

Whence and Whither Greek Verbal Lexicography and Pedagogy:
A Diachronic Review

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Ever since the advent of the printing press, the Latin West and its lexicographic inheritors have used the first person singular indicative verb form (e.g., λύω) as the lemma of the Greek verb. There are historical reasons for this. These historical reasons for using the indicative form, however, are not coextensive with those by which modern lexicographers operate. This issue significantly overlaps with pedagogical concerns. The present article seeks to sketch a basic history of Greek verbal treatments toward a reevaluation of lexicographic and pedagogic practice regarding the ancient Greek verb. (Article)

Keywords: Lexicography, Pedagogy, Verb, Lemmatization

1. *Introduction*

Since the late Byzantine period, when the Latin West began again to interact seriously with the Greek East, there has been up to recently a principal—and under-evaluated—assumption regarding the Greek verb: the indicative mood serves as the basic verb from which other tenses and moods are compared and derived. Morphological and semantic variation between tenses and moods may be taught, it is supposed, with the indicative as the primary form.¹ Of course, this assumption did not appear in

1. It is becoming increasingly more recognized that the indicative is not the most basic verb form (e.g., Taylor, “Deponency,” 176, n. 33); nonetheless, if recent Greek grammars are any indicator the use of the indicative as the basic

history *ex nihilo*. Rather, its seminal origins are from a more ancient understanding of logical propositions, namely the proper makeup of the *μέρη λόγου*, the “parts of [proper] discourse.”² In other words, the seminal origins of what we might today call grammatical treatments of the verb were more concerned with philosophical matters than with syntax, morphology, or language pedagogy *per se*; it should, therefore, be carefully noted that the study of grammar and philosophy were not separate fields of study before the *γραμματικοί* of the late Koine and early Byzantine periods.³

It is a remarkable feature of the history of the Greek language that verbal treatments followed two basic trajectories, what might be termed (somewhat reductionistically) (a) lexical and (b) grammatico-syntactic trajectories.⁴ The latter followed the Stoics, who had in their turn expounded upon Plato’s and

verb form remains largely unchallenged.

2. The ancients conceived of the *μέρη λόγου* in various—though related—ways. The primary issue is that the basic historical trajectory utilized the indicative mood for philosophical and not (purely) grammatical reasons.

3. “Koine Greek may generally be regarded, in stages, as that period between the phenomenon of dialect mixing within the Ionian territories under the sway of the First Maritime League” of 477 B.C. to that of the nativization of the language as expressed through such writers as Flavius Josephus and Lucian of Samosata (Bubenik, “The Rise of Koine,” 344–45), of which the New Testament corpus is a representative of the late Koine period. The Byzantine period may generally be regarded, again in stages, as that period between the 400’s A.D. and the fall of Byzantium in 1453 (Robins, *Byzantine Grammarians*, 11–12).

4. This distinction is necessarily artificial. The ancients did not make such distinctions as we might today; the lexical and grammatico-syntactic traditions were more fully integrated into a philosophical framework, whereas we separate these fields. However, the categories are helpful for evaluating the historical trajectories and provide heuristic categories for understanding how we have arrived at the lexicographic and pedagogic situation of our own day. By “grammatico-syntactic” I mean that the categories were attempting to evaluate morphology (grammar) but that the taxonomy was based on sentences, or more precisely, propositions as truth-claims (syntactic).

Aristotle's *μέρη λόγου*. The former followed a basic pattern—τό + lemma—with verbal lemmata tending toward the infinitive when there was no exigent reason to deviate. This “lexical trajectory” would finally yield in the late Byzantine period to the grammatical categories of the *μέρη λόγου* in the persons of Joannes Crastonus and Constantine Lascaris (and perhaps other prior grammarians), whose works would introduce—for better or worse—a seminal pattern upon which future Greek lexicography and pedagogy would be based. These trajectories are presently explored with a view toward modern discussions as they relate to present pedagogical and lexicographic practices of the Greek of the New Testament. The following article presents what we might term “grammatico-syntactic” treatments of the verb, followed by what we might term the verb’s “lexical” treatments.

2. The Greek Grammarians: From Plato to the Γραμματικοί

Before the advent of the *γραμματική* as a work devoted to the formal explanation of the Greek language, and the *γραμματικός* as a teacher of Greek literature as a subject worthy of study in its own right, the ancient Greeks treated grammar primarily as an extension of philosophical inquiry, and indeed, had no metalanguage for grammatical study *per se*.⁵ These early philosophers discussed issues related to what we currently call grammar (study of morphology), semantics (study of meaning) and syntax (study of sentence structure and meaning), but these discussions centered not upon prescriptive grammar or language pedagogy. Rather, they were situated in the context of the democracy of Greek city-states. The study of language was, then,

5. Forbes says that “Aristotle defines *γραμματική* as the ability to read and write. The mastery of this art made a man *γραμματικός*, *litteratus*. The teacher of it was called *γραμματιστής*, or, since he knew the subject he taught, *γραμματικός*. But *γραμματικός* could also have a wider meaning, connoting knowledge of and about the matter read” (Forbes, “Greek Pioneers,” 105).

directed at a more practical concern of rhetoric and logic within the democracy.⁶

2.1 *Plato*

Plato's lasting legacy for the present study is found in his foundational taxonomy of words. A sentence (λόγος) is composed of two parts: a subject or "name" (ὄνομα) and a predicate or "verb" (ῥῆμα).⁷ Plato further delineates the proper categorization of words in the *Sophist*.⁸ Here he rejects the notion that a word might be related naturally to its referent. His two-fold distinction is informative: "that of a 'name' (ὄνομα) or referring word" is the first part of speech, and "that of a word saying something of the

6. Forbes, "Greek Pioneers," 107. This is not to deny the diversity of the Greek language and its many dialects during this period (for an outline of the diachronic view of the variegated dialects of Greek, see Adrados, *History*, 59–84). The present study is, rather, necessarily quite limited to the known influences upon which the Τέχνη Γραμματική drew. Furthermore, Attic, the language of Plato and Aristotle, with its "highly inflectional system of endings in both the nominal and the verbal systems" was the precursor to Hellenistic Koine (Philippaki-Warbuton, "Syntax," 590), which in turn gave way to the regional dialects that the authors of the New Testament used (Janse, "Greek," 646–53). The classification of words, according to Aristotle originated with Protagoras, who "distinguish(ed) γένη ὀνομάτων as ἄρρενα, θήεα, and σκεύη," which is a division according to gender (i.e., natural sex, not grammatical gender). The first record of the classification of words according to their syntactical function in the sentence is Plato (though, cf. Protagoras's division of time and what we would call "mood" (Diog. Laert. 9.53–54 [Hicks, LCL])).

7. "Plato ... is the most important figure in the prehistory of grammar. On every linguistic level—element, syllable, word, sentence—the distinctions (*sic*) he draws, the terms he introduces, the arguments he advances ... have left their imprint on the Stoic and thus the Apollonian system" (Schmidhauser "Birth," 501).

8. Plato (*Sophist* 261) investigates the proper understanding of names (περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων) and declares that the sentence (λόγος) is composed necessarily of the "name" (ὄνομα) and a predicate or verb (ῥῆμα) (*Sophist* 262 [Fowler, LCL]).

referent, a predicating word (ῥῆμα),”⁹ is the second. This two-fold distinction would become the bedrock for future Greek grammarians: Plato’s early distinction would remain essentially intact, although future grammatical treatments would eventually settle upon eight “parts of discourse” (μέρη λόγου).

2.2 Aristotle

Aristotle’s primary influence upon future grammatical treatments is twofold. First, Aristotle retains Plato’s categories, ὄνομα and ῥῆμα, with some slight modifications; he further distinguishes between categories of conjunctions (σύνδεσμος and ἄρθρον).¹⁰ Second, and more significantly for the development of grammatical terminology, he distinguishes between a word’s primary form (for the noun: κλησις; for the verb: ῥῆμα) from that of its secondary forms, or flexion (πτώσεις), a distinction which would wend its way into most future lexical taxonomies.¹¹ The secondary forms are said to “fall away” from the primary form, hence πτώσις, or a “falling away” from a theoretical primary form. The ῥῆμα is a verb in the indicative mood, and other moods are said to be the πτώσις ῥήματος.¹² In Aristotle’s definition, a ῥῆμα must: (a) carry time,¹³ and (b) be a complete

9. Jonge and Ophuijsen, “Greek Philosophers,” 490.

10. There is some speculation about what ἄρθρον might actually mean (Forbes, “Greek Pioneers,” 110). Diogenes Babylonius and subsequent grammarians applied this term to the article, but Aristotle seems to have applied the term to conjunctions.

11. Forbes indicates that Aristotle saw the present indicative as the ῥῆμα: “the present indicative of a verb is ῥῆμα, the other tenses and moods πτώσεις” (Forbes “Greek Pioneers,” 110).

12. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1457a (LCL).

13. Whether or not the verb in the indicative mood carries time as a semantic feature is the subject of much debate (see Campbell’s rough overview in Campbell, *Basics*, 29–30). My primary concern is not, in this case, to evaluate whether the verb carries time semantically or pragmatically, but that Aristotle defined the ῥῆμα as such, and thus argued that the indicative serves as the base stem for every other mood or verbal part of speech, including the infinitive and the participle.

form with root and suffixes. Thus it is that the ῥῆμα—necessarily the indicative mood—is one of the μέρη λόγου. As the Stoics and subsequent grammarians essentially followed Aristotle’s model of noun, verb, and flexion, the infinitive is necessarily excluded as a primary ῥῆμα on the grounds that it is not part of a basic sentence or λόγος.¹⁴

2.3 *The Stoics*

Present limits preclude a fuller treatment of the Stoic philosopher-grammarians. It is, however, necessary to trace the notion of the μέρη λόγου within a basic trajectory, and this trajectory flows through the Stoics.¹⁵

What would become the eightfold taxonomy of words (the eight μέρη λόγου) “is central to ancient grammatical treatises, but its origins may be traced back to the much earlier philosophical interest in λόγος (discourse) and its parts.”¹⁶ Importantly, in this seminal grammatical treatment of the μέρη λόγου, the infinitive is

14. Note, however, Apollonius Dyscolus’s treatment of the infinitive (below), whose treatment seems to have been an anomaly as compared with other ancient taxonomies that treated the infinitive as a secondary or tertiary part of speech.

15. For a fuller treatment, see Blank and Atherton, “Stoic Contribution,” 310; Jonge and Ophuijsen, “Greek Philosophers,” 485–98; Frede, “The Stoic,” 109–28. Some claim that the Stoics were not interested in grammar *per se* as a science, a thesis that Schmidhauser opposes. See Schmidhauser, “The Birth,” 499–511. Whatever the degree to which Stoic philosophers engaged in grammar as an autonomous science is secondary to the present point, namely, that Stoic grammatical theory played a significant role in the development of the theory of grammatical ideas. Even the categories of tenses were, according to Porter, “not only adopted by other hellenistic grammarians ..., but by virtually all grammarians of Greek through to the present, although the same semantic grid was not employed” (Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 85).

16. Jonge and Ophuijsen, “Greek Philosophers,” 495. This syntactical treatment of ῥῆμα would come to govern all future treatments of Greek verbs, despite that the infinitive may have served as a more functional primary form in treating tense and voice, or in treating the verb semantically—indeed, as the lexical treatments below demonstrate.

excluded as a ῥῆμα (or any part of speech) on the grounds that it is not one of the primary elements of a λόγος. This taxonomy would eventually inform Dionysius Thrax's and Apollonius Dyscolus's highly influential Greek grammars. It must be carefully noted that the concerns of Dionysius, Apollonius, and those who followed them were not coextensive with those of the earlier Stoic philosophers, whose interests:

were not in fact interested in the characteristics and behavior of different types of *words* so much as in the analysis of the minimal unit of speech called λόγος as the potential truth-bearer; what they referred to as ὄνομα, ῥῆμα, etc. were essentially primarily constituents of the declarative, assertoric sentence.¹⁷

In Stoic treatments, the most basic, meaningful declarative sentence, the λόγος, consisted variably of four, five, or six parts of speech.¹⁸ The Stoics maintained the Aristotelian distinction between the verb and the noun.¹⁹ Central to the present study is the recognition that these seminal “philosopher-grammarians” were less concerned to discuss the verb *qua* verb within a language system.²⁰ Rather, the Stoic grammarians were primarily concerned with the verb as it is situated in the context of the proposition as a truth-claim.

17. Jonge and Ophuijsen, “Greek Philosophers,” 495 (emphasis in original).

18. “According to our main sources, Stoics identified at first four, later five, and still later six, parts of speech (*merê tou logou*), as opposed to the later standard eight” (Blank and Atherton, “Stoic Contribution,” 323). These parts of speech included the ἄρθρον, which included both the article and the pronoun, the σύνδεσμος (conjunction), and the μεσότης (adverb) (*ibid.*).

19. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.58. The Stoic definition implies that a ῥῆμα is even more narrowly conceived as a transitive verb with an explicit subject.

20. This is not to say that the Stoics disregarded the system entirely, but this was not central to their aims.

2.4 *The First Γραμματικοί*

Robert Robins remarks upon the generally accepted primary influences throughout the entire Byzantine period, roughly the third or fourth century A.D. through 1453: “[W]e are justified in assuming that the three major authoritative texts for the Byzantine grammarians were [Dionysius’] *Téchnē* in its final form, the complete works of Apollonius, and Priscian’s *Institutiones* and *Institutio*.”²¹ This trajectory of grammatical theory, in many ways originating with Dionysius and Apollonius, and with Priscian’s Latin grammar, is relevant to the treatment of the verb in (a) the categorization of the *μέρη λόγου*, (b) the delineation of a *ῥῆμα* and the theory of morphological derivations and inflections and (c) the categorization of the verb through tense and mood. Dionysius’s *Téchnē* and Apollonius’s *Syntaxeōs* provide the foundation for these in subsequent Byzantine and Western Renaissance treatments.²²

The first extant Greek grammar, the *Τέχνη Γραμματική*, said to have been written by Dionysius Thrax in the first century B.C., is an indisputable influence upon subsequent treatments of Greek and Latin in technical grammars.²³ By the fourth century A.D, it was, according to Robins, despite its brevity of fifteen pages—or perhaps because of it—“the standard grammar of Greek, and its system of word classes (parts of speech) and their

21. Robins, *Byzantine Grammarians*, 31.

22. One may speculate on the degree to which Priscian’s Latin grammar influenced the Greek grammarians. While Greek grammatical theory certainly influenced other languages in the early Byzantine period, other languages did not have the same influence upon Greek grammarians: “Latin, in the late second century BCE, became the first language to which the Greek system was adapted; and for the next 600 years Latin grammarians continued to be inspired by their Greek homologues (the reverse does not hold)” (Schmidhauser, “The Birth,” 500). It would be interesting to evaluate Priscian’s influence upon later Byzantine grammarians, but this must remain outside of the scope of the present treatment.

23. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 77–78.

grammatical categories, case, tense, etc., was accepted and retained throughout the Byzantine period.”²⁴

According to Dionysius, the art and science of grammar (τέχνη γραμματική) is essentially “the practical study of the normal usages of poets and prose writers.” Importantly, these later grammarians’ task was perceived as looking back to the more ancient and proper Greek through reading and interacting with ancient authors and their manuscripts.²⁵

Dionysius categorizes the μέρη λόγου as follows:

Λέξις ἐστὶ μέρος ἐλάχιστον τοῦ κατὰ σύνταξιν λόγου. Λόγος δὲ ἐστὶ πεζῆς λέξεως σύνθεσις διάνοιαν αὐτοτελῆ δηλοῦσα. Τοῦ δὲ λόγου μέρη ἐστὶν ὀκτώ· ὄνομα, ῥῆμα, μετοχή, ἄρθρον, ἀντωνυμία, πρόθεσις, ἐπίρρημα, σύνδεσμος. (“A word is the smallest part of the properly arranged sentence. And a sentence is, in prose, a combination of words revealing a meaning complete of itself. And the parts of a sentence are eight: noun, verb, participle, article, pronoun, preposition, adverb, and conjunction.”)²⁶

Note the overlap between the Stoics and Dionysius. However, in Dionysius the μέρη λόγου themselves, rather than being parts of speech in the Stoic sense to describe propositional truth-claims, have now become the parts of a sentence in the sense of a grammatically complete, properly arranged sentence.

One feature of this grammar is notable: Dionysius casts tense into past, present, and future categories, thus making the indicative mood the only possible mood from which to describe the entire verbal system.²⁷ This presentation of the indicative as a sort of unmarked mood in this canonical elementary grammar would remain largely unchallenged for the better part of two millennia.

Apollonius Dyscolus was perhaps the most influential grammarian of Ancient Greek.²⁸ While Dionysius’s primary achievement is that of the establishment of the eight μέρη λόγου,

24. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 77–78.

25. Blank, “Apollonius Dyscolus,” 149–50.

26. Dionysius Thrax, *Τέχνη Γραμματική*, §11; my translation.

27. Dionysius Thrax, *Τέχνη Γραμματική*, §13.

28. Blank and Atherton, “Stoic Contribution,” 313.

“to complete the system and to place it on a theoretical foundation seems to have been the achievement in particular of Apollonius Dyscolus.”²⁹ His work on grammar and syntax is generally recognized as the most influential and lasting of the extant Greek grammatical treatments of the ancient world, particularly upon the entire Byzantine grammatical project.³⁰

Apollonius saw the purpose of his work as a direct corollary to reading and interpreting the ancient writers; this was also the larger project of the Byzantine period. In other words, the entire grammatical project leading up to the fifteenth century was predicated *not* upon the description of Greek grammar within its own milieu, but a description of the language of Homer, Aristotle, and other Classical Greek authors and poets, usually oriented *prescriptively* as a corrective for so-called improper barbarisms of their own day.

In Apollonius’s time, there was apparently some disagreement over the classification of the infinitive (ἡ ἀπαρέμφατος). Against the consensus of his day, Apollonius argues that the infinitive, not the indicative, serves as the semantic stem for the verb.³¹

29. Matthews, “Ancient Grammarians,” 1195.

30. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 73; Householder, “Introduction,” 9; Schmidhauser, “The Birth,” 508; Robins, *Byzantine Grammarians*, 31; Matthews, “Ancient Grammarians,” 1195–96.

31. According to Apollonius:

[T]he infinitive form (ἡ τῶν ἀπαρεμφάτων ἔγκλισις) is the most general, necessarily omitting all reference to the categories we wondered about before—person and its inseparable associate, number, which is not as such a category of the verb, but appears along with the subject persons. The action (or event) itself is single—τὸ γράφειν, τὸ περιπατεῖν. And when this act occurs in connection with persons it produces περιπατῶ, περιπατοῦμεν, περιπατοῦσιν. Nor is it the case that the verb is susceptible of person; this, too, arises by association, in the following way. The persons who take part in the action are classified into persons—περιπατῶ, περιπατεῖς, περιπατεῖ—but the verb itself, unaffected by person and number, will freely go with all persons and all numbers. Furthermore, the verb in itself has no mood (‘mental attitude’ οὐδὲ ψυχικῆ διαθέσειν τὸ ῥῆμα ἐπιδέχεται); here, too, it is the subject persons who express their own mental attitude by means of the verb. But infinitives, since they have

Apollonius claims that the infinitive is the most general verbal form because it omits unnecessary morphological elements. Further, the infinitive is “mood-less” because it is more general than the indicative, imperative, subjunctive, or optative: the infinitive expresses no illocutionary force (ψυχική διάθεσις) though it is one of the inflected mood-forms (ἔγκλισις).³² The *sine qua non* of the verb in Apollonius’s categorization is tense and voice; all other features (mood, person, number) are not intrinsic to the verb itself.³³

How, then, does Apollonius envision the place of the indicative? It is a pedagogical tool: because it manifests person-number suffixes, it serves the other moods as a primary form from which other person-number suffixes are presumably derived. The person-number suffixes and other morphemes appended to the verb are derived from the basic indicative and its person-number suffixes (δύναμαι, δύνωμαι, δυναίμην).³⁴

not yet acquired subject persons, naturally also have no expression of the mental attitudes of those persons.” (Apollonius Dyscolus, *Peri Syntaxeos* 3.59).

Here and elsewhere, the translation is directly from Householder, but his extra-textual notes have been removed, and his transliteration has been replaced with the Greek text as found in Lallot.

32. It is also remarkable that Apollonius attempts to demonstrate the general nature of the infinitive as it compares with the other moods by tying a verbal idea to the mood itself and appending an infinitive onto the construction (Apollonius Dyscolus, *Peri Syntaxeos*, 3.61): “Just so every mood (ἔγκλισις) consists of nothing else but an infinitive plus a word conveying the meaning of the mood, as when we say περιπατῶ (I am walking) equals ὠρισάμην περιπατεῖν (I declared I was walking), περιπατοῖμι (I hope to walk) equals ἠξάμην περιπατεῖν (I prayed I would walk), περιπάτει (walk!) equals προσέταξα περιπατεῖν (I gave orders to walk).” Apollonius is demonstrating the generic nature of the mood of the infinitive by the implied infinitive in any given modal idea.

33. Apollonius Dyscolus, *Peri Syntaxeos*, 3.60.

34. Apollonius Dyscolus, *Peri Syntaxeos*, 3.62.

3. *Verbal Lexical Treatments*

At the same time that the pedagogical approach to grammar was operating on the *λόγος* model, the lexical treatments of this period followed a different trajectory, one more closely related to Apollonius's description of the infinitive noted above. The basic pattern for treating the verb as a lexical item is “τό + infinitive.” This pattern is followed consistently when treating the verb as a semantic entity, but there are exceptions to this rule. These exceptions can frequently be explained as a treatment of a verb as it is situated in another text, though this is not a hard-and-fast rule.³⁵ Two adduced lexica may prove illustrative in describing this phenomenon; the first follows what we might call the “contextual model,” and the second follows what we might call the “infinitive model” of lemma entry.

35. Here we must distinguish between the treatment of a verb as a lexical item (e.g., “τὸ εἶρεῖν denotes the use of speech,” Plato, *Cratylus* 408a [LCL]) from that of the explanation of a verbal concept by way of predication (e.g., “τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν [into the hands of the living God] is a terrifying thing,” Heb 10:31). Our literature provides an abundance of the latter; while examples of verbal predication and other similar syntactical constructions may provide an interesting supplement to the present study, this study will be limited to the treatments of the verb as a lexical item. There are some key criteria in determining when an author is treating a verb as a lexical item. I present these criteria in order of priority:

(1) Contextual indicators:

a. The author is discussing a prior use of, or general meaning of a word. This may be by the medium of a single sentence, or an entire lexicon.

b. The author seeks to define, explain, or further elaborate on a verb in question by way of a noun-phrase or a morphologically parallel verb form.

(2) Lexical indicator: certain verbs tend to describe the headword. These include *σημαῖναι* (signify), *δηλώσαι* (mean), *(μεθ-, δι-) ἐρμηνεύσαι* (translate), *καλέσαι* (call, name), *εἶναι* (to be; frequently implied).

(3) Syntactical indicator: The neuter singular article (τό) frequently precedes the headword. It is almost invariably in the nominative case for syntactical reasons.

3.1 Contextual Lemma Entry Model

Hesychius's lexicon, though now not largely attributable to Hesychius himself as a result of the redactional work by later authors,³⁶ still bears the marks of the process by which a lemma entry was determined. Interestingly, Hesychius's lexicon follows the contextual model and arranges lemmata alphabetically. The following is a list of verbal entries from a randomly selected page, listed in the order presented in the lexicon:

γεγυρωμένον· κεκαμμένον, ἡτονηκότα τῷ σώματι
 γεγωνεῖν· μεγαλοφωνεῖν. ἤδη δὲ φθέγγεσθαι
 γεγωνήσω· βοήσω
 γεγωνίσκει· λέγει
 γεσιποδίζειν· τὸ προσβάλλειν τὰ γείσα ἐν τοῖς τοίχοις
 γεκάσα· ἐκοῦσα³⁷

This serves to demonstrate a common way of presenting verbs, in their respective inflected forms from an original text. The neuter singular perfect participle is glossed with a different verb using the same inflection; the present active infinitive is glossed with a parallel form; the future active indicative first singular is glossed likewise. And so it goes throughout the lexicon, with an occasional supplemental comment. Lemmata in Hesychius items of practical utility, providing the exact form from an ancient text as a lemma, and glossing the lemma with a morphologically parallel form.

The New Testament manifests a similar phenomenon in Paul's letter to the Ephesians: διὸ λέγει· ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. Τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς (“Therefore it says, ‘When he ascended on high he led captive a host of captives and gave gifts to men. Now what does the word, ‘He ascended’ mean unless he also descended ...”).³⁸ First, Paul uses the neuter singular article to anticipate the discussion of the word as a lexical item.³⁹ Second, and more interestingly, Paul

36. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 88.

37. Hesychius, *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, 339–40.

38. Eph 4:8–9.

chooses an aorist indicative tense form to discuss his previously quoted aorist participle of the same lemma. The reason for this change is likely that the lemma stems from Paul's quotation of the LXX of Psalm 67. So, while this is not an exact quotation, his lemma entry choice is morphologically closer to the LXX than even his own paraphrase:

Ps 67:19 (LXX): ἀνέβης εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσας αἰχμαλωσίαν

Eph 4:8: ἀναβάς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσία

Eph 4:9: τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν

Notably, where the LXX has the second person singular, Paul's lemma entry is the third person singular, and is otherwise inflectionally parallel. The difference of person is accounted for by the purposes of the authors.

In the Gospel according to Mark, Mark demonstrates a similar tendency, though his is accomplished by way of translation: καὶ ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐστέναξεν καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἐφφαθά, ὃ ἐστίν διανοίχθητι (Then he [Jesus] looked up at the sky and

39. This may have interesting implications for further study on the use of the articular infinitive as a lexical item, which cannot be explored here. A. T. Robertson also indicates that this phenomenon occurs when an author chooses to treat a word "as a word merely. Any word can be so regarded [i.e., as a neuter]." Robertson, *Grammar*, 254. Similarly, BDF indicates the same: "In explanatory phrases Koine employs the neuter ὃ ἐστίν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν (τουτέστιν), 'that is to say', a formulaic phrase used without reference to the gender of the word explained or to that of the word which explains ..." (Blass and Debrunner, *Grammar*, 73). Pace Wallace, who indicates that the neuter singular article "is used before a statement, quotation, or clause" (Wallace, *Grammar*, 237). He interprets "τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν ..." in this way: "Although the word from the preceding quotation of Ps 68:18 is repeated," says Wallace, "the idiom suggests that the whole verse is under examination. In other words, the author is not asking, 'What does "he ascended" mean?' but 'What does the quotation from Ps 68:18 mean?'" (Wallace, *Grammar*, 238). Wallace's approach, then, does not take into consideration that the article is treating the lexical item, as is defended here. Considering that the neuter article is so frequently used to mark the treatment of a word's definition, Wallace's exegesis seems somewhat strained.

sighed, “Ephphatha” [that is, “Be opened”]).⁴⁰ The ethpaal imperative $\pi\eta\eta\eta\eta$ is translated as the Greek aorist passive imperative second person singular of $\delta\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\tilde{\iota}\xi\alpha\iota$.⁴¹ So Mark, rather than relying upon a theoretical verb-stem, transferred as much inflectional information as possible (i.e., tense, voice, mood, person, and number) to convey the meaning of the Semitic verb.

Philo also exemplifies the same practice. He interprets Deut 21:18–20, commenting on the philosophical underpinnings of God’s command as it relates to Hellenistic notions of virtue. He takes note of a particular verb that, in Philo’s exegesis, is warranted by the person lacking virtue: $\delta\iota\acute{o}\ \mu\omicron\iota\ \delta\omicron\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma\ \delta\acute{\nu}\omicron\mu\alpha\tau\iota\ \sigma\upsilon\nu\theta\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omega\ \chi\rho\eta\theta\eta\iota\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \sigma\upsilon\mu\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\omega}\nu\ \dots$ (“Therefore, it seems to me, that he himself uses a compound word, namely, $\sigma\upsilon\mu\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\omega}\nu$ ”).⁴² The LXX text in question reads: $\omicron\upsilon\chi\ \acute{\upsilon}\pi\alpha\kappa\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \phi\omega\nu\eta\varsigma\ \eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu\ \sigma\upsilon\mu\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\omega}\nu\ \omicron\iota\nu\omicron\phi\lambda\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ (“He will not obey our voice; he is a $\sigma\upsilon\mu\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\omega}\nu$ and a drunkard”). Philo’s lemma of the word is morphologically coordinate with the same form found in the LXX, namely, the present active participle masculine singular nominative of $\sigma\upsilon\mu\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\kappa\omicron\pi\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\iota$.

Examples of this sort of “contextual lemma entry” could be multiplied. When an author was discussing a verbal lemma from another context, the tendency was to use the inflected form parallel with the original—or as close as could be reasonably provided.

3.2 *Infinitive Lemma Entry Model*

As noted above, an alternative method of entering verbal lemmata was by means of the (articular) infinitive. This is particularly true when the verb is being discussed from whole cloth, with little or no reference to another context.

40. Mark 7:34, my translation.

41. According to Thayer and BDAG; cf. also the Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*. France agrees with this assessment (France, *Mark*, 304). However, France notes that others (e.g. Rabinowitz) believe the word to originate from a Hebrew source in which case the verb would be a niphil masculine singular imperative; still others believe the issue to be unresolvable (e.g. Morag).

42. Philo, *Ebr.* 1.23 (Colson and Whitaker, LCL).

Julius Pollux's second century *Onomasticon* illustrates this approach. A page selected at random might show something like the following entry:

Αγεῖραι συναγεῖραι, συλλέξαι συλλέξασθαι, ἀθροῖσαι, ἀθροίσασθαι, συναθροῖσαι, συναθροίσασθαι, παρίσαι συμπορίσαι συμπορίσασθαι, συνενεγκεῖν, συνάγειν, συστήσαι συστήσασθαι, συμφορήσαι συμφορήσασθαι, συνεγανίσαι. τὰ δὲ πράγματα ἀγερός συναγερός, ἀθροῖσαι συνάθροῖσαι, συναθροισμός ἀθροισμός, πόρος, συναγωγή, ἔρανος, συλλαγή, σύστασις. δύσφεγκτα δὲ τὰ λοιπά. (“to collect, to collect together; to assemble, to unite; to gather, to heap, to gather together, to heap together; to place near, to place together; to come together; to accumulate, to join together, to place alongside, to accumulate alongside, to put together, to acquire together, to join. Now the event-nouns are: collection, collection together; gathering, gathering together; place of gathering, gathering-place, meal-gathering, pluck-gathering, group-gathering [to utter more would be superfluous]”).⁴³

This lexicon is a sort of “word-list” as the title implies. This word list almost invariably enters verbs in the infinitive form, usually in the present and aorist, as shown above.

This entry method also manifests itself in the larger body of Greek literature. Clement of Alexandria exemplifies the method. In his diatribe against his contemporaries' Hellenistic religion, Clement discusses the Spartans' goddess Artemis and (what Clement believes to be) the semantic relationship between her title and the meaning of the Greek word: καὶ Χελύτιδα δὲ Ἄρτεμιν Σπαρτιᾶται σέβουσιν· ἐπεὶ τὸ βήττειν χελύττειν (“Also, Spartans worship Artemis Chelytis; because for the word ‘to cough,’ they say χελύττειν”).⁴⁴ The proper noun Χελύτιδα has been translated into the Greek infinitive χελύττειν and glossed as the articular infinitive of the more commonly known verb βήττειν; both verbs are present active infinitive tense-forms.⁴⁵

43. Pollux, *Lexicographi Graeci*, 96.

44. Clement, *Al. Protreptikus* 2.33 (LCL), my translation. A review of various lexica of Koine, Patristic, and Byzantine Greek indicates that the verb χελύξαι is rare in the literature; cf., however, Liddell, Scott and Jones, *Lexicon*.

45. See also Clement, *Al. Protreptikus* 2.33.

Similarly, Origen inquires into the meaning of words as the Jews might have understood the meaning of *πρίζειν* and *σχίζειν* in relation to Sus 1:50–59:

οὐκ ὀλίγοις Ἑβραίοις ἀνεθέμην πυνθανόμενος, πῶς παρ’ αὐτοῖς ὀνομάζεται πρίνος, καὶ πῶς λέγουσι τὸ πρίζειν· ἔτι δὲ εἰς τί μεταλαμβάνουσι τὴν σχῖνον τὸ φυτόν, καὶ πῶς τὸ σχίζειν ὀνομάζουσιν (“I asked the opinion of not a few Hebrews, asking what they used for πρίνος, and what they call the word πρίζειν in their language; and again, I inquired into what plant the Hebrews translated as σχῖνον and how they used the word σχίζειν.”)⁴⁶

Here Origen uses the articular present active infinitive as a lemma entry when he is asking about a word’s semantic meaning.

Again, examples of this method could be multiplied: these examples serve to demonstrate that there was a general tendency to use the articular infinitive when Greek authors were treating the verb *qua* verb, seeking to understand the verb’s semantic features without (or with less) specific reference to another piece of literature. Specifically—though not fully explored in this paper⁴⁷—(a) there was a tendency, whenever authors treated a verb’s semantic features *per se*, to use the infinitive form;⁴⁸ (b) the form was consistently active, except when treating a

46. Clement, *Al. Protreptikus* 2.33 (LCL), my translation.

47. For a fuller treatment, see Kraeger, “Infinitive.”

48. This infinitival use might conceptually be treated as a subcategory of the appositional infinitive (the biblical literature, likely because of its genre, does not manifest the use of the appositional infinitive in the definition of a word, but of content, frequently describing with *τοῦτο*, or a content idea: cf. Exod 14:5, Eph 4:17, 2 Cor 2:1). The appositional infinitive is typically described by grammarians as “limitative” and when used with nominals, “the appositional inf. restricts or describes it” (Robertson, *Grammar*, 1078). Similar treatments of the appositional infinitive may be found in the following: Votaw, “Infinitive,” 17; Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek*, 174–75; Wallace, *Grammar*, 606–607. The reason that the infinitive served this function may have been that the infinitive expresses the nominal idea of the verb, whereas the participle frequently highlights the activity of the verb; thus the infinitive may have served quite naturally as a lemma entry for description or definition.

middle/passive-only tense-form when the middle/passive form would be listed, but (c) this would vary between the imperfective and perfective aspect; (d) furthermore, regardless of verbal finiteness, when an author referred to the verb as a semantic phenomenon, the tendency was to include the article.⁴⁹

4. *A Relegation: Grammatico-Syntactic over Lexico-Semantic*

By the late Byzantine period, this lexico-semantic use of the infinitive was relegated to the grammatico-syntactic understanding of the verb: following the λόγος model of Apollonius and Dionysius the indicative ῥήμα was implemented as the lemma entry choice. The late Byzantine period provided the climate for the cooperation of language learning between the Latin West and the Greek East. This cooperation in no small part resulted from the Turkish invasion and the Italian Renaissance, which would produce such grammarians as Constantine Lascaris (1434–1501),⁵⁰ Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1350–1415),⁵¹ and Theodore of Gaza (c. 1400–1475).⁵²

49. When referring to a word as a lexical item, the writer would frequently do so with the neuter singular article regardless of the inflected tense form used. This pattern is seen from Plato (ὅπερ οὖν καὶ ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν ἐλέγομεν, τὸ “εἶρειν” λόγου χρεῖα ἐστὶ [“Now, as I said before, εἶρειν denotes the use of speech”], Plato, *Cratylus* 408a (Fowler, LCL)) and Aristotle (ἡ γὰρ ἐπιστήμη, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ ἐπίστασθαι, διττόν, ὧν τὸ μὲν δυνάμει τὸ δὲ ἐνεργείᾳ [“Knowledge, like the verb ‘to know,’ has two senses, of which one is potential and the other actual.”], Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1087a.15 (Tredennick, LCL)) through the Stoic grammarians, into the Byzantine period. “The article [in Greek scholia] is also frequently used with a word or phrase that is the topic of discussion; phrases normally take neuter articles (as do letters of the alphabet, verb forms, and other words with no gender of their own), and words with their own gender can take either neuter articles or ones corresponding their own gender” (Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 113).

50. Sandys, *History*, 76.

51. Sandys, *History*, 19.

52. Geanakoplos, *Constantinople*, 68. Robins indicates that these grammarians, along with Moschopoulos, Chalkondyles, and Syncellus “have

Constantine Lascaris's grammar, one of the first printed works in Greek,⁵³ marks well this period of Renaissance interest in the Greek language. Lascaris's work is intended for non-Greek learners of the classical language. In his description of verbs, he begins invariably with the present active indicative first person singular tense-form, providing the aorist, future, and (sometimes) the perfect before describing the verb. This is central to the present discussion, in that this period marks an early occurrence—perhaps even one of the first—using the present active indicative first person singular form followed by various inflected forms in a systematic entering of verbal lemmata.⁵⁴ The following entry is characteristic of Lascaris's entry method:

Φιλῆώ, ω, ὁ παρακείμενος, πεφίληκα, ὁ ἀόριστος ἐφίλησα. ὁ μέλλων φιλῆσω. Συντάσσεται δὲ καὶ ἀπαρεμφάτω, ὅτε τὸ εἶωθε σημαίνει, ὅσον φιλεῖ ἀναγινώσκειν, ἀντὶ εἶωθε. ... “Φιλῆώ [φιλῶ], perfect πεφίληκα, aorist ἐφίλησα, future φιλῆσω, also constructs with the infinitive when it means ‘usually do something’ as in φιλεῖ ἀναγινώσκειν ‘he usually reads’, in place of εἶωθε ‘he is accustomed’.”⁵⁵

Here we see that the uncontracted form (later called the first principal part) is presented as the lemma entry, followed by the contracted suffix, followed by the complete inflected forms (if I may speak anachronistically) in the order of the fourth, second, and third principal parts. This marks the turning point of formal

been recognized as the main sources of an early sixteenth-century Latin grammar of Greek” (Robins, *Byzantine Grammarians*, 236).

53. Robins, *Byzantine Grammarians*, 247.

54. Though it would be difficult to verify as it is an argument from silence, I strongly suspect that the fading use of the infinitive in the late Byzantine period, coupled with the continued use of the eight *μέρη λόγου*, played a significant role in this development. The late Byzantines borrowed from the ancient ideas to present an indicative-based lemma entry system, despite the fact that the indicative's primacy was determined by its role within a *λόγος*, not its role as a semantically basic verb. Nevertheless, this is what it had become, and now remains.

55. Robins, *Byzantine Grammarians*, 248–50. In Robins' translation of the text, he provides the transliterated word, which I have replaced with the Greek text.

Western lexicography, an important clue in discovering our lexicographic heritage, the first of which is found in Joannes Crastonus.⁵⁶

Crastonus's lexicon marks the official entrance of the new lexicographic age. Following are his treatments of select verbs:⁵⁷

γίνομαι. μ. γενήσομαι. fio. fu. debeo. mesosaoristus secudus. ἐγενόμην.
 γέγονα. mesos. γίγνομαι. idem
 κρίνω. μ. ἰνώ. π. ἰκα. accuso. iudico secerno. actium accusatiuo iugitur.
 κρίνων. οντος. ὄ. iudicans.
 λαμβάνομαι. accuso λαμβάνω. μ. λήψομαι. π. εἴληφα. capio. accipio. ἄορ.
 β. ἔλαβον actiuum. accus. iungitur.
 πιστεύομαι. μ. εὔσομαι. π. ευμαι. fide facio. πιστεύω. μ. εὔσω. π. εὔκα.
 credo. neu.

56. Noteworthy examples include: the *Donati Graeci*, sometime after the twelfth century, presents verbs through four conjugations (the second person suffix form before the final ζ determining the conjugation), and lists various verbs through a number of primary forms: the active is presented first, and lists the PActInd1Sg, PActInd2Sg, PActInd3Sg, PActInd1Sg, PActInd2Sg, PActInd3Sg, PActImp2Sg, PActImp3Sg, AActInf, PActInf, followed by various nominal forms (Ciccolella, *Donati Graeci*, 185). Notably, the *Donati Graeci* provides the “present, imperfect, pluperfect, and future active of each verb” and the aorist is sometimes confused with the perfect forms (Ciccolella, *Donati Graeci*, 185). Manuel Moschopoulos, “one of the leading grammarians and scholars of the early fourteenth century,” provides a similar approach to verbs:

Ἐδημιούργησε. Give the rule. Δημιουργέω, δημιουργῶ, future δημιουργήσω, aorist ἐδημιούργησα, τὸ δεύτερον, ἐδημιούργησας, τὸ τρίτον, ἐδημιούργησε. δη with η and μι with ι. δημηγόρος with the verb δημηγορῶ both have η; δημιουργός has η and ι (Robins, *Byzantine Grammarians*, 144–45).

Other *epimerismoi* and *schede* demonstrate similar approaches to verbs, and quoting them here would be superfluous.

57. The first edition of this work was in 1478. The edition under consideration is: Johannes Crastonus, *Dictionarium graecum copiosissimum secundum ordinem alphabeti cum interpretatione latina: Cyrilli opusculum de dictionibus, quae uariato accentu mutant significatum secundum ordinem alphabeti cum interpretatione Latina* (Venice: A. Manutius, 1497). These verbs were selected because they manifest different morphological features such as “middle only” forms, “-μι verbs,” “second aorist verbs,” and the like.

πληρόω. μ. ὤσω. π. ὠκα. impleo per ficio actiuum gto iungitur.
 τίθημι. μ. ἤσω. π. εἶκα. pono. facio. actiuum accu iung.

The publishing of Crastonus's lexicon, one of the first books of the printing press,⁵⁸ marks a primary turning point for the tradition of Greek lexicographic practice and pedagogy for the West.⁵⁹ It was, according to John Considine, “[f]or nearly fifty years ... ‘the vital book for every humanist who wanted to learn Greek seriously.’”⁶⁰ Only two centuries before the publishing of this lexicon, the enormous work attributed to John Zonaras retained a purely alphabetical organization with no attention to lexical stems as source words for inflected forms (much like Hesychius above).⁶¹ Future lexicographic work would be directly dependent upon the work of such authors as Crastonus and Lascaris. One need only scan through Greek-English or Greek-Latin lexica after Crastonus to witness the enduring influence of Crastonus's method in terms of lemmatization and theoretical morphological derivation.

58. Considine, *Dictionaries*, 27.

59. Lee marks the year 1514 as the major turning point for New Testament lexicography (Lee, *History*, 55). While this is likely true for New Testament lexicography, it is even more significant for the purposes of this essay that Crastonus' lexicon presents the verbs in contradistinction from that of his predecessors, and that subsequent lexicographic practice follows Crastonus in his presentation of various inflected tense-forms.

60. Considine, *Dictionaries*, 27, quoting Delaruelle, “Dictionnaire greco-latin de Crastone,” 221.

61. The lexicon in question was “compiled in the first half of the thirteenth century” and it erroneously “carries the name of Zonaras” (Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 102). See Tittmann, *Ioannis Zonarae Lexicon*. The lexicon, well within the norms of its own tradition, presents the inflected form as readily as it presents the PActInd1Sg tense-form. Much like the *Συναγωγή Λέξεων Χρησίμων*, the gloss is frequently, but not always, the same tense-form as that which is presented as the lexical source. See also, for example, Photius's ninth-century lexicon, which follows the same alphabetical organization and lack of attention to stems (Photius, *Photiou Tou Patriarchou Lexeon Synagoge*).

5. *Considerations for Lexicography and Pedagogy*

Only in more recent history has lexicography and pedagogy been neatly separated in terms of their aims and concerns. This may be demonstrated by a quick scan of the lexica of yesteryear whose pages so frequently included a primer for Greek grammar before defining lemmata under the alpha heading. Some significant issues overlap between the fields, not least including the fact that the printed lexica have a certain air of authority, particularly for the recently initiated. And this authoritative heritage is passed from lexicon to lexicon, in terms of both definition and lemmatization. This long-standing and largely unchallenged tradition of lemmatization may be a significant reason for the continued use of the present active indicative as the headword in modern New Testament grammars. Still, it is helpful to distinguish lexicographic and pedagogic practice in this brief evaluation. Considering the diachronic review of verbal treatments above, what are some possible implications for lexicography and pedagogy today?

5.1 *Lexicographic Considerations*

In the office of the present author reside several New Testament Greek lexica, including the recent publications produced by Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida (1988, 1989), and by Frederick William Danker (2000). The settled dust on their pages is a lasting testimony to their semi-permanent stations on the shelf. So it is that the traditional (i.e., handheld) lexicon is slowly passing away in favor of the electronic database. Aside from the lexica published in major Bible software programs such as Logos, Accordance, and Bibleworks, substantial electronic databases devoted to the lexicographic task are also available, including such notables as the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, the *Duke Data Bank of Documentary Papyri*, and the *Perseus project*.⁶² The point-and-click method has all but replaced more traditional research methods in the use of the lexicon. However

62. Johnson provides a review of these and other electronic resources in "Electronic Resources," 75–84.

one envisions the future of lexicography, any discussion must center upon the reality of utility in the electronic age.⁶³

So, for example, arguments for or against moving toward the infinitive as the headword cannot be framed by an outdated view of how traditional lexica have been published in the past, but by how we can expect electronic lexica to be produced in the future. Even the notion of locating a word under a proper lemma is an argument presupposing a traditional means of looking up a Greek word. Looking up a word in its alphabetical listing is replaced now by left-clicking a word and opening the appropriate lexicon.

Still, even a fully tagged database needs a basic taxonomy for presenting a lemma. And the decision to lemmatize the verb as the “first principal part” is also a clue as to how the lexicographers themselves understand the verb as part of the verbal system. If verbal aspect is the prominent feature of the verbal system, and if the perfective aspect (traditional aorist tense-form) is semantically the most basic of the aspects, good lexicographic sense might dictate that the lexicographer use the aorist verb as the lemma.

Of course, the history of verbal lexicography at least since Lascaris and Crastonus has largely precluded the use of the aorist verb as a standard lemma.⁶⁴ Having adopted the *λόγος* model, *λύω* made good sense for taxonomic purposes. In other words, *ἔλυσα* would be a poor headword for a taxonomy, which would in that case include a rather disproportionately large section under the epsilon heading. In conjunction with this point, because the Greek word grammaticalizes person and number in the indicative mood, the traditional use of the “first principal

63. I am grateful to Nicholas Ellis in private conversation for pointing this out, particularly as it relates to the use of the lexicon.

64. Lee famously criticizes the tradition of Greek lexicographic definitions; yet, his criticism could easily be directed at traditional lemmatization. Among the “sins” listed by Lee include “imperfect knowledge, guesswork, and, above all, dependence on predecessors” (Lee, “Present State,” 66).

part” as the headword is nonetheless typically translated as an English infinitive: λύω is manifestly *not* “to loose” but rather “I loose.”⁶⁵

Given the state of understanding of the Greek verb at present, it follows naturally that the infinitive would serve quite effectively in this capacity. The verb could be lemmatized variously. One could provide the aorist active infinitive as the only headword (λύσαι). Alternatively, one could provide the primary form as it is found in the literature (e.g., the aorist ἀποθανεῖν, but the present ζῆν). Or one could lemmatize all three aspects under one lemma, in the order the present, aorist, and perfect (λύειν, λύσαι, λελυκέναι).⁶⁶

5.2 Pedagogical Considerations

Gone are the days when New Testament Greek grammarians evaluated the verbal system through the categories of time and *Aktionsart*.⁶⁷ This “time + *Aktionsart*” tense theory, itself a byproduct of the nineteenth century view of the tense system, was produced and perpetuated by New Testament grammarians up to the paradigm-shifting debate in the early 1990s between Stanley Porter and Buist Fanning.⁶⁸ These older tense models were grounded in concerns of the λόγος model described above: the indicative mood was the modal form from which all other moods were described, both morphologically and semantically.⁶⁹

65. Cf. BDAG; Louw and Nida, *Lexicon; et passim*.

66. Taylor would, *mutatis mutandis*, prefer the first of these options, though the headword would also reflect the primary voice as it occurs in the literature (Taylor, “Deponency,” 176, n. 33). Buth would prefer something like the last of these options, with the stative infinitive being located between the perfective and imperfective infinitive (Buth, “Verbs Perception,” 193).

67. Picirilli’s article is a helpful review and expansion on the rather abbreviated points made in this paragraph (Picirilli, “Meaning,” 533–55).

68. The rare exception is found in McKay, whose work beginning well before the debate in 1990 and 1991 stands in contrast with the older models and finds a more comfortable home in the present debate.

69. Still worse, of course, was the isomorphic view of the verb regarding tense and time held by many grammarians in the nineteenth century.

As D. A. Carson remarks regarding the debate, “Few areas of Greek grammar have produced more puzzlement of this kind than the verbal system.”⁷⁰

More than two decades later, the categories and structure of the verbal tense system still perplex New Testament Greek grammarians. Despite some lingering differences, most of these grammarians would now work with a model of the Greek verb that indicates the prominence of aspect over other morpho-syntactic categories, including tense, voice, and mood.⁷¹ The darkness of antiquated philological theories is passing away from the Greek verbal system, and while it remains uncertain how the linguistic light will shine forth, verbal aspect seems the most promising of advancements. Despite this recent theoretical adjustment of the verb as it is understood as part of a verbal system, few grammars have attempted to break free from the indicative-based (λόγος-based) model.

For most New Testament Greek grammars the presentation of the verb begins with the present active indicative verb. The student’s first exposure to the verb as part of the verbal system might be:

	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
1	λύω	λύομεν		I loose	We loose
2	λύεις	λύετε		You loose	You loose
3	λύει	λύουσι(ν)		He/She/It looses	They loose

In this schema, the student is expected to learn the following, bearing in mind that this verb represents only one part of the verbal system:

- (1) This is a representative of the present tense form. Other tense categories may be discussed by comparison and contrast, though the forms

70. Carson, “Porter/Fanning Debate,” 18.

71. Some of the more recent grammarians treating the subject of verbal aspect as part of grammar include Baugh, *Primer*; Black, *Learn to Read*; Campbell, *Basics*; Mounce, *Basics*; Porter et al., *Fundamentals*.

will be discussed later.

(2) This is a representative of the active voice. Other voice categories may be discussed by comparison and contrast, though the forms will be discussed later.

(3) This is a representative of the indicative mood. Other modal categories may be discussed by comparison and contrast, though the forms will be discussed later.

(4) The subject of the verb is encoded in the verbal suffixes.

(5) Six forms are to be memorized with an appropriate English translation.

By contrast, a pioneering approach by a grammar in use by the BibleMesh project provides some promise toward a solution: the grammar provides an approach to the verb that is sensitive to the prominence of aspect (a) in the description of the verb's morpho-syntactic categories, (b) in the utilization of the lemma, and (c) in its general taxonomy that takes seriously the verb's aspectual prominence. In other words, because it does not begin with the indicative mood from which to conceptualize the verb, the grammar is free to evaluate aspectual prominence through a truly trinary perspective (perfective, imperfective, and stative). What this means is that the student is exposed to the supplemental forms in the indicative mood as they relate to the more basic morphological indicators. The verb is a taxonomized as part of an aspectual system is therefore more readily conceptualized.⁷²

72. In conversation with Nicholas Ellis, under the auspices of the BibleMesh Greek Project (www.biblemesh.com/languages) and related forthcoming publications by Nicholas Ellis, Mark Dubis, and Michael Aubrey. Used by permission.

	imperfective		stative (combinative)		perfective	
infinitive	λύειν		λελυκέναι		λύσαι	λύσειν
participle	λύοντες		λελυκότες		λύσαντος	λύσοντες
imperative	λύε		λέλουον		λύσον	
subjunctive	λύωμεν		λελυώμεν		λύσωμεν	
optative	λύοιμεν		λελυοίμεν		λύσαιμεν	λύσοιμεν
indicative	ἐλύομεν past	λύομεν non-past	ἐλελύκειμεν past	λελύκαμεν non-past	ἐλύσαμεν past	λύσομεν non-past

Rather than the imperative, subjunctive, and optative morphologically “falling away” (πτώσει ρήματος) from the indicative primary ῥήμα, as it was in Aristotle and those who followed him for over two millennia, this grammar assumes a morpho-syntactic taxonomy whereby the infinitive is less morpho-syntactically loaded than are the other modal forms. The indicative in this schema is not a “neutral” mood from which the other moods are anticipated (as in the λόγος model described above) but one that is in some ways even more marked than other moods by positive morphological indicators.

This pioneering approach for New Testament grammars is one potential solution to the “problem” of pedagogy in light of verbal aspect, a problem marked now by a growing disconnect between the progressive recognition of aspectual prominence in the verbal system and the continued use of older (less aspectually sensitive) categories. Other grammars will surely produce their own approach to the verb. However, due to the growing appreciation for the prominence of aspect, successful grammars will likely include those that best describe the verb in those terms.⁷³

73. What the recognition of the prominence of verbal aspect in the Greek verbal system calls for is an alignment in many ways with Porter’s “most radical” and yet “most promising” option in his own call for a solution to the problem of tense terminology: a reformulation of the description of Greek

The more traditional grammars that begin with the indicative do so also for pedagogical reasons: the student is introduced to a finite verb form so as to facilitate a basic translation of a *λόγος*. This, in turn, motivates the student as he sees an immediate reward for his work. The gain, however, is shortsighted: the student is better served by a more immediate and lasting grasp of the verb as a part of the verbal system than he is by understanding the verb as a part of a *λόγος*. Short term pedagogical gains cannot justify long term pedagogical losses.

6. *Concluding Remarks: Toward a Reexamination of the Verbal System*

A first principle for lexicography, as given by Ladislav Zgusta, when deciding upon the canonical form, the lemma entry, is fairly straightforward: “his choice should be such that *the whole paradigm is derivable from the canonical form as easily as possible.*”⁷⁴ The ancient grammarians chose the indicative for reasons *other than* its viability as a lemma, or even its viability to describe the *sine qua non* of the verb as a part of a verbal system. Rather, the indicative was chosen for no other reason than that it is one part of a proposition, one part of a declarative statement, one part of a *λόγος*. Indeed, later authors such as Crastonus and Lascaris may have had sound—though certainly disputable—pedagogical reasons for introducing a seminal “principal parts” system: Latin speakers learning Greek may have benefitted from what would eventually become known as a “principal parts” approach to the verb. Unfortunately, the analogy between English and Greek is less functionally parallel even while English speakers retain the principal parts method for pedagogy and lexicography.

There is no doubt about the pedagogical value of the indicative to describe the basic sentence. We cannot begin to

verbal usage on the basis of systematic application of the grammatical category of aspect” (Porter, *Studies*, 44–45).

74. Zgusta, *Lexicography*, 202.

teach the Greek sentence without the verb, and the verb needs to have some person-number suffixes. What better verb form could one use for teaching the Greek sentence than the indicative? Well and good.

This is not, however, the same as teaching the verb as part of a language system. This study has sought to trace the historical reasons for why we use the indicative as the basic form in pedagogy and lexicography, and that the historical reasons are not coextensive with how modern lexicographers envision their project. Indeed, Greek grammarians would do well to consider that the infinitive (λαβεῖν, λαμβάνειν, εἰληφέναι)—not the indicative (ἔλαβον, λαμβάνω, εἴληφα)—serves as a better theoretical stem from which one may anticipate morphological variation, and from which one may better conceptualize the verb's aspect.

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