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BOOK REVIEW

Robert Joseph Mondi and Peter L. Corrigan. *A Student Handbook of Greek and English Grammar*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2013. 176 pp. Pbk. ISBN 1624660940.

Mondi and Corrigan provide a handbook for students of Classical Greek to learn English grammar. They introduce grammatical categories to bridge between introductory textbooks and standard reference grammars, and explain that although learning Greek is not easy, the process can be easier if students learn these grammatical concepts.

The first section covers English grammar at a general level. It discusses inflection, parts of speech, sentences, clauses, and phrases. The authors also explain certain kinds of nouns and their functions, e.g., singular, plural, proper, and common; complement and substantive. They illustrate, “Pericles was a democratic leader in the city,” underlining “leader” and “city” as common nouns (3).

The second section covers the syntax of nouns and related words. For each concept and section of the book, Mondi and Corrigan contrast the English category with Greek. For English, they explain the difference between singular, plural, and collective nouns, and how each is type used depending on the exact word. But for Greek, they discuss singular, plural, and dual, also noting inflection. They also indicate that the singular and plural nouns in Greek are most common, whereas dual is rare.

In the third section, they discuss the syntax of verbs, infinitives, participles, absolute constructions, verbals, indirect statements, conditionals, types of clauses, and interrogative sentences.

In the fourth and final section, they cover adverbs, particles, conjunctions, and interjections. The book concludes with an

index of terms.

The purposes of this book are praiseworthy. First-year students of Greek jump numerous hurdles to learn the language; perhaps the greatest hurdle is learning, or *re*learning, grammatical concepts from English. I personally remember experiencing this struggle, but after I jumped this hurdle, learning Greek became easier because I had my grammatical bearings.

The layout of handbook suits the student audience well. Starting at a bird's eye view and progressing slowly through all of the various grammatical concepts helps students see the proverbial forest first before the trees. Although this layout initially seems repetitive, it is more helpful for students—who may need the repetition.

The scope of this book is sufficient. Although more grammatical concepts could have been treated, this amount can provide a good, beginning foundation.

The authors, however, neglect modern linguistics *in toto*. For whatever reason, language study in universities is segregated; on the one hand, linguistic departments study languages with the developments of modern linguistics, but, on the other hand, language study in all other disciplines ignores modern linguistics almost entirely. This segregation is problematic for several reasons, primarily because the quality of language study can be improved by considering the developments within modern linguistics.

With a consideration of modern linguistics, scholars could explain, explore, and critique their underlying linguistic framework. Whether or not these authors recognize it, they work within their *own* linguistic framework, albeit with unstated assumptions, methods, and limitations. Classical Greek scholars often apply grammatical categories from Latin to Greek and, as such, they produce predictable results that resemble those from Latin grammar. Yet, as is being discovered from current discussions of deponency, this forces Greek into an alien straightjacket, because Latin grammar categories and terms do not describe Greek morphology and grammar well.

As a result of this straightjacket, this book's discussion of grammatical categories becomes atomistic. Although breaking

these categories into sections helps pedagogically, it produces inconsistency. For the discussion on how the noun cases work and modifications (17–22), the authors list one set of functions; but, their list of how modification functions in clauses (112–32) is entirely different. Although these grammatical topics are usually treated separately in reference grammars, they ought to be subcategories of a larger discussion of modification—discovering how Greek modifies various grammatical categories and how, or if, these resultant modified structures have consistency across the language.

Furthermore, Mondì and Corrigan fail to explain basic differences between Greek and English. In their discussion of person and number for verbs, they show how English verbs function, i.e., “I am walking” (58). In third person, one of the auxiliaries changes, i.e., “he is walking” (58). For Greek, they list this same verb—only *one* word in Greek—and also give the gloss “I walk” or “I am walking,” (58). Yet, the word count difference between the languages is unexplained. This seemingly small difference is one with which some students struggle.

Although these authors distinguish tense, time, and aspect (61–62), their descriptions and nomenclature are outdated. Their framework of Greek has three aspects, imperfective, perfective, and aoristic (61–63). Imperfective includes present, imperfective, and future. Perfective covers perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect. Aoristic consists of present, aorist, and future. They also claim that tenses encode time. Although they write, “This system of tense and aspect is fairly straightforward”, (62) their system differs from modern linguistic descriptions for aspect and tense. For example, Stanley E. Porter lists three aspects: perfective, imperfective, and stative, (Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 90). Under perfective, he classifies aorist, under imperfective, the present, and under stative, the perfect tense. Mondì and Corrigan, however, do not interact with or even mention this recent research and thus may mislead students regarding aspect and tense.

Finally, this book has limited application for training in Christian ministry. Christians usually want to know the meaning of the Bible; yet, if they struggle with English grammar, they will struggle because the main point(s) may be discovered by

identifying the head noun, main verb, and independent and dependent clauses. Perhaps a pastor could teach a Sunday school course such as “Biblical Languages for the Rest of Us” and use this handbook—albeit critically—to explain English grammar.

For Bible college and seminary students, this handbook benefits somewhat for learning English grammar. However, it might harm the learning process due to the aforementioned problems. As students, teachers, and scholars of Koiné, we need to learn, teach, and study the language in a way that best coheres with how it functions systemically instead of importing terminology and assumptions from other languages.

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