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Review: Learn to Read New Testament Greek, User-Friendly Greek: A Common Sense Approach to the Greek New Testament, New Testament Greek, New Testament Greek Workbook, Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach

Wayne Brindle
Liberty University, wabrindl@liberty.edu

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Learn to Read New Testament Greek. By David Alan Black. Expanded ed. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994, xiv + 236 pp., \$24.99. *User-Friendly Greek: A Common Sense Approach to the Greek New Testament*. By Kendell H. Easley. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994, viii + 167 pp., \$14.99 paper. *New Testament Greek*. By Gerald L. Stevens. Lanham: University Press of America, 1994, xxiv + 492 pp., \$29.50. *New Testament Greek Workbook*. By Gerald L. Stevens. Lanham: University Press of America, 1994, x + 287 pp., \$29.50 paper. *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach*. By Richard A. Young. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994, xi + 308 pp., \$21.99.

The growing tendency among seminaries and Christian colleges to depreciate Biblical language study is being countered by the publication of many excellent tools and textbooks, especially for the study of NT Greek. Each of the volumes reviewed here is an excellent addition to this literature.

Within two years of its first edition, Black's introductory grammar is enjoying heavy use at seminaries and colleges. This expanded edition adds a summary of noun and pronoun paradigms, tables of case and person suffixes, a summary of prepositions, a short list of principal parts, a key to translation exercises, and several other lists, plus minor improvements throughout. Black follows the five-case system and grounds his presentation in linguistic features. His discussion of tense is current. Charts and paradigm lists abound. Most chapters end with extensive Greek translation exercises. He gives especially good explanations of adjectives, the aorist and perfect tenses, personal and demonstrative pronouns, amalgamation in future and aorist tenses, and verb contraction. Biblical examples and exercises are included wherever useful. A review chapter with morphological analysis of the indicative mood is helpful. The chapter on participles is clear and complete. Conditional sentences are dealt with briefly in a way that advances beyond the traditional. Information on word and clause order in the final chapter is excellent but condensed. An appendix on accents is simple and concise, the subject index is extensive and useful, and a summary list of vocabulary is helpful (but should include page or chapter numbers).

The book's weaknesses are not major. Classroom teachers may find the chapter vocabulary lists too extensive for beginning students. Sometimes terms are used without having been defined (e.g. "final clause"). Chapter exercises have little variety, and translating English sentences into Greek (a helpful method) is never attempted. The analysis of the middle voice follows an inadequate traditional model. I find Black's explanation of the following concepts insufficient: cases, prepositions, deponent verbs, adverbs, agency, principal parts, third-declension noun forms, liquid verb forms and the optative mood. The discussion of contract verbs would benefit from a summary chart of contractions. Information on syntactical and discourse structure included in the final chapter will be confusing to most students. It needs broader explanation and application. The inclusion of a key to the translation exercises is a questionable addition. Finally a student workbook, welcomed by most teachers, is still unavailable. Overall, Black's grammar is an excellent tool for learning to read the Greek NT.

Easley's volume, on the other hand, is specifically designed for those who have finished beginning Greek and have either not understood or not studied intermediate Greek or have begun to lose their ability to use Greek for preaching or teaching. Those who have worked diligently to master the language should not let it rust out because it seems too complicated or time-consuming. This easy-to-read volume may help many continue to grow in Greek exegetical skills.

Easley avoids rehashing beginning Greek while teaching the basics of Greek syntax. Intermediate Greek often ignores clause and paragraph analysis, but this is where Easley begins. He shows how to distinguish various kinds of clauses, the grammatical

parts of a sentence, verb patterns, conjunctions, sentence types, and structure markers within paragraphs, with the goal of developing a paragraph flow summary of a Greek passage as the basis for a sermon or lesson. Each step is carefully applied to three NT passages as hands-on exercises. Answers are included in the back of the book.

Easley reviews the basic syntax of Greek tenses, moods and genitive nouns. In each category the author distinguishes between the most "basic" use(s) and "special" uses, suggesting that readers utilize the "special" meanings only when the context demands it. He also provides summary charts and simplified names for syntactical designations. The final chapter completes the circle by looking again at macrostructure—how to analyze paragraph, narrative and compositional patterns. He closes by providing updated general guidelines for doing word studies, describing a modern linguistic, synchronic approach. Each chapter is immediately applied in further study of the chosen passages. Although not a general intermediate Greek text, this book fulfills its purpose admirably.

Stevens' *New Testament Greek* is a professor's dream: clear, precise, accurate, fully packed. In 34 lessons he includes 342 tables and charts. The closing pages contain two lexicons (keyed to lesson numbers), a vocabulary list by lesson number, 31 pages of paradigm charts, 15 pages of principal parts, a glossary and an extensive index. Based on a traditional, deductive approach, the book follows the five-case system (with "eight functions"), emphasizes vocabulary acquisition, stresses accents and pronunciation, teaches sentence diagramming and thoroughly explains almost everything imaginable in a beginning text. Each lesson ends with two lists of "what to learn" (points to master), one each for beginning and advanced students. Students are urged to read each lesson, look at the items to master, then reread that material. Type sizes used for explanations of inflections and form changes are large, providing one of the best visual presentations I have seen in any similar text.

The major problem with the book is its questionable design as both a beginning and an intermediate grammar. Intermediate material often confuses beginning students, and intermediate students usually find a beginning text boring. I especially recommend this book for the following: (1) seminary and graduate classes whose students have strong backgrounds in English grammar, (2) those who have learned Greek but want a strong review text, (3) remedial classes for students who passed beginning Greek but are not ready for detailed syntax study, and (4) Greek teachers who want examples of how to explain complex points. Further, the author should consider collecting his tables and charts into a book of reproducible transparencies for sale to Greek teachers as classroom aids.

All of the homework exercises for Stevens' text are included in his *New Testament Greek Workbook* rather than in the main text. Lessons correspond to those in the text. Both the vocabulary and "what to learn" lists are reproduced at the beginning of each lesson. Exercise pages are perforated to allow for classroom use. Combining fill-in-the-blank questions, charts to be filled in with paradigms and translations, and the translation of selected Greek sentences (often from the NT, with helpful hints in footnotes), the workbook takes students through the essential matters of each lesson. Usually one or two sentences are to be diagrammed, but mere busywork is eliminated. The last five lessons include major selections from 1 John. The format and content of the workbook seem entirely appropriate for beginning students.

The lack of a thorough, up-to-date intermediate Greek grammar has now been partially resolved by Young (see D. Wallace's *Exegetical Syntax* for another). What Easley has simplified, Young has distinguished, categorized and classified, and he has done a remarkable job. Following the descriptive school of linguistics, Young seeks to link grammar, syntax and exegesis, emphasizing language analysis and the deep

structure of Greek texts. The surface structure of a passage, says Young, is not a reliable guide to the author's intended meaning. Indeed, knowing the grammar and vocabulary of a language does not necessarily imply that we know the meaning of a text, since form and meaning can be "skewed" (cf. idioms and figures of speech).

This book is a masterpiece of detail and analysis, covering all the major areas of Greek syntax. It describes 24 basic uses of the genitive case (plus 25 other subcategories), 14 uses of the infinitive, and 24 functions of participles. Young analyzes 14 major conjunctions, including 17 distinct uses of *kai*. Each function is defined, described and illustrated, usually with at least one Greek example (with English translation). Each chapter ends with 16 to 20 specific exercises, in which students are asked to state the syntactical function of various words, give alternate possibilities, and translate passages so as to show the force of the selected function(s). Young gives both a traditional and a semantic analysis of conditional sentences, describes the philosophy and method of discourse analysis, explains sixteen types of figurative language, and clarifies word order, clauses and sentence patterns. The closing chapter illustrates various types of diagramming. He shuns line (sentence) diagramming but illustrates both thought-flow diagramming and semantic structure analysis.

The book is well designed and easy to read, with extensive Scripture and subject indices (by the end of the book, however, both indices are off by about ten pages, due probably to last-minute formatting changes). A teacher's answer book for exercises is available. The few weaknesses of this text are perhaps obvious. Much of the semantic information will be difficult for intermediate students to grasp. The mass of information makes the book harder to use as a course textbook, since most teachers will need to omit or abbreviate some parts for class use. Yet my own students have found it very helpful, and I highly recommend it. Even seminary graduates can use it to catch up on recent applications of linguistics and semantics to Greek.

Wayne A. Brindle
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

The Morphology of Biblical Greek. By William D. Mounce. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, 362 pp., \$39.99.

The volume under review is a companion volume to Mounce's grammar, *The Basics of Biblical Greek*, and to his *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*. In *Morphology* he categorizes rules based on the relationship between the phonetic and morphological features of Biblical Greek. Rather than simply memorizing irregular or exceptional forms, the Greek student is invited to learn the morphological rules that explain why Greek words have the forms they do.

The book is composed of five parts: (1) rules governing vocalic and consonantal changes, (2) rules governing verb formation, (3) page after page of paradigms of nouns and adjectives organized by morphological category, (4) page after page of paradigms of verbs organized by morphological category and (5) an alphabetical index listing all the words in the NT with their morphological category. The morphological categories are denoted by nomenclature that is difficult to remember, such as "n-3a" for third-declension nouns with stems ending in a labial, and "v-2d(5)" for verbs with roots ending in a nasal. The initial chapter on phonology is a detailed introduction to labials, velars, fricatives, sibilants, etc., and the various morphological changes they cause as they combine.



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