

ἔχειν πίστιν IN HELLENISTIC GREEK AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO
THE ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ DEBATE*

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Abstract: This article argues that the construction ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek is a nominalized ideational metaphor that is semantically related to the finite verb πιστεύειν. Therefore, when the construction possesses a genitive modifier, the function of the genitive is disambiguated as denoting the object of πίστιν. This understanding of ἔχειν πίστιν + the genitive has significant implications for interpreting the construction in Mark 11:22, Jas 2:1, and Hippolytus's De Antichristo 61:26. (Article)

Keywords: πίστις Χριστοῦ, Greek linguistics, nominalization, grammatical metaphor, Mark 11:22, Jas 2:1, Hippolytus

This article will address a specific linguistic issue that has direct relevance for the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate but lies outside of the Pauline corpus. It will examine the semantics of the construction ἔχειν πίστιν + a genitive modifier in Hellenistic Greek, including the New Testament,¹ and consider how this construction informs an understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ in early Christian literature. In doing this, a theory of grammatical metaphor will be employed from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to argue two points: (1) that ἔχειν πίστιν is a

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1. I.e., in Mark 11:22: ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ; and Jas 2:1: ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης.

nominalized ideational metaphor² that is semantically related to its congruent paradigmatic variant πιστεύειν, and (2) that ἔχειν πίστιν disambiguates the function of a genitive modifier as the object of its head term. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that while the expressions ἔχειν πίστιν and πιστεύειν are semantically related, the difference between them is primarily a functional one. Before entering this theoretical discussion in more detail, a very brief survey will be given of the current status of linguistics in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate.

*The Role of Linguistics in the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate*³

Debate over the meaning of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the New Testament shows no sign of diminishing. Within the last fifty years or so, objectivists (“faith in Christ”) and subjectivists (“the faith[fulness] of Christ”) alike have published extensively, arguing for their particular view on the genitive case, the meaning of πίστις and why their view fits best within the scope of Pauline theology.⁴ More recently, a “third view” has emerged, proposing alternate adjectival renderings for the construction

2. Although they are broadly related, this sort of metaphorical expression needs to be distinguished from lexical metaphor, which primarily deals with the meaning potential of individual words. Grammatical metaphor, on the other hand, primarily deals with the meaning potential inherent in lexicogrammatical structures.

3. For a more comprehensive review of recent research, see Easter, “The Pistis Christou Debate,” 33–47.

4. See, for example, Peterman, “Notes”; Harrisville, “Witness of the Fathers”; Howard, “Notes”; Williams, “Again Pistis Christou”; Johnson, “Rom 3:21–26”; Campbell, “Romans 1:17”; Choi, “πίστις in Galatians 5:5–6”; Hultgren, “Pistis Christou”; Foster, “Ephesians 3.12”; Pollard, “The ‘Faith of Christ’”; Taylor, “πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians”; Matlock, “Detheologizing the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate”; Matlock, “Even the Demons Believe”; Matlock, “The Rhetoric of πίστις in Paul”; Lee, “Against Hays”; Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*; Dunn, “Once More, πίστις Χριστοῦ”; and Easter, “The Pistis Christou Debate.”

(the “Christic-faith” or “faith from Christ”).⁵ Additionally, while the discussion has primarily remained within the Pauline corpus (e.g., Rom 3:22; Gal 2:16; 3:22; Phil 3:9), several studies have included the broader scope of the New Testament and other early Christian texts.⁶

Yet as one becomes familiar with the literature, one will recognize that, at their core, all three views have been primarily motivated by hermeneutical and theological concerns.⁷ This is rather unsettling, since in the end what is being judged in the debate is a question of *language*. The imposition of a theological paradigm in order to determine Paul’s linguistic intentions runs the risk of misrepresenting Paul’s own communicative processes.

Nevertheless, it appears that many scholars, if not most, have abandoned the notion of solving the πίστις Χριστοῦ conundrum on linguistic grounds alone. In a 1989 article, Morna Hooker made the now well-known statement that the debate “cannot be settled on the basis of appeals to grammatical construction alone,” and that it “can be settled only by exegesis.”⁸ There are some who have disagreed with Hooker’s sentiments and so have continued to pursue various linguistic routes in an attempt to solve the problem. The recent works of Matlock,⁹ Lee,¹⁰ and

5. See Williams, “Righteousness of God,” 241–90; Sprinkle, “πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event,” 165–84.

6. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*; Harrisville, “Witness of the Fathers”; Lowe, “James 2:1”; Bird and Whittenton, “Overlooked Patristic Evidence.”

7. Easter has noted this as well (“Pistis Christou,” 42–44). See also Hays, “πίστις and Pauline Christology,” 35–60.

8. Hooker, “πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 321. Peterman echoes this sentiment in his recent article: “As most agree, its ambiguity calls the exegete to search for arguments beyond mere syntax in order to establish the nuance of the phrase” (“Notes,” 163).

9. Matlock, “Detheologizing the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” 1–23; Matlock, “Even the Demons Believe,” 300–318; Matlock, “The Rhetoric of πίστις in Paul,” 173–203.

10. Lee, “Against Hays,” 51–80.

Porter and Pitts¹¹ are good examples of linguistically oriented approaches to πίστις Χριστοῦ, particularly as found in Paul.¹²

In light of this trend, the present work will align more with the work of Matlock, Lee, and Porter and Pitts insofar as they approach the conversation from a linguistic point of view. The uniqueness of this paper, however, lies in its scope, that is, in specifically addressing the meaning of the construction ἔχειν πίστιν + genitive modifier as it occurs in Mark 11:22, Jas 2:1, and *De Antichristo* 61:26—all of which have been used in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. To this end, the following section sets forth a theory of grammatical metaphor, which will be applied in the analysis of these texts.

Grammatical Metaphor and Nominalization

Grammatical metaphor theory finds its origins in SFL. The notion of “system” refers to the network of available semantic options within a language from which a speaker or writer can make meaningful choices.¹³ Language users possess sets of semantic paradigms that are realized in the use of linguistic forms.¹⁴ Language is “functional” inasmuch as it is used by individuals (or communities) to do or accomplish certain things. This understanding 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 what the form, via its meaning, is *doing* in its co-text.¹⁵ Second,

11. Porter and Pitts, “πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier,” 33–53, although even Porter and Pitts concede that the debate will not be solved by grammar alone given the fact that there are other issues at stake in the debate (53).

12. Interestingly, each of these studies concludes in support of an objective reading of the genitive.

13. Berry, *Introduction to Systemic Linguistics*, 1:142–92.

14. Reed, *Philippians*, 36.

15. Berry, *Introduction to Systemic Linguistics*, 1:22–23; Butler, *Systemic Linguistics*, 148–49. “Co-text” is here defined as “linguistic units that are part

functionality concerns the idea that the semantic roles encoded in linguistic forms relate to definite social scenarios.¹⁶

According to Halliday, the relationship between social context and language is expressed via three metafunctions of language: the ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Here, the discussion must be limited to the first and last of these functions. The ideational metafunction refers to the use of language for the purpose of understanding the environment of one's human experience, focusing 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."¹⁷ In Greek, as well as in English, verbs are the primary carrier of ideational meaning,¹⁸ and so it is here within the ideational metafunction that the most time will be spent with reference to grammatical metaphor and nominalization.

The textual metafunction deals with the semantic and grammatical continuity and the thematic element of a discourse in such a way as to provide the discourse with linguistic cohesion.¹⁹ Moreover, textual meanings are directly influenced by their particular social scenario; how a text is organized—semantically and grammatically—is directly influenced by its contextual situation and mode of lexico-grammatical realization.²⁰

Thompson gives a concise yet helpful definition of grammatical metaphor. He defines the concept as the "possibility

of a discourse and, more specifically, linguistic units that surround a particular point in the discourse" (Reed, *Philippians*, 42).

16. See Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 245–46. Halliday calls this notion the "context of situation." See also Melrose's discussion on register, although it is based on Fawcett's approach to systemic linguistics, not Halliday's (Melrose, "Systemic Linguistics," 78–93 [81]).

17. Reed, *Philippians*, 59. Cf. Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, xiii; Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 238.

18. Thompson, *Functional Grammar*, 87; Ravelli, "Grammatical Metaphor," 134.

19. Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, 27. See also Reed, *Philippians*, 60.

20. Halliday and Hasan, "Text and Context," 6–91 (12).

of re-setting the relationships between meanings and wordings, which is a central resource for expanding the meaning potential of language.”²¹ For example, when the semantic choice [+PROCESS] is realized in its typical manner, as a verb, then the realization is *congruent*.²² However, *metaphor* occurs when a choice is realized in a non-typical manner, for example, when the choice [+PROCESS] is made but is expressed in the grammar as [+THING], that is, as a noun.²³ An example from English may be helpful here.²⁴

(1) Congruent realization of [+PROCESS]: He decided to go on vacation last week.

(2) Choice of [+PROCESS] realized metaphorically as [+THING]: His decision to go on vacation was made last week.

In this example, the two expressions are semantically related; both realize a process meaning, yet example (1) construes experience congruently through the use of a verb while example (2) construes experience metaphorically through the use of a

21. Thompson, *Functional Grammar*, 220.

22. Ravelli helps to clarify what I mean here by using the term “typical.” She says it “refers to the expected flow-on of choices between the various linguistic levels and ranks” (“Grammatical Metaphor,” 134). Also helpful is her comment regarding the relationship between congruent and metaphorical forms: “Further it should be emphasized that metaphorical forms are not permutations of congruent forms: one does not ‘become’ the other; there is no ‘base form.’ Each is a lexicogrammatical form arrived at by a pass through the system network: they are independent realizations, but share a certain core meaning” (“Grammatical Metaphor,” 135).

23. Since I am concerned with the semantic category of PROCESS, this example of metaphor can be specifically labeled as ideational metaphor. On the notion of interpersonal metaphor, see Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 626–35; Thompson, *Functional Grammar*, 231–35. Thompson also includes a section on textual metaphors (235–36), whereas Halliday does not. Halliday seems to believe that ideational and interpersonal metaphors have implications for the textual metafunction, rather than there being a separate category of textual metaphor.

24. The example is borrowed from Halliday, “Language and Knowledge,” 170–71.

noun. Thus, in (2) the verb has undergone a nominalization.²⁵ Therefore, it can be said that the verb *decide* and the noun *decision* are *agnates* of one another.²⁶ They are paradigmatic variants that, although semantically related, differ in that the noun *decision* combines both a “process” meaning and a “thing” meaning. This is what Halliday has termed “semantic junction.”²⁷

At this point, a brief comment is needed with regard to the proposal that ἔχειν πίστιν represents a nominalization. It is suggested here that it grammaticalizes a specific kind of nominalized expression, that being, a PROCESS + RANGE structure. In these sorts of expressions “the process is reconstrued as a participant and is combined with a new process with the general sense of ‘perform.’”²⁸ Nominalization occurs in the realization of the RANGE (i.e., πίστιν), which enters into syntagmatic relationship with a process verb that takes a “performance” meaning. However, such verbs are essentially “semantically empty,” with the bulk of the clausal meaning being carried by the noun.²⁹ Examples from English of PROCESS + RANGE expressions are abundant: “take a shower,” “have a nap,” “make a mistake.” All of these examples are PROCESS + RANGE ideational metaphors that represent verbal processes that have been

25. See Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 656–58; Ravelli, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 13–35; Thompson, *Functional Grammar*, 225–27; Heyvaert, “Nominalization as Grammatical Metaphor,” 19.

26. Ravelli, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 141; Heyvaert, “Nominalization as Grammatical Metaphor,” 71–72.

27. Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 637–38; Halliday, “On Language,” 419; cf. Halliday, “On the ‘Architecture,’” 22. Thus, in the construction ἔχειν πίστιν, the choice of [+PROCESS] realized as [+THING] also qualifies as a semantic junction.

28. Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 651.

29. Halliday, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 10. Thompson likewise notes concerning the PROCESS + RANGE nominalization, “In other cases, the process contributes relatively little to the meaning of the clause. It may be a lexically empty verb that combines with the following nominalization (functioning as SCOPE [what Halliday calls RANGE]) to express the process” (*Functional Grammar*, 227). See also Ravelli, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 142.

nominalized.³⁰ ἔχειν πίστιν can be seen to fit this category since it metaphorically realizes the verbal process “believe” as a nominalization in a PROCESS + RANGE construction.³¹

Criteria, Motivation, and ἔχειν πίστιν as Ideational Metaphor

In this section, several questions need to be answered. First, how does one determine whether a form is congruent or metaphorical? That is, what makes πιστεύειν the congruent mode and ἔχειν πίστιν the metaphorical mode? Second, what motivates the use of ideational metaphor and what difference does it make when a speaker/writer chooses to employ a metaphorical form? Third, is the proposal that ἔχειν πίστιν is an ideational metaphor a valid one in Hellenistic Greek?

In establishing a method for evaluating congruence and metaphor, Halliday’s comments are helpful concerning the “continuum of concretization” in which various shifts take place when grammatical metaphors are used. He says:

The general drift is, in fact, a drift towards the concrete, whereby each element is reconstructed in the guise of one that lies further towards the pole of stability and persistence through time. Thus, entities are more stable than qualities, and qualities than processes.³²

According to Halliday, there is a continuum of metaphorical usage that starts with the less concrete and moves toward the more concrete. For him, since processes are *less* concrete than

30. Somewhat similar to the concept of PROCESS + RANGE is Fawcett’s discussion on main verb extensions (see Fawcett, *Systemic Functional Linguistics*, 183–88). Outside of SFL, these constructions are often referred to as “light verbs.” Napoli, *Syntax*, 98, gives the example “She *took care* of them” (italics mine), in which the verb *take* “tells us the actual activity that occurred or state that existed. The entire string, then, is the predicate [...]. For this reason, verbs like *take*, when used as in [this example] are often called LIGHT VERBS. They are semantically lightweight.” See also Butt, “The Light Verb Jungle.”

31. Halliday, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 10, and Ravelli, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 142.

32. Halliday, “Language and Knowledge,” 169.

entities, a speaker/writer is more likely to realize a process metaphorically as a thing rather than the other way around. The chief reason a speaker/writer chooses to employ metaphorical language in the first place is to bring what is abstract into a more concrete experience for his or her recipients.³³ This is precisely what occurs with the use of ideational metaphors—a more abstract process is realized as a more concrete thing for the purpose of increased tangibility. In this way, *nominalization* is a primary criterion for determining an occurrence of ideational metaphor: if it can be said that the choice [+PROCESS] has been realized in the grammar as a noun, then the nominal expression represents an ideational metaphor and is thus semantically related to its verbal congruent agnate. Further, as Halliday notes, an ideational metaphor can be interpreted against the backdrop of its congruent variant.³⁴ His point here is significant, since there are several instances in Greek literature where the congruent expression πιστεύειν is used along side of the metaphorical ἔχειν πίστιν.

To address the second question, there are at least two motivating factors for the use of ideational metaphor. One lies in the manner in which a speaker/writer wishes to re-construe reality for his or her listener/reader.³⁵ Since the ideational meta-function is concerned with how language is used to express the realm of human experience, ideational metaphors are likewise concerned with the construal of human experience. However, this concern is expressed through *transcategorization*, that is, through the semantic category [+PROCESS] being realized in the lexicogrammar as [+THING].³⁶ Thus, ideational metaphors

33. See also Halliday and Matthiessen, *Construing Experience through Meaning*, 233.

34. Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 637. See also Ravelli, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 138, where she mentions the usefulness of transitivity analyses in revealing ideational metaphors.

35. Halliday, “On the ‘Architecture,’” 20–22; Halliday, “On Language,” 420–22.

36. The concept of transcategorization is similar to that of semantic junction.

allow a reader/listener to experience less tangible processes as more concrete things.³⁷

The second motivation for the use of ideational metaphor concerns its implications for the textual metafunction. Here, two points can be made. First, when a process is realized metaphorically as a thing, it can then be treated textually as a participant in the discourse similar to other things/entities.³⁸ Second, ideational metaphor provides the language user with a resource to modify processes in such a way that may be more difficult for congruent expressions.³⁹ Halliday himself 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*.” Below it will be argued that these two points on the textual functions of ideational metaphor can be seen in the use of the construction ἔχειν πίστιν + genitive modifier.

The answer to the third question—is the concept of ideational metaphor applicable to ancient Greek?—is yes. The following analysis of ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic literature provides support for this assertion.⁴⁰ There are two goals in conducting this analysis. First, the relation between the semantic choice realized in the metaphorical expression as compared to its congruent expression will be highlighted. The focus here will be to show that ἔχειν πίστιν is used as an expression of one’s “belief,” “confidence,” or “trust,” and not one’s “faithfulness.”

37. See Halliday, “On Language,” 422.

38. Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 638.

39. Halliday, “Grammatical Metaphor,” 10.

40. Although O’Donnell defines Hellenistic Greek as “the extant Greek writ-ten by native and non-native language users throughout the Hellenistic and Roman worlds from approximately the fourth century BCE to the fourth century CE” (*Corpus Linguistics*, 2–3), I will include authors who wrote up to the sixth century CE (e.g., *Vita Nicolai Sionitae*).

The second goal of the analysis is to identify the typical function of a genitive modifier of πίστις when one is present.⁴¹

ἔχειν πίστιν in Hellenistic Greek

The following examples demonstrate the criteria, motivation, and semantics of ἔχειν πίστιν as an ideational metaphor. Examples of ἔχειν πίστιν without a genitive modifier are:

(1) Plutarch, *Praec Ger Reipub* 812:F:6

ἐπαινοῦσι δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀναφλύστιον Εὐβουλον, ὅτι **πίστιν ἔχων** ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα καὶ δύναμιν οὐδὲν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἔπραξεν οὐδ' ἐπὶ στρατηγίαν ἦλθεν (Now, they praised Anaphlustius Euboulus, because, although **he had confidence** among those who were greatest, and strength too, he practiced nothing of the Greeks' affairs, nor came upon a commanding post).⁴²

(2) Polybius, *Hist.* 32:6:5

ὁ τε γὰρ Μάρκος, ἀρχιερεὺς ὢν καὶ πρῶτος τῆς συγκλήτου γραφόμενος, ὁ τε Λεύκιος ὁ τὸν Περσέα νικήσας, μεγίστην **ἔχων πίστιν** καὶ δύναμιν, πυνθανόμενοι τὰ πεπραγμένα τῷ Χάροπι (For both Markus, who was chief-priest as well as the first who was written about of the Senate, and Lukius, who overcame Per-seus, while **having the greatest confidence** and strength, learned about the things which had been done to Charops).

(3) Diog. Laert., *Vit. Phil.* 1:78:6

φίλον μὴ λέγειν κακῶς, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ ἐχθρόν. εὐσέβειαν ἀσκεῖν. σωφροσύνην φιλεῖν. ἀλήθειαν **ἔχειν πίστιν**, ἐμπειρίαν, ἐπιδεξιότητα, ἑταιρίαν, ἐπιμέλειαν (not to speak badly about a friend

41. As will be seen in the analysis, although I am mostly concerned with instances when the construction occurs with an anarthrous use of πίστις, the paper does not exclude instances where πίστις occurs with the article. So, for example, in my treatment of Jas 2:1, I will argue that when the construction occurs with the article, it allows πίστις to enter the system of DETERMINATION, which marks πίστις as a specific discourse referent that is able to be tracked by the recipient as the discourse unfolds.

42. All translations are mine. Two other examples from Plutarch are: *Theseus* 1:4:1 and *De Capienda* 91:A:8.

nor an enemy. To practice piety. To love prudence. **To have** truth, **faith**, experience, cleverness, unity, [and] diligence).

(4) Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina Moralia* 913:13

ὔβρις **πίστιν ἔχειν** ἐν χρώμασι, μὴ καρδίῃσι⁴³ (arrogance **has faith** in the surface of the skin, not in the heart).

(5) Nonnus, *Par Sancti Ev. Joannei* 1:206

πίστιν ἔχεις ἔνα μῶνον ἀθαμβέα μῦθον ἀκούσας ὅττι σε μῶνον ἔειπον ἰδεῖν ὑπὸ πυθμένα συκῆς (**You have faith** because you heard a bold story when I said I saw you under the branch of the fig tree).⁴⁴

Examples with of ἔχειν πίστιν with a genitive modifier are:

(6) Josephus, *Ant.* 19:16:1

ἄλλως τε ἐπειδὴ καὶ πολλὴν **ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ** τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ παραμυθίαν τοῖς ἐν τύχαις κειμένοις (Because it **has much faith in the God** of power and great encouragement for those who happen to be laid with affliction).

(7) Hermas, *Pastor* 43:9:2

ὅταν οὖν ἔλθῃ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἔχων τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ θεῖον εἰς συναγωγὴν ἀνδρῶν δικαίων **τῶν ἔχόντων πίστιν θεοῦ πνεύματος** (Therefore, whenever a person who has the Divine Spirit should come to a gathering of righteous men, **who have faith in the divine Spirit**).

(8) Plutarch, *Fab. Max.* 5:5:1

τῷ δ' ἡ μὲν κρίσις **πίστιν ἔχοντι τοῦ συμφέροντος** ἐν αὐτῇ βέβαιος εἴστηκε καὶ ἀμετάπτωτος (But the decision, **for the one who has confidence in a beneficial outcome** because of it, stood certain and unchangeable).

43. This spelling and any other unorthodox spellings are according to the TLG text.

44. ἔχειν πίστιν without a genitive modifier also occurs ten times in the New Testament: Matt 17:20; 21:21; Mark 4:40; Luke 17:6; Acts 14:9; Rom 14:22; 1 Cor 13:2; 1 Tim 1:19; Jas 2:14; Phlm 5.

(9) Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi* 29:4:15

ποιω̄ν ἐν ἐκάστῳ τῶν αὐτοῦ τὴν πίστιν ἐχόντων καὶ τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ σταυροῦ φορούντων (Making [death] become quite weak in each of **those who have faith in him** and who bear the sign of the cross).⁴⁵

(10) Epiphanius, *Panarion* 3:351:7

ὁ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοὺς τρόπους καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν παρεκτρέψας τῶν τὴν σύνεσιν τοῦ θεοῦ κεκτημένων καὶ τὴν **πίστιν ἐχόντων τῆς ἀληθείας** (And the one among people who perverted the ways and the mind of those who have acquired the knowledge of God and **those who have confidence in the truth**).

(11) *Vitae Nicolai Sionitae* 59:16–17

καὶ ἐγὼ ἀμαρτωλὸς εἰμι ἄνθρωπος, ἐὰν δὲ ἔχητε πίστιν θεοῦ, ὁ κύριος ὑμῖν δοῦναι ἔχει ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐτῶν ὧν ἐκοπώθητε (I myself am also a sinful person, but if **you should have faith in God**, the Lord has the ability to give back to you on behalf of the years for which you have been troubled).⁴⁶

45. This example is quite interesting for two reasons: (1) the broader context of Athanasius's discourse is centered on Christ's victory over death via the cross event, being similar to the message of the Hippolytus text that will be considered later in this paper, and (2) within the same passage, and in close proximity, there are two occurrences of an unambiguous πίστις word group + Χριστός construction: τῇ πίστει τῇ εἰς Χριστὸν and the congruent expression ὑπὸ τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν πιστευόντων. The two unambiguous constructions in the context should help clarify the more ambiguous construction (see a similar argument made in Matlock, "Saving Faith," 73–89).

46. For other similar examples of the construction, see *Acta Pauli et Theclae* 17:10; Sophronius, *Narratio Miraculorum Sanctorum Cyri et Joannis* 7:15; Antiochus, *Pandecta Scripturae Sacrae* 102:80; Rhetorius, *Capitula Selecta (ex Rhetorii Thesauris)* (e cod. Paris.gr.2425, fol. 88v) 152:19; Galen, *De Compositione Medicamentorum per Genera Libri viii* 12:997:16; Pseudo-Justin Martyr, *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos* 491:A:3; Basilii Seleuciensis, *Sermones xli* 456:29; Aelius Aristides, πρὸς πλάτωνα ὑπὲρ τῶν τεττάρων 158:32; Athanasius, *Disputatio contra Arium* 28:500:23; Labanius, *Orationes 1–64* 1:70:8; Michael Gabras, *Epistulae* 20:35; Cyrillus, *Collectio Dictorum Veteris Testamenti [Sp]* 77:1225:32; Sophronius, *Narratio Miraculorum Sanctorum Cyri et Joannis* 64:37; Joannes, *Adversus Iconoclastas* 96:1357:38; Basilii Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* 29:509:27; Gregorius Acindynus, *Refutatio Magna* 4:12:52; Maximus Confessor, *Ambigua ad*

Each text above illustrates the semantic junction of “process construed as thing,” with the mental process “believe” being expressed in the lexicogrammar as “having belief (or faith or confidence).” This is most clearly seen in examples (5), (6), (7), and (11). The text of Nonnus comes from his *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John*. Here, he is paraphrasing John 1:50, which recounts the latter part of Jesus’ interaction with Nathaniel. The text as found in the New Testament reads, ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, ὅτι εἶπόν σοι ὅτι εἶδόν σε ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς, πιστεύεις. Interestingly, Nonnus has chosen to grammaticalize the semantics of πιστεύεις in John 1:50 as πίστιν ἔχεις in his own text. It can be deduced, then, that for Nonnus the two lexicogrammatical constructions realized very similar semantic choices. This does not mean that they are synonymous, but it does mean that they have significant semantic overlap: they both realize [+PROCESS], but πίστιν ἔχεις is a nominalization that construes the process as [+THING].

While the example from Josephus does not have specific contextual evidence of the congruent mode against which to interpret ἔχει πίστιν, the flow of the discourse suggests that one ought to read the construction as a metaphorical realization of the congruent πιστεύειν. Josephus’s text is found within a larger passage that recounts the actions of Caius, a Roman official, who appears to have caused quite a bit of trouble for both Rome and the Jewish nation (*Ant.* 19:11–16). According to Josephus, it was a very good thing for both the Roman public and the Jews when Caius was killed (*Ant.* 19:15). In light of this, Josephus is determined to give a thorough history of the turbulent and miserable affairs surrounding Caius and his death (*Ant.* 19:14–16), because his account has “much faith in the God of power and encouragement for those who happened to be laid with

Thomam 5:175; Athanasius, *Orationes tres contra Arianos* 26:17:39; *Contra gentes* 45:14; Didymus Caecus, *Fragmenta in Psalmos* 1081:6; 1:1:3:42:24; Eusebius, *Commentarius in Isaiam* 2:57:65; Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarius in xxi Prophetas Minores* Am.pr.1:95; Palladius, *Dialogus de vita Joannis Chrysostomi* 132:27; and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2:75.

affliction.” Thus, Josephus’s record of the events was meant to spur his readers on to “faith in God” and encourage those impacted by Caius’s actions, and to provide “wisdom for those who think worldly success is eternal” (19:16). Josephus has nominalized the would-be verbal process of “believing strongly in God” by realizing it as a PROCESS + RANGE expression—“having much faith in God.”

Examples (7) and (11) provide solid co-textual evidence for reading ἔχειν πίστιν as an ideational metaphor, since both the congruent and the metaphorical expressions are used in close proximity to one another. The text from Hermas’s *Pastor* is found in a section that contrasts the “Divine Spirit” with the “Spirit of the earth,” and gives commands for how one might discern between a true prophet and a false prophet (43:5–7). It is said that those who doubt (τῶν διψύχων) are those that the false prophet destroys (43:2). It is the doubters (οἱ διψύχοι) who consult diviners (μαντεύονται) with the result of bringing greater sin upon themselves by committing idolatry (καὶ ἑαυτοῖς μείζονα ἁμαρτίαν ἐπιφέρουσιν εἰδωλολατροῦντες, 43:4). In contrast, believers (πιστοί) are not affected by the false prophet, and those who are “strong with faith in the Lord” (ἰσχυροί εἰσιν ἐν τῇ πίστει τοῦ κυρίου) stay clear of such false spirits (43:4). Further, a true prophet can be identified by the manner in which he interacts with “an assembly of righteous people who have faith in the Divine Spirit” (συναγωγὴν ἀνδρῶν δικαίων τῶν ἔχόντων πίστιν θείου πνεύματος). That is, his quality is made known as the assembly prays to God and as the prophet speaks what the Lord wishes (43:9–10). The false prophet, on the other hand, exalts himself (ὑψοῖ ἑαυτόν, 43:12) and avoids the assembly of righteous men (εἰς συναγωγὴν ἀνδρῶν δικαίων οὐκ ἐγγίζει, ἀλλ’ ἀποφεύγει αὐτούς, 43:13). In view of this contrast between the true and false prophets, Hermas himself is commanded to believe in the Spirit that comes from God (σὺ δὲ πίστευε τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, 43:17) and to identify himself with the “assembly of the righteous who have faith in the Divine Spirit,” that is, those who are able to discern between the true and false prophets and between the Divine and earthly spirits. Thus, the expressions

“having faith in the Divine Spirit” (43:9) and “believe in the Spirit who comes from God” (43:17) can be read in light of one another. The first expression has realized the process of “believing” as an ideational metaphor, as a nominalization of the congruent verb πιστεύειν found a few lines later.

In *Vitae Nicolai Sionitae*, Nicolas, the servant of God, is approached by a man and his wife who are in desperate need of divine help due to a severe famine that has struck their land (59:5–8, 13). The couple has come to Nicolas’s monastery “to worship God, holy Zion, and [Nicolas’s] holiness” (59:9–10), hoping that Nicolas might intercede for them before God. Nicolas shows his piety by first affirming his limitations because of his own sinfulness (καὶ ἐγὼ ἁμαρτωλὸς εἰμι ἄνθρωπος, 59:16), and then by encouraging the couple to “have faith in God” rather than in him (ἐὰν δὲ ἔχητε πίστιν θεοῦ, ὁ κύριος ὑμῖν δοῦναι ἔχει ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐτῶν ὧν ἐκοπώθητε, 59:16–17). However, most interesting is the couple’s response to Nicolas: δοῦλε τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν τῷ θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ αὐτοῦ (59:18–19). The couple responds to Nicolas’s exhortation (ἔχητε πίστιν θεοῦ) by declaring their belief in God, using the congruent verbal expression πιστεύομεν. This response only makes sense if Nicolas had exhorted them earlier to “have faith in God.”

ἔχειν πίστιν and the Disambiguation of the Genitive Case

If ἔχειν πίστιν represents an expression that is semantically related to πιστεύειν, what does this mean for how one understands instances when the construction is modified by a word or phrase in the genitive case? So far, I have assumed in my translations that when a genitive modifies the construction the genitive is “objective.” To justify this assumption, an understanding is needed of (1) the semantics of the genitive case, and (2) how the function of a case is influenced by lexis.

In their contribution to the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, Porter and Pitts offer helpful treatment of the semantics of the Greek

case system.⁴⁷ In doing so, their goal is to elucidate the semantic contribution of the genitive case by establishing a systemic network through which to view it in relation to the other four cases.⁴⁸ They identify the essential semantic feature of the genitive as [+SPECIFICATION]: “The genitive grammaticalizes a restricting relation with the semantic feature *specification* in that it specifies, for example, a possessor or a part (partitive), a kind (apposition, epexegetical), or a time (temporal).”⁴⁹ Thus, a genitive modifier restricts the meaning of a head term via its semantic feature of SPECIFICATION; yet the precise manner in which the genitive does this is determined by context and the genitive’s relationship with the lexical content of the head term.⁵⁰

This last point is crucial, as it brings the discussion of ideational metaphor into dialogue with case disambiguation. If the metaphorical expression ἔχειν πίστιν is understood to contain the same essential lexical content as the congruent expression πιστεύειν, then this provides a significant clue as to what the genitive specifies in the larger construction ἔχειν πίστιν + genitive modifier, that being the “realm” or “object” of “faith.”⁵¹ This assertion is further supported by the observation that the two expressions seem to occur in their own unique syntactical frames.⁵² That is, whereas the relation between the congruent expression πιστεύειν and its object (when there is one present) tends to be marked by a word or word group in the dative (cf. *Hermas*, *Pastor* 43:17; *Nicolai Sionitae* 59:18–19), the object of

47. See Porter and Pitts, “πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier,” 38–46.

48. Porter and Pitts, “πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier,” 42.

49. Porter and Pitts, “πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier,” 44.

50. Porter and Pitts, “πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier,” 45.

51. Porter and Pitts, “πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier,” 51. See also their discussion of how the functions of the cases are determined by the lexical and syntactic contexts in which they occur (45–46).

52. See Porter and Pitts, “πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier,” 37.

the metaphorical expression ἔχειν πίστιν tends to be marked by the genitive, though this is not always the case. I suggest, then, that in each of the examples given above, the lexical content of ἔχειν πίστιν functions in tandem with the semantics of the genitive case, which itself restricts the meaning of the head term πίστιν and specifies the “object” of “faith.”

Having treated a number of examples from the broader corpus of Hellenistic Greek, I will now examine three examples of ἔχειν πίστιν + a genitive modifier in early Christian texts: Mark 11:22, Jas 2:1, and Hippolytus’s *De Antichristo* 61:26. I will show that the grammatical decisions made by at least several biblical scholars on these verses rest on a quite precarious foundation, having little or no guidance from a set of criteria or an informed linguistic methodology.

Mark 11:22

To my knowledge, no modern English translation renders Mark 11:22 in any other way than, “Have faith in God,”⁵³ with the construction marking “God” as the object of πίστιν. Yet at least three commentators have argued that Mark has used the construction to mean “you have God’s faithfulness.”⁵⁴ This reading has been used in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate to support the claim that, when πίστις is followed by “God” or “Christ” in the genitive, it is never unambiguously objective, thus a subjective genitive is more likely.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, advocates for

53. See, for example, KJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, NRSV, NET, CEB, NLT.

54. Robinson, “The ‘Faith of Jesus Christ,’” 71–81; Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 53–54, 71; and Lane, *Mark*, 409–410.

55. For example, Wallis writes: “It should also be noted that apart from Paul, there are no unambiguous cases in the New Testament where πίστις followed by Christ or God in the genitive case must be interpreted objectively” (*The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 71, citing Robinson’s work). However, it is interesting to contrast this statement with what Hays says about the πίστις θεοῦ construction in Mark 11:22, although he himself is a subjective genitivist: “For what it is worth, D.W.B. Robinson contributes the observation that the ninth edition of Liddell and Scott cites no instance of πίστις followed by an

this view have offered no linguistic support for their claims. However, objectivists have likewise offered no linguistic data to qualify their position.⁵⁶

The method proposed in this article provides a sound theoretical and empirical basis for understanding ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ in Mark 11:22 as “have faith in God.” Mark realizes the verb πιστεύειν metaphorically by using the PROCES + RANGE nominalization, ἔχετε πίστιν. The nominalized construction has entered into a syntagmatic relationship with a genitive modifier (θεοῦ), which restricts the lexical content of πίστιν to “faith/belief,” and specifies the realm in which it operates as “God.”

Notably, the congruent verb is used twice in the immediate co-text of Mark 11:23–24. After telling his disciples to “have faith in God,” Jesus teaches them in v. 23 that anyone will be able to do great things if that person μὴ διακριθῆ ἔν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ πιστεύῃ ὅτι ὁ λαλεῖ γίνεται. In the next verse, Jesus proceeds to teach about prayer: πάντα ὅσα προσεύχεσθε καὶ αἰτεῖσθε, πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε, καὶ ἔσται ὑμῖν. Whereas the Matthean parallel juxtaposes the metaphorical phrase ἔχητε πίστιν with μὴ διακριθῆτε, Mark juxtaposes μὴ διακριθῆ with the congruent expression πιστεύῃ. Three points can be made on the basis of this observation. First, the verses in Mark and Matthew demonstrate that ἔχειν πίστιν and πιστεύειν are

objective genitive. Against this sort of evidence, however, it may be argued that the New Testament itself supplies a few instances of πίστις with an objective genitive, the clearest of which is probably Mark 11:22: ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. Robinson attempts to explain this usage away, but it is probably wisest to accept that the objective genitive construction after πίστις is possible, though rare” (Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 164).

56. For examples, see Gould, *Mark*, 215; Cranfield, *Mark*, 361; Collins, *Mark*, 534; Stein, *Mark*, 519; and France, *Mark*, 448. Interesting for the present study are France’s remarks: “ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ...is a more arresting expression for πιστεύετε τῷ θεῷ, but does not differ in meaning. (The suggestion that πίστις θεοῦ means God’s faithfulness, which the disciples are either exhorted to ‘take hold of’ or assured that they already ‘have,’ is surely forced).” Here, France demonstrates that he is on the right track with regard to his understanding of the relation between ἔχειν πίστιν and πιστεύειν, but he lacks the appropriate methodology to elucidate the connection any further.

semantically related; both are options within the Greek language system for realizing the process of “believing.” Second, in Mark, the PROCESS + RANGE nominalization restricts the lexical meaning of πίστιν to “faith/belief” and disambiguates the function of the genitive, marking θεοῦ as the object realm of πίστιν. Third, and consequently, this suggests that previous commentators who have proposed the reading “you have/hold to God’s faithfulness” are likely wrong.

Furthermore, there are two probable factors that motivate Mark’s choice of the ideational metaphor. First, the primary incentive for its use seems to be the construal of experience. Mark has construed the verb process of “believing” for its readers in a more concrete way—as a thing or entity. Second, the metaphor’s impact on the textual level is clear: the nominalization aids in the organization of information in the text, with πίστις now being read as a discourse participant along with other nominal entities, for example, ἡ συκῆ (v. 21), τῷ ὄρει (v. 23) and τὴν θάλασσαν (v. 23). Likewise, the congruent forms, πιστεύη (v. 23) and πιστεύτετε (v. 24), seem to be organized around other verb processes such as διακριθῆ (v. 23), προσεύχεσθε and αἰτεῖσθε (v. 24).

James 2:1

Jas 2:1 has been invoked in debate over πίστις Χριστοῦ more than Mark 11:22.⁵⁷ The verse is found in a section of the letter that has received a noticeable amount of attention concerning its role in the letter’s theology and supposed “socio-rhetorical” structure (2:1–13).⁵⁸ Further, the question of how to translate 2:1

57. See especially Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus*, 64–65; Wachob, “‘Household’ and ‘Kingdom,’” 151–68; Dunn, “Once More,” 64–65; and Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law*, 246 n. 13. See also McKnight’s discussion in *James*, 176–77.

58. See the studies by Edgar, *Has God Not Chosen the Poor?*; Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus*; Wachob “‘Household’ and ‘Kingdom,’” and Lowe, “James 2:1.” As Allison has pointed out, there are also significant text-critical issues

has long been an issue within Jacobean scholarship.⁵⁹ Even so, the debate over the function of 2:1–13 as a whole has led commentators either to simply presuppose the meaning of πίστις and an understanding of the genitive in 2:1, or to force a reading of 2:1 into an already established exegetical framework.⁶⁰ While many have attempted to treat the syntax of 2:1 and have recognized the importance of the ἔχειν τὴν πίστιν construction, these treatments appear to be quite limited and lack a rigorous linguistic method for answering how and why the construction should be understood in a particular way.⁶¹ Thus for the sake of

involved; for example, whether Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and τῆς δόξης should be omitted or not (see his “The Fiction of James,” 529–70).

59. See Davids, *James*, 90. For a recent treatment, see Assaël and Cu villier, “À propos de la traduction,” 145–51, who propose an entirely new translation for the verse. They say, “Au terme de notre analyse, nous proposons de traduire Jc 2.1 ainsi: ‘Mes frères, ne trouvez pas dans des masques (ou: des signes extérieurs) la preuve fiable de la gloire accordée par notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ.’” Further, to illustrate the inherent difficulty of translating Jas 2:1 note the diverse renderings of various English Bibles: “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with respect of persons” (KJV; cf. RSV, ASV); “My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism” (NIV); “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory” (ESV; cf. NASB); “My brothers and sisters, when you show favoritism you deny the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been resurrected in glory” (CEB).

60. For example, Wachob simply asserts that τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ “is a ‘global allusion’ to Jesus’s own faith, what he believed, said and did” (“‘Household’ and ‘Kingdom,’” 167). Just as presumptuous are Wachob’s comments in *The Voice of Jesus*, 65: “[the objective genitive reading of Jas 2:1], I think is incorrect. The genitive appears to be subjective, and the phrase should be translated ‘the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ If this is the correct sense of the genitive here, then a satisfactory understanding of what the theme entails would seem to require that we at least allow the possibility that the audience is admonished to hold (ἔχειν) a faith that in quality is like the faith-obedience of Jesus Christ.”

61. For example, Moo, *James*, 100–101 and Davids, *James*, 106–107. The best treatment, in my opinion, is McCartney’s. First, he acknowledges that ἔχειν πίστιν and πιστεύειν are “generally equivalent.” Second, he recognizes the structural parallel between Jas 2:1 and Mark 11:22 concerning ἔχειν πίστιν + genitive. Third, he concludes in favor of the objective genitive reading “have

clarity, while the aim here is not to engage the broader structural and theological issues at stake, such issues may be affected. The goal is to consider the linguistic evidence for understanding ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as an ideational metaphor, with πίστιν having the added element of [+DETERMINATION] in light of the presence of the article.

ἔχειν πίστιν occurs in two other places in James besides 2:1—in 2:14, εἰς πίστιν λέγει τις ἔχειν ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχη, and several verses later in v. 18, σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις, κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω. Interestingly, the very next verse begins with the statement σὺ πιστεύεις ὅτι εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ θεός. Further, v. 23, being a quotation from Gen 15:6, reads ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ τῷ θεῷ. This suggests that the metaphorical ἔχειν πίστιν structures are best read in light of the congruent πιστεύειν structures; the former represents a semantic junction, while the latter is a congruent expression. Since metaphor and congruence appear throughout James 2, it is likely that the surrounding co-text is meant to restrict the semantics of ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 2:1 to its (hypothetical) congruent expression πιστεύετε τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ.⁶² The nominalized structure, carrying the lexical semantic sense of “believe,” has entered into syntagmatic relationship with τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. As a result, two things have happened: (1) the nominalization has disambiguated the function of the genitive modifier in its co-text, and (2) the genitive modifier itself has specified the realm in which πίστιν operates.

faith in Jesus Christ” (see his *James*, 135–36). But, while I am in agreement with him, McCartney provides no solid evidence for his assertions. Wallace’s treatment also lies in the realm of simple assertion: “There are two or three clear instances of πίστις + objective personal gen. in the New Testament (Mark 11:22; Jas 2:1; Rev 2:13), as well as two clear instances involving an impersonal gen. noun (Col 2:12; 2 Thess 2:13). Nevertheless, the predominant usage in the New Testament is with a subjective gen.” (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 116). Wallace gives no evidence or criteria for these judgments.

62. Whether or not the verb is an imperative or indicative is not a concern here.

The fact that πίστιν possesses the article needs attention. While it appears that some have used the presence of the article to suggest that Jas 2:1 refers to “the Christian faith,”⁶³ a theory of grammatical metaphor provides a better option for understanding the article’s function. Note what Halliday writes:

In addition, such a figure, realized metaphorically by a nominal group rather than congruently by a clause, gains access to the textual systems of the nominal group—most significantly, the system DETERMINATION. This means that it can be treated textually as a discourse referent/participant. It is marked either as “non-specific” or as “specific” in which case its identity is presented as recoverable to the addressee.⁶⁴

When a verb process has been nominalized, it can then enter into another aspect of the system network that verbs (at least finite ones) cannot, that of DETERMINATION. “Determination” refers to an entity’s specificity. This is why some functional grammarians will label the article as a “Specifier,”⁶⁵ although specificity can also be expressed by the use of other items, such as demonstrative pronouns. Therefore, the article in Jas 2:1 assigns a level of specificity to the nominal form, πίστις. This would mean that James is exhorting his readers to exercise a specific kind of “believing,” that is, a believing that has Jesus as its object. In this sense, the article can be seen as working in tandem with the genitive case—both perform specifying functions, but one specifies πίστις and the other specifies the word’s syntagmatic relationship to τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. If accurate, then this also explains why the article drops out in the two other metaphorical expressions in 2:14, 18.

63. See Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 187, who, by appealing to the work of Robinson, says, “In Jas 2:1, Rev 2:13, 14:12, however, πίστις, as in Gal 1:23, means ‘the (Christian) faith,’ and the genitive is, as Robinson rightly judges (“Faith of Jesus Christ,” 79), ‘broadly adjectival.’” Unfortunately, however, the reader is left wondering what has led both Robinson and Hays to their conclusions.

64. Halliday, *Functional Grammar*, 644.

65. See the introduction to the annotation model of the OpenText.org project at www.opentext.org.

In these verses, since it is in a nominalized structure, unspecified πίστις can be used to effectively contrast general “belief” with “works”—two discourse participants that occupy key roles in James’ exposition in 2:14–26. Thus, the central point that James seems to be making in this section is that a “believing” void of “doing” is inconsistent with the specified “belief” referred to in 2:1—a belief that has “our Lord Jesus Christ” as its object.⁶⁶

Hippolytus’s De Antichristo 61:26

Hippolytus’s *De Antichristo* 61:26 has recently been used to provide evidence in support of a subjective reading of the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction, and in support of identifying the semantic content of πίστις as Jesus’ specific act of obedience in going to the cross.⁶⁷ The portion of text that is most relevant to this study is *De Antichristo* 61:23–31:

[ὁ τύραννος] διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν φεύγουσαν ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν καὶ ἐν ἐρημίᾳ κρυπτομένην ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ἔχουσαν μεθ’ ἑαυτῆς οὐδὲν ἕτερον εἰ μὴ τὰς δύο πτέρυγας τοῦ ἀετοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου τουτέστιν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν ὅς ἐκτείνας τὰς ἀγίας χεῖρας ἐν ἀγίῳ ξύλῳ ἤπλωσε δύο πτέρυγας δεξιὰν καὶ εὐάνυμον προσκαλούμενος πάντας τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας καὶ σκεπάζων ὡς ὄρνις νεοσσούς. καὶ γὰρ διὰ Μαλαχίου φησὶν καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά μου ἀνατελεῖ ἡλῖος δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἴασις ἐν ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτοῦ. ([The Tyrant] persecuting the church that flees from city to city and is hidden in the desert among the mountains, having with herself no other thing except the two wings of the great eagle, that is, [she has] faith in Jesus Christ, who, having stretched out the holy hands on the holy tree, spread out two wings, right and left, summoning those who believe in him, and protecting [her] “like a hen does chicks.” For through Malachi he says, “And among you who fear my name, the sun will dawn with righteousness and healing in his wings.”)

Since there are two intervening phrases between ἔχουσαν and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν, their relationship may not be clear at

66. See Kamell, “The Soteriology of James,” 152, although her entire work is devoted to the theme of “faith” and “works” in James.

67. Bird and Whitenton, “Overlooked Patristic Evidence,” 552, 559.

first sight. However, their connection becomes identifiable in light of two grammatical observations. First, ἔχουσαν is one of three participles that modify τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, the other two being φεύγουσαν and κρυπτομένην. Second, ἔχουσαν has three objects: οὐδὲν ἕτερον, τὰς δύο πτέρυγας, and πίστιν. The issue becomes the function of τοὔτεστιν and the manner in which it adds πίστιν to the list of the “things” that the church “has” as protection from the Tyrant. Bird and Whitenton understand τοὔτεστιν to function as an appositional marker that identifies “the two wings of the great eagle” as Jesus’ own “faithfulness” in going to the cross.⁶⁸ However, I suggest there is a more helpful way to read τοὔτεστιν. τοὔτεστιν (including its disjointed form τοὔτ’ ἔστιν) does not always function as an indicator of apposition. There are instances where it operates as a marker of further explanation by implicitly reintroducing the verbal component of the preceding clause, and by signaling the addition of new information in what follows it.⁶⁹ For example, in Rom 7:18 Paul says οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοὔτ’ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν. Here οἰκεῖ is ellided in the latter half of the verse so that Paul can more effectively describe “good does not live in me” as “good does not live in my flesh.” The important thing to note is that the verbal component of οἰκεῖ is reintroduced after τοὔτ’ ἔστιν, although the verb itself is not present.⁷⁰ With regard to *De Antichristo* 61:24, 26, τοὔτεστιν reintroduces the verbal component of ἔχουσαν and so further describes what the Church has in her possession as protection from the Tyrant—“she has nothing in her possession other than the two wings of the great eagle, that is, [she has] faith in Jesus Christ.” In any case, what does seem clear is that πίστιν, taking the accusative case, is one of the grammatical objects of ἔχουσαν, which al-

68. Bird and Whitenton, “Overlooked Patristic Evidence,” 552, 559.

69. This could be labeled the “exegetical” use of the set phrase τοὔτ’ ἔστιν (see, e.g., Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 411–12).

70. For other examples in the New Testament, see also Acts 19:4; Rom 10:6; Philm 12; Heb 2:14. Outside the New Testament, see Diogenes, *Vitae Philosophorum* 10:127:2; Plutarch, *De Cupiditate Divitiarum* 524:D:3; Plutarch, *De Facie in Orbe Lunae* 926:F:4; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 10:70:13.

lows for the strong possibility of reading the phrase as ἔχουσιν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν.

The evidence for seeing the construction as an ideational metaphor is two-fold. First, ἔχουσιν . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν is a nominalization of πιστεύειν; Hippolytus has construed the Church's "believing" metaphorically by means of a PROCESS + RANGE structure. Identifying the construction as a metaphor is confirmed on the basis of the use of its congruent agnate in 61:28: τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας. Hippolytus has drawn upon both the metaphorical and the congruent expressions as he moves in his exposition from what the Church has as its protection (faith in Jesus Christ) to how the Church experiences that protection (by "believing in him"). Further, if ἔχουσιν . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν is in fact an ideational metaphor, then the nominalized structure disambiguates the function of the genitive modifier; the lexical content of πίστιν is restricted to "belief/trust" and specifies "Jesus Christ" as its object. In this way ἔχουσιν . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν can be read directly in light of τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας.

The second element that establishes ἔχουσιν . . . Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν as an ideational metaphor concerns the textual motivations lying behind its use.⁷¹ In discussing the Tyrant's persecution and the Church's flight into the desert, Hippolytus wishes to construe the Church's experience of "believing" as a concrete thing that protects and defends her in the face of danger. This is why πίστιν is used alongside of οὐδὲν ἕτερον and τὰς δύο πτέρυγας: it is a fellow discourse participant along with these other entities and is represented nominally in order for it to be more tangible, concrete and experiential. On the other hand, the congruent expression τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας is used when Hippolytus begins to describe the actions (understood as processes) of Jesus, which are introduced by the relative pronoun

71. Bird and Whittington think it unlikely that two semantically related phrases would be used in such close proximity, and thus make the point that the phrase τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας is semantically distinct from Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πίστιν ("Overlooked Patristic Evidence," 558–59).

ὅς. That is, Hippolytus uses τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας where he does because the section is dominated by other verbal processes—ἐκτείνας, ἠπλώσε, προσκαλούμενος and σκεπάζων. The two main motivating factors for Hippolytus’s use of two semantically related expressions are (1) to construe the experience of “believing” differently for the sake of his readers (an entity vs. a process), and (2) to more concretely provide his text with a certain semantic organization.⁷²

Conclusion

I have provided analysis of the construction ἔχειν πίστιν from the perspective of SFL, arguing that it represents a nominalized ideational metaphor, with its congruent agnate being πιστεύειν. The primary difference between the metaphorical expression and its congruent agnate is a functional one: the metaphor reconstrues the experience of a process as a more concrete nominal entity. This in turn has significant textual implications, those being that the nominal form can be modified by Epithets, Specifiers, and other items in ways that finite verbs cannot. Nominalized structures also affect how a text organizes its information, and can function to disambiguate the syntagmatic relationships into which they enter with other linguistic items. This understanding of ἔχειν πίστιν + genitive has been used to interpret the construction’s meaning in three early Christian writings—Mark 11:22, Jas 2:1, and *De Antichristo* 61:26. It was seen that in light of its semantic relation to πιστεύειν, the construction disambiguates the pragmatic function of the genitive by denoting the object of πίστιν.

72. For a more thorough exegesis of this passage see Cirafesi and Peterman, “πίστις and Christ,” 602–603.

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