. Interestingly, however, Gray continues by noting two literary features present in v. 17 that "intensify the tone of judgment against the temple" and by

---

[84] Gray. *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark.*
[85] Wong, *The Temple Incident.*
[86] Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark,* 31.
[87] This is evidenced by the fact that Gray does not include a single bibliographic entry for any Greek grammar reference tool. In the light of this, one could hardly assume that Gray is here referring to a work on verbal aspect theory.

which Mark "highlights Jesus' authority, which will soon be questioned."[88] Whether or

not these features do what Gray suggests they are doing, his notation of the intense tone

of the judgment is helpful for the current study.

Wong offers slightly more comment on Mark's use of πεποιήκατε, although his

treatment is hindered by an *Aktionsart* model and his dependence on dated sources (i.e.,

BDF). He says:

> Whereas it is true that we can not overemphasise the use of the perfect tense in
> Mark, nor can we underestimate its peculiar effect in Mark, either, especially
> when it is compared with the other two gospels. So when the composite quotation
> in Mark 11, 17cd is taken together as a whole, the perfect tense πεποιήκατε (v.
> 17d) captures completely the thrust of the whole quoted composite. Compared to
> Matthew and Luke, Mark seems to speak retrospectively with a present allusion
> in v. 17d...[89]

Wong recognizes that the Perfect πεποιήκατε is significant, although to what extent he is

uncertain. What is certain for Wong is what the Perfect means; it conveys a past (or

retrospective) action with present reference (or allusion). This leads him to offer his own

convoluted translation of Jesus' judgment as "'you *made* the house of God into a den of

bandits, and, *see* for yourselves, it *is now* a den of bandits!'" (italics original).[90] But, as I

have argued, this is not what the Perfect tense-form means (see chs. 2 and 3); thus,

Wong's suggestions rest on shaky methodological ground. I contend that, regardless of

whether or not the literary features Gray mentions are meant to "intensify" or "highlight"

Jesus' judgment and authority, and contra Wong's *Aktionsart* approach, the aspectual

model presented in this work, in which the Perfect is the most heavily marked tense-form

---

[88] Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 31. These two literary features are, first, Mark's
rhetorical reversal in using the Old Testament quotations. That is, there is a switch from an assertion in the
source text (Isa 56:7) to a question in Mark, and a switch from a question in the source text (Jer 7:11) to an
assertion in Mark. The second is the notion that Mark shows Jesus "as having license to apply the oracles of
the prophets to the temple."

[89] Wong, *The Temple Incident*, 131–32.

[90] Wong, *The Temple Incident*, 132.

and functions to frontground important elements of a discourse, provides better

methodological ground and verifiable evidence for drawing similar conclusions.

Besides the use of the Perfect πεποιήκατε, Mark's speech frame contains two

grammatical components that distinguish it from Matthew and Luke.[91] The first

component is the addition of the negative particle οὐ, which, as Gray notes, switches the

simple assertion of Isa 56:7 to a question that implies a positive answer.[92] This switch is

significant, not necessarily for rhetorical reasons, but because of the manner in which

interrogative frames can be used to create prominence in discourse. Concerning

interrogatives and prominence, Westfall notes that "interrogatives draw attention toward

the answer" and "[i]n non-narrative, questions are explicitly interactive and intend to

create involvement with the text. They often appear with other markers of emphasis."[93] In

Mark 11:17, an instance of non-narrative, the interrogative draws attention to the

expected positive answer and appears with other co-textual markers of emphasis such as

the most heavily marked Perfect γέγραπται,[94] the marked use of the nominative

(ὑμεῖς), and an additional use of the Perfect (πεποιήκατε). All of these features together

point to understanding πεποιήκατε as having a frontgrounding function that specifically

highlights Jesus' pronouncement of judgment on those in the temple.

The second grammatical component concerns Mark's differing syntax in v. 17d.

Matthew and Luke have fronted the pronoun αὐτὸν in relation to the verb (ὑμεῖς δὲ

---

[91] Although it may be argued otherwise, I do not consider Mark's inclusion of the phrase πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν to be a grammatical difference *per se*.

[92] See Porter, *Idioms*, 278–79.

[93] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 68, although she is specifically discussing the words τίς, τί, and πῶς.

[94] Concerning v. 17, Wong, *The Temple Incident*, 126 notes "The 'it is written' (γέγραπται) is also a Marcan way to quote the Hebrew bible (1,2; 7,6; 14,27; cf. 9,12.13; 14,21). All this points to (preparing the audience for) the importance of the following quoted Hebrew bible."

αὐτόν + ποιέω), which puts more emphasis on the temple as the referent of αὐτόν.

Mark's word order is ὑμεῖς δὲ πεποιήκατε αὐτόν, which puts more emphasis on the

"you" expressed in the pronoun + verb structure. This indicates that Jesus'

pronouncement of judgment here is not so much directed at the temple itself but at those

corrupting it (the "you") through deviant financial activity.[95] The syntactical structure

further supports the assertion that Mark wishes to frontground Jesus' condemnation of

this activity, as the use of the Perfect, along with the other features mentioned above,

create a "zone of turbulence" making it the most prominent portion of Mark's temple

cleansing episode.

A cursory consideration of the broader discourse, particularly the other aspectual

choices within it, confirm the frontgrounding function of πεποιήκατε and its role in

creating discourse prominence. In recounting material not present in either Matthew or

Luke, Mark uses the Imperfect ἤφιεν in v. 16 to say that Jesus "was not allowing anyone

to bring a cultic vessel [σκεῦος] through the temple." Wong takes the verb to be denoting

continual action in the light of its tense form.[96] However, he lacks consistency when he

translates the verbs ἐδίδασκεν and ἔλεγεν in v. 17 as "Jesus 'taught' and 'said'."[97] As

Wong's translations make apparent, it is unlikely that Jesus "continually taught and

spoke" what is related in v. 17cd. This point, then, suggests that neither does ἤφιεν

possess such a "continual" nuance. Instead, this chain of more heavily marked

Imperfects, ἤφιεν, ἐδίδασκεν, and ἔλεγεν, creates semantic cohesion for vv. 16–17 and

---

[95] See Wong, *The Temple Incident*, 123. This is not necessarily to suggest, however, that Jesus' judgment entailed no pronouncement against the temple itself.

[96] Wong, *The Temple Incident*, 123.

[97] Wong, *The Temple Incident*, 126.

functions to foreground (with the added element of remoteness) the entire quotative

frame of v. 17. Therefore, one could say that Mark has created a peak structure[98] with

these verses that builds from the foregrounded imperfective verbs used in narrative

discourse up to the frontgrounded stative verbs γέγραπται and πεποιήκατε used in

Jesus' quotation. Verses 18–19 represent the "descent" of this section of the discourse as

the Aorist ἤκουσαν and, again, a chain of Imperfects are used (ἐζήτουν, ἐφοβοῦντο,

ἐξεπλήσσετο, and ἐξεπορεύοντο).

4.3. Tense-form Analysis 3

The final analysis will consider the Aorist indicative form ἐξηράνθη in Matt

21:19, 20 in contrast to the Perfect participle and Perfect indicative forms ἐξηραμμένην /

ἐξήρανται used in Mark 11:20, 21.[99] The first difference in aspect occurs in narrative

discourse (Matt 21:19//Mark 11:20), while the second occurs in direct speech (Matt

21:20//Mark 11:21). As noted earlier, Matthew has grouped Jesus' judgment on the fig

tree with its withering, while Mark has placed the temple cleansing scene between the

two fig tree episodes. This narrative organization has led scholars to propose that the

Markan account of Jesus' actions in the temple have an inseparable connection with the

---

[98] I am not using the term "peak structure" as a technical term as in Longacre's approach to discourse analysis.

[99] The second use of these these forms (Matt 21:20//Mark 11:21) takes place in the disciples' (Matthew)/Peter's (Mark) response to seeing the withered fig. It may be helpful to defend the validity of a comparison that includes an indicative form contrasted with a participle, since traditional approaches to Greek verbs tend to treat indicative forms as quite different than non-indicatives, particularly with regard to temporal expression. It has been argued in this work that the core semantic component of Greek verbs—verbal aspect—remains the same in indicative *and* non-indicative forms. Therefore, since ἐξηράνθη and ἐξηραμμένην each represent a meaningful choice of verbal aspect (perfective *vs.* stative), a comparison on this semantic level is warranted, and an analysis of their textual function is appropriate. However, this scenario (finite *vs.* non-finite and different verbal aspects) should be distinguished from instances where forms differ in finiteness but possess the same verbal aspect. In these scenarios, while choice of aspect is the same, finite forms are more semantically marked in the light of the greater complexity of their system networks.

fig tree episodes.[100] I believe such proposals are correct; however, I suggest that an

analysis of aspectual choice in Mark and Matthew provides new insight into the textual

organization and information flow of Mark's narrative in particular. Further, this analysis

will supply the formal evidence that narrative-symbolic and redactional studies (which

tend to use traditional temporal or *Aktionsart* approaches to Greek verbs) often lack.[101]

Table 3

Matt 21:19, 20	Mark 11:20, 21
v. 19: καὶ ἐξηράνθη παραχρῆμα ἡ συκῆ v. 20: πῶς παραχρῆμα ἐξηράνθη ἡ συκῆ;	v. 20: εἶδον τὴν συκῆν ἐξηραμμένην ἐκ ῥιζῶν v. 21: ῥαββί, ἴδε ἡ συκῆ ἣν κατηράσω ἐξήρανται

---

[100] For example, Telford, *The Barren Temple*; Wong, *The Temple Incident*, 111, 121; Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 38–43. Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2:134 calls the episodes "zwei Ereignisse, die einander ergänzen und erklären ("two events that complement and explain each other").

[101] For example, referring to Mark 11:12–14, 20–21, Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*, 39 notes that the fig tree plays a crucial role for "Mark's narrative flow," but does not ground his claims in a rigorous analysis of the text itself. On pp. 38–39, he gives four reasons for his assertion: (1) as Jesus' search for fruit was "out of season" so Jesus' cursing seems out of character, (2) the fig tree cursing is the only negative mighty deed that Jesus performs, (3) the fig tree cursing is the only mighty deed that Jesus performs in Jerusalem, and (4) the framing of the fig tree stories around the temple cleansing episode. Further, he says that the significance of the fig tree becomes even greater, however, when one becomes aware of Mark's comment in v. 14b that the disciples "heard" Jesus (καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ μαθηταί). This, Gray suggests, is Mark's way of invoking the important theme of "hearing" as a call for deeper discernment, a theme established earlier in the Gospel in the parable of the sower (p. 39); the "good soil" is described as "those who hear" (οἵτινες ἀκούουσιν). Thus, for Gray, this means that the reader of Mark's Gospel is encouraged to read the cursing of the fig tree for its symbolic meaning, i.e., as eschatological judgment against the temple (pp. 42–43). Interestingly, however, Gray does not mention the instance when, immediately following Jesus' proclamation of judgment in the temple, Mark 11:18 says "the chief priests and the scribes *heard* and sought to destroy him" (italics mine). The idea that "hearing" in this verse is a call for "deeper discernment" is untenable. Thus, while the connection in Mark between Jesus' judgment on those in the temple and the fig tree is close, the notion of "hearing" in the Gospel may not be as helpful as Gray suggests. Telford's classic work (*The Barren Temple*), on which a large portion of Gray's comments depends, is entirely devoted to a redactional approach the fig tree episode in Mark. While these studies contribute to an understanding of the fig tree's role in the Gospel (particularly its relation to the temple cleansing), their dependence on narrative- and redaction-critical methods (respectively) lead both authors to neglect any substantial comment on Mark's use of the Perfects tense-forms ἐξηραμμένην / ἐξήρανται. Gray's treatment of the form (p. 39) is limited to two sentences: "As Jesus and the disciples pass by the tree, they see [...] the fig tree withered away to its roots (ἐξηραμμένην ἐκ ῥιζῶν, v. 20). The image of withered away roots may echo the seed sown on rocky ground, which withered for lack of roots (διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ῥίζαν ἐξηράνθη, 4:6)." Telford's comments primarily revolve around the use of ἐξηραμμένην with the modifying Adjunct phrase ἐκ ῥιζῶν, which "indicates how complete the fig tree's destruction was" (pp. 157–58; cf. France, *Mark*, 447).

Matt 21:19, 20	Mark 11:20, 21
v. 19 "And the fig tree was withered immediately" v. 20 "How was the fig tree withered immediately?"	v. 20: "They saw the fig tree being withered from the roots" v. 21: "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed is withered!"

In keeping with the primary argument of the current work, I maintain that both

Perfects in Mark represent motivated uses of the tense-form for the purpose of

frontgrounding the withering of the fig tree and creating for the episode a heightened

level of discourse prominence within their respective frames (narrative discourse/direct

speech). There are at least two points of evidence that support this claim. First, the choice

of stative aspect grammaticalized in these forms has a cohesive function, being a formal

semantic tie that links at the discourse level those upon whom Jesus pronounced

judgment in the temple (πεποιήκατε = stative aspect) with the withered fig tree. That is

to say, just as the buyers and the sellers are highlighted in 11:17 through use of the

Perfect, so Mark highlights (frontgrounds) the withered fig tree in 11:20, 21.[102] Whatever

symbolism may be present in the use of τὴν συκῆν,[103] and whether or not Jesus'

judgment is geared specifically toward the temple, what seems rather clear from these

uses of the Perfect is that the "you" in the construction ὑμεῖς δὲ πεπεοιήκατε is

semantically (i.e., aspectually) linked to τὴν συκῆν ἐξηραμμένην/ἡ συκῆ ἡν κατηράσω

ἐξήρανται. Such a cohesive function of the stative in these portions of Mark may mean

---

[102] Note the connection between the volitive use of the most marked optative mood in Mark 11:14 to pronounce an emphatic judgment on the fig tree (see Porter, *Idioms*, 60; Porter, "Prominence," 63; Westfall, *Hebrews*, 58), the use of the marked Perfect in Mark 11:17 to pronounce judgment on those in the temple, and the use of the most marked Perfect in Mark 11:20, 21 to, again, refer to the fig tree. The repeated use of marked items to highlight and connect the two participants seems intentional.

[103] On the various backgrounds to ἡ συκῆ (Old Testament and Late Judaism), see Telford, *The Barren Temple*, 128–204.

that the Perfect acts as a cohesive thread running through the entire triumphal entry/

temple cleansing discourse. Therefore, it may be possible to view Mark's earlier uses of

δεδεμένον (11:2, 4) along these lines: at least in this portion of the PN, the Perfect

functions to highlight a particular feature or character that is essential in the development

of the narrative and contributes to the creation of discourse prominence.

The second piece of evidence that suggests ἐξηραμμένην is prominent is the

presence of the modifying Adjunct phrase ἐκ ῥιζῶν. Concerning such modifying features

Westfall says

> The concept of support material can be narrowly applied to a more specific
> definition of subordinate support and expansion. A sentence that includes a large
> complex of modifiers including participial phrases, prepositional phrases, ἵνα (in
> order that) clauses and/or other dependent clauses will be more prominent than a
> clause that has the same formal features without similar expansion. A sentence
> that is expanded by its following co-text will also be prominent.[104]

In other words, ἐκ ῥιζῶν expands and adds an element of detail calling attention to the

extent of the "withering."[105] Whereas Matthew's use of the Aorist presents the fig tree's

"withering" as a complete event in an uncontoured and less marked fashion—though with

the added elements of suddenness and immediacy (παραχρῆμα)[106]—Mark's use of the

most heavily marked Perfect expresses in a more contoured and definite manner the

Gospel's focus on the fig tree's state of "witheredness" with the added note on the

entirety of the withering (ἐκ ῥιζῶν).[107] The Adjunct and the Perfect tense-form work in

---

[104] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 70.

[105] Cf. Telford, *The Barren Temple*, 157; France, *Mark*, 447.

[106] Louw-Nida, *Lexicon*, 67.113.

[107] Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2:134 says Daß er von der Wurzel an verdorrt gewesen sei, kann nur als Symbol für das unfruchtbar gewordene Jerusalem begriffen werden ("That [the fig tree] has been withered from the roots can only be understood as a symbol that Jerusalem has become unfruitful").

tandem to generate frontgrounded prominence as Mark leads into Jesus' teaching on faith and prayer in 11:22–25.

5. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to accomplish three goals. First, I have demonstrated the essential cohesiveness of the so-called triumphal entry, temple cleansing, and fig tree episodes (Matt 21:1–22//Mark 11:1–25//Luke 19:28–48). Second, I have provided an outline of the content of these episodes in preparation for three analyses of divergent verbal aspectual choice. Third, I have performed these analyses on three instances of aspectual choice : (1) ἀποστέλλει in Mark 11:1 in contrast to ἀπέστειλεν in Matt 21:1// Luke 19:29; (2) ποιεῖτε in Matt 21:13 in contrast to πεποιήκατε in Mark 11:17 and ἐποιήσατε in Luke 19:46; and (3) ἐξηράνθη in Matt 21:19, 20 in contrast to both ἐξηραμμένην and ἐξήρανται in Mark 11:20–21. In distinction from temporal or *Aktionsart* frameworks, I have argued that these tense-form choices reflect motivated uses of verbal aspect that contribute to structuring the individual discourses according to various levels of prominence. I have shown that occurrences of the least marked Aorist contribute little to the creation of discourse prominence, whereas the occurrences of the most heavily marked Perfect does, as it works together with other formal features in the text. This model will continue to be tested in the following chapter as a shorter portion of text is considered, Peter's denials of Jesus.

CHAPTER 5

PETER'S DENIAL OF JESUS
MATT 26:69–75//MARK14:66–72//LUKE 22:54–62

1. Introduction

Several commentators have noted that scene of Peter's denial of Jesus unfolds in

quite a dramatic fashion in all three Synoptic accounts, with its narrative tension

increasing incrementally as the story develops.[1] However, this observation appears to be

made predominately on the basis of the lexical items ἀναθεματίζειν, καταθεματίζειν

(both possessing the gloss "to curse"), and ὀμνύναι ("to swear") that are present in

Matthew and Mark's version of the Peter's third denial, or on the basis of the interpreter's

pure intuition. While commentators may be right in sensing an escalation of narrative

tension In the episode, practically no one makes reference to any of the formal linguistic

features present in the pericope that contribute to this escalation. If an item is commented

on, there is typically no explanation given as to why it contributes to this heightened level

of "narrative tension".[2] This is especially true concerning the issue of divergent verbal

aspectual choice.[3]

With this in mind, more attention is certainly needed in treating the formal

features, especially the tense-forms, that are present in the Synoptic accounts of the

denial episode. Therefore, the aspectual analyses in this chapter will have two

---

[1] For example, Turner, *Matthew*, 642; Marshall, *Luke*, 839; Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 447; France, *Mark*, 619; and Green, *Luke*, 786–88; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:541–2; Luz, *Matthew*, 3:453.

[2] For example, concerning Peter's third denial, France, *Mark*, 622 mentions that τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον "is a strikingly dismissive way for Peter to speak of the person whom he has previously hailed as ὁ Χριστός," but he offers no explanation why this is so striking.

[3] For example, Bock, *Luke*, 1788 does a similar thing when he notes the tense-form differences of the verb κλαίω in Matt 26:75//Mark 14:72//Luke 22:62, but gives no explanation for the difference.

overarching goals: (1) to advance the main argument of this work, namely, that an aspectual model of the Greek verbal system provides the best tool for answering the question of divergent tense-form usage, and (2) to demonstrate how an author's formal choices, particularly those of verbal aspect, are often in harmony with what is happening on the level of narrative development, and thus provides formal criteria for evaluating elements of a narrative such as the escalation of dramatic tension found in the denial episode. First, however, the structure and cohesiveness of the denial episode in the Synoptics will be considered, followed by an overview of the episode's content.

2. The Cohesiveness of the Episode

In contrast to the episodes treated in chapter 4—which were read as a cohesive unit of discourse—the scene of Peter's denial is a much shorter text. It is worth establishing, then, how it hangs together within its larger co-text in each Gospel and how the episode itself represents a cohesive unit of discourse.

After recounting Jesus' experience with his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36–56//Luke 22:39–53), Matthew and Luke signal new development in their narratives using a series of δέ conjunctions as markers of development[4] as Jesus is seized and transferred to a new location for trial, that is, to the courtyard (αὐλή, Matt)/home (οἰκία, Luke) of Caiaphas the high priest.[5] Mark 14:53 also moves Jesus, via his arrest, to the location of the high priest, but does so in such a way that expresses essential

---

[4] Black, *Sentence Conjunctions*, 144; Westfall, *Hebrews*, 66; Porter and O'Donnell, "Conjunctions," 10.

[5] Matt 26:57: Οἱ δὲ κρατήσαντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπήγαγον πρὸς Καιάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα ("Now they, once they had seized him, lead Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest").

continuity with the preceding content (καί),[6] rather than a new development. All three

Gospels add a further comment—in Matthew and Luke, signaled, again, by δέ—that

"Peter was following [him] from a distance" (Matt 26:58//Mark 14:54//Luke 22:54).[7]

Matthew and Mark include Adjunct phrases that specify the location and extent of Peter's

following: ἕως τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ ἀρχιερέως (Matt 26:58); ἕως ἔσω εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τοῦ

ἀρχιερέως (Mark 14:54). The comment concerning Peter, particularly in the texts of

Matthew and Mark, functions as a cohesive tie on the level of participant reference. That

is, while Luke leads directly into the content of the denial scene after introducing Peter in

22:54, Matthew and Mark further develop the content of Jesus' trial before the Jewish

rulers in Matt 26:59–68//Mark 14:55–65 before returning to Peter's activity in Matt

26:69–75//Mark 14:66–72. The structure of these further developments can be viewed as

five shorter frames that lead into the Matthean and Markan accounts of Peter's denial:[8]

(1) The chief priests seek a (false) witness against Jesus (Matt 26:59–60a//Mark 14:55–

56); (2) accusations are made against Jesus concerning the temple (Matt 26:60b–62//

Mark 14:57–60); (3) Jesus, though quite at first, finally answers the high priest (Matt

26:63–64//Mark 14:61–62); (4) the incredulous response the high priest makes (Matt

---

[6] Black, *Sentence Conjuctions*, 111–14; Westfall, *Hebrews*, 66; Porter and O'Donnell, "Conjunctions," 10.

[7] Matthew and Luke have nearly identical syntax: ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν (Matt 26:58); ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἠκολούθει μακρόθεν. Mark is slightly different: καὶ ὁ Πέτρος ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ.

[8] This proposed structure of Matt 26:59–68//Mark 14:55–65 is based primarily on the use of conjunctions as markers of discourse development and changes in participant Actors.

26:65–66a//Mark 14:63–64b);[9] and (5) the response the crowd makes (Matt 26:66b–68//

Mark 14:64c–65).[10]

However, the manner in which Matthew and Mark connect Jesus' trial to Peter's

denial differs quite significantly, with the differences having a clear impact on exegesis.

This will be noted at various places in the first tense-form analysis below. For now, it is

worth noting that Matthew presents the denial episode as a distinct development in the

narrative as it returns to Peter as the main participant by using δέ (cf. Luke 22:54,

συλλαβόντες δέ), while Mark creates much stronger cohesion between Jesus' trial and

Peter's denial by using a καί + genitive absolute construction (καὶ ὄντος τοῦ Πέτρου).[11]

Several notes on the cohesiveness of the denial episode itself are needed. First,

particularly in Matthew and Mark, the repetition of the lexeme ἀρνέομαι ("deny," Matt

26:70, 72//Mark 14:68, 70[12]) and the repetition of οὐκ οἶδα ("I do not know")[13] in Peter's

speech frames function as cohesive ties that link the accusations brought against Peter

with Peter's actual responses.[14] This provides a level of coherence for the progression of

the dialogue.

---

[9] It may be helpful to note that Matthew and Mark differ in how each transitions to this frame. Matthew, by using the connective τότε, appears to signal the beginning of a subunit characterized by marked continuity with the preceding content (see Black, *Sentence Conjunctions*, 221), while Mark, by using δέ appears to signal a certain measure of unmarked discontinuity with what precedes.

[10] See Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:519 for a similar structure, at least for Matthew's Gospel.

[11] On a similar structure, see Westfall, *Hebrews*, 198, where a genitive absolute construction creates "close structural ties." Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2:290, although he says it is an editorial feature, notes similarly that that the genitive absolute in 14:66 picks up where 14:54 and the narrative about Peter left off, while the scene of Jesus before the Sanhedrin is placed in the middle: "Vom sandwhich-agreement mit der Synhedrialverhandlung wurde schon in Verbindung mit Vers 54, der ehemals die Geschichte einleitete, gesprochen. Der Genitivus absolutus in 66a knüpft daran an und ist redaktionell."

[12] In Matt 26:70, 72//Mark 14:68, the Aorist form ἠρνήσατο is used. In Mark 14:70, Mark uses the Imperfect form ἠρνεῖτο (see analysis 2 below).

[13] Or a phrase similar to it Matt 26:70, 72, 74//Mark 14:68, 71//Luke 22:57, 60.

[14] In Matt 26:72//Mark 14:70, a form of ἀρνέομαι occurs with the modifying temporal Adjunct πάλιν ("again"). This repetition, coupled with a break from it in Matt 26:74//Mark 14:71 through the use of marked τότε and the clause ἤρξατο καταθεματίζειν καὶ ὀμνύειν in Matthew and ἤρξατο ἀναθεματίζειν καὶ ὀμνύναι in Mark, suggests Peter's response to the third accusation is prominent.

Second, and related to the notion of prominence, the scene in all three Gospels

contains a concentrated cluster of second person-to-first person locutions and third person

references.[15] That is, the episode is structured around the use of the second and third

person within projections (quotations) directed toward Peter, and the use of the first

person within projections made by Peter in response. The dense occurrence of the more

marked second person and the most marked first person locutions not only contribute to

the episode's coherence but also create an environment containing marked items that

interact with the function of verbal aspectual choice (see chart below).[16]

Table 4

Projections	Matthew	Greek Text	Mark	Greek Text	Luke	Greek Text
Second Person	26 69	καὶ σὺ ἦσθα μετὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Γαλιλαίου	14 67	καὶ σὺ μετὰ τοῦ Ναζαρηνοῦ ἦσθα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ	22 58	καὶ σὺ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ
	26 73	ἀληθῶς καὶ σὺ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ	14 70	ἀληθῶς ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ		
Third Person	26 71	οὗτος ἦν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου	14 69	οὗτος ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐστίν	22 56	καὶ οὗτος σὺν αὐτῷ ἦν
					22 59	ἐπ' ἀληθείας καὶ οὗτος μετ' αὐτοῦ ἦν
First Person	26 70	οὐκ οἶδα τί λέγεις	14 68	οὔτε οἶδα οὔτε ἐπίσταμαι σὺ τί λέγεις	22 57	οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, γύναι
	26 72	οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον	14 71	οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον ὃν λέγετε	22 58	ἄνθρωπε, οὐκ εἰμί
	26 74	οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον			22 60	ἄνθρωπε οὐκ οἶδα ὃ λέγεις

---

[15] On this, see Westfall, *Hebrews*, 43.
[16] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 62.

Third, the episode contains a high concentration of participants, which Westfall

believes is a feature often characteristic of prominent sections of discourse.[17] She notes,

"Common in narrative, at the point of a peak or the climax of the story, everyone but the

subsidiary characters may be present. On the other hand, the participants may be reduced

or concentrated to one figure at the climax, such as in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*."[18]

Besides Peter, the participants in the denial scene can hardly be called "major

participants,"[19] but the sheer number of them certainly does suggest a "crowded stage."[20]

Peter is clearly the main Actor in all accounts. In Matthew, there are at least four other

participants who move in and out of the narrative—the "maidservant" (παιδίσκη, 26:69),

the "all" (παντῶν, 26:70), "another [maidservant]" (ἄλλη, 26:71), "those there" (τοῖς

ἐκεῖ, 26:71), and "those standing" (οἱ ἑστῶτες, 26:73). The "rooster" (ἀλέκτωρ, 26:74)

may also be considered a participant.

The participant "stage" is structured somewhat differently in the Markan and

Lukan accounts. Both include the presence of a "maidservant" (Mark 14:66//Luke

22:56);[21] however, both differ from Matthew in reporting who brought the second round

---

[17] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 72–73, although she is primarily working with the ideas found in Longacre, *Grammar of Discourse*, 40.

[18] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 72.

[19] Westfall, *Hebrews*, 72.

[20] Longacre, *Grammar of Discourse*, 40. Also, the same could be said about he "crowded stage" of Jesus' trial, in which Jesus is the main participant and the high priest and Jesus' accusers are supplementary participants. The occurrence of back-to-back crowded stages are mutually reinforcing, since they establish two peak points that represent very similar scenarios that have very similar linguistic and narrative elements. This further suggests that the two scenes (i.e., Jesus trial and Peter's denials) should be read directly in the light of each other (see below).

[21] Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, 406 translates παιδίσκη here as "young slave." As a result, Lagrange suggests that the slave girl initially comes to Peter with the intent to serve him: "παιδίσκη est ici une jeune esclave; c'est le sens normal dans les LXX pour שׁפחה et pour אמה. Elle vient, c'est-à-dire probablement qu'elle passe pour faire son service." However, in the end it is difficult to determine the exact nuance of παιδίσκη, whether it should be translated "maidservant" or "female slave" (see Luz, *Matthew*, 3:454 n. 14).

of accusations against Peter. Mark appears to have the same maidservant as the second

accuser (14:69). This is indicated by the use of the article in ἡ παιδίσκη, which is most

often used as a anaphoric marker of particularity.[22] Luke records that the second

accusation was leveled against Peter by "a different person" (ἕτερος, 22:58). Luke also

differs form Matthew and Mark by saying the third accusation was brought by "another

person" (ἄλλος, 22:59). In the Matthean and Markan versions it is οἱ ἑστῶτες/οἱ

παρεστῶτες ("those standing") who bring the third accusation (Matt 26:73//Mark

14:70). As a final comment, Luke includes a major participant who is absent in the other

accounts: ὁ κύριος ("the Lord"), whose referent is Jesus.[23] This will be an important

point to consider when analyzing Luke's choice of verbal aspect in recounting the third

accusation.

The goal of noting these several elements of cohesion, both within the denial

episode itself and within with larger co-text, has been to highlight features and patterns

that may influence how one understands the particular aspectual choices that are made.

Likewise, very brief comments concerning the content of the scene will further establish

a relevant framework in which to analyze the function of verbal aspect in the Synoptic

accounts.

3. The Content of the Episode

The setting, the participant roles and relationships, and the processes that take

place in the episode contribute significantly to an understanding of the function of the

---

[22] See Porter, *Idioms*, 103–4.

[23] ὁ Ἰησοῦς is mentioned in Peter's "memory frame" in Matt 26:75//Mark 14: 72, whereas in Luke, Jesus is an active (real) participant, which is expressed in the comment "turning, he looked at Peter" (Luke 22:61).

linguistic forms in the text itself, particularly verbal aspect. The scene takes place at night

(Matt 26:20//Mark 14:17//Luke 22:14), in the courtyard of the high priest (Matt 26:69//

Mark 14:66//Luke 22:54–55), and is sandwiched between the proceedings of Jesus's trial.

Peter, the main character of the scene, has ventured into dangerous territory in hopes of

following Jesus at a distance, and finds himself in the company of a maidservant (perhaps

multiple maidservant, cf. ἄλλη in Matt 26:71) as well as an unspecified group of people,

known as "the bystanders" in most modern English translations (e.g., ESV, NASB, RSV).

In all three Gospels, the only participant that receives any sort of defined description is

the maidservant through the use of the term παιδίσκη, which perhaps highlights the girl's

social status.[24] Peter's other accusers are identified more vaguely (ἕτερος "a different

person," Luke 22:58; οἱ ἑστῶτες/οἱ παρεστῶτες "those standing [by]," Matt 26:73//

Mark 14:70).[25]

In the episode, Peter is at risk of being associated with Jesus, who is being "tried"

at that very hour by the Jewish authorities. He is accused three times concerning his

personal knowledge of Jesus, the Gospel accounts differing at points on who it is that

brings forth the accusations (on this, see above). In any case, Peter denies all three

accusations of knowing Jesus, failing in his own trial and fulfilling Jesus' predictive

words (Matt 26:34//Mark 14:30//Luke 22:34). Peter's response of "bitter weeping" at the

sound of the crowing cock is the same in each Gospel.

---

[24] France, *Mark*, 620. See also Schweizer's comment that "the one who asked [Peter] was simply a servant girl who probably had no idea what it really meant to be a 'Nazarene,' so neither a 'yes' or 'no' would have indicated anything about faith" (*Mark*, 332).

[25] This point is not to suggest that οἱ ἑστῶτες/οἱ παρεστῶτες does not have a prominent discourse function in Matthew and Mark, as I believe it does. It only serves to note that, on the level of character description, the maidservant is more defined in her role and contributes more detail to our understanding of the interpersonal relations within the episode.

4. Aspectual Analyses

Having surveyed the cohesiveness and content of the episode, an analysis of

verbal aspect choice can now proceed. Three instances of divergence will be examined

and their exegetical significance will be evaluated, although Analysis 3 itself will contain

multiple aspectual differences.

4.1. Tense-form Analysis 1

The first analysis concerns Matthew and Mark's use of different tense-forms in

recounting the maidservant's action of approaching Peter:

Matt 26:69	Mark 14:66
καὶ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ μία παιδίσκη	ἔρχεται μία τῶν παιδισκῶν
"and a certain maidservant approached him"	"and one of the maidservants came"

Table 5

It is difficult for both temporal and *Aktionsart* approaches to explain why

Matthew uses an Aorist form and the Mark uses a narrative Present. Both verbs are

functioning in a past-referring narrative context, and any attempt to describe how the

action objectively occurred—whether in some punctiliar sense for the Aorist or a durative

sense for the Present—seems difficult to maintain. That is, the question could again be

asked, how can an action objectively take place, being both punctiliar and durative?

Consequently, I contend the best explanation for the difference in tense-forms is that of

verbal aspectual choice.

The narrative Present has already received attention in this work. Rather than the

traditional views on the form's use, it is better to focus on the aspectual value of the

Present tense-form and its function in discourse in order to explain why Mark has chosen

to use it at this point in the Gospel, while, in contrast, Matthew has employed an Aorist.

Although operating in similar temporal contexts, it is the imperfective Present form,

being more heavily marked in opposition to the perfective Aorist, that has the capability

of foregrounding an action the author wishes to emphasize. Mark in particular uses the

narrative Present quite often. According to Fanning, it is used:

> (1) to begin a paragraph [...]—1:12; 2:15, 18; 3:13 (bis), 20 (bis), 31; 4:36 (after λέγει); 5:35; 6:30; 7:1; 8:22 (ter); 9:2 (bis); 10:1 (bis), 35, 46; 11:1, 15, 27 (bis); 12:13, 18; 14:17, 32, 43, 66;
> (2) to introduce new participants in an existing paragraph or setting [...]—1:40; 2:3; 4:37; 14:53;
> (3) to show participants moving to new locations within a paragraph [...]—5:15, 38 (bis), 40 (bis); 6:1; 11:7; 14:33, 37, 41; 16:2;
> (4) to begin a *specific* unit after a sentence introducing the *general* section in which it falls [...]—4:1; 5:22–23; 6:7; 7:32.[26]

However, even though Mark has a relatively high frequency of narrative Present

forms, this does not diminish the form's foregrounding value and its ability to contribute

to prominence. Since it is the more marked imperfective form, it stands in marked

contrast to the instances where the perfective aspect is used similarly to transition the

narrative (e.g., 1:9; 1:29, 35; 6:53), introduce participants (e.g., 6:14, 8:11; 10:13), etc.,

and so retains its potential to function as a discourse highlighter in narrative sequences as

interacts with other marked features in the text.[27]

---

[26] Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 232. Fanning bases his observations primarily on Buth, "Mark's Use of the Historical Present," 7–13, but faults Buth's analysis for its "tendency to break the narrative up into too many small paragraphs based on the occurrence of historical presents" (Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 232 n. 70). See also ch. 6 of the present work in which it is noted that Mark "overloads" the crucifixion episode of 15:16–27 with nine narrative Presents. As Fanning and Buth note, "this may be a climax marker in the Gospel" (Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 233).

[27] See Decker, *Temporal Deixis*, 101–4. However, Decker wishes to keep the notion of "vividness" at a distance, presumably due to previous scholars basing claims of vividness on temporal conceptions. But Mathewson rightly notes that "vividness" is a valid claim for the narrative Present, so long as it is based on aspectual value, not time (see Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect*, 75 n. 129).

In 14:66, Mark seems to have purposely chosen to foreground, and thus draw attention to, the maidservant's act of approaching Peter. In this way, the narrative Present functions to highlight the shift of focus from Jesus before the high priest and his accusers (vv. 53–65) to Peter before the maidservant and his accusers (vv. 66–72). This function is confirmed on the basis of two further observations. First, the maidservant's action begins an important episode that is meant to be read in direct contrast to the trial of Jesus. The marker of continuity + genitive absolute construction καὶ ὄντος τοῦ Πέτρου κάτω ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ ("and while Peter was down in the courtyard") provides a structural tie, binding it closely the preceding pericope,[28] and establishing (1) Peter as its topic,[29] and (2) a contemporaneous temporal reference for the ensuing narrative scene. Thus the sense of the construction may be "meanwhile, while Peter was down in the courtyard..."[30] Through the use of this construction, the author moves the reader seamlessly from vv. 53–65, a pericope primarily concerned with false witnesses and accusations brought against an innocent and enduring Jesus, to vv. 66–72, a pericope concerned with the true accusations brought against a guilty Peter who falls under temptation.[31]

---

[28] See Westfall, *Hebrews*, 198. See also Porter, "Mark 16:1–8," 127–28 for another occurrence of a genitive absolute construction in Mark 16:1 that creates the same kind of cohesion. Additionally, Porter's essay is another fine test case for how verbal aspect can shape and contour a discourse by means of its pragmatic capabilities. However, it is not Porter's intent to fully account for divergent tense-form usage in Synoptic parallel texts.

[29] For a helpful discussion on the notions of Prime/Subsequent, Theme/Rheme, Topic/Comment, see Dvorak, "Thematization, Topic, and Information Flow," 19–24. Dvorak defines Prime as a clause level term. It is "[w]ho or what the clause is focused upon; [it] provides the framework within which the subsequent can be interpreted." Also at the clause level, the Subsequent is the "development of the prime; [it is] that which the writer wants the reader to remember." A the level of the clause-complex, the Theme is "the change of participant as actor of process chain," while the Rheme is the "additional process information for current actor (extension of process chain)." At the paragraph level is the Topic, which is the "establishment of a new semantic environment for the discourse," and the Comment, which is "Support information for the current topic" (Dvorak, "Thematization, Topic, and Information Flow," 20).

[30] Stein, *Mark*, 689.

[31] Schwiezer notes this as well when he says, "Peter's denial forms a framework around Jesus' testimony. His unfaithfulness is contrasted to the faithfulness of Jesus, who remains true until death. Surely at one time the story of Peter's denial was told by itself as a continuous unity" (*Mark*, 320).

The second observation which may explain why Mark wishes to foreground the maidservant's action of coming to Peter relates to how the pericope fits within the larger theme of the failure of the disciples present in the Gospel. For example, throughout the Gospel the disciples do not comprehend Jesus's parables (4:13), they behave ignorantly (9:5–6) and without power (9:18), and they flee from Jesus at his arrest (14:50).[32] On the level of thematic structure, then, Peter's denials may represent a climax for this particular theme—the top apostle falls the hardest. Matthew, on the other hand, evidently does not wish to highlight the transition, at least not in the same way and with the same formal linguistic features as Mark.[33] The use of the connective δέ in 26:69 may suggest a bit more narrative development and discontinuity between the previous episode of Jesus before the high priest and Peter's denials, whereas in Mark the two scenes are depicted as side-by-side.[34] Matthew's use of προσῆλθεν as the least heavily marked Aorist functions to provide the background, and simply carries the narrative baseline forward without drawing any attention to the maidservant's "approaching."

4.2. Tense-form Analysis 2

The second analysis again concerns a difference between Matthew and Mark. In recounting Peter's second denial, Matthew uses the Aorist form ἠρνήσατο, while Mark uses an Imperfect ἠρνεῖτο.

---

[32] See Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 89–90.

[33] However, note that Davies and Allison say concerning Matthew's account that Peter's denials represent "the climax of the disciples' failure. The first to be called is now the last to fall away" (*Matthew*, 3:543). See also Luz, *Matthew*, 3:453.

[34] Black, *Sentence Conjunctions*, 144.

Table 6

Matt 26:72	Mark 14:70
καὶ πάλιν ἠρνήσατο μετὰ ὅρκου	ὁ δὲ πάλιν ἠρνεῖτο
"and again he denied with an oath"	"now again he denied"

France says that Mark's change in tense-form, from ἠρνήσατο in the first denial to ἠρνεῖτο in the second, is "surprising."[35] He goes on to suggest two possible explanations, both based on a theory of *Aktionsart*: (1) the Imperfect form could suggest "a continuing or repeated denial rather than a single statement,"[36] or (2) and more likely for France, the form has a conative force, because although Peter was attempting to deny his attachment to Jesus, his accent labeled him definitively as a Galilean, and thus one of his disciples.[37]

There are two problems with France's suggestions that concern us here. First, he does not offer any formal linguistic evidence for his assertions concerning the meaning of the Imperfect in Mark 14:70. It is possible that Peter's denial was continual or possessed a conative force, but neither of these options can be established on the basis of the Imperfect tense-form alone. Attempting to do so confuses and blurs the distinctive line between the verb's semantics (imperfective aspect) and pragmatics (foregrounding), as well as its form and function. Instead, co-textual and contextual observations must be the deciding factors as to whether there is a continual or conative function for the Imperfect. Second, the *Aktionsart* approach to the meaning of Greek verbs, as employed by France

---

[35] France, *Mark*, 621.
[36] Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markum*, 293 also suggests this, saying "Das Imperfekt deutet deren Andauern an" ("The imperfect points to the continuation [of the action]."
[37] France, *Mark*, 621.

and Gnilka for example, will have difficulty answering the question of why Matthew has employed an Aorist form and Mark an Imperfect form, while both are recounting the same processes. It is unlikely that Peter's second denial could have objectively occurred in both a punctiliar and durative manner simultaneously.[38]

A better suggestion is that the subjective choice of the more heavily marked imperfective form serves a foregrounding function for Mark's narrative, adding a level of discourse prominence to Peter's second denial. Decker offers a helpful summary concerning the function of the Imperfect, especially as it appears in Mark: "Narrative writers normally employ the imperfective aspect for descriptive purposes: the present form for emphasis and/or detailed description, the imperfect for describing events that are more remote from the main storyline."[39] So, while the Imperfect is slightly less marked than the Present, it nonetheless retains imperfective aspect and thus stands in opposition to the least marked perfective Aorist: the Imperfect is used to describe an event in a more defined and contoured manner than the Aorist, portraying it as unfolding from the perspective of the author.

It is reasonable now to evaluate other co-textual features that are present in the Markan pericope that support the claim of a foregrounding discourse function for the Imperfect ἠρνεῖτο. Two features in particular are worth mentioning: (1) the introduction

---

[38] Stein (*Mark*, 691–92) also incorrectly employs an *Aktionsart* understanding of the Imperfect, which leads him to say, "The imperfect 'was denying' (ἠρνεῖτο, *erneito*) indicates the repetitiveness of his [Peter's] denial. Thus the second denial is more damning than the first, single denial (indicated by the aorist form of the verb [ἠρνήσατο, *ernesato*] in 14:68a) in intensity and scope (to the female servant and the bystanders, not just to the woman)." While Stein is correct in noting that (1) there is an increase of intensity in the scene, and (2) the Imperfect does play a role in raising the narrative tension, he is wrong to base his observations on the false idea that the tense-form communicates the "repetitiveness" of Peter's denial.

[39] Decker, *Verbal Aspect*, 107. See also Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 198–211 for a thorough treatment of the Imperfect form.

of τοῖς παρεστῶσιν ("those standing by") to the narrative, and (2) the recorded speech of 14:69. These two features require further explanation.

After the first denial, Mark moves Peter away from the courtyard itself (ἡ αὐλὴ) to what was probably the gateway leading into the courtyard (τὸ προαύλιον). This movement depicts the escalation of Peter's fear and embarrassment, and thus his attempt to avoid a further encounter with the maidservant.[40] However, Peter does not remove himself far enough to accomplish his goal. At 14:69, the same maidservant (note the article in ἡ παιδίσκη) identifies him once again, but this time Mark has her speaking to a new character group, "the bystanders," expressed by means of the Perfect participle τοῖς παρεστῶσιν.

This introduction is significant for two reasons. First, the author uses the most heavily marked Perfect to identify and describe those as "the bystanders." It is interesting to note that the word παρίστημι occurs six times in Mark, all appearing in the Perfect tense-form.[41] However, the temptation to view this as a stereotyped Markan idiom should be resisted.[42] Rather it should be understood as an intentional use of the tense-form, which is used to express a key lexical item that seems to hold a prominent place in Markan usage. Mark 4:29, the close of Jesus' first teaching segment on the nature of the kingdom of God, says that when the seed of the kingdom grows and bears fruit, the sickle is sent out because the harvest is "standing by" (or "ready," παρέστηκεν). The next time the word is used, in 14:47, it is of Peter himself, as "one of the bystanders" (τῶν

---

[40] So Collins, *Mark*, 708 and France, *Mark*, 620–21.
[41] Mark 4:29; 14:47, 69, 70; 15:35, 39.
[42] The major reason being that there seems to have been a fully developed range of paradigmatic choices available for Mark concerning παρίστημι.

παρεστηκότων), who drew out his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Two other occurrences (15:35, 39) come at Jesus' crucifixion and describe characters who make significant christological statements. I suggest, then, that Mark may have a tendency to use this word in the Perfect tense-form at various climactic points in his narrative structure. The same seems to be true for its two occurrences in the episode of Peter's denial. Peter has been accused by a single maidservant at the start, but now, at the second denial, a group of people are added to the narrative equation. It is this same group of people (v. 70, οἱ παρεστῶτες) that function as a cohesive tie between vv. 69 and 70, and thus actually become Peter's accusers at his third denial. Therefore, one can begin to see why Mark chose to employ the Imperfect ἠρνεῖτο as a foregrounding form: to highlight the escalation of the narrative tension in combination with the introduction of a key character group, "the bystanders." This is something that Matthew evidently does not wish to do in his version, although he seems to have his own way of creating discourse prominence for Peter's third denial (see below).

More briefly, the second formal element that contributes to the foregrounding function of the Imperfect is the recorded speech in Mark 14:69: οὗτος ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐστιν ("he is one of them"). While direct speech in narrative is by its very nature meant to draw attention to something in particular,[43] two specific features stand out that cause the quotation to aide in the creation of prominence at this point in the discourse. First, the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος adds the notion of proximity (understood spatially) to participant interaction. Peter has exited the courtyard in order to remove himself from

---

[43] See Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 75.

danger, yet he is still spatially close enough for (1) both the maidservant and the

bystanders to recognize him, and for (2) him to deny her accusation. This spatial

proximity functions harmoniously with the imperfective aspectual value of ἠρνεῖτο,

which conceives of the action as unfolding before the eyes of the author. Interestingly, in

v. 71—Peter's third denial—Peter likewise uses the proximate demonstrative pronoun in

the construction τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον to emphatically deny knowing Jesus.[44] Second,

the syntax of the statement elevates the force of the accusation against Peter. The Adjunct

phrase ἐξ αὐτῶν placed before the main verb squarely identifies Peter as one "from

among them [Jesus' disciples]."[45] Luke follows the same syntactical pattern, while

Matthew does not.

Therefore, it seems accurate to say that the reason why Mark has chosen to

employ the Imperfect tense-form ἠρνεῖτο at 14:70 is in order foreground Peter's second

denial. In doing so, it (1) escalates narrative tension because it is a more heavily marked

form, and (2) functions in tandem with the important introduction of those who will bring

the third and final accusation against Peter. Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, do not

appear to draw any particular attention to the content of the second denial, for both are

expressed by the least marked Aorist. However, as will be the focus of our next analysis,

both Matthew and Luke have their own unique linguistic tactics that are used in creating

discourse prominence for their version of Peter's final act of disowning Jesus.

---

[44] Schweizer, *Mark*, 332 says that Peter's third denial is more emphatic than the previous two, but he is not explicit as to why this is the case.

[45] See Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 293, who says "'Dieser gehört zu ihnen' die die Gemeinschaft der Jünger im Blick hat" ("'This is one of them' has the community of disciples in view").

4.3. Tense-form Analysis 3

The third analysis will examine verbal aspect choice in the verses that recount

Peter's third denial (Matt 26:73–75//Mark 14:70b–72//Luke 22:59–62). However, first, a

prefatory comment is needed. This treatment, primarily of the divergences between

Matthew and Luke, will not be limited to a same-lexeme-different-tense-form sort of

analysis. That is, the texts diverge not only in tense-form choice, but also in the use of

lexical items and larger structures. Thus the analysis will take several interesting

instances of verbal aspect choice into consideration. The texts read as follows:

Table 7

Matt 26:73–75	Mark 14:70b–72	Luke 22:59–62
μετὰ μικρὸν δὲ προσελθόντες οἱ ἑστῶτες εἶπον τῷ Πέτρῳ· ἀλη-θῶς καὶ σὺ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ, καὶ γὰρ ἡ λαλιά σου δῆλόν σε ποιεῖ. τότε ἤρξατο καταθεματίζειν καὶ ὀμνύειν ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον. καὶ εὐθέως ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν. καὶ ἐμνήσθη ὁ Πέτρος τοῦ ῥήματος Ἰησοῦ εἰρηκότος ὅτι πρὶν ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι τρὶς ἀπαρνήσῃ με· καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς.	καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν πάλιν οἱ παρεστῶτες ἔλεγον τῷ Πέ-τρῳ· ἀληθῶς ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ, καὶ γὰρ Γαλιλαῖος εἶ. ὁ δὲ ἤρξατο ἀναθεματίζειν καὶ ὀμνύειν ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον ὃν λέγετε. καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκ δευτέρου ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν. καὶ ἀνεμνήσθη ὁ Πέτρος τὸ ῥῆμα ὡς εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι πρὶν ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι δὶς τρίς με ἀπαρνήσῃ· καὶ ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιεν.	καὶ διαστάσης ὡσεὶ ὥρας μιᾶς ἄλλος τις διισχυρίζετο λέγων· ἐπ' ἀληθείας καὶ οὗτος μετ' αὐτοῦ ἦν, καὶ γὰρ Γαλιλαῖός ἐστιν. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Πέτρος· ἄνθρω-πε, οὐκ οἶδα ὃ λέγεις. καὶ παραχρῆμα ἔτι λαλοῦντος αὐτοῦ ἐφώνησεν ἀλέκτωρ. καὶ στραφεὶς ὁ κύριος ἐνέβλεψεν τῷ Πέτρῳ, καὶ ὑπ-εμνήσθη ὁ Πέτρος τοῦ ῥήματος τοῦ κυρίου ὡς εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὅτι πρὶν ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι σήμερον ἀπαρνήσῃ με τρίς. καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς.
Now after a little while, those standing said to Peter, "Truly you yourself are also one of them. For indeed your accent makes you clear." Then he began to curse and swear that "I do not know the man!" And immediately the rooster crowed. And Peter was reminded of the word Jesus spoke to him that "Before the rooster crows, three times you will deny me." And going outside, he wept bitterly.	And after a little while, again those standing by were saying to Peter, "Truly you are one of them. For indeed you are a Galilean." Now he began to curse and swear that "I do not know this man whom you say." And immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter was reminded about the word that Jesus spoke to him that "Before the rooster calls twice, three times you will deny me." And putting his head in his hands he was weeping.	And after about an hour had passed, some other person was convinced saying "Truly this man also was with him, for he is a Galilean. But Peter said. "Man, I do not know what you say." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And turning, the Lord looked right at Peter, and Peter was reminded of the word of the Lord that he spoke to him that "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." And going outside he wept bitterly.

To start, all three Gospels begin the sequence of Peter's third denial with temporal

deixis, which strengthens cohesion between the first two denials and the third one (Matt

26:73, μετὰ μικρὸν δε "now after a little while"//Mark 14:70b, καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν πάλιν

"and after a little while, again"//Luke 22:59, καὶ διαστάσης ὡσεὶ ὥρας μιᾶς "and after

about an hour had passed"). Whereas Luke recounts that an individual acted as Peter's

accuser (ἄλλος τις, "another certain person"), Matthew and Mark attribute the

accusation to a group of people (Matt 26:73, οἱ ἑστῶτες "those standing"//Mark 14:70b,

οἱ παρεστῶτες "those standing by).

Matthew's use of the most heavily marked Perfect participle οἱ ἑστῶτες in 26:73

seems intentional, being similar to Mark's use noted above. However, Matthew's precise

placement of it seems intentional as well. Unlike Mark, Matthew has chosen not to use

the Perfect participle in 26:71, where it simply has a maidservant speaking τοῖς ἐκεῖ ("to

those there"). Consequently, I suggest that Matthew has reserved the Perfect participle's

use for 26:73 in order to pull Peter's third round of accusers to the frontground of the

discourse and to create prominence at the point of Peter's third denial and the crowing of

the rooster. This assertion is supported by the heightened force of the group's accusation.

First, Matthew records the group as saying ἀληθῶς καὶ σὺ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶ ("truly you

yourself are also one of them"). The adjunct ἀληθῶς acts as an intensifier and expresses

that the accusers themselves are thoroughly convinced of Peter's true identity as one of

Jesus' followers. Second, the conjunction of unmarked continuity, καί, is probably meant

to solidify the link between Peter and the rest of the disciples.[46] Third, the marked use of

---

[46] Black, *Sentence Conjunctions*, 111–14.

the nominative, i.e., the expressed subject σύ, reinforces Peter as the focus of their

statement.[47] Fourth, οἱ ἑστῶτες in 26:73 and εἰρηκότος in 26:75, both being heavily

marked Perfect participles, form a cohesive tie around Peter's last denial, which

emphasizes the denial itself as well as the two indicting participants—"those standing by"

and "the word of Jesus." Thus, these features function collaboratively to support the

argument that the Perfect participle operates as a frontgrounding form to create a

heightened level of discourse prominence at this point in Matthew's narrative.

Luke, evidently, has chosen quite a different way to structure his narrative and

mark this section (22:59–62) as the climax of the episode. Verse 59 provides a temporal

cohesive tie between Peter's second and Peter's third denial by means of the genitive

absolute construction καὶ διαστάσης ὡσεὶ ὥρας μιᾶς ("and after about an hour had

passed"). Luke then introduces Peter's third accuser, employing an Imperfect form as the

main verb: ἄλλος τις διϊσχυρίζετο λέγων ("another person was thoroughly convinced,

saying"). The use of the strategically positioned imperfective form in the midst of an

episode dominated by perfective (i.e., Aorist) forms is significant,[48] and reflects a typical

Lukan pattern concerning aspectual choice. Alexander Loney has correctly argued that

Luke has a predilection for using Aorist forms to open and close narrative sequences,

while employing Imperfect forms in close proximity to one another in order to create a

---

[47] See Porter, *Idioms*, 295–96, where he says, "The expressed subject is often used as a form of topic marker or shifter (in a 'topic and comment sequence'), and is appropriately placed first to signal this semantic function. What this means is that when the subject is expressed it is often used wither to draw attention to the subject of discussion or to mark a shift in the topic, perhaps signalling that a new person or event is the center of focus. The comment is made upon this topic by means of the predicate. The subject gives new or emphatic information and the predicate elucidates it." See also, Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:806 notes that καὶ σύ is "emphatic" but does not say why or what qualifies it as "emphatic."

[48] This takes into consideration the use of several aspectually vague verbs such as κάθημαι and εἰμί. On the notion of aspectual vagueness, see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 442–47.

vivid narrative structure on the basis of "perspective change."[49] By choosing to use either

Aorist (perfective aspect) or Imperfect (imperfective aspect) forms, Luke is able to

provide an organized structure for his episodic narrative that consists of vividness and

contrastive prominence within individual pericopes.[50] Therefore, the important thing to

note for this study is that the strategically placed, more heavily marked Imperfect tense-

form brings to the foreground the force of Peter's third accuser, and thus signals the

episode's climax, whereas the first two accusations were carried along primarily by less

heavily marked Aorist verbs.[51]

There are two other features in the surrounding co-text of Luke 22:59 that

contribute to the foregrounding function of the more heavily marked Imperfect, and so

establish the climactic character of 22:59–62. First, the Adjunct phrase ἐπ' ἀληθείας

("truly"), the functional equivalent of ἀληθῶς in Mark and Matthew, strengthens the

accusation against Peter, and, together with διισχυρίζετο, helps to bring the narrative

---

[49] See Loney, "Narrative Structure," 4–31. This is seen in Luke 22:54, where Luke opens the episode with several Aorist forms (συλλαβόντες, ἤγαγον, εἰσήγαγον), recounting the actions from an external viewpoint, and then, in the same verse, draws his readers into the episode through the use of the Imperfect ἠκολούθει. The external/internal perspectival opposition, to me, can be understood along similar lines of what this work has described as the background/foreground opposition (Aorist and Present/ Imperfect).

[50] Loney argues that Luke's pattern of usage follows in the historiographical tradition of other Greek authors, in particular Thucydides, since he was concerned with both the factual representation of the past as well his own contemporary, didactic purposes ("Narrative Structure," 9–11). Although he is working in Classical Greek, see also Buijs, "Aspectual Differences and Narrative Technique," 128–32 who discusses the Aorist/Imperfect opposition in terms of completedness/incompletedness and its potential for signaling the coming of more information. For Buijs, the Aorist cuts off this potential due to its "completedness," while the Imperfect "gives the sign 'to be continued'" (p. 130) and "creates the expectation that more information...will be conveyed" (p. 131). Even though Buijs works within a different framework for the Aorist and Imperfect in Classical Greek, his attempt to show the impact on narrative structure that aspectual differences have in parallel material is helpful.

[51] See Marshall, *Luke*, 843 who, although noting the force of the accusation, does not offer comment on the function of the Imperfect specifically. He says, "The man [Peter's accuser] is sure of his ground, despite Peter's earlier denials, and so the narrative reaches its climax in his firm statement...that Peter is certainly one of the group, since he is a Galilean." Similarly, see Green, *Luke*, 787–88 who appears to acknowledge the escalated tension at this point in Luke's episode, but does not comment on the use and function of the Imperfect. (See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 201–2 for some general observations on the aspectual differences between Synoptic writers, particularly with reference to Luke.)

tension to a peak.[52] And second, while Peter's words in v. 60 do not seem to be formally

highlighted, it does appear that Luke wishes to underscore that Peter's ultimate accuser in

the episode is not the ἄλλος τις ("some other person"), but rather *Jesus' words*, which

were spoken to him prophetically in 22:34: "The cock will not call today until you should

deny knowing me three times." Therefore, here, at the pinnacle of the episode, Luke does

not wish to draw attention to the actual content of Peter's denial, but rather to the fact that

καὶ παραχρῆμα ἔτι λαλοῦντος αὐτοῦ ἐφώνησεν ἀλέκτωρ ("and immediately, while

he was still speaking, the rooster crowed"). Through the use of the two temporal deictic

indicators and the more heavily marked Present participle, Peter's indictment and the

fulfillment of Jesus' predictive words are accentuated. This may be meant to evoke a

certain level of irony, since in the end it is not the insistent third accuser of v. 59 who

pronounces a guilty verdict on Peter. Rather, the point is that at the precise moment of

Peter's crime, Jesus's words come true—Peter has indeed denied Jesus three times before

the rooster crowed.[53] This, coupled with the contextual note of v. 61, in which Peter's

eyes meet with Jesus', thus signaling Peter's memory and his conviction, creates an

enhanced level of discourse prominence for vv. 59–62, in which the Imperfect tense-form

plays a central role.

My analysis will conclude with comments on two other interesting occurrences of

divergent tense usage in the section of Peter's final denial. The first concerns a difference

---

[52] Marshall, *Luke*, 843 comments that ἐπ' ἀληθείας is Luke's "equivalent for ἀμήν."

[53] This notion seems to coincide with Green's comments (*Luke*, 786, although no linguistic comment is given) that, "his [Peter's] role in the narrative is primarily related to demonstrating that Jesus is truly a prophet. After all Jesus had foretold the primary events of this scene—both Peter's threefold denial before the crowing of the cock...and his own maltreatment...Not least in light of Luke's reference to Jesus' earlier predication as 'the word of the Lord' (v. 61), which recalls the designation of prophetic speech earlier in the Gospel and in the OT..., the cruel game Jesus' captors play with him can only be understood by Luke's audience as ironic: It is to a genuine prophet that they address the demand, 'Play the prophet'."

between Matthew and Mark/Luke, and the second concerns a difference between

Matthew/Luke and Mark.

In Mark 14:72//Luke 22:61, both Gospels recount that once the rooster had

crowed, Peter was reminded of Jesus' word ὡς εἶπεν αὐτῷ ("as he spoke to him"). This

secondary clause is noticeably absent in the Matthean parallel (26:75), which reads

instead that Peter was reminded τοῦ ῥήματος Ἰησοῦ εἰρηκότος ("of the word which

Jesus spoke"). How is one to account for this difference in form? Those who would resort

to the claim that Greek verbs lose temporal reference outside of the indicative mood are

still forced to deal with (1) the fact that the participle is still a Perfect and so must address

the semantics of the Perfect tense-form, and (2) the fact that Mark and Luke chose to use

a different form to recount the same event of Jesus' speaking. As has already been

demonstrated, temporal frameworks and *Aktionsart* theory have serious difficulties when

attempting to account for such differences.

It is more methodologically sound to understand Matthew's use of the Perfect

participle as a subjective choice of stative verbal aspect, which here serves a discourse

function of frontgrounding the "word that Jesus spoke" in order to emphatically connect

Jesus' prediction of Peter's denials in 26:34 with the predication's fulfillment in 26:75.[54]

This point becomes clearer in the light of other verbal oppositions present in 26:75: the

---

[54] Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:807 suggests that it is the rooster's crowing that "points rather to the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in v. 34 and at the same time, as a dramatic touch, serves to heighten Peter's shameful failure." However, in keeping with the analysis above, I suggest that, according to Matthew, the crowing of the rooster was a mnemonic device for Peter that caused him to remember τοῦ ῥήματος Ἰησοῦ εἰρηκότος. It is this "word that Jesus spoke" that marks the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in 26:34 and connects it to 26:75, not the rooster's crow itself. In this way, one can understand the rooster's crowing as the background (hence the Aorist, ἐφώνησεν) for the highlighting of Jesus' word, which in the end indicts Peter for his actions. See also Luz, *Matthew*, 3:456; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:549 who say that Ἰ ησοῦ εἰρηκότος is "more solemn" than the phrase "as Jesus said to him" in Mark;

first main verb is an Aorist indicative; there are two Aorist non-indicatives in the verse

(an infinitive in direct discourse, and a participle); and the episode closes with another

Aorist indicative main verb. Therefore, it is quite likely that Matthew intends for the

Perfect participle to stand out in its surrounding co-text and raise the level of discourse

prominence for the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction. Further, as mentioned above, it is

likely that εἰρηκότος provides a link with ἑστῶτες in 26:73 by means of its aspectual

semantics; both function to highlight Peter's third denial and the participants through

which Peter's indictment comes. In contrast, Mark and Luke do not draw any particular

attention to Jesus' prior prediction through formal marking. However, as is noted below,

Mark's interest in this part of the episode (14:72) appears to be in Peter's response of

weeping to the rooster's crowing, which is expressed formally by the use of the Imperfect

ἔκλαιεν. Luke, on the other hand, formally marks neither the fulfillment of Jesus'

prediction nor Peter's weeping.

The final instance of divergent tense-form usage that is considered in this chapter

revolves around the use of the verb κλαίω ("I weep") in Matt 26:75//Mark 14:72//Luke

22:62, which is employed as an Aorist in Matthew and Luke (ἔκλαυσεν) but as an

Imperfect in Mark (ἔκλαιεν).[55] Once again, strictly temporal and *Aktionsart* approaches

to the Greek verbal system have difficulty in accounting for this difference: does Peter's

weeping occur objectively as a punctiliar action or a durative one? The answer is that

neither option is communicated on the basis of tense-form usage alone. Instead, as has

been the pattern, this tension is resolved once verbal aspect is understood as the core

---

[55] Bock, *Luke*, 1788 notes this divergence, yet offers no suggestions as to why the divergence might exist.

semantic component of Greek verbs. In this way, the difference may be explained in terms of the perfective/imperfective aspectual choice of an author. That is, the contrast lies in each author's conception of the action, whether it is viewed internally as "in progress" or externally as a "complete whole." Therefore, rather than interpreting ἔκλαιεν in Mark as referring to a continual or prolonged weeping,[56] Mark should be understood as employing the more marked Imperfect tense-form as a descriptive foregrounding device that highlights Peter's response to the rooster's crowing, an action that is expressed from Mark's subjective viewpoint as in progress.[57]

Furthermore, it appears that Mark could have broader thematic reasons for foregrounding Peter's act of weeping. In other words, the marked use of ἔκλαιεν to close the episode may provide a formal signal to readers/listeners that Peter's action is meant to be understood in connection or contrast with something in the narrative past or future.[58] Although offering virtually no linguistic argumentation, France puts forth two reasons for

---

[56] See Mann, *Mark*, 632 who says the tense communicates "a long-continued grief, following upon shattering self-discovery." However, this assertion is (1) based entirely on Mann's subjective interpretation and not formal linguistic evidence, and (2) altogether insufficient to explain why the other two Synoptic writers use an Aorist form. In other words, he side-steps the morphological difference and blurs the distinction between form and function.

[57] Collins, *Mark*, 710 suggests that the construction ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιεν is "vivid," but does not say why this is so. Additionally, she lacks any comment on the use of the Imperfect.

[58] Porter (*Verbal Aspect*, 350) seems to suggest a similar concept when he says in discussing the use of the marked Present imperative δίδου in Luke 11:3, "The Present Imperative in the prayer appears to be a self-conscious use of the marked Present to draw attention to a theme that is pursed in the following material." However, a notable difference between Porter's analysis of Luke 11 and mine of Mark 14 is that Luke's following material picks up the theme of "giving," which is signaled through the use of the marked δίδου, but also coincides lexically. In contrast, I do not argue that Mark pursues a later theme of "weeping," but rather that the marked tense-form seems to signal narrative connections and contrasts that are meant to be seen in the light of Peter's action.

the presence of ἔκλαιεν in Mark 14:72.[59] First, he says the verb is meant to draw a

contrast between Peter's remorseful response to his failure on the one hand, and Judas's

"settled disloyalty" on the other (cf. Mark 14:10–11, 43–46). For France, Peter's sorrow

is the likely reason why his defection from Jesus is portrayed as temporary, while Judas's

is absolute. Second, and closely tied to the first, ἔκλαιεν may foreshadow Mark's version

of Peter's reinstatement recounted in 16:7. Here, an angel appears to the three women at

Jesus' tomb and says to them, "Speak to his [Jesus'] disciples *and to Peter...*" (italics

mine). Since this is the only point in Mark at which Peter is mentioned after the denial

episode, it seems probable that he is singled out from among the other disciples to

communicate that he was not left in his weeping, but rather that in the light of his

weeping he remains the lead apostle.[60] Thus, the foregrounding function of the more

marked Imperfect tense-form, and its ability to add more defined contour to a narrative

on the basis of its verbal aspect, provide France with the formal linguistic evidence that

his otherwise insightful comments lack.

5. *Summary and Conclusion*

In this chapter I have accomplished two primary goals. First, I have identified and

evaluated the key features that create cohesion between Peter's denial episode and the

discourse material that precedes it, as well as features that create cohesion with the

---

[59] France, *Mark*, 619. However, while this thematic contrast via the use of ἔκλαιεν is suggestive, France seems to evince an inaccurate knowledge on the meaning of the Imperfect tense-form and ignores the its function in narrative discourse. In commenting on the tense-form a few pages later he says, "The three words which express his response, καὶ ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιεν, are puzzling. An aorist tense, as in Matthew and Luke, would have seemed more natural for his 'bursting into tears,' and it is loading the imperfect very heavily to take it as 'wept uncontrollably' or the like." For France, then, the Imperfect here is clearly an anomaly, and is ultimately unexplainable.

[60] While not commenting on the tense-form itself, Boring also notes, "Peter weeps. This is the reader's last sight of Peter, apparently a step in the direction of repentance. The word of 16:7 will single him out for restoration, but the narrative ends without recounting this" (*Mark*, 416). See also Collins, *Mark*, 710.

episode itself. Second, I have performed three comparative analyses of verbal aspect choice. The first analysis concerned the Aorist προσῆλθεν in Matt 26:69 and the Present ἔρχεται in Mark 14:66. The second concerned the Aorist ἠρνήσατο in Matt 26:72 and the Imperfect ἠρνεῖτο in Mark 14:70. The third analysis examined a series of divergences: (1) the distinctive uses of the Perfect participles οἱ ἑστῶτες in Matt 26:73 and οἱ παρεστῶτες in Mark 14:70, (2) the unique role of the Imperfect διϊσχυρίζετο in Luke's discourse, (2) the use of the Aorist εἶπεν in Mark 14:72//Luke 22:61 and the Perfect participle εἰρηκότος in Matt 26:75, and (4) the use of the Aorist ἔκλαυσεν in Matt 26:75//Luke 22:62 and the Imperfect ἔκλαιεν in Mark 14:72. I have argued that the least marked Aorist functions primarily as a backgrounding tense-form that contributes little to the creation of discourse prominence. In contrast, the use of the more marked tense-forms (i.e., the Present/Imperfect and the Perfect) add more contour and shape to certain actions in the denial episode through their foregrounding and frontgrounding functions as they interact with other marked features in the text.

Thus far, the validity of this model has been tested and confirmed in two sections of the Synoptic PNs; chapter 4 contained an analysis that dealt with a larger portion of text, while the present chapter has dealt with a shorter portion. The model will continue to be tested in the following chapter as it considers verbal aspectual choice in the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' Crucifixion (Matt 27:33–56//Mark 15:22–41//Luke 23:33–49).

CHAPTER 6

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS
MATT 27:1–61//MARK 15:1–47//LUKE 22:66—23:56

1. Introduction

This chapter represents the final aspectual analysis of this work and will focus on

the Synoptic accounts of the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. Although it will

include treatment of several pericopes that could be taken as smaller, individual episodes,

the cohesive character of Matt 27:1–61//Mark 15:1–47//Luke 22:66—23:56 prompts a

consideration of the patterns of verbal aspect choice within the larger unit of discourse.

Thus, similar to the analyses above in chs. 4 and 5, I will consider the significance of

tense-form divergence and the influence that aspect choice has within the broader co-text.

Identifying the cohesive framework of the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' crucifixion

will be the first major task of the chapter. Specifically, I will show how the smaller sub-

units of Jesus before Pilate (Matt 27:1–31//Mark 15:1–20//Luke 22:66—23:25), the

crucifixion (Matt 27:32–56//Mark 15:21–41//Luke 23:26–49), and the burial of Jesus

(Matt 27:57–61//Mark 15:42–47//Luke 23:50–56) cohere as a larger unit of discourse. I

will do this by giving attention to three textual features: (1) items that mark development

in the narrative such as conjunctions and temporal deixis, (2) participant references, and

(3) lexical repetition. Identifying such elements of cohesion will provide a formal

foundation for understanding how the function of verbal aspect influences its broader co-

text. The second major task of the chapter will be to analyze four instances of tense-form

divergence. It will be argued that the aspectual model that has been put forth in previous

chapters offers the most powerful explanation for these divergences.

2. The Cohesiveness of the Episodes

Since the texts considered in this chapter are longer, I will note only three features that provide the discourse with cohesion. I will give Matthew's account a more thorough treatment and then compare the cohesive patterns of Mark and Luke to it, since Matthew contains slightly more content than the other two Gospels. Concerning Matt 27:1–31, the transition from Peter's denials to Jesus' trial before Pilate is indicated through the use of the genitive absolute + δέ: πρωΐας δὲ γενομένης.[1] The construction does double duty in that it marks a development in the narrative and gives its dominant element (συμβούλιον ἔλαβον, with the backgrounding Aorist carrying the mainline of the narrative forward) a new temporal referent, "when early morning came."[2] The scene is structured around uses of τότε and καί, which signal continuity in discourse, and uses of δέ, which signal a mid-level degree of discontinuity.[3] τότε in v. 3 begins a short section (vv. 3–10) that develops material perhaps understood as occurring "behind the scenes."[4] That is, vv. 1–2 transition Jesus' trial from the Jewish leaders to Pilate, vv. 3–10 recount material about Judas's remorse, and v. 11 pushes the narrative forward (via δέ + Aorist main verb ἐστάθη) by

---

[1] Cf. instances when a genitive absolute is used with καί, a maker of continuity (e.g., Matt 21:10, 23). Nolland, *Matthew*, 1145 suggests that the genitive absolute here may indicate Matthew's "concern to show that there is an unbroken continuity of action from 26:68 to 27:1." Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Mattäus*, 468 connects Matthew's use of πρωΐας δὲ γενομένης with its later use of ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης, making the comment that "Mit der Zeitangabe πρωΐας (δὲ) γενομένης wird der Anbruch des Passionstages Jesu markiert, das Gegenstück ist der Einsatz der Begräbnisgeschichte V. 57: ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης" ("The time of the advent of Jesus' passion day is marked with πρωΐας (δὲ) γενομένης, the counterpart, the burial story, is the use of ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης in v. 57"). See also Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:552

[2] A "dominant element" is an element on which another element is dependent (Reed, "The Cohesiveness of Discourse," 33). On the meaning and referent of συμβούλιον ἔλαβον, see Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:809

[3] See the horizontal cline of continuity-discontinuity that Porter and O'Donnell give in "Conjunctions," 10.

[4] Several commentators take vv. 3–10 as a completely separate unit (e.g., Turner, *Matthew*, 648–51; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:557–71; Hanger, *Matthew*, 2:809–16).

bringing the reader back to Jesus who is set before the Roman governor as the his

interrogation begins.

Matt 27:1–31 revolves around four groups of participants—Jesus, Pilate, the

Jewish leaders (including the crowds), and Barabbas. Jesus is the focal participant, an

assertion that is supported by the frequent usage of his name (in comparison to other

proper names) (vv. 1, 11 [2], 17, 20, 22, 26, 27). Jesus is also the grammatical subject of

seven verbs (vv. 3 [Goal], 11 [Goal and Actor], 12 [Goal and Actor], 14 [Actor], 22

[Goal], 23 [Goal]), and he is the referent of approximately twenty third-person pronouns.[5]

Pilate and the Jewish leaders/crowds share the "stage," also being participants, but ones

subsidiary to Jesus.[6] Even though Barabbas never speaks, he is often paired with Jesus in

discussion,[7] which may indicate that Matthew wishes to put the two characters in a

comparative relationship.[8] While the grouping of these participants creates cohesion for

Matt 27:1–31, noting changes—the presence of new participants or the absence of old

participants—can provide textual clues as to the boundary of this section.

While there are a number of lexical items repeated in Matt 27:1–31, three items in

particular occur most frequently: παραδίδωμι ("hand over, betray," 5x), ἀπολύω

("release," 4x), and σταυρόω ("crucify," 4x). Every use of παραδίδωμι in the passage,

except one (v. 18), refers to the handing over of Jesus to the Jewish or Roman authorities.

---

[5] Cf. vv. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 19, 25, 27, 28 (2), 29 (2), 30 (2), 31 (5).

[6] The proper noun "Pilate" occurs five times in the passage (vv. 2, 13, 17, 22, 24), along with seven occurrences of the title "Governor" (vv. 2, 11 [2], 14, 15, 21, 27) and four third person pronouns referring to him (vv. 14, 19 [3]). The Jewish leaders/crowds are referenced by a third person pronoun only five times (vv. 17 [2], 21, 22, 26), but they are the subjects of twenty-nine verbs.

[7] See vv. 16–17, 20–21, 26.

[8] This comparison is still valid on the narrative level, whether or not there was a historical Barabbas. For a helpful survey and analysis of the issue in relation to the "paschal pardon" custom, see Merritt, "Jesus Barabbas," 57–58. See also the various explanations in Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:822–23; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:814–20; Collins, *Mark*, 718–19; Nolland, *Matthew*, 1167–69; and Davies, "Who Is Called Barabbas," 260–62.

Each occurrence of ἀπολύω has Pilate as the Actor in the process (potential or real) of

"releasing." I suggest that Matthew wishes to put the uses of παραδίδωμι—which

express the handing over of Jesus—in direct contrast with the uses of ἀπολύω—which

express Pilate's desire to release Jesus in the light of his innocence.[9] In this way, the

words add a level of lexical-semantic cohesion to the sub-unit. σταυρόω occurs twice on

the lips of the crowds as they demand that Jesus be crucified (σταυρωθήτω). In v. 26,

the words are syntactically connected by a ἵνα clause: "[Pilate...] after flogging Jesus,

handed him over [παρέδωκεν] in order that [ἵνα] he might be crucified [σταυρωθῇ]."

The repetition of the words has two functions. First, they give an indication of the topic

of the section, that being the handing over of Jesus to the authorities for the purpose of

his execution. Second, the use of σταυρόω, specifically, also functions as a lexical

semantic tie to link this section (Matt 27:1–31) with the following one (Matt 27:32–56),

where the crucifixion itself is the centerpiece of the narrative. That is to say, in 27:1–31

(esp. vv. 22–31), the act of crucifying Jesus lies in the realm of possibility, a point

indicated by the use of σταυρόω in the oblique moods (imperative [2], subjunctive, and

an infinitive used to denote purpose [εἰς τὸ σταυρῶσαι]).[10] In 27:32–56, however, the

crucifixion actually happens.

Matthew's use of the construction ἐξερχόμενοι δὲ in 27:32 creates cohesion

between the units of 27:1–31 and 27:32–56. δὲ signals further development in the

narrative, and the participle, likely possessing an antecedent temporal relation to the main

---

[9] Louw-Nida, *Lexion* put both words within the same semantic domain of Control, Rule (Domain 37): παραδίδωμι can refer to the delivering of a person into the control of someone else; ἀπολύω can refer to the releasing of one from the control of another.

[10] See Porter, *Idioms*, 52–53,

verb εὗρον,[11] provides a semantic link with ἀπήγαγον in v. 31.[12] That is, ἐξερχόμενοι

δὲ introduces an event that occurs once the soldiers lead Jesus away to crucify him. Verse

33 completes the journey Jesus and the soldiers began in v. 31, signaling a geographical

transition (καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Γολγοθᾶ) and establishing the setting of

the crucifixion as "Golgotha." Uses of καί (vv. 34, 36, 37, 40, 41, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56),

δέ (vv. 35, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 54, 55), and τότε (v. 38) supply the unit with basic

structural indicators of continuity and development.

New participant roles and interaction identify Matt 27:32–56 as a distinct sub-unit

within the larger crucifixion narrative.[13] Pilate and Barabbas are no longer present. Jesus

certainly remains the center of attention, but he is no longer on trial—he is a "convicted

criminal" now carrying out his sentence. A new participant is introduced in v. 32, Simon

the Cyrene. The other major participants are the Jewish leaders and the two λῃσταί

("robbers") crucified along with Jesus. The Jews had played the role of Accusers of Jesus

before Pilate (cf. 27:12: ἐν τῷ κατηγορεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ

πρεσβυτέρων), but now they play the role of Mockers of Jesus (27:41: οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς

ἐμπαίζοντες μετὰ τῶν γραμματέων), as do the two robbers (at least in Matthew and

Mark). Thus, while the primary participants remain the same, their roles have developed

and changed as the narrative has progressed.

---

[11] I should note that this is not due to the participle's tense-form, but rather to its syntactical position in relation to εὗρον (see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 400 and his response to certain criticisms in Porter, "Time and Order in Participles").

[12] Although Louw-Nida does not put ἐξέρχομαι and ἀπάγω in the same semantic domain, it is not difficult to see that the two words overlap in some way: in v. 31, the soldiers "lead away" Jesus in order to crucify him, and v. 32 resumes the outward movement of the soldiers, "once they went out."

[13] For a similar structuring, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:607–8.

As was the case in Matt 27:1–31, the repetition of the σταυρ- root in vv. 32–56 creates cohesion not only within vv. 32–56 itself, but also between the sub-units vv. 1–31 and vv. 32–56. The root occurs five times, three times with reference to the cross of Jesus (vv. 32, 40, 42) and two times with reference to Jesus' crucifixion and the crucifixion of the two robbers (vv. 35, 38). Thus "cross" and "crucifixion" provide the section with a level of thematic continuity.

Matthew transitions to the final sub-unit of the crucifixion narrative, 27:57–61, through the use of the construction ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης in 27:57.[14] This particular construction occurs somewhat frequently in Matthew's Gospel to indicate temporal shifts and to connect the preceding content closely to what follows (cf. 8:16; 14:15, 23; 20:8; 26:20). Here it moves the narrative from the morning of Jesus' trial (cf. 27:1: πρωΐας δὲ γενομένης) and the day-time of his crucifixion (ἀπὸ δὲ ἕκτης ὥρας...ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης[15]) to the evening-time of his burial. The sub-unit is built around four uses of καί (v. 57, 59, 60 [2]) and one use of narrative τότε (v. 58), all of which create sequential continuity for the unit (except perhaps for the καί in v. 57).

Jesus is no longer the main participant in the sub-unit 27:57–61—this role belongs to Joseph of Arimathaea, who is given the attributive Epithet πλούσιος.[16] The unit is grouped with verbs in the third person, with Joseph being the Actor in every verb process in the unit (except in the process realized by the verb ἐμαθητεύθη in v. 57, where he

---

[14] Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:644; Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 482; Nolland, *Matthew*, 1125.

[15] Concerning ἀπὸ δὲ ἕκτης ὥρας...ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης, Turner says "[e]vidently, Jesus was crucified around midmorning. He dies at the end of a providential darkness during what is typically the brightest part of the day" (*Matthew*, 668). He goes on in a footnote to mention "[t]his way of reckoning time counts hours from dawn, roughly 6 a.m. (*Matthew*, 668 n. 1).

[16] In their structuring of the burial episode, Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:644 note that 27:57 introduces Joseph as the main character (cf. also pp. 648–49).

functions as the Goal, and the process realized by the verb ἐκέλευσεν in v. 58). Pilate

resurfaces as a participant, albeit briefly in v. 58, where he orders Jesus' body to be given

to Joseph. His reintroduction creates a cohesive thread for the entire Matthean crucifixion

narrative, linking 27:1–31 with 27:57–61. Verse 61 closes this sub-unit through the use of

discontinuous δὲ, which introduces and marks off two further participants that, while not

playing a major role here, become the main participants in the following resurrection

episode (Matt 28:1–10).

Since Jesus' crucifixion is now in the narrative past, the use of the σταυρ- root is

absent here. Instead, the slight repetition of "body" (σῶμα) language, referring to Jesus'

lifeless body (vv. 58, 59, 60 [σῶμα is the referent of αὐτὸ in vv. 59, 60]), and

"tomb" (μνημεῖον) language, referring to Joseph's "new tomb" (v. 60 [2]), identifies the

burial of Jesus' body as the theme of the sub-unit.

Even though at places the content of Mark 15:1–47//Luke 22:66—23:56 differs

from Matt 27:1–61 (see section 3 below), the essential patterns of cohesion in the Markan

and Lukan accounts of Jesus before Pilate (Mark 15:1–20//Luke 22:66—23:25) are

similar to that of Matthew. Mark, as does Matthew, notes that it was "in the

morning" (πρωὶ) when the Jews took Jesus and handed him over to Pilate, which

indicates a temporal shift in the narrative setting. Luke gives a similar temporal indicator

in 22:66 (καὶ ὡς ἐγένετο ἡμέρα), but it is with reference to the time of Jesus' trial

before the Jewish leaders, not Pilate. This section of Luke's story, however, leads directly

into his account of Jesus' interaction with Pilate and the accusations of the Jews. Both

Mark and Luke signal continuity between the sub-unit of Jesus before Pilate and its

preceding content through the use of καί. This stands in contrast to Matthew's use of discontinuous δέ.

The participants noted in Matt 27:1–31 are the same for Mark and Luke, except that Luke has included Herod as an additional participant (23:7–12). Jesus, Pilate, and the Jewish leaders (including the crowds) appear at the beginning of the sub-unit (Mark 15:1–3//Luke 22:66—23:3); in all three Gospels, the Jews play the role of Jesus' accusers (cf. Matt 27:12//Mark 15:3//Luke 23:2). The fourth participant, Barabbas, is not introduced in Mark and Luke until a few verses later (Mark 15:7//Luke 23:18), but he does seem to play the same antagonistic role to Jesus as he does in Matthew.

Mark's repetition of the lexical items παραδίδωμι (15:1, 10, 15), ἀπολύω (15:6, 9, 11, 15), and σταυρόω (15:13, 15, 20), being similar to Matthew's, provides the sub-unit with lexical cohesion.[17] The items παραδίδωμι and ἀπολύω, again, seem to contrast the handing over of Jesus with Pilate's desire to release him.[18] The unfortunate outcome, of course, is that Pilate "releases" Barabbas instead and "hands over" Jesus in order to be flogged and crucified (15:15). Luke's account, on the other hand, coheres around the repetition of a different set of lexemes that reflect more of a "trial" or "courtroom" scene for the sub-unit. That is to say, it primarily revolves around the use of court-room language rather than the language of "handing over" and "releasing."[19] This is demonstrated by Luke's use of the words κατηγορέω (23:2, 10, 14), ἀνακρίνω (23:14), ἐπερωτάω (23:6, 9), and αἴτιος (23:4, 14, 22), all of which connect to Domain 56,

---

[17] On the significance of the word in Mark's PN, see Collins, *Mark*, 81.
[18] See the comments made in Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 823.
[19] Although ἀπολύω does occur five times in Luke 23:1–25. παραδίδωμι, however, only occurs once (v. 25).

Courts and Legal Procedures in Louw and Nida's *Lexicon*.[20] Thus, not only does the

repetition of the individual lexemes provide the Lukan sub-unit with cohesion, but so

does their semantic domain.

The Markan and Lukan accounts of the crucifixion proper (Mark 15:21–41//Luke

23:26–49) are introduced by καί; Mark follows the connective with the narrative Present

ἀγγαρεύουσιν, while Luke follows it with a temporal use of ὡς. Once again, these

introductions differ from Matthew's use of δέ with a Present participle in 27:32.

However, Matthew's ἐξερχόμενοι operates similarly to Mark and Luke's constructions in

so far as it closely links the preceding content with what follows. Thus the main function

of the Markan and Lukan structures is to introduce an event that occurs at the same time

that Jesus and the soldiers are moving toward their destination, "the Place of the Skull."

As in Matthew, the geographical transition is noted in Mark 15:22//Luke 23:33,[21] and the

accounts basically agree in their uses of καί and δέ to signal continuity and discontinuity

(e.g., Mark 15:22, 23, 24, 25; Luke 23:27, 28, 32, 33, 35), although Luke does seem to

use δέ more frequently and has one occurrence of τότε (23:30).

In terms of lexis and participant involvement, Mark evinces similarity to Matthew

in grouping the "crucifixion" sub-unit with the repetition of the σταυρ- root, which

---

[20] Two points of clarification are needed here. First, while κατηγορέω is not listed in Domain 56 *per se* (it is listed in Domain 33, Communication), the authors do give a footnote for the word, asking the reader to "[s]ee the corresponding meanings of formal legal charges against someone (Domain 56, *Courts and Legal Procedures*)" (italics orginal). Second, the adjective αἴτιος is also not listed in Domain 56. Rather it is listed in Domains 88 (Moral and Ethical Qualities and Related Behaviors) and 89 (Relations). However, based on their definition for αἴτιος in Domain 88 ("guilt as a basis or reason for condemnation —guilt, wrongdoing, reason for condemning"), it seems odd that Domain 56 is not listed as a possibility for αἴτιος, whose noun form, αἰτία, is listed in Domain 56 as well as in Domain 88 along side of αἴτιος. Thus, I suggest that, at least here in Luke 23, αἴτιος certainly does possess legal connotations, especially in the light of its use alongside other court-room language.

[21] It is interesting to note that Luke does not include the Aramaic name Γολγοθά, but rather has only the Greek Κρανίου.

occurs 6x (15:21, 24, 25, 27, 30, 32). This creates cohesion within Mark's sub-unit, as well as between it and the latter part of the preceding sub-unit (15:13–20). Likewise, Mark's participant involvement resembles Matthew's account: Pilate and Barabbas are now absent, Jesus remains the focal participant, Simon Cyrene, a new participant, is introduced in v. 21, and the Jewish leaders/crowds shift from the role of Accusers to Mockers, along with the two robbers.

Luke, however, appears to differ in its lexical and participant grouping strategy. No one lexical item, or even semantic domain, dominates this sub-unit. In contrast to Matthew (5x) and Mark (6x), the σταυρ- root only occurs twice in Luke (23:26, 33), although it still creates a level of cohesion between 23:26–49 and the preceding unit. Nevertheless, I contend that the Lukan sub-unit coheres around two semantic domains and the participants that are associated with them. The first domain can be labeled Mourn, Lament, and includes the words κόπτομαι ("mourn") and θρηνέω ("lament") in 23:27, and κλαίω ("weep") in 23:28 (2x).[22] The Actors in the processes realized by the verbs κόπτομαι and θρηνέω are the "women," who were "morning and lamenting" Jesus (Goal), as they were following him along with a large crowd. While Jesus is the Actor in the verbal process that begins with εἶπεν in v. 28, the women are the embedded Actors in Jesus' command μὴ κλαίετε ἐπ' ἐμέ.[23] The second domain can be labeled Mock, Ridicule,[24] and includes the words ἐκμυκτηρίζω ("ridicule, mock") in 23:35,

---

[22] Louw-Nida puts κόπτομαι and θρηνέω in Domain 52, Funerals and Burials, and κλαίω in Domain 25, Attitudes and Emotions (subdomain Laugh, Cry, Groan). According the authors, only θρηνέω shares both of these domains. However, in view of Jesus' words to the women, Θυγατέρες Ἰερουσαλήμ, μὴ κλαίετε ἐπ' ἐμέ· πλὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτὰς κλαίετε καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν, it would appear that all three lexemes possess at least some level of semantic overlap.

[23] On these sorts of processes, see Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 100–3.

[24] This is a subdomain title that Louw-Nida give for Domain 33, Communication.

ἐμπαίζω ("mock") in 23:36, and ἐβλασφήμει ("blaspheme, revile") in 23:39. The Actors

in the processes realized by these words are οἱ ἄρχοντες ("the rulers"), οἱ στρατιῶται

("the soldiers"), and εἷς [...] τῶν κρεμασθέντων κακούργων ("one of the hanging

criminals"), respectively. The Goal of each of these processes is Jesus. The clustering of

words within these two semantic domains and their associated participants suggests that

Luke's crucifixion sub-unit is primarily structured around the reactions of two groups of

people toward Jesus, with the crucifixion itself inserted between them: 23:27–32

concerns the crowd who "followed" Jesus, which includes the women who "mourned"

him, 23:33–34 recounts the actual crucifixion, and 23:35–43 concerns those who

"mocked" Jesus.[25] The rest of the sub-unit (23:44–49) concludes with the reaction of a

third participant, ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης ("the centurion"), who, in response to the events

surrounding Jesus' death, "glorified God" (ἐδόξαζεν τὸν θεόν, 23:47).

Although both signal continuity with the preceding content (καὶ), Mark and Luke

transition differently to the scene of Jesus' burial (Mark 15:42–47//Luke 23:50–56). Mark

uses the construction καὶ ἤδη ὀψίας γενομένης in 15:42—a construction similar to its

Matthean parallel (Matt 27:57)—which creates temporal cohesion with what precedes.

Mark also adds the temporal note ἐπεὶ ἦν παρασκευὴ ὅ ἐστιν προσάββατον ("when it

was preparation day, which is the day before Sabbath").[26] Luke does not use any such

---

[25] Of course there is the exception of the other criminal in Luke's account who defends the innocence of Jesus (23:40–43).

[26] On issues of chronology related to these temporal indicators, see Collins, *Mark*, 776–77; France, *Mark*, 665.

temporal deixis. Rather, the introduction of the new focal participant, Joseph, serves to signal the transition to a new sub-unit.[27]

Mark's sub-unit is tied together primarily by the use of καί (e.g., 15:43, 44, 45, 46). This is true of Luke as well (23:50, 53, 54). However, Mark's use of δέ at the start of 15:44 marks a narrative development concerning Pilate's interaction with a centurion (κεντυρίωνα) and with Joseph that neither Matthew nor Luke includes. All three Gospels introduce the offline comment concerning the presence of women at Jesus' burial through the use of δέ (Matt 27:61//Mark 15:47//Luke 23:55).[28]

The use of lexis and participant involvement in the Markan and Lukan burial scenes are similar to that in Matthew, but differ particularly over participant reference. Concerning lexical usage, both Mark and Luke include the use of (dead) body (σῶμα: Mark 15:43, 45; Luke 23:52, 53, 55; πτῶμα ["corpse"]: Mark 15:45) and tomb language (μνημεῖον: Mark 15:46 (2); Luke 23:53, 55). Concerning participant involvement, in all three Synoptics Joseph of Arimathaea is the main Actor. Yet, in contrast to Matthew,

---

[27] The formal marking that Luke uses to introduce Joseph into the narrative suggests that Joseph is an important figure for Luke. Westfall says, "The introductory reference to the first participant of a story or episode will often include a full nominative noun phrase. Any expansion with more marked cases or participial and prepositional phrases increases the focus on the new participant. In other words, the appearance of marked constructions builds the prominence of the focus of the sentence" (*Hebrews*, 60). This is precisely what is seen in Luke's text. Joseph is introduced by a noun phrase, by additional nominative (nouns and participles) Epithets, and by the surrounding use of more marked cases (genitive and dative): ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι Ἰωσὴφ βουλευτὴς ὑπάρχων, ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος—οὗτος οὐκ ἦν συνκατατεθειμένος τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῇ πράξει αὐτῶν—ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας πόλεως τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὃς προσεδέχετο τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. This suggests that Luke wishes to "build the prominence of the focus," which is Joseph, in a way that Matthew and Mark do not.

[28] Matthew and Mark specifically name two of the women: "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" (Matt. 27:61//Mark 15:47).

Mark includes more content referring to the re-entrance of Pilate into the narrative

(15:44–45), and Luke creates an even greater focus on the introduction of Joseph.[29]

3. The Content of the Episodes

Having established a cohesive framework for Matt 27:1–61//Mark 15:1–47//Luke

23:1–56, I will offer a brief sketch of the content of the crucifixion narrative. A certain

amount of its content was mentioned during the cohesion analysis, thus only basic points

will be surveyed.

The episode begins in all three Gospels with the Jewish leaders taking council,

with the result being that they hand Jesus over to Pilate for trial (Matt 27:1–2//Mark

15:1//Luke 22:66—23:1). Immediately following, Matthew includes comments on

Judas's regret at having betrayed Jesus (Matt 27:3–10), comments which are not included

in Mark and Luke. In Matt 27:11–31//Mark 15:2–20//Luke 23:2–3, 18–25, Pilate tries

Jesus before the Jewish crowds on charges of claiming to be "the king of the Jews."[30] In

the end, he releases to them in Jesus' stead Barabbas, an accomplice in murder, and, as

the crowds shout all the more,[31] he turns Jesus over to be executed. According to Matt

27:28–29//Mark 15:17, the soldiers dress Jesus in purple/scarlet cloth, place a crown

made of thorns on his head, and lead him away to crucify him.

---

[29] One could compare Luke's prominent introduction of Joseph with the fact that Pilate merely functions as the Goal in an embedded material process: οὗτος, προσελθὼν τῷ Πειλάτῳ, ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Luke 23:52).

[30] Luke 23:4–16 recounts Jesus being sent back and forth between Pilate and Herod, which is material that Matthew and Mark do not include. Also, Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 457 notes the distinction here between ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, which Pilate speaks in Mark 15:2, and ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραήλ, which occurs on the lips of the chief priests and scribes in 15:32. Cf. also Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1475.

[31] Matt 27:23: οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἔκραζον λέγοντες Σταυρωθήτω; Mark 15:15: οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἔκραξαν.

At this point, all three Synoptics introduce Simon the Cyrene, the one who carries

Jesus' cross to Golgatha, presumably because Jesus did not have the strength to do it

himself (Matt 27:32//Mark 15:21//Luke 23:26). Luke uniquely includes an interaction

between suffering Jesus and some women who were mourning his impending death

(23:27–31). Matt 27:35–44//Mark 15:24–32//Luke 23:33–39 contains the actual

crucifixion of Jesus and the mocking of the crowds, about which Matthew and Mark are

more detailed in their accounts. However, Luke is once again unique in that it recounts

Jesus' encounter with one of the criminals crucified with him, in which the criminal

defends the innocence of Jesus, and Jesus assures the criminal that his final destination is

"paradise" (23:40–43). All three Gospels note the darkness that came upon the entire

land, but only Matthew and Mark mention Jesus' cry of "My God, my God, why have

you forsaken me?" and the crowd's response to it (Matt 27:46–49//Mark 15:34–36).

Luke, rather, proceeds directly to the tearing of the temple curtain, which is followed by

Jesus giving his last breath (Luke 23:45–46). In Matthew and Mark, it is only after Jesus

cries out and lets go of his spirit that the temple curtain tears,[32] and only Matthew

recounts other activities taking place such as the earth shaking and dead saints being

raised (27:51–53). The crucifixion proper ends in all three Gospels with the awe-full

response of the centurion and the note that many women who had ministered to Jesus

during his ministry were looking on from a distance (Matt 27:55–56//Mark 15:40–41//

Luke 23:49).

---

[32] For a treatment of the torn veil in Matthew, see Gurtner, *The Torn Veil*, 138–98.

The Synoptics follow the crucifixion with the introduction of Joseph of

Arimathaea, who was probably a rich man and a member of the Sanhedrin, the latter of

which is noted in the use of βουλευτής in Mark 15:43//Luke 23:50.[33] The Gospels agree

that Joseph was positively associated with Jesus: Matthew says he "was a disciple/

followed Jesus" (27:57), while Mark and Luke describe him as one "who was waiting for

the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43//Luke 23:51). Luke adds a further description in 23:50

that he was ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος ("good and righteous"). According to Mark, Joseph was

courageous enough to dare to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus.[34] Mark also notes uniquely

that Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus had died so soon; however, once this was

confirmed, Pilate seems to have given the body willingly to Joseph for a proper Jewish

burial.[35]

4. Aspectual Analyses

With this basic outline of content in place and its cohesive nature identified, an

analysis of divergent verbal aspect choice can now proceed. I have selected three such

instances to compare and contrast: (1) the Aorist παρέδωκαν in Matt 27:18//the

Pluperfect παραδεδώκεισαν in Mark 15:10, (2) the Present σταυροῦσιν in Mark 15:24//

the Aorist participle σταυρώσαντες in Matt 27:35//the Aorist indicative ἐσταύρωσαν in

Luke 23:33, and (3) the Aorist ἐλατόμησεν in Matt 27:60//the Perfect periphrastic

participle λελατομημένον in Mark 15:46//the adjectival construction ἐν μνήματι

λαξευτῷ in Luke 23:53.

---

[33] Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:648–49; Collins, *Mark*, 777–78; Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 483.

[34] Mark 15:43: τολμήσας εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς τὸν Πειλᾶτον καὶ ᾐτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ("Having dared to enter to Pilate and request the body of Jesus"). See Evans, *Mark*, 519.

[35] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:646–47; Evans, *Mark*, 2:520–21.

4.1. Tense-form Analysis 1

Matt 27:18	Mark 15:10
ἤδει γὰρ ὅτι διὰ φθόνον παρέδωκαν αὐτόν.	ἐγίνωσκεν γὰρ ὅτι διὰ φθόνου παραδεδώκεισαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς.
For he knew that because of envy they handed him over.	For he knew that because of envy the chief-priests handed him over.

Table 8

In their otherwise very insightful article devoted to the concept of "envy" in the

ancient world and Mark's Gospel (especially at 15:10), Hagedorn and Neyrey make no

comment whatsoever on Mark's use of the Pluperfect form παραδεδώκεισαν to refer to

the act of the Jews "handing over" Jesus to the Roman authorities.[36] Few commentators,

if any, offer discussion on the form's use in their sections on Mark 15:10.[37] The same is

true regarding Matthew's use of the Aorist παρέδωκαν in 27:18 in contrast to the

Markan Pluperfect.[38] Nolland does mention the divergence in a short footnote, but gives

no explanation why this is the case.[39] Thus, by and large, the issue has received little-to-

no treatment from most commentators and exegetes. Despite this lack of attention, I argue

based on the model of verbal aspect put forth here that the divergence of tense-forms

between Matthew and Mark is quite significant and plays a key role in one's

---

[36] Hagedorn and Neyrey, "The Anatomy of Envy," 15–56. Admittedly, their study does not set out to deal with grammatical or linguistic issues (other than the meaning and use of the lexeme φθόνος ["envy"]). Yet if their task was to elucidate the importance of the envy theme in Mark, comments on the marked use of the Pluperfect would have been quite helpful for them and would have provided much-needed formal evidence for their analysis of Mark 15:10.

[37] Examples of major commentaries that lack comment on the Pluperfect in Mark 15:10 are: France, *Mark*, 632–33; Stein, *Mark*, 700–1; Evans, *Mark*, 2:481–82; Collins, *Mark*, 720; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 301–2

[38] Examples of major commentaries that do not note the divergence in tense-form are: Turner, *Matthew*, 653–54; Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:823; Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 472; Luz, *Matthew*, 3:497–98; Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, 910.

[39] Nolland, *Matthew*, 1169 n. 347. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:586 give a similar notation.

understanding of Mark's account of Jesus' trial before Pilate. However, before treating

Matthew and Mark specifically, it is worth briefly reiterating my position on the meaning

and function of the Pluperfect.

The Greek Pluperfect shares the same verbal stem as the Perfect tense-form, and

differs only slightly in its morphology.[40] It thus shares the same semantic value as the

Perfect, that being stative aspect.[41] While the Pluperfect often appears in past contexts, as

Porter mentions, it is not "past-bound."[42] Rather, it is better to see the form as

grammaticalizing stative aspect plus the added element of remoteness. In this way, the

Perfect/Pluperfect opposition is similar to the Present/Imperfect opposition: the forms,

having the same morphological stem, share the same aspectual semantics, but the latter

forms represent a simultaneous choice in the system network of +remoteness.[43] In

contrast, the Perfect grammaticalizes -remoteness since "it appears more readily in a

variety of contexts,"[44] rather than being primarily restricted to narrative discourse.

Further, the Pluperfect is more marked than the Perfect: it occurs significantly less

---

[40] Both share first consonant reduplication with ε and primary endings. The Pluperfect differs in its thematic vowel of ει or η and typically has an augment, although, as is the case in Mark 15:10, it often drops out in Hellenistic Greek (Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 289). Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 903 says "[The Pluperfect] disappeared in Greek before the present perfect, though in the N. T. it still survives in current, but not common, usage."

[41] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 289; Porter, *Idioms*, 42; similarly McKay, *New Syntax*, 51. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 305–6 and Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 224 likewise note the Pluperfect's relation to the Perfect, even though their understanding of the semantics of the form differ from what is presented here. Fanning applies his three-fold meaning of the Perfect (stative *Aktionsart*, tense, and aspect) to the Pluperfect, with the added element of it being one step removed in past time. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:228–29 assigns the Pluperfect to imperfective aspect as he does with the Perfect.

[42] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 289.

[43] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 94–96, 109. Campbell, following his spatial paradigm, says that the Pluperfect grammaticalizes "heightened remoteness" (*Verbal Aspect*, 1:229–33). However, it is not clear how the the form grammaticalizes this, since the notions of "heightened" and "remoteness" seem contradictory. In any case, Campbell runs into the same problems with the Pluperfect as imperfective aspect and heightened proximity as those noted in ch. 3. For example, he again is not clear on how the Pluperfect is able to share the same aspectual value as the Present/Imperfect although the forms have completely different morphological stems.

[44] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 289. That is to say,

frequently, it possess an additional semantic feature (i.e., remoteness), and has greater

morphological bulk and relatively little morphological irregularity. It thus possesses the

ability to function similarly to the Perfect in discourse. That is, it is can function to

frontground particular elements in a discourse in a manner more definite and contoured

than the other tense-forms, but often does so in past-referring contexts. Accordingly, it,

like the Perfect, represented (for a time) a tool for Greek speakers/writers to create

heightened levels of discourse prominence.

In turning to examine Mark's use of the Pluperfect παραδεδώκεισαν in 15:10 in

contrast to Matthew's use of the Aorist, I should note that it is very likely Mark has made

a conscious choice in using the Pluperfect form (as opposed to, say, an Aorist or Perfect).

This assertion is supported in that Mark uses παραδίδωμι quite frequently (20x) and

does so using a variety of tense-forms—the Present (e.g., 9:31; 14:21, 41), the Future

(13:9, 12; 14:18), and the Aorist (3:19; 7:13; esp. 15:1) especially. In other words, the

author of Mark had a range of formal options from which to choose. This suggests that

the choice of +stative +remoteness was a motivated one. Below, I argue that instead of

expressing an action "that, completed in the past, has results that existed in the past as

well,"[45] Mark intentionally uses the Pluperfect in 15:10 to frontground the action of the

chief-priests' handing over of Jesus to Pilate, thus creating a heightened level of discourse

prominence at this point. In doing this, Mark draws a purposeful contrast between the

handing over of Jesus, whom Mark portrays as the true "king of the Jews," and Barabbas,

---

[45] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 583. Cf. also Moule, *New Testament Greek*, 16; Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 903 says "[a]s the present perfect is a blending in idea of the aoristic (punctiliar) and the durative present (a sort of durative aoristic present combined), so the past perfect is a blend of the aorist and the imperfect in idea."

the murder (at least by association), who was imprisoned likely in an ideological effort to bring about the kingdom of God, but who would be released by Pilate.

In Mark 15:1, the reader is told that once the Jewish leaders had taken council, they handed Jesus over (Aorist παρέδωκαν) to Pilate for trial. Pilate begins his examination of Jesus in 15:2 by addressing the issue of Jesus' "kingship": Σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; ("Are you the king of the Jews?"). Jesus gives a brief, affirmative answer to this question (Σὺ λέγεις, "You yourself say"),[46] then remains silent as further accusations are leveled against him in vv. 3–4. After a minor transition is signaled in 15:6, 15:7–8 gives important background information and introduces a new participant, Barabbas. In 15:9, Pilate returns to the issue of Jesus' kingship when he asks the Jewish crowds θέλετε ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἰουδαίων; ("Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?"). The reason for his question is given in v. 10: ἐγίνωσκεν γὰρ ὅτι διὰ φθόνον παραδεδώκεισαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ("For he knew that because of envy the chief-priests handed him over"). Verses 11–15 then depict the escalation of the crowd's desire to have Barabbas released and Jesus crucified.

There are three elements in 15:1–15 mentioned above that support the argument that the Pluperfect functions to create prominence by drawing a contrast between the handing over of Jesus and the character Barabbas: (1) the importance of "kingship" in Pilate's examination, (2) the fact that Barabbas is characterized as a rebel murderer in 15:7, and (3) the actual formal features that are employed in Barabbas's characterization. To address the first element, the kingship of Jesus is the main topic of Pilate's

---

[46] On this exchange between Pilate and Jesus as feature common to all four Gospels, see Porter, "Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek?" 163.

examination of Jesus in 15:1–15. This is identified by Pilate's repetition of the phrase τὸν

βασιλέα τῶν Ἰουδαίων with reference to Jesus in vv. 2, 9, and 12.[47] Mark alternates

between these references to Jesus as "king of the Jews" and references to Barabbas (vv.

7–8, 11, 15), which may alone suggest that the handing over of Jesus and Barabbas is

meant to be read in close connection one with another.

Concerning the second element, in the light of Jesus' kingship holding an

important thematic role, it is significant that Barabbas is characterized by Mark as "one

who was bound with the rebels who had committed murder in the rebellion" (15:7).

Although Matthew says that Barabbas was "well-known" (ἐπίσημον), it appears that

nothing outside of the canonical Gospels is mentioned about Barabbas or the exact

rebellion in which he participated.[48] Nevertheless, scholars have tried to reconstruct a

viable background for him.[49] Mark calls Barabbas a στασιαστής, and John calls him a

λῃστής (John 18:40). It appears that much has recently been written on the historical-

political associations of λῃστής ("robber, bandit") in particular, a word that in its

---

[47] See Stein, *Mark*, 699; France, *Mark*, 628, who says about 15:2, "The kingship of Jesus, now newly introduced (since the kingship previously mentioned has been that of God), becomes the focal theme for the rest of Mark's account of the passion, occurring explicitly six times (vv. 2, 9, 12, 18, 26, and 32) and underlying especially the account of the soldiers' mockery in vv. 16–20." Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2:299 makes a similar point when he says simply "[d]ie Frage des Pilatus richtet sich auf den König der Juden" ("Pilate's question is focused on the king of the Jews"). Note that in 15:32, on the lips of mocking Jews, Jesus is called ὁ χριστὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραήλ. It appears that the phrase "king of Israel" resembles more Jewish terminology while "king of the Jews" may resemble Greco-Roman terminology (see France, *Mark*, 628). Bauckham, "Messianism," 59–60 also says this regarding the terms in John's Gospel.

[48] So Stein, *Mark*, 701 and Brown, *Death of the Messiah* 1:796–97 who say that the article in the phrase ἐν τῇ στάσει suggests that the rebellion was "well known." However, it is unlikely that the article possess the ability to make such claims.

[49] According to Brown, Barabbas is often described as a Zealot, though he suggests that the term did not arise until three decades after the life of Jesus (see *Death of the Messiah*, 1:689–93). But Wright, *Jesus* 156–57 suggests that it is hard "to imagine that serious violent revolution was not on the agenda in the 20s of the first century AD. The 'Zealots' themselves emerged as a clear-cut group later on, in the 60s; but this did not represent a major change of direction, a turning to serious paramilitary violence by a group previously committed to 'social banditry'." For other historical reconstructions of the events surrounding Barabbas, see also, for example, Barnett, "Under Tiberius All Was Quiet," 568; France, *Mark*, 630; Stein, *Mark*, 700–1; Collins, *Mark*, 717–18; Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, 414–15.

technical sense may have referred to renegade bandits who opposed Roman authority, often through violent means.[50] Mark's στασιαστής ("rebel"), which appears only here in the New Testament, is used frequently in Josephus's *Jewish War*, occurring in political contexts with reference to those in rebellion against Rome, Caesar, or some type of king/ ruler.[51] It is quite difficult to determine if Mark intended to use στασιαστής in a technical sense in order to describe Barabbas as being a part of a specific violent sect active during the time of Jesus (e.g., the Zealots).[52] However, Mark's unique description certainly locates Barabbas within the realm of political protest against Rome, whether or not he and his fellow rebels believed they were inaugurating the kingdom of God through their violence. Yet this is precisely how the claim of being "king of the Jews" would have been heard within Jesus' context, that is, as a political challenge to the kingship of Caesar.[53] Thus, on the one hand, Mark presents Barabbas as a participant in (or perhaps leader of) political violence against Rome—one who may have been intentionally seeking to bring about God's kingdom through such violence—and yet also as the one who is released by Pilate and received by the Jews. On the other hand, Mark presents Jesus as the true "king of the Jews," who taught that God's kingdom would come through loving one's neighbor, but yet also as the one whom the Jews handed over to Pilate in order to be crucified.

This contrast between Barabbas and the handing over of Jesus in Mark is strengthened in view of the formal features present in the text, especially tense-form

---

[50] Two well-known authors who advocate strongly for this technical understanding of ληστής are Horsley, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*, 77–87 and Wright, *Jesus*, 155–60.
[51] For example, 2:295:1; 2:406:5; 2:452:2; 2:455:5.
[52] France, *Mark*, 630–31 seems to go in this direction.
[53] Cf. France, *Mark*, 631.

usage. In 15:7, Mark uses the most heavily marked Perfect participle δεδεμένος to

describe Barabbas as one who was "bound" (or "imprisoned") along with the other rebels

(μετὰ τῶν στασιαστῶν). The participle's use is meant to draw a purposeful contrast

between Jesus, who was "bound" by the Sanhedrin (v. 1 Aorist δήσαντες), with

Barabbas, who was "bound" (v. 7 Perfect δεδεμένος) with insurrectionists.[54] The contrast

is sharpened in v. 7 when Mark says that these rebells, and Barabbas by association, "had

committed murder," using the even more marked Pluperfect form πεποιήκεισαν.[55] The

use of the Pluperfect here provides a cohesive link between 15:7 and παραδεδώκεισαν

in 15:10 on the level of aspectual semantics (+stative +remoteness) and heightens the

contrast between Jesus and Barabbas. On the level of discourse function, the occurrence

of the two heavily marked forms in 15:7—the Perfect δεδεμένος and the Pluperfect

πεποιήκεισαν—creates a prominent environment for the frontgrounding introduction of

Barabbas as a new participant. The use of the more marked Imperfect ἐγίνωσκεν and the

most marked Pluperfect παραδεδώκεισαν in 15:10 creates another prominent

environment for referencing the handing over of Jesus, which happened despite the fact

that Pilate "knew" it was because the Jews were envious of Jesus (διὰ φθόνου).

Therefore, the creation of two prominent contexts, tied together by means of verbal

aspect—one referencing the binding of Barabbas and his association with murderers, and

the other referencing the handing over of Jesus—highly suggests that the latter be read in

the light of the former: Jesus, the true king of the Jews who is bound by his own people

---

[54] I wish to thank Dr. Cynthia Westfall for bringing this point to my attention.

[55] While perhaps not too much should be made of it, it is interesting to note that here Mark repeats forms that have occurred at other important (i.e., frontgrounded) junctures in the PN (δεδεμένην in 11:2, 4 and πεποιήκατε in 11:17).

(δήσαντες), is handed over to die (παραδεδώκεισαν), while Barabbas, who was also

bound (δεδεμένος), will go free in spite of his association with those who had committed

murder (φόνον πεποιήκεισαν).

In contrast to Mark's use of the Pluperfect, Matthew uses the Aorist παρέδωκαν

in 27:18. The use of the perfective aspect to perform a backgrounding function in

Matthew's narrative is identifiable by two points. First, Matthew and Mark differ in the

content of their introduction of Barabbas (cf. Matt 27:16//Mark 15:7). That is, Mark's

comments include the details of Barabbas's association with "the rebels" and their violent

actions, whereas Matthew simply uses the phrase δέσμιον ἐπίσημον λεγόμενον

Βαραββᾶν ("a well-known prisoner called Barabbas").[56] This itself may suggest that

Matthew is less interested than Mark in the Barabbas/ Jesus contrast. Second, instead,

Matthew seems more concerned with recounting the role of Pilate regarding Jesus'

innocence. This is demonstrated by (1) Matthew's use of the marked Pluperfect ᾔδει

referring to Pilate's "knowing" that the Jews were motivated by envy, and (2) Matthew's

unique inclusion of the warning of Pilate's wife that he should have "nothing to do with

that righteous man" (27:19).[57] On the word-level ᾔδει in 27:18 represents the most

marked item in its clause, but because it functions in combination with the most heavily

marked Perfect participle συνηγμένων at the start of 27:17, both of these marked features

create a domain of prominence for Pilate's interaction with the crowd and the comment

---

[56] Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:821; Nolland, *Matthew*, 1168; Lagrange, *Évangile selon Sain Matthieu*, 519 agrees that the Epithet ἐπίσημον probably indicates that the Jewish population held Barabbas in a positive light.

[57] μηδὲν σοὶ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ.

referring to his knowledge of their envy.[58] Thus, Matthew's unique content and its use of

certain formal features generate for its narrative a focus on Pilate's knowledge of Jesus'

innocence, which is distinct from Mark's focus on the contrast between Barabbas and the

Jews' handing over of Jesus.

4.2. Tense-form Analysis 2

The second instance of divergent tense-form choice I wish to consider is Mark's

choice of the Present form σταυροῦσιν in 15:24 to recount the crucifying of Jesus in

contrast to Matthew's use of the Aorist participle σταυρώσαντες (27:35) and Luke's use

of the Aorist indicative ἐσταύρωσαν (23:33). The function of the narrative Present was

already treated in ch. 4; thus, here I argue that the Synoptics each have different

emphases in their accounts of the crucifying of Jesus, which is expressed in their choices

of verbal aspect.

Table 9

Matt 27:35	Mark 15:24	Luke 23:33-34
Σταυρώσαντες δὲ αὐτὸν "διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ βάλλοντες κλῆρον"	καὶ σταυροῦσιν αὐτὸν καὶ "διαμερίζανται τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ βάλλοντες κλῆρον ἐπ'αὐτὰ" τίς τί ἄρῃ	καὶ ὅτε ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Κρανίου, ἐκεῖ ἐσταύ- ρωσαν αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς κακού ργους, ὃν μέν ἐκ δεξιῶν ὃν δὲ ἐξ ἀριστερῶν. "διαμεριζόμενοι δὲ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἔβαλον κλῆ ρους."
Now after they crucified him, "they divided his garments by casting lot."	And they crucified him and "they divided his garments by casting lot" to see who might take what.	And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. "And dividing his garments, they cast lots."

---

[58] This point could be strengthened further in the light of Matthew's use of the Pluperfect εἰώθει ("to be accustomed) in 27:15 to refer to Pilate's yearly custom of releasing a prisoner to the people. However, it is quite possible that the Perfect/Pluperfect stem was the only available choice for this lexeme by the time of the New Testament (cf. BDAG, 295). If this is the case, the Pluperfect here would not represent a meaningful choice of verbal aspect.

Mark's use of the narrative Present σταυροῦσιν is the fourth in a chain of six

imperfective Predicators, a chain which spans only three verses.[59] This grouping with

more marked imperfective forms suggests that 15:22–24 represents a heightened level of

discourse prominence.[60] Thus, in contrast to Matthew and Luke, Mark creates a domain

of prominence in which to introduce the act of crucifying Jesus in a more definite and

contoured manner. In this light, it is possible to say that, while none of the Synoptic

accounts gives a detailed description of the crucifixion, Mark wishes to highlight the

event itself more than the others. This is supported by the fact that, in latter parts of the

Gospel, Mark refers to "crucifixion" by using the most heavily marked Perfect tense-

form (cf. 15:32; 16:6).[61]

According to Nolland, Matthew's use of the Aorist participle σταυρώσαντες

represents the author's desire to dispose of "an unwanted historic present," though

Nolland gives no explanation as to why Matthew may have considered it "unwanted."[62] I

suggest that σταυρώσαντες places the act of crucifying in the presupposed background

of the narrative,[63] which, by putting less emphasis on the crucifixion itself, indicates that

Matthew is more concerned about how the crucifixion relates to the fulfillment of Old

---

[59] φέρουσιν, μεθερμηνευόμενος (v. 22); ἐδίδουν (v. 23); σταυροῦσιν, διαμερίζονται, βάλλοντες (v. 24). I should also note the presence of the Perfect participle ἐσμυρνισμένον in v. 23.

[60] Even Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 233 seems to agree.

[61] In 15:32, the two criminals are referred to as οἱ συνεσταυρωμένοι, and in 16:6, the angel at the empty tomb refers to Jesus as τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον. See also Porter, "Mark 16:1–8," 123–37 who notes that Mark has a particular interest in the crucifixion.

[62] Nolland makes this comment first regarding Matthew's supposed change of Mark's φέρουσιν αὐτὸν to ἐλθόντες, and then makes a similar comment regarding σταυρώσαντες (*Matthew*, 1189, 1191).

[63] According to Porter's systemic network, the semantics of the Aorist participle is +factive presupposition +perfective aspect (*Verbal Aspect*, 94).

Testament Scripture.[64] Tense-form usage alone may not indicate this concern, since vv.

33–35 is predominately carried along by Aorists,[65] though Matthew uses the most heavily

marked Perfect participle μεμιγμένον ("being mixed") to modify οἶνον. In any case,

Matthew's language—particularly in v. 34 (cf. also v. 48)—is particularly reflective of

LXX 68:22, perhaps more so than the Markan or Lukan accounts.[66] France says

> Matthew understands the incident [the soldier's giving Jesus wine with gall] as a
> hostile act of the soliders, since he mentions χολή (bile, bitter substance) rather
> than myrrh, thus producing an echo of Ps. 69:21 where the action is clearly
> hostile (and where the LXX χολή translates rō'š, normally understood of a
> poison).[67]

Additionally, on a grammatical level, Matthew subordinates the act of crucifying

Jesus to the verb διεμερίσαντο, which occurs in the citation of LXX Ps 21:19 in 27:35.

These points indicate that, in distinction from Mark, σταυρώσαντες is meant to provide

---

[64] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:613 note that in Matthew "the crucifixion itself is mentioned only in passing." Similarly, regarding the crucifixion in all four Gospels, Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:945 asks "[y]et in all comparable literature, has so crucial a moment ever been phrased so briefly and uninformatively?"

[65] ἔδωκαν, ἠθέλησεν (v. 34); διεμερίσαντο (v. 35).

[66] Nolland, *Matthew*, 1190–91. LXX Ps 68:22 reads: καὶ ἔδωκαν εἰς τὸ βρῶμά μου χολὴν καὶ εἰς τὴν δίψαν μου ἐπότισάν με ὄξος ("And they put in my food gall and for my thirst they me sour wine to drink"). Matt 27:34 reads: ἔδωκαν αὐτῷ πιεῖν οἶνον μετὰ χολῆς μεμιγμένον· καὶ γευσάμενος οὐκ ἠθέλησεν πιεῖν. Mark does not include any lexical resemblance to LXX Ps 68:22, while Luke 23:36 does mention that the soldiers offered him "sour wine" (ὄξος). To be clear, I am not suggesting that mere lexical similarity or dissimilarity determines whether or not a New Testament author is citing/alluding/echoing an Old Testament text. What I am suggesting is that because Matthew's language reflects the LXX passage more specifically (ἔδωκαν and the Adjunct phrase μετὰ χολῆς), and because the act of crucifying is grammatically subordinated to another Old Testament citation (LXX Ps 21:19), Matthew has purposely chosen to be more specific and to focus greater attention on the crucifixion's relation to Old Testament Scripture.

[67] France, *Mark*, 642. See also Nolland, *Matthew*, 1190–91. However, even though France and Nolland are correct in noting that in Matthew the actions of the soldiers toward Jesus are hostile, the Markan account of the soldiers' actions should probably not be considered any less hostile (*contra* Nolland, *Matthew*, 1190–91). In personal communication, Dr. Cynthia Westfall noted that "myrrh" is Aramaic for "made bitter," and so Mark may have simply been more general in the use of the participle ἐσμυρνισμένον in 15:23. Therefore, the use of gall can be assumed in Mark's account; it is doubtful that the soldiers actually used myrrh, which was sold at the price of gold. Since gall is a strong laxative, one could imagine that the soldiers attempted to provoke projectile diarrhea thus inflicting extreme embarrassment on Jesus. Thus, whereas Nolland's explanation depicts unexplainable discontinuity between the soldiers' mockery of Jesus (15:18-20) and their offer of the wine mixture (15:23), these insights by Westfall provide a strong explanation and establish continuity between the soldiers' actions.

the background for Matthew's reflection on the crucifixion's relation to the Old

Testament.[68]

Luke's use of the Aorist ἐσταύρωσαν in 23:33 likewise indicates that, for him,

the act of crucifying Jesus stands in the narrative background. It was noted in ch. 5 of this

work that Luke often switches between the least marked perfective Aorist and the more

marked imperfective Imperfect to create vividness in his narrative structure.[69] This claim

appears to hold true in the sub-unit of 23:26–49 as well. For example, v. 26 opens with

the Aorist ἐπέθηκαν, which is followed by a clustering of Imperfects in v. 27 (ἠκολούθει,

ἐκόπτοντο, and ἐθρήνουν). Verse 33 uses the Aorist ἐσταύρωσαν as its main verb,[70]

which is followed by a Pluperfect (εἰστήκει) and an Imperfect (ἐξεμυκτήριζον) in v.

35.[71] The Aorist form ἐνέπαιξαν begins v. 36; the next finite verb to occur in the

narrative is the Imperfect ἐβλασφήμει in v. 39. Finally, v. 45 uses the Aorist ἐσχίσθη,

which is followed in vv. 47, 48 by the Imperfect forms ἐδόξαζεν and ὑπέστρεφον.

I suggest that Luke's use of the Aorist and the Imperfect here not only gives the

reader insight into the structure of the text, but also highlights, what are for Luke, the

most important elements of the crucifixion sub-unit. That is, with the crucifixion itself in

the narrative background, Luke uses the Imperfect to bring to the foreground the essential

features of the scene, namely, those characters that demonstrate some sort of response to

the events surrounding Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. In 23:27—content unique to

[68] Note Nolland's comment on this grammatical construction: "Curiously his [Matthew's] pattern subordinates the crucifixion to the subsequent sharing of Jesus' clothing" (*Matthew*, 1191). Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:945 notes this as well.

[69] Cf. Loney, "Narrative Structure," 4–31.

[70] The other Aorist indicative in the verse, ἦλθαν, is part of the larger clause ὅτε ἦλθαν, which, being a circumstantial clause, is subordinate to the verb ἐσταύρωσαν.

[71] It should be noted here also that v. 34, according to the NA[27], is likely not original to Luke's Gospel. The rest of v. 34 is a citation of LXX Ps 21:19.

Luke—the Imperfects ἠκολούθει, ἐκόπτοντο, and ἐθρήνουν highlight the reaction of the

"large multitude of people," especially "the women," who "were mourning and

lamenting" Jesus on his way to Golgotha.[72] In 23:35, the mocking response of the people

is foregrounded by the use of the Imperfect ἐξεμυκτήριζον, which also introduces the

direct speech of the crowd.[73] After the general note that "the soldiers, approaching him,

mocked him" in 23:36, Luke adds more contour to his narrative by foregrounding a

specific instance of mockery, introducing the "blasphemous" response of one of the

criminals through the Imperfect ἐβλασφήμει in v. 39.[74] And after recounting that the

temple curtain had been torn, and that Jesus had died, Luke highlights the awestruck

response of the centurion through the use of ἐδόξαζεν and the sorrowful return of those

who witnessed Jesus' death through the use of ὑπέστρεφον.

Luke's aspectual scheme here may have the purpose of connecting these

responses to one another in a contrastive relationship: those following, mourning, and

lamenting Jesus are contrasted with those mocking him, and the one blaspheming him

from his own cross could stand in contrast to the centurion who glorified God as a result

of what he witnessed.[75] What seems clearer is that Luke is generally more interested in

what is taking place around the cross, i.e., the reactions of certain groups of people, rather

---

[72] Cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 863 who says "Jesus [...] was followed by a large crowd of the people [...] who here appear in the role of sympathizers rather than mockers." See also Evans, *St. Luke*, 861.

[73] *Contra* Evans, *St. Luke*, 869 who says the Imperfect here has "the sense 'repeatedly mocked'."

[74] Marshall, *Luke*, 871 says "The use of the imperfect is required, since the first speaker is interrupted by the second." Although Marshall is not explicit, it appears the reason he says this is that he assumes the Imperfect ἐβλασφήμει implies durative or continuous action, thus the words of the second criminal in v. 40 must have put an end to this continual action, and hence were an "interruption." However, there is no indication in the text that v. 40 is an interruption; Luke simply presents the verse as the second criminal's response to the first criminal's blasphemous statement in v. 39. Further, even if v. 40 was an interruption, this in no way requires that βλασφημέω take the Imperfect form (cf. ἐνέπαιξαν in v. 36).

[75] However, a natural contrast to the blaspheming of the criminal on the cross may be the other criminal who defends Jesus' innocence in 23:42. Nevertheless, on the level of aspectual linkage, the reviling criminal and the glorifying centurion do stand in contrast to one another.

than the crucifixion itself. This, of course, is not to suggest that the cross is unimportant

for Luke; instead it indicates that, in terms of discourse prominence, he wishes to

foreground other elements that necessarily build on the backgrounded act of the

crucifixion.

4.3. Tense-form Analysis 3

The third and final analysis of this work will consider Mark's use of the

periphrastic construction ἦν λελατομημένον ("was hewn") in 15:46 in contrast to

Matthew's Aorist indicative ἐλατόμησεν ("he hewed") in 27:60 and Luke's use of a

semantically related adjectival form λαξευτός ("hewn from rock") in 23:53.

Matt 27:60	Mark 15:46	Luke 23:53
καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ καινῷ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ ὃ ἐλατόμησεν ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ καὶ προσκυλίσας λίθον μέγαν τῇ θύ-ρᾳ τοῦ μνημείου ἀ πῆλθεν	καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ ὃ ἦν λελατομημένον ἐκ πέτρας καὶ προσεκύλισεν λίθον ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τοῦ μνημείου.	καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνήματι λαξευτῷ οὗ οὐκ ἦν οὐδεὶς οὔπω κείμενος
And he laid it in his new tomb, which he hewn in the rock, and after rolling a great stone against the door of the tomb, he departed.	And he laid him in the tomb, which was hewn from rock, and he rolled a stone over the door of the tomb.	And he laid him in a tomb hewn from rock, in which no one was yet laying.

Table 10

Few commentators note the different usage; however, one commentator who does

misidentifies Mark's Perfect periphrastic as "pluperfect,"[76] and nevertheless gives no

explanation for the different tense-form. In view of this lack of attention, I argue two

points. First, the fundamental motivation for the use of these different lexicogrammatical

constructions lies in the authors' construal of experience for their readers. That is to say,

in systemic linguistics there is an assumption that while there are different ways semantic

---

[76] Nolland, *Matthew*, 1232.

choices can be realized in grammar, these differences are not without meaning—they

function to construe the experience of the listener or reader in a particular way.[77] This

point is particularly helpful for addressing the difference between Mark's Perfect

periphrastic construction and Luke's use of an adjective (i.e., +quality).[78] Second, the

difference between Mark and Matthew can be explained on the basis of the model of

verbal aspect argued for in this work: Mark wishes to frontground and attribute discourse

prominence to the fact that the tomb in which Jesus was laid "was cut from rock," while

Matthew places it in the narrative background. In arguing these points I will first begin

with a brief definition and explanation of periphrastic constructions in Greek, followed

by comments on how Mark's periphrastic relates to/differs from Luke's use of an

adjective in regard to verbal aspect and the construal of readers' experience. Following

this, I will address the aspectual distinction between Mark and Matthew in terms of

discourse prominence.

In his intermediate grammar, Porter says:

> *Periphrastic verbal constructions are formed by the grammatically appropriate*
> *combination of a form of the auxiliary verb* εἰμί *and a participle.* The participle
> contributes the semantic (meaning) feature of verbal aspect to the construction
> (as well as voice [...]). The form εἰμί, which is aspectually vague (i.e. it does not

---

[77] A good example of this is the concept of "nominalization," which is also prevalent in Hellenistic Greek (see Cirafesi, "ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek," 8–12).

[78] This point is also important to note because, as Porter has pointed out, some have claimed that there is at times no difference between an adjectival form and a participle that has been "adjectivized" (see Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 454). Thus, that periphrastic constructions contribute verbal aspect and so differ from adjectives in the construal of experience argues strongly against the notion of adjectivizing.

provide a meaningful choice of aspect), is used to grammaticalize attitude (i.e. mood [...]) of the action in its context, as well as person and number [...].[79]

Porter suggests elsewhere that periphrasis should be understood "as a construction that draws attention to the Participle and its modifiers."[80] Thus the defining characteristics of periphrastic constructions (particularly in contrast to adjectives) are (1) their retention of verbal aspect,[81] and (2) the focus of the construction on the participle (and items that modify it). Furthermore, tense-forms retain their markedness values when used in periphrasis as long as there remain other formal choices for the verb form. That is to say, conversely, for verb forms that only occur in periphrastic constructions because their simple forms are no longer in use, the construction is unmarked since there are no other options from which the language user may choose. However, Porter notes that even when there are no other choices available (in terms of lexicogrammaticalization), choice of verbal aspect is still meaningful.[82]

---

[79] Porter, *Idioms*, 45 (italics original). Porter is more thorough in his treatment of Greek periphrasis in his *Verbal Aspect*. After offering a helpful survey of the various theories of periphrasis (pp. 447–49) and after treating the issue of εἰμί as an auxiliary verb in Greek (pp. 449–52), Porter describes four features of periphrasis (pp. 452–54). First, the construction "must contain (1) an aspectually vague auxiliary verb and (2) a Participle in agreement with its referent." Second, "the Participle not only must be grammatically in suitable agreement with the auxiliary but must be adjacent to it, either before or after [...]." Third, periphrastic constructions can be understood as substitutes for verbal forms only "[i]n those places in the verbal paradigm where simple forms have passed out of use [...]." Fourth, the notion that some participles simply represent "adjectivized" forms should be rejected, since "while a Participle may function like an adjective, in periphrasis (as elsewhere) it still asserts its verbal aspect." McKay criticizes Porter's view of periphrasis has being too narrow, but does not provide a detailed argument for his evaluation (*New Syntax*, 36). Campbell asserts that "periphrastic constructions convey the same semantic information as their finite counterparts" (*Verbal Aspect*, 2:32). He gives the example of an Imperfect periphrastic, saying that it conveys both imperfective aspect and remoteness as does the Imperfect indicative. However, Campbell's argument is unclear, since, on the one hand, he says periphrastics retain a spatial element (remote/proximate), but, on the other hand, he says the opposition remoteness/proximity "is not carried over to the non-indicatives" (pp. 28–29).

[80] Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 453.

[81] See also Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 454.

[82] Porter, *Verbal Aspect* 453. See also p. 466, where, concerning the Perfect participle in periphrastic constructions, he says: "the Perfect [...] continued to maintain its subjective aspectually-stative meaning from the Homeric through the hellenistic period, and this meaning is displayed in periphrastics as well."

Since, at times, periphrastic constructions function like adjectives—as in the

example tackled here (Mark 15:46//Luke 23:53)—what is the difference between them? I

suggest two differences, one of which has been said already, and both of which have to

do with an author's desire to construe reality for his or her readers. First, as noted above,

unlike adjectives, participles in periphrastics contribute the semantic feature of verbal

aspect. Thus Perfect participles, specifically, can still realize +stative and represent the

most marked of the tense-forms. This leads to the second difference: ἦν λελατομημένον

in Mark 15:46 represents the semantic choice of +process, a choice that is typically

realized in grammar by verbal constituents, which are the primary carriers of ideational

meaning in both Greek and English.[83] Therefore, Mark has construed "hewing" as a

process to be experienced by readers from the stative viewpoint of the author. The fact

that the participle occurs in a marked Perfect paraphrastic further suggests that Mark

desires to place emphasis squarely on the process of "hewing."

In contrast to Mark, Luke's use of λαξευτῷ,[84] a word whose lexical semantics is

nearly synonymous with λατομέω,[85] represents the semantic choice of +quality, a choice

typically realized in grammar by adjectives. Thus, instead of a process that is seen from a

stative aspect, Luke has chosen to construct his grammar in a way that construes the

process of "hewing" as the quality "hewn from rock." While not wishing to go into great

detail, I suggest that this represents Luke's use of a grammatical metaphor in which the

semantic choice +process is realized in the grammar as +quality, i.e., as an adjective.[86] I

---

[83] See Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 87; Ravelli, "Grammatical Metaphor," 134.
[84] Interestingly, for this verse, Codex Bezae reads μνημειω λελατομημενω.
[85] See Louw-Nida 19.25 (λατομέω) and 19.26 (λαξευτός).
[86] For recent works that use grammatical metaphor in biblical studies, see Cirafesi, "ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek" and Fewster, "Evaluating Root Metaphors," forthcoming.

have argued elsewhere that one of the primary functional motivations in using

grammatical metaphor is textual organization.[87] That is, grammatical metaphors allow an

author to communicate a similar semantic choice (e.g., process) but do so in a way that

allows him or her to modify certain items and organize the text in a manner that could not

be otherwise.[88] In the light of this, Luke's use of λαξευτῷ has allowed him to do two

things with his text that differ with Matthew and Mark. First, whereas Matthew and Mark

place their forms of λατομέω within larger relative clauses that modify μνημεῖον,

λαξευτῷ directly modifies μνήματι. Second, because the process of "hewing" is

realized as a quality in Luke, it places emphasis at the level of word group on the quality

of μνήματι. That is, in functional terms, Mark's focus is on "hewing" as an Event, while

Luke's focus is on "hewing" as an Epithet.

Comparing the aspectual choices of Matthew and Mark brings this study back into

familiar territory. I argue that the use of the least marked Aorist indicative ἐλατόμησεν in

Matthew places the act of Joseph's "hewing" in the narrative background, whereas

Mark's use of the most heavily marked Perfect periphrastic construction places it in the

narrative frontground and gives the event a more contoured and defined focus in the

episode. There are three points that support this argument. First, Matthew's burial scene

is predominantly carried along by Aorists, which gives it a sense of unmarked and

undefined narration.[89] Matthew sees the burial of Jesus and the tomb that Joseph "had

---

[87] Cf. Cirafesi, "ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek," 12–14.

[88] Concerning nominalization and ideational metaphor, Halliday gives an example of this using the English words *believe* and *belief*. Whereas *belief* can be assigned an Epithet such as *firmly entrenched* (thus, a firmly entrenched belief) such an Epithet cannot be assigned to the verb *believe*; modification would have to come through another semantic choice such as [+CIRCUMSTANCE] [+MANNER] and realized grammatically by an adverb: "he believed *strongly*" (*Functional Grammar*, 638–39).

[89] ἦλθεν, ἐμαθητεύθη (27:57); ᾐτήσατο, ἐκέλευσεν (27:58); ἐνετύλιξεν (27:59); ἔθηκεν, ἐλατόμησεν (27:60).

hewn in the rock" as the relevant background for the impending resurrection narrative in ch. 28 to which Matthew gives slightly more attention.[90]

Second, there are additional formal features in Mark's episode that support the frontgrounding function of ἦν λελατομημένον.[91] For example, within the immediate co-text other more heavily marked tense-forms are present (v. 44: τέθνηκεν; v. 47: ἐθεώρουν, τέθειται), and the (re)introduction of new participants (ὁ Πειλᾶτος, τὸν κεντυρίωνα) makes the narrative stage more crowded.[92] Both features indicate a heightened level of discourse prominence for the entire Markan burial episode as it establishes a highly marked co-text.

Third, the point made above becomes even more important when it is seen that the unifying element of τέθνηκεν, ἦν λελατομημένον, ἐθεώρουν, and τέθειται is that each form has the death and burial of Jesus as its referent. Mark uses these four marked verbal constructions to recount (1) the fact that Jesus died (τέθνηκεν), (2) where his body was laid (ἐν μνήματι ὃ ἦν λελατομημένον, τέθειται), and (3) who saw it being laid in the tomb (ἐθεώρουν). The overloading of marked items with similar referents is significant because, unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark's impending resurrection scene, while still very important, is quite abbreviated.[93] The indication is that Mark's emphasis is on Jesus'

---

[90] For example, Matthew includes the unique details of the scheming of the Jews (27:11–15). This assertion does not intend to diminish the possible significance that Matthew gives to the character Joseph of Arimathea. As Nolland says, "It is worth noting again the rarity of named participants in the Gospel story. The naming, except where public figures are involved, marks the associated events as having a particularly high level of significance" (*Matthew*, 1228).

[91] Note the difference between ἐλατόμησεν in which Joseph is Actor and ἦν λελατομημένον in which μνήματι is the Goal.

[92] The repetition of the Perfect tense-form provides the episode with semantic cohesion, and perhaps continues the semantic thread of Mark's earlier uses of the Perfect in previously examined episodes.

[93] For example, if it agreed that the Gospel ends at 16:8, Mark does not recount any post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, or even that the eye-witnesses told anyone else what they had seen.

death and burial, since even in the resurrection episode the focus is on Jesus as "the

crucified Nazerene" (16:6: Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον).[94]

Each of these points demonstrates that Mark's use of the Perfect periphrastic ἦν

λελατομημένον plays an important role—combined with other marked features—in

creating discourse prominence and in highlighting features that reinforce the fact (from

Mark's perspective) that Jesus really died and was buried in the most secure location

possible, since it was a "a tomb that was hewn out of rock."

5. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has accomplished two goals. First, I have identified and described

the cohesive nature of Matt 27:1–61//Mark 15:1–47//Luke 23:1–56, which, although

given the overarching title "the Crucifixion of Jesus," contains smaller sub-units.[95] This

cohesion analysis involved a consideration of organic ties (specifically conjunctions),

participant references, and lexical repetition. Identifying these cohesion patterns provides

a coherent linguistic framework within which to understand divergences in verbal

aspectual choice in the Synoptic parallel material.

Second, I have advanced the thesis that discourse structure according to various

levels of salience—rather than the recounting of time or kind of action—is the prime

motivation for differences in tense-form choice. Three such instances have been

analyzed: (1) the Aorist form παρέδωκαν in Matt 27:18//the Pluperfect

παραδεδώκεισαν in Mark 15:10, (2) the Present σταυροῦσιν in Mark 15:24//the Aorist

---

[94] See Porter, "Mark 16:1–8," 123–37.
[95] That is, Jesus before Pilate (Matt 27:1–31//Mark 15:1–20//Luke 22:66—23:25), the crucifixion (Matt 27:32–56//Mark 15:21–41//Luke 23:26–49), and the burial of Jesus (Matt 27:57–61//Mark 15:42–47//Luke 23:50–56).

participle σταυρώσαντες in Matt 27:35//the Aorist ἐσταύρωσαν in Luke 23:33, and (3)

the Aorist ἐλατόμησεν in Matt 27:60//the Perfect paraphrastic participle λελατομημένον

in Mark 15:46//the adjectival construction ἐν μνήματι λαξευτῷ in Luke 23:53. Each of

these analyses demonstrates the motivated use and function of verbal aspect to highlight

certain features of a text as it works and interacts with other formal items.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

1. Summary of Thesis

In this work I have sought to address the issue of divergent tense-form usage in the Synoptic parallel material—an issue that has been largely neglected by traditional historical critics and major commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels, which have been mostly concerned with discerning "authentic material" or conducting source and redaction-oriented analyses.[1] I have noted throughout that studies that at least mention certain tense-form changes do not appear to offer much linguistic explanation for these changes and instead resort to commenting on an author's redactional tendencies. However, most studies simply do not offer any explanation at all.[2]

I have suggested that much of the work dealing with the Synoptic parallel material has been done on the traditional assumption that Greek verbs grammaticalize either absolute time (*Zeitart*) or kind of action (*Aktionsart*). Since these categories are inherently objective, that is, they attempt to describe how an action takes place in the "real world," I have argued that they are inadequate for dealing with Synoptic tense-form differences. Instead, a robust theory that sees verbal aspect as the core semantic

---

[1] Studies referred to in this work that are good examples of this are Pryke, *Redactional Style of the Markan Gospel*; Telford, *The Barren Temple*; Robinson et. al., *The Critical Edition of Q*; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*; Wright, *Jesus*; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*; Hagner, *Matthew*; Evans, *Mark*; Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*; Luz, *Matthew*; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*.

[2] Good examples of this are Nolland, *Matthew*; France, *Mark*; Bock, *Luke*; Collins, *Mark*. Additionally, in the light of these general trends of explaining divergences based on redactional styles, sources, etc., it was important for this work to note a recent paper delivered by Porter on verbal aspect and Synoptic relations. In it, he concludes that, if anything, a study of tense-form change reveals the complexity of the relations that exist among the Synoptics. That is, although Porter's study is meant to offer only preliminary suggestions on the issue, it shows how difficult it is to identify any discernible patterns of verb form change that point in any definite direction concerning source relations. This means that, currently, one cannot simply defer to a particular theory of source relations to explain divergent tense-form use.

component of Greek verbs and that recognizes the discourse functions that they can

perform has more explanatory power for answering the question of divergent tense-form

usage. In other words, understanding the Greek verbal system as a network of semantic

relationships from which an author/speaker can (consciously or unconsciously) make

subjective formal choices for functional purposes helps to explain tense-form differences

on the basis of normal Greek usage rather than in terms of anomaly or irregularity. This

thesis was tested by applying a systemic-functional model of Greek verbal aspect to

certain episodes in the Synoptic PNs, focusing on the textual function that aspect has in

creating discourse prominence as it interacts with other linguistic features in its

immediate co-text.

In ch. 2, a systemic model of verbal aspect was put forth, with aspect being

understood as a semantic category essentially defined as an author's subjective

conception of an action, which is realized morphologically by choice of tense-form. The

Aorist was seen to grammaticalize perfective aspect—an action is seen from the

perspective of the author as a complete and undifferentiated whole; the Present realizes

imperfective aspect—an action is conceived as in-progress and unfolding; and the Perfect

expresses stative aspect—an action is seen by the author from the viewpoint of a complex

state of affairs. The Imperfect, sharing the same verb stem as the Present, also expresses

imperfective aspect but with the added feature of remoteness. Likewise, the Pluperfect,

sharing the same stem as the Perfect, also realizes stative aspect but with the added

element of remoteness. The concept of remoteness was subsequently defined as

"anything that has a tendency to distance or diminish the context in the eyes of the

speaker from some other feature,"[3] while at the same I acknowledged it may be more accurate to view the concept as a feature of textual organization.

The critical analysis of recent theories of verbal aspect was followed by a discussion of the notion of markedness and the Greek verbal system. It was argued that the tense-forms should be understood within a system of binary equipollent oppositions. This was established by applying Porter's four-fold criteria of markedness to the Greek verb forms (i.e., material, implicational, distributional, and semantic). Within these binary oppositions, the first exists between the least marked perfective and the more marked non-perfective aspects. The selection of +non-perfective in turn forms a second opposition between the more marked imperfective (Present/Imperfect) and most marked stative aspects (Perfect/Pluperfect).[4]

In the light of this systemic model of verbal aspect and markedness, the functional elements of verbal aspect were considered. While it was noted that the primary functional purposes of verbal aspectual choice are ideational, it was argued that there are significant implications for the textual metafunction as well, and this was the major focus of the thesis. Having defined "markedness" as a word-level term, the concepts of "grounding" and "prominence" were defined as discourse-level terms, with "prominence" being distinguished from "grounding" as a superordinate term under which the various levels of grounding function. In view of these distinctions, it was concluded, for example, that the Perfect will always be the most heavily marked tense-form; however, in terms of its textual function, it must be seen to interact with other marked items in its co-text in order

---

[3] Millhouse, "Use of the Imperfect," 58–59, as quoted in Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 1:85.
[4] See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 89.

for it to contribute to frontgrounded discourse prominence. While the markedness value

of the Perfect lends itself to the creation of prominent linguistic contexts, the principle of

markedness assimilation—as articulated by Batistella—provided a further criterion for

evaluating this function of the Perfect. The same was found true regarding the

backgrounding function of the Aorist and the foregrounding function of the Present/

Imperfect.

With this model in place, I examined instances of divergent verbal aspect choice

in three major episodes in the Synoptic PNs: (1) Jesus enters Jerusalem (Matt 21:1–22//

Mark 11:1–25//Luke 19:28–48), (2) Peter's denial of Jesus (Matt 26:69–75//Mark 14:66–

72//Luke 22:54–65), and (3) the crucifixion of Jesus (Matt 27:1–61//Mark 15:1–47//Luke

23:1–56).

2. Results of Tense-form Analyses

The results of the aspectual analyses demonstrate the explanatory power of the

model above. For example, the use of the Aorist consistently functions to provide the

background for certain other features in the discourse,[5] and the Perfect was seen to

interact with other marked features to frontground an action and create prominence.

Two general conclusions about verbal aspect can be made on the basis of these

analyses. First, while it was acknowledged that choice of verbal aspect may be a

conscious or unconscious decision, when one considers the aspectual differences in the

Synoptic parallel material, one sees, rather clearly, conscious and flexible aspectual

---

[5] For example, Luke's use of ἐσταύρωσαν in 23:33 set the background for the actions of
ἐξεμυκτήριζον and ἐβλασφήμει (23:35, 39), which Luke foregrounds using the Imperfect. Another good
example of how the Aorist interacts with other less marked features to provide the background is in Matt
27:57–61, where the entire story is carried along by Aorist forms.

choices being made. This does not mean that choices were not constrained in some way by temporal contexts or other discourse features,[6] but rather that, *ceteris paribus*, authors could indeed use verbal aspect for their own textual purposes. This was especially seen in Mark's foregrounding and transitional use of the so-called historic Present (11:1; 14:66) and its frontgrounding use of the Perfect πεποιήκατε (11:17) in contrast to Matthew's use of ποιεῖτε (23:13) and Luke's use of ἐποιήσατε (19:46). This subjective freedom was also seen in Matthew's strategic positioning of the Perfect participles οἱ ἑστῶτες and εἰρηκότος (26:73, 75) and Luke's climactic use of the Imperfect διϊσχυρίζετο (22:59), which reflected his overall scheme of perspective change.

Second, the textual application of the model demonstrated the exegetical value of a robust understanding of verbal aspect theory, particularly regarding its functional elements. This is especially seen in how an author's aspectual choices can help a reader track with the structure of a discourse according to its various levels of salience. For example, as noted, Luke typically employs the opposition of Aorist/Imperfect to create a vivid narrative structure for his audience on the basis of external/internal (or background/foreground) perspective switching. In Mark's case, at times, the Perfect and Pluperfect tense-forms were seen not only to spotlight certain actions that were most important in the narrative (e.g., πεποιήκατε in 11:17; παραδεδώκεισαν in 15:10), but also to function together with other uses of the same forms, which provided the discourse with semantic cohesion and tied the actions together in a prominent manner (e.g., πεποιήκατε

---

[6] For example, the clear past-referring contexts of Mark 15:7, 10 most likely restricted Mark's choice of the +stative +remoteness Pluperfect forms since, even though the Pluperfect does not *mean* past-time, its feature of +remoteness makes it a good fit for past-referring contexts.

in 11:17 and ἐξηραμμένην, ἐξήρανται in 11:20, 21; πεποιήκεισαν in 15:7 and

παραδεδώκεισαν in 15:10). In short, verbal aspect itself can function as a major

exegetical tool by painting for the reader both the background and foreground colors of a

discourse.

3. Avenues for Further Research

The conclusions drawn in this work are by no means exhaustive. Rather, they are

meant to demonstrate, on a general level, the need in biblical studies (particularly in the

study of the Greek of the New Testament) to move beyond traditional models and

methods, and to begin integrating the findings of modern linguistic research into biblical

criticism and exegesis. This is not to say that traditional Greek grammarians have nothing

to offer contemporary New Testament scholarship, but to suggest that their linguistic

models are outdated, and, as is the case with any academic discipline, need to be updated

in the light of the most recent data.

While there is a good deal of scholarly consensus on certain matters related to

Greek verbal aspect, the application of it for interpreting ancient texts, especially biblical

ones, remains sparse. This is supremely seen in the lack of attention that verbal aspect is

given in the major commentaries, particularly those on the Synoptics.[7] I suggest that the

influence of linguistics, especially verbal aspect theory, will continue to not be felt in

---

[7] Besides the commentaries engaged in this work, J. Ramsey Michaels' recent full-scale commentary on the Gospel of John is a fine example of this neglect. In a recent RBL review of his commentary, D.A. Carson rightly points out that "Michaels makes observations on the syntax of the Greek as if there have been no linguistic developments in the last half-century. Writing on 20:29, Michaels renders the aorists 'Blessed are those who did not see and believed.' Then, of course, he has to explain why John chose verbal forms that are past-referring when the context leads us to expect something like 'Blessed are those who will believe...without having seen.' The solution he offers is unconvincing. Convincing or not, however, the application of aspect theory provides a more plausible explanation of the aorist. The same problem erupts in John 2:20 and elsewhere" (Carson, Review of *John*, 3).

biblical scholarship until such commentaries and scholarly monographs begin to consistently incorporate its findings.[8]

More specifically, the study of verbal aspect choice in the Synoptic parallel material has much more room to grow. At least three important questions remain, which were not dealt with exhaustively in this work. First, regarding aspect theory itself, while there is a consensus about much, there is not a consensus about all. For example, even though I argued strongly for Porter's understanding of the Perfect tense-form as stative aspect, there may be room left for a full-blown study that fine-tunes the semantics of the form and its function in various genres of Greek literature.[9]

Second, the question of idiolect was altogether left untouched. "Idiolect" is defined by Crystal as "the linguistic system of an individual speaker. Idiolects are 'personal dialects,' arising from the way people have learned slightly different usages in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and style."[10] In order to determine an author's idiolectic of aspectual usage, a much more comprehensive comparison of aspectual choice must be performed. The goal of such a study would be to shed light upon certain patterns of usage that would allow one to provide a detailed description of the author's style and perhaps to reconstruct such categories as the linguistic register of the Gospel writer or its context of situation. A comparison of aspect choice alone would probably not be able to determine these categories, but as other linguistic features, such as attitude,

---

[8] Brill's new monograph series, Linguistic Biblical Studies, is specifically devoted to accomplishing this task. However, I believe that it will take studies that are *not* linguistically based, but yet incorporate modern linguistic research into their work, for linguistics to penetrate biblical scholarship more broadly.

[9] The Future form also falls in this category.

[10] Crystal, *Dictionary of Language*, 2nd ed., 155.

voice, word order, and clause structure are considered, a reconstruction would become possible.

Third, the question remains as to what role, if any, verbal aspectual choice plays in engaging Synoptic relations, or even further, the relationship between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John. Porter is one of the few, perhaps the only one, who has offered some preliminary remarks on verbal aspect and the Synoptic Problem.[11] But no one has yet used it as a model, or part of a model, to address how the Synoptics relate to John. Apart from issues of source and origin, it may also be fruitful to simply add John's parallel material to a future aspectual analysis to compare discourse structure and verbal aspect's contribution to prominence.

Whether or not these areas are ever explored, this thesis has shown the value of an aspectually-based approach to the Greek verb for interpreting instances in the Synoptic Gospels where verb forms differ. Thus its main contribution lies at the intersection of linguistic theory and exegetical practice.

---

[11] But see Catherine Smith's Ph.D. dissertation ("Casting Out Demons and Sewing Seeds"), which approached the Synoptic Problem from the perspective of SFL.

Bibliography

Andrews, Edna. *Markedness Theory: The Union of Asymmetry and Semiosis in Language*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1990.

Bakker, Egbert J. "Similes, Augment, and the Language of Immediacy." In *Speaking Volumes: Orality and Literacy in the Greek and Roman World*, edited by Janet Watson, 1–23. MnS 218. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Barnard, Jody. "Is Verbal Aspect a Prominence Indicator? An Evaluation of Stanley Porter's Proposal with Special Reference to the Gospel of Luke." *FN* 19 (2006) 3–29.

Barnett, Paul W. "Under Tiberius All Was Quiet." *NTS* 21.4 (1975) 564–71.

Battistella, Edwin L. *The Logic of Markedness*. New York: Oxford University, 1996.

_____. *Markedness: The Evaluative Superstructure of Language*. SSL. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990.

Bauckham, Richard, "Messianism according to the Gospel of John." In *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, edited by John Lierman, 34–69. WUNT 2.219. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.

Beilby, J.K., and Paul R. Eddy. "The Quest for the Historical Jesus: An Introduction." In *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*, edited by James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, 9–54. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009.

Berry, Margaret. *Introduction to Systemic Linguistics*. 2 vols. London: Batsford, 1975–1977.

_____. "Systemic Linguistics and Discourse Analysis: A Multi-layered Approach to Exchange Structure." In *Studies in Discourse Analysis*, edited by Malcolm Coulthard and Martin Montgomery, 120–45. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

Black, David Alan. *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek: A Survey of Basic Concepts and Applications*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.

Black, Stephanie L. *Sentence Conjunctions in the Gospel of Matthew: καί, δέ, τότε, οὖν, and Asyndeton in Narrative Discourse*. JSNTSup 216. SNTG 10. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002.

_____. "The Historic Present in Matthew: Beyond Speech Margins." In *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, 120–39. JSNTSup 170. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Blass, Friedrich, and Albert Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated by Robert W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 19961.

Bock, Darrell L. *Luke 9:51—24:53*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.

Boring, M.E. *Mark: A Commentary*. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.

Brown, Gillian and George Yule. *Discourse Analysis*. CTL. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983.

Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. 2 vols. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Brugmann, Karl. *Griechische Grammatik: Lautlehre, Stammbildungs und Flexionslehre, Syntax*, edited by Albert Thumb. 4th ed. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1913.

Buijs, Michel. "Aspectual Differences and Narrative Technique: Xenophon's *Hellenica* & *Agesilaus*." In *The Language of Literature: Linguistic Approaches to Classical Texts*, edited by Rutger J. Allan and Michel Buijs, 122–53. ASCP 13. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Bulter, Christopher S. *Systemic Linguistics: Theory and Application*. London: Batsford, 1985.

Buth, Randall. "Verbs Perception and Aspect, Greek Lexicography and Grammar: Helping Students to Think in Greek." In *Biblical Greek Language and Lexicography:Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Danker*, edited by Bernard A. Taylor et al., 177–98. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

Campbell, Constantine R. *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*. SBG 13. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

_____. *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*. SBG 15. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

_____. "Breaking Perfect Rules: The Traditional Understanding of the Greek Perfect." In *Discourse Studies and Biblical Interpretation: A Festschrift in Honor of Stephen H. Levinsohn*, edited by Steven E. Runge, 139–55. Bellingham, WA: Logos Software, 2011.

Carson, Donald A. "An Introduction to the Porter/Fanning Debate." In *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Donald A. Carson, 18–25. JSNTSup 80. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993.

_____. Review of *John*, J. Ramsey Michaels. *RBL* 06/11.

Cuvillier, Elian. "Die 'Kreuzestheologie' als Leseschlüssel zum Markusevangelium." In *Kreuzestheologie im Neuen Testament*, edited by Andreas Dettwiler and Jean Zumstein, 107–50. WUNT 151. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.

Chae, Young S. *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew*. WUNT 2.216. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.

Chilton, Bruce *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program with a Cultural History of Sacrifice*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992

_____. *A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theology from Jesus through Johannine Circles*. NovTSup 72. Leiden: Brill, 1994.

Cirafesi, Wally V. "ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek and its Contribution to the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate." *BAGL* 1 (2012) 5–37.

_____. "The Priestly Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of John in the Light of 1QS, 1QSa and 1QSb." *JGRChJ* 8 (2011–12) 83–105.

_____. Review of *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation: The Function of Greek Verb Tenses in John's Apocalypse*, by David L. Mathewson. *JGRChJ* 8 (2011–12) R66–R70.

Collins, Adela Y. *Mark: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

Comrie, Bernard. *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems*. CTL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Cranfield, C.E.B. *The Gospel according to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*. CGTC. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.

Crossan, John Dominic. *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Croy, N. Clayton. *A Primer of Biblical Greek*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Crystal, David. *A Dictionary of Language*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Culy, Martin M., Mikeal Carl Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall. *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text*. BHGNT. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.

Dahl, Nils Alstrup. *The Crucified Messiah and Other Essays*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974.

Dana, H.E., and J.R. Mantey. *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. Toronto: Macmillian, 1955.

Danker, Frederick W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Danove, Paul L. *Linguistics and Exegesis in the Gospel of Mark: Applications of a Case Frame Analysis*. JSNTSup 218. SNTG 10. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001.

Davies, Stevan L. "Who Is Called Barabbas." *NTS* 27.2 (1981) 260–62.

Davies, W.D., and Dale C. Allison. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew*. 3 vols. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988–97.

Decker, Rodney J. *Temporal Deixis of the Greek Verb in the Gospel of Mark with Reference to Verbal Aspect*. SBG 10. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

Drewitt, J.A.J. "The Augment in Homer." *CQ* 6 (1912) 44–59; 104–20.

Dry, H.A. "Foregrounding: An Assessment." In S.J.J Hwang and W.R. Merrifield (eds.), *Language in Context: Essays for Robert E. Longacre*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1992. 435–50

Dvorak, James D. "Thematization, Topic, and Information Flow." *JLIABG* 1 (2008) 17–37.

Elliott, J.K. *The Language and Style of the Gospel of Mark: An Edition of C.H. Turner's "Notes on Marcan Usage" Together with Other Comparable Studies*. NovTSup 71. Leiden: Brill, 1993.

Evans, Craig A. *Mark 8:27—16:20*. WBC 34B. Nashville: Nelson, 2001.

_____. "Mark." In *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity and Diversity of Scripture*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander et al., 267–73. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

Evans, C.F. *St. Luke*. London: SCM Press, 1990.

Evans, Trevor V. *Verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch: Natural Greek Usage and Hebrew Interference*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2001.

Fanning, Buist M. *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek*. OTM. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.

_____. "Approaches to Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek: Issues in Definition and Method." In *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Donald A. Carson, 46–62. JSNTSup 80. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993.

_____. Review of *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*, by Constantine R. Campbell. *JETS* 51.2 (2008) 394–97.

_____. "Greek Presents, Imperfects, and Aorists in the Synoptic Gospels: Their Contribution to Narrative Structuring." In *Discourse Studies and Biblical Interpretation: A Festschrift in Honor of Stephen H. Levinsohn*, edited by Steven E. Runge, 167–86. Bellingham, WA: Logos Software, 2011.

Fawcett, Robin P. *Invitation to Systemic-Functional Grammar through the Cardiff Grammar: An Extension and Simplification of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar*. 3rd ed. London: Equinox, 2008.

Fewster, Gregory P. "Evaluating 'Root' Metaphors in Ephesians and Colossians: An Inquiry into Metaphorical Extension from a Functional Monosemous Perspective." In *Modeling Biblical Language: Studies in Theory and Practice*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Wally V. Cirafesi. In preparation.

Ford, J. Massyngberde. "Money 'Bags' in the Temple (Mark 11:16)." *Bib* 57.2 (1976) 249–53.

France, R.T. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Texts*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Frey, Jörg. "Die 'theologia crucifixi' des Johannesevangeliums," In *Kreuzestheologie im Neuen Testament*, edited by Andreas Dettwiler and Jean Zumstein, 169–238. WUNT 151. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.

Gaechter, Paul. *Das Matthäus Evangelium*. Munich: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1962.

Gnilka, Joachim. *Das Evangelium nach Markus*. EKKZNT. 2 vols. Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1989.

Gould, Ezra P. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Mark*. ICC. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903.

Gray, Timothy C. *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in its Narrative Role*. WUNT 2.242. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

Green, Joel B. *The Gospel of Luke*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Greenberg, Joseph H. *Language Universals with Special Reference to Feature Hierarchies*. The Hague: Mouton, 1966.

Gurtner, Daniel M. *The Torn Veil: Matthew's Exposition of the Death of Jesus*. SNTSMS 139. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Halliday, Michael A.K. *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold, 1985.

_____. *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. New York: Elsevier North Holland, 1977.

_____. "On the Ineffability of Grammatical Categories." In *Linguistics in Systemic Perspective*, edited by J.D. Benson, M.J. Cummings, and W.S. Greaves, 27–51. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1988.

Halliday, Michael A.K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. "Text and Context: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective." *SL* 6 (1980) 6–91.

_____. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976.

Hagedorn, Anselm C., and Jerome H. Neyrey, "'It Was Out of Envy that They Handed Jesus Over' (Mark 15:10): The Anatomy of Envy and the Gospel of Mark." *JSNT* 69 (1998) 15–56.

Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew*. 2 vols. WBC 33A, B. Nashville: Nelson, 1995.

Holmén, Tom. *Jesus and Jewish Covenant Thinking*. BIS 55. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Hopper, P.J. "Aspect and Foregrounding in Discourse." In *Discourse and Syntax*. Edited by T. Givón. New York: Academic Press, 1979. 213–41.

_____. "Aspect between Discourse and Grammar: An Introductory Essay for this Volume." In *Tense-Aspect: Between Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edited by P.J. Hopper .Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1982. 1–18.

Horsley, Richard A. *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*. Harrisbug, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.

Kwong, Ivan Shing Chung. *The Word Order of the Gospel of Luke: Its Foregrounded Messages*. LNTS 298. SNTG 12. London: T. & T. Clark, 2005.

Lagrange, M.-J. *Évangile selon Sain Matthieu*. Paris: Gabalda, 1923.

_____. *Évangile selon Saint Marc*. Paris: Gabalda, 1966.

Loney, Alexander C. "Narrative Structure and Verbal Aspect Choice in Luke." *FN* 18 (2005) 4–31.

Longacre, Robert E. "Discourse Peak as a Zone of Turbulence." In *Beyond the Sentence: Discourse and Sentential Form*. Edited by Jessica R. Wirth. Ann Arbor, MI: Karoma, 1985. 81–98

_____. "A Top-Down, Template-Driven Narrative Analysis, Illustrated by Application to Mark's Gospel." In *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, 140–68. JSNTSup 170. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.

_____. "Mark 5:1–43: Generating the Complexity of a Narrative from Its Most Basic Elements." In *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, 169–96. JSNTSup 170. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999.

_____. *The Grammar of Discourse*. TLL. 2nd ed. New York: Plenum, 1996.

Louw, J.P., and Eugene A. *Nida. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. 2 vols. New York: United Bible Societies, 1988.

Luz, Ulrich. *Matthew: A Commentary*. 3 vols. Translated by James E. Crouch. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

Lyons, John. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Mann, C.S. *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. ABC 27. New York: Doubleday, 1986.

Marshall, I.H. *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.

_____. *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*. Downer Grove: InterVarsity, 2004.

Martin-Asensio, Gustavo. *Transitivity-Based Foregrounding in the Acts of the Apostles: A Functional-Grammatical Approach to the Lukan Perspective*. JSNTSup 202. SNTG 8. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000.

Mason, William. *The Gospel of Luke*. MNTC. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930.

Mathewson, David L. *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation: The Function of Greek Verb Tenses in John's Apocalypse*. LBS 4. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

McKay, Kenneth L. *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach*. SBG 5. New York: Peter Lang, 1994.

_____. "The Use of the Ancient Greek Perfect down to the End of the Second Century A.D." *BICS* 12 (1965) 1–21.

_____. "Aspect in Imperatival Constructions in NT Greek." *NovT* 27 (1985) 201–26.

_____. "Aspects of the Imperative in Ancient Greek." *Antichthon* 20 (1986) 41–58.

_____. "Further Remarks on the 'Historical' Present and Other Phenomena." *FL* 11 (1974) 247–51.

_____. *Greek Grammar for Students: A Concise Grammar of Classical Attic with Special Reference to Aspect in the Verb*. Canberra: Australian National University, 1974.

_____. "On the Perfect and Other Aspects in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri." *BICS* 27 (1980) 23–49.

Merritt, Robert L. "Jesus Barabbas and the Paschal Pardon." *JBL* 104.1 (1985) 57–68.

Millhouse, Roy R. "The Use of the Imperfect Verb Form in the New Testament: An Investigation into Aspectual and Tense Relationships in Hellenistic Greek." MA thesis. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1999.

Morris, Leon. *The Cross of Jesus.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

Moule, C.F.D. *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.

Moulton, J.H. *Prolegomena.* Vol. 1 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek.* 3rd ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906.

Nolland, John. *Luke 18:35—24:53.* WBC 35C. Dallas: Word, 1993.

_____. *The Gospel of Matthew.* NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Olsen, Mari B. *A Semantic and Pragmatic Model of Lexical and Grammatical Aspect.* ODL. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997.

Porter, Stanley E. *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussion and New Proposals.* JSNTSup 191. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000.

_____. *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with reference to Tense and Mood.* SBG 1. New York: Peter Lang, 1989.

_____. "How Can Biblical Discourse Be Analyzed? A Response to Several Attempts." In *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Donald A. Carson, 107–16. JSNTSup 113. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.

_____. *Idioms of the Greek New Testament.* 2nd ed. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994.

_____. "Prominence: An Overview." In *The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Matthew B. O'Donnell, 45–74. NTM 11. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009.

_____. "The Greek of the New Testament as a Disputed Area of Research." In his *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice*, 75–99. SBG 6. New York, Peter Lang, 1996.

_____. "In Defense of Verbal Aspect." In his *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice*, 21–38. SBG 6. New York, Peter Lang, 1996.

_____. "Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek? A Look at Scholarly Opinion and Evidence." In his *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice*, 139–72. SBG 6. New York, Peter Lang, 1996.

_____. "Tense Terminology and Greek Language Study: A Linguistic Re-Evaluation." In his *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice*, 39–48. SBG 6. New York, Peter Lang, 1996.

_____. "'In the Vicinity of Jericho': Luke 18:35 in the Light of its Synoptic Parallels." In his *Studies in the Greek New Testament: Theory and Practice*, 125–38. SBG 6. New York, Peter Lang, 1996.

_____. "Verbal Aspect and Discourse Function in Mark 16:1–8: Three Significant Instances." In *Studies in the Greek Bible: Essays in Honor of Francis T. Gignac*, edited by Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp, 123–37. CBQMS 44. Washington, D.C., Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2008.

_____. "Verbal Aspect and Synoptic Relations." Unpublished paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, 21–24 November 2009.

_____. "The Role of Greek Language Criteria in Historical Jesus Research." In *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Vol. 1. *How to Study the Historical Jesus*, edited by Tom Holmén and Stanley E. Porter, 361–404. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

_____. "Greek Linguistics and Lexicography." In *Understanding the Times: New Testament Studies in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of D.A. Carson on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough, 19–61. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

_____. "Dialect and Register in the Greek of the New Testament: Theory." In *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation*, edited by M. Daniel Carroll R., 190–208. JSOTSup 299. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000.

_____. "Scripture Justifies Mission: The Use of the Old Testament in Luke–Acts." In *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, edited by Stanley E. Porter, 104–26. MNTS. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Porter, Stanley E. and Matthew B. O'Donnell. "The Greek Verbal Network Viewed from a Probabilistic Standpoint: An Exercise in Hallidayan Linguistics." *FN* 14 (2001) 3–41.

_____. *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament* (in preparation).

_____. "Conjunctions, Clines and Levels of Discourse." *FN* 20 (2007) 3–14.

Pryke, E.J. *The Redactional Style of the Markan Gospel: A Study of Syntax and Vocabulary as Guides to Redaction in Mark*. SNTSMS 33. New York: Cambridge University, 1978.

Ravelli, L.J. "Grammatical Metaphor: An Initial Analysis." In *Pragmatics, Discourse and Text*, edited by Erich H. Steiner and Robert Veltman, 133–47. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1988.

Reed, Jeffrey T. *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*. JSNTSup 136. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997.

_____. "Identifying Theme in the New Testament: Insights from Discourse Analysis." In *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Donald A. Carson, 75–101. JSNTSup 113. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

_____. "The Cohesiveness of Discourse: Towards a Model of Criteria for Analyzing New Testament Discourse." In *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, 28–46. JSNTSup 170. SNTG 4. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Reed, Jeffrey T. and Ruth A. Reese, "Verbal Aspect, Discourse Prominence, and the Letter of Jude." *FN* 9 (1996) 181–99.

Robertson, A.T. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*. 3rd ed. Nashville: Broadman, 1934.

Robinson, James M., et al., eds. *The Critical Edition of Q: A Synopsis Including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas*. Leuven: Peeters, 2000.

Ruipérez, M.S. *Estructura del Sistema de Aspectos y Tiempos del Verbo Griego Antiguo: Análysis Funcional Sincrónico*. Theses et Studia Philologica Salmanticensia 7. Salamanca: Colegio Trilingue de la Universidad, 1954.

Runesson, Anders. *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study*. CB NTS 37. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001.

Runge, Steven E. "The Verbal Aspect of the Historical Present Indicative in Narrative." In *Discourse Studies and Biblical Interpretation: A Festschrift in Honor of Stephen H. Levinsohn*, edited by Steven E. Runge, 191–223. Bellingham, WA: Logos Software, 2011.

Sanders, E.P. *Jesus and Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

Schlatter, Adolf. *Der Evangelist Matthäus*. Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1948.

Schmidt, Daryl D. "Verbal Aspect in Greek: Two Approaches." In *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Donald A. Carson, 63–73. JSNTSup 80. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993.

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News according to Mark*. Translated by Donald H. Madvig. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970.

Silva, Moisés. *God, Language, and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics*. FCI 4. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

_____. "A Response to Fanning and Porter on Verbal Aspect." In *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Donald A. Carson, 74–82. JSNTSup 80. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993.

Smith, Catherine. "Casting Out Demons and Sewing Seeds: A Fresh Approach to the Synoptic Problem from the Perspective of Systemic-Functional Linguistics." Ph.D. dissertation. University of Birmingham, 2005.

Stein, Robert H. *Mark*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Telford, William R. Review of *Linguistics and Exegesis in the Gospel of Mark: Applications of a Case Frame Analysis*, by Paul Danove. *BI* 13.2 (2005) 209–11.

_____. *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition.* JSNTSup 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1980.

Thompson, Geoff. *Introducing Functional Grammar.* 2nd ed. London: Hodder Education, 2004.

Thorely, John. "Subjunctive Aktionsart in New Testament Greek: A Reassessment." *NovT* 30.3 (1988) 193–211.

Turner, David L. *Matthew.* BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

_____. "The Semantic Range of the Article-Noun-καί-Noun Construction in the New Testament." *GTJ* 4.1 (1983) 59–84.

Wallace, Steven. "Figure and Ground: The Interrelationships of Linguistic Categories." In *Tense-Aspect: Between Semantics and Pragmatics,* edited by Paul J. Hopper, 201–23. TSL 1. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1982.

Wiefel, Wolfgang. *Das Evangelium nach Mattäus.* THZNT 1. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998.

Westfall, Cynthia L. *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews.* LNTS 297. London: T. & T. Clark, 2005.

_____. "A Method for the Analysis of Prominence in Hellenistic Greek." In *The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament,* edited by Stanley E. Porter and Matthew B. O'Donnell, 45–74. NTM 11. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009.

_____. "Blessed Be the Ties That Bind: Semantic Domains and Cohesive Chains in Hebrews 1.1–2.4 and 12.5–8." *JGRChJ* 6 (2009) 199–216.

Wright, N.T. *Jesus and the Victory of God.* Christian Origins and the Question of God 2. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.

_____. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

Wong, Solomon Hon-fai. *The Temple Incident in Mark 11, 15–19: The Disclosure of Jesus and the Marcan Faction.* NTSCE 5. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009.

Zerwick, M. *Biblical Greek Illustrated from Examples.* Translated by J. Smith. Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963.