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 **THE CLASSIFICATION**

 **OF PARTICIPLES:**

 **A STATISTICAL STUDY**

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 *Understanding participles is a major requisite for the NT scholar.*

*This study surveys the many ways participles are used in the Greek*

*NT and the frequency of occurrence of each functional type. Attention*

*is given to the structural patterns involved and the significance of*

*these classifications. Eighteen categories are distinguished, nine of*

*adjectival uses and nine of verbal uses. The special feature of this*

*study is the statistical information provided, which points out the*

*relative importance of the various types; more detailed discussion of*

*the adverbial, the genitive absolute, the periphrastic, and the impera-*

*tival categories is provided.*

 \* \* \*

 INTRODUCTION

THIS article does not present a new and different approach to

participles in the NT. It is, rather, an attempt to use a new

avenue of study via computer analysis to supply information pre-

viously not easily available. This information concerns the relative

frequencies of the various uses of participles in the NT, and some of

the patterns these uses take. The first step in this process was to

prepare an in-order list of all participles occurring in the Greek NT,

together with a grammatical identification of each. Next, an in-context

study was made in order to determine the usage classification of

each. Finally, a class-by-class study of these occurrences was con-

ducted in order to note any special features or peculiarities which

might be helpful to the NT Greek student. The classification system

used is for the most part the traditional one, though the purpose is

not to defend this manner of treatment. In fact, in some cases a very

different treatment is advocated.

 The definition of a participle as a verbal adjective sets a pattern

for the classification of its uses. As an adjective it stands in gender,

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number and case agreement with a noun or other substantive (ex-

pressed or unexpressed), and in some way modifies, describes, or

limits that substantive. As a verbal, while still attached by agreement

to a substantive, it affects also the action or predication of the

sentence.

ADJECTIVAL USES

Just as the position of the adjective in relation to the article gives

the clue to its adjectival function (attributive or predicate), it is also

important to understand whether the same is true of the participle.

Thus the position of the adjectival participle in relation to its govern-

ing noun's article was made the basis for the classification. The first

four categories show the article in "attributive position," that is, im-

mediately following the article. The fifth category shows the participle

in "predicate position," that is, not following the article. The last four

categories are ambiguous since the governing noun (if there is one)

does not have the article and this positional distinction is thus not

present.

A P N (*Article + Participle + Noun*)

A glance at the statistical table will show that the placing of the

participle before the noun (APN and PN) is relatively rare. Most

frequently it occurs when the participle has no modifiers; sometimes

the participle has become almost an adverb, such as "existing," "near-

by," "coming," "present." Often the participle's own modifiers are

very brief, consisting of an adverb, a short prepositional phrase, or a

direct or indirect object; when the modifiers are more extended they

often are separated from it and stand after the noun. In all the in-

stances the participle seems to be purely attributive and usually can

best be translated as a relative clause.

A N A P (Article + Noun + Article + Participle)

This so-called "second attributive position" is far more frequent

with participles.l Characteristically it is used where the participial

modifiers are extensive (although certainly not all instances are such;

e.g., ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ζῶν which occurs frequently), or where more than

one participle is so used coordinately. Like the preceding category

the function is purely attributive, best translated as a relative clause.

1 Of the participles identifiable by position as attributive the ratio of first to second

attributive position is 1:2.7. Among adjectives the ratio is 1:0.7

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N A P (*Noun + Article + Participle*)

In sharp contrast with adjectives2 this pattern is quite frequent

with participles. By far the majority of instances occur when the

noun is a proper name (68 times), which is then identified as "the one

called (λέγομενος, καλούμενος, ἐπιλεγόμενος, ἐπικαλούμενος)" by

another proper name (23 times), or by a characteristic or customary

action or condition when the participle is present tense (21 times) or

perfect tense (4 times), or by a particular past action when the parti-

ciple is aorist (20 times). This pattern occurs less frequently with

common nouns (23 times), usually indefinite or general in nature,

which the participle identifies more precisely by stating some specific

act or condition.

It is noteworthy that one idiom belonging prominently to this

category, the "proper name + ὁ λεγόμενος + proper name" also

occurs with the first proper name showing an article, the A N A P

category, and with both names anarthrous, the N P category. Many

of the examples classified in this category also might well be listed

with the A P category, as a substantival participle in apposition to

the noun it follows. Such a situation will serve to warn against press-

ing these differing patterns as rigid categories. Rather, they serve

merely as convenient methods of systematizing patterns. All these are

simply attributive.

A P (*Article + Participle*)

By far the most frequently used3 pattern of attributive participles

is the article and the participle standing alone without a noun ex-

pressed, the "substantive use" of the participle. A person or thing is

sufficiently identified as "the one who. . ." or "that which. . . ," where

the generic term is identified by a participle which states its character,

its condition, or its action. Again the participle functions purely as an

attributive adjective. Usually, it is translated as a relative clause, but

in many cases it is the full equivalent of a noun; ὁ πιστεύων is simply

"the believer."

While it is beyond the scope of this article to deal with the

significance of tense in participles, it is worthwhile to note that these

substantival participles demonstrate rather dramatically a characteris-

tic difference. Present participles identify by some characteristic or

customary action or condition, and frequently are equivalent to a

2 In comparison with the 97 instances found in participles there are only 18 ex-

amples with adjectives. All but five of these are with nouns which are proper names,

like βαβυλών ἡ μεγάλη.

3 1467 examples; see the statistical chart.

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name or title. So ὁ στείρων "a sower," ὁ κλέπτων is "a thief," o[

δαιμονιζόμενος is "the demon-possessed person" (cf. Mk 5:15-16; it

is used *after* the demon was cast out, a title which identified the man,

not a description of his present state), ὁ βαπτίζων is "the baptizer"

(or "the Baptist"), ὁ κρίνων is "the judge," ὁ ἀκούων "a hearer,"

ὁ παραδιδούς is "the betrayer," the infamous title of Judas most fre-

quently used, before (Matt 26:48), during (John 18:2), and after (Matt

27:3) the act itself. Some of these seem actually to have become

nouns, listed as such in the lexicons; e.g., ὁ ἄρχων is "the ruler." The

matter is different, however, with the substantival participle in the

aorist and future tenses. Here the identification seems always to be

specific, not general. An aorist participle identifies by referring to

some specific act in past time; the future by a specific future act: so

τὸ ῤηθέν "that which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, etc." (very

many times); τὰ γενόμενα, "the things which had happened"; ὁ κτίσας,

"the One who created them male and female," not "the Creator";

ὁ παραδοῦς, "the one who betrayed him" (John 19:11; also Matt 10:4,

apparently from the viewpoint of the author's time); ὁ παραδώσων,

"the one who will betray him" (John 6:64).

A N P (*Article + Noun + Participle*)

This pattern is the only one which places the participle in a

clearly "predicate position. " This, along with its extreme rarity,4 raises

the question whether this distinction is valid for participles. Or, to

put it differently, are we justified in looking for a different meaning

in these few instances solely on the basis of the analogy of the

adjective? Some examples seem similar to those adjectives which are

found in predicate position but are found with a sentence which

already has its predication, and hence become in effect a secondary

or parenthetic predication.5 So in Mark 6:2 at αἰ δυνάμεις . . . γινόμεναι

the sense is not merely an identification or description of the miracles,

but rather an added admission that they really were happening. Often,

however, it is difficult to see any distinction.

4 Only 20 were so catalogued in this study; 17 are certain (Matt 6:30 twice, Matt

27:37; Mark 6:2; Luke 11:21, 12:28 twice, 16:14; John 2:9, 8:9,14:10; Acts 13:32; 1 Cor

8: 12; 2 Cor 4: 15; Eph 5:27; I Pet 3:20, 4: 12) and 3 are so catalogued with some

hesitation (John 4:39; Eph 2:4; Heb 3:2). There were other instances where a participle

followed an articular noun, but they were adjudged to be verbal rather than adjectival,

functioning as an adverb or as a supplement to the verb.

5 For example, 2 Pet 1:19 βεβαιότερον; not "the more sure word" (which would

require the attributive position), but rather "we have the prophetic word, which is more

sure."

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N P (*Participle following Noun; no article with either*)

P N (*Participle preceding Noun; no article with either*)

Like adjectives, when a participle stands in agreement with an

anarthrous noun it is not possible to tell by position whether it is

attributive or predicate. This does not mean that such functions are

not present; it only means that they cannot be determined by posi-

tion. No attempt is made in this study to ascertain the function of

these participles. The statistical chart will show that the N P pattern

is more common; the P N pattern is extremely rare.

P (*Participle alone, functioning substantively*)

Usually a participle standing alone is verbal (see below), but a

considerable number of instances show that it can also be adjectival

or substantival, even without the article. Most of these function as

anarthrous nouns. Some stand in agreement with some other sub-

stantive word in the sentence, such as a pronoun, a numerical adjec-

tive, or with the subject implied in the person and number inflection

of the verb. Anarthrous participles are placed in this category only if

the sense of the sentence demands it--only if it is difficult to make

sense by considering it a verbal usage.

*P: Pred. Adj. (Participle alone, as a predicate adjective)*

This is a normal and proper use for a participle, although it is

not often singled out as a separate category. It is clearly the predicate

use and as such does not use the article. The predicating verb is either

εἰμί or γίνομαι, or is left unexpressed. It most often is in the nomina-

tive case, although when the predicative verb is an infinitive the parti-

ciple agrees in case with the accusative subject. Also, verbs which

take an accusative object and a predicate complement (καλέω, ποιέω)

have the predicate complement in agreement with the object.

It sometimes is a problem to decide whether a participle belongs

to this category, or to another to be discussed below, the periphrastic

participle. There are obvious similarities; both agree in gender, num-

ber and case with the subject of the verb, the same verbs are involved

(εἰμί, perhaps γίνομαι), and the sense is similar. Two considerations

have been used to help decide. First, those places where the verbal

sense seemed to be primarily in the participle, where the connecting

verb was "semantically empty,"6 were classified as periphrastic. Those

in which the copulative verb seemed to be predicating to the subject

6 A term taken from R. W. Funk, *A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenis-*

*tic Greek*, vol. 3 (Missoula: Scholar's Press, 1973) 430.

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some quality, act or state expressed by the participle were classified as

predicate adjectives. This factor also explains why the periphrastic

construction is made a part of the "verbal" uses of the participle, for

in such instances the participle does in fact express "the verb" of the

clause. Second, where the participle appears in a list of predications

along with predicate adjectives or predicate complements, its parallel-

ism with the other predicates was taken to indicate its own predicate

nature, even when it could well have been taken as periphrastic if it

had stood alone.

VERBAL USES

This second general category is more frequent than the first,7 and

it is here that the versatility of the Greek participle is especially

demonstrated. Here, too, the exegete faces the more puzzling alterna-

tives. These participles never have the article; they stand in gender-

number-case agreement with some noun or other substantive in the

sentence, yet not as a "modifier" but as a connecting point for some

element in some subordinating relation to the verb of the sentence.

Whereas the adjectival participle is the equivalent of a relative clause,

the verbal participle is the equivalent of an adverbial clause or is

involved as an integral part of the principal "verb phrase."

*Adverbial Participles*

There are two main categories of verbal participles, the first and

most frequent being the adverbial, which includes the first three cate-

gories in my tabulation. The first of these is a general one and properly

should include those listed here in the second and third category. For

convenience these subclasses are listed separately because of some

special considerations.

*Adverbial (General)*

Adverbial participles "modify the verb," hence the term. They

describe the circumstances,8 or "set the stage," under which the action

7 61.2% of the total.

8 There is some confusion over the use of the term circumstantial by the gram-

marians. W. W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar*, rev. by C. B. Gulick (Boston: Ginn, 1930)

329-33, and most of the classical grammars as well as some NT grammars, use the

term for the entire category which I have called Adverbial, and indeed it makes a very

appropriate name for it. E. D. Burton, *Syntax of Moods and Tenses in New Testament*

*Greek* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1897) 169, 173, followed by Dana and Mantey,

*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1927) 226,

and many others, use this term to designate one sub-division of this group (the one

called by Goodwin *Any attendant circumstance*) and the term *Adverbial* for the entire

group. To avoid this confusion, I have chosen to used *Adverbial* as the general title.

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of the verb takes place. These circumstances may be practically any

which may be expressed by true adverbs, answering to such questions

as when? where? in what way? by what means? why? under what

circumstances? Grammarians have usually summed up these adverbial

uses as time, cause, manner, means or instrument, purpose, condi-

tion, concession, and attendant circumstances.

The present study has made no attempt to sub-classify these

adverbial participles under these headings, for several reasons. The

size of the task (almost 3,500 instances), the subjectivity of the task

(each one must be decided on the implications of the context alone,

and frequently several choices seem equally plausible), and the limita-

tions of publication (a mere listing would probably fill a whole issue

of this *Journal*) have, at least for the present, made it impractical, in

spite of the conviction that such a study would be very useful.

Only rarely is it possible to translate a Greek adverbial participle

into an English participle. When it is not possible to do so, then the

alternative becomes the use of a subordinate adverbial clause. To

make this translation it is necessary (1) to decide what adverbial idea

is being expressed (time, cause, manner, condition, etc.), (2) to choose

the proper conjunction to express that idea (when, while, since, if,

etc.), (3) to make the substantive with which the participle agrees the

subject of the clause, and (4) to select the proper English tense to use.

These are not always easy choices, and they demand a hermeneutical

sensitivity as well as a rather sophisticated understanding of the Greek

tense system.

Adverbial participles use the aorist tense slightly more frequently

than the present (52% compared with 44%; this is the only category of

participles where the present is not more frequent than the aorist).

The case used is most commonly the nominative (85%), but the other

cases (except vocative) are all used. The case, of course, is determined

not by its adverbial character but by its agreement with its governing

substantive, which may stand in any case relationship to the sentence.

Genitive Absolute

A genitive absolute is simply an adverbial participle, and all that

has been said about adverbial participles in the preceding section is

applicable here. Although usually temporal, they may express any of

the adverbial ideas already described and their meaning must be ap-

proached in the same manner. A separate category has been made

only because of a peculiar explanation for the choice of the case used.

Normally the participle relates the adverbial quality it expresses to

some noun or other substantive in the sentence. Its agreement with

that noun determines its case. When, however, the adverbial quality is

related to some substantive which is not a part of the main sentence,

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and thus has no "case relation" to it (such a structure is called "abso-

lute" in the grammars), the Greek idiom arbitrarily uses the genitive

case for such a disconnected noun and the participle agreeing with it.9

In the classical period it would be used only when this was the situa-

tion. But in later Greek, including the New Testament, this limitation

was not always observed, and there are instances where a genitive

absolute is used when the reference is to a word which is present in

the sentence and has a case of its own. In most instances this occurs

where the genitive absolute precedes the main clause, thus the word

to which the participle refers would not yet be obvious to the hearer

or reader.10

Not all adverbial participles in the genitive case are "absolute,"

however; they may simply be related to a word which has a proper

genitive relationship to the sentence.11

This special class of adverbial participles occurs frequently in the

Gospels, Acts, and Revelation and is commonly agreed to reflect

Semitic influence. As the term is used in this paper, it applies only to

the participles λέγων and ἀποκριθείς when they are used with verbs

which in themselves also express in some way the concept of speech,

such as "he taught saying," "he cried out saying," and "he answered

saying." Λέγων occurs with a great variety of such words expressing

speech, including ἀποκρίνομαι and even λέγω. Ἀποκριθείς occurs

only with εἶπον. The two occur often together, even combined.12

Not all occurrences of λέγων are pleonastic, only those which

actually repeat an expression of speech. To illustrate, in Luke 1:67

ἐπροφήτευσεν λέγων is classified as pleonastic because λέγων repeats

the idea of speech involved in the verb προφητεύω. But in the preced-

ing verse λέγοντες is classified simply as adverbial, because its use

with ἔθεντο does not involve any redundancy.

Redundancy or pleonastic are terms which speak of style rather

than grammar. When these participles are so classified, it simply

means that they reflect a style of speaking which was probably quite

native to the early Christians with Semitic background, whose first

language was probably Hebrew. But such Greek style would probably

have sounded strange to most Greek-speakers of that time, much the

9 Compare the ablative absolute in Latin, the nominative absolute in English.

10 For a fuller discussion, with examples, cf. A. Buttman, *A Grammar of the New*

*Testament Greek* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1891) 315-16.

11 Examples found are 13: Matt 26:7; Luke 2:13 (twice); Acts 17:16, 19:34; 1 Cor

8:10; 2 Cor 7:15; 2 Thes 1:8; Heb 11:12; 1 Pet 1:7; 2 Pet 2:4; Rev 1:15, 17:8.

12 Cf. Luke 14:3, ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν...λέγων . . . . Such expression un-

doubtedly reflects Hebrew: ויאמר. . . ויען or some similar construction.

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same as Elizabethean English occasionally sounds strange to present-

day speakers of English. There is nothing in this idiom that is "ungram-

matical," but it is unidiomatic and simply embodies a literalistic formal

translation style from Hebrew to Greek. As it stands it is an adverbial

participle, probably of manner.

*Supplementary Participles*

The second type of verbal participle is involved directly with the

main verb and in effect with it forms a verb-chain. Robertson says,

"the term supplementary or complementary is used to describe the

participle that forms so close a connection with the principle verb

that the idea of the speaker is incomplete without it. . . . It fills out

the verbal notion.”13 Turner compares it with the adverbial or cir-

cumstantial use: "The circumstantial ptc. differs from a supplemen-

tary ptc. in that the latter cannot without impairing the sense be

detached from the main verbal idea, whereas the circumstantial is

equivalent to a separate participial clause.”14 They occur in conjunc-

tion with specific verbs and types of verbs; frequently they are the

same verbal ideas as use the participle in English, although certainly

not always. For convenience I shall use the categories listed by

Robertson.15

Periphrastic Participle

Construction of tenses and moods by using a participle with an

"auxiliary" verb, thus producing a periphrastic or "round-about" ex-

pression, was always a part of the Greek verb system, but by classical

standards it became much more common in Hellenistic Greek. The

tendency seems to be a natural one, occurring in other languages as

well (compare English). In fact, to an English-speaking student of NT

Greek, ἦν διδάσκων seems much more natural for "he was teaching"

than the inflected form, ἐδίδασκεν. Mark and Luke use this peri-

phrastic construction much more commonly than the other NT

writers.16 It may be another reflection of Hebrew grammar formally

translated into Greek since היה plus the participle is common in second

temple Hebrew.

13 A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of*

*Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 1119.

14 Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3: Syntax (Edinburgh:

T. & T. Clark, 1963) 153.

15 Robertson, *Grammar*, 1119-24.

16 The rate per 1000 words of text is: Luke, 3.49; Acts, 3.14; Mark, 2.48; John,

2.04; Matt, 1.31, Heb, 1.21; Paul, 1.19; General epistles, 1.05; Rev, 1.01.

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The auxiliary verb is almost always the present or imperfect ofεἰμί. Some grammarians tentatively list γίνομαι and ὑπάρχω as also

involved, but to the present writer a participle occurring with these

verbs seems more probably to be understood as supplementary (see

below).

Participles used in this construction are the present (153 times)

and perfect (115 times), perhaps also the aorist (two very doubtful

instances).17 The case used is almost always the nominative, since the

participle is in a sense a subjective complement of the copulative verb,

requiring that the case be the same as that of the subject. The two

instances where the periphrastic participle is accusative18 are actually

following that rule; in one case the auxiliary is an infinitive, which

has its "subject" in the accusative; in the other the auxiliary is itself a

participle which modifies (and therefore has as its "subject") an ac-

cusative pronoun.

Usually the participle follows the auxiliary; it precedes in only 28

instances. In a few cases a participle has been identified as periphrastic

when an auxiliary is not present but seems to be implied by the sense

of the context or by parallels where the same construction has the

auxiliary.19

There is necessarily some ambivalence between the periphrastic

participle and a participle functioning as a predicative adjective, al-

ready discussed above. Indeed, N. Turner says, "In the same way as

the ordinary adj. the ptc. may fulfill the role of a predicate and

answers either to the subject or the direct complement of the preposi-

tion. In this way, with εἶναι and γίνεσθαι the ptc. forms a peri-

phrastic tense.”20 It is hard to see how ἦν ἀσθενῶν (John 11:1) would

be different if it were ἦν ἀσθενής; or ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ᾖ πεπληρω-

μένη (I Jn 1:4) if it were ᾖ πλήρης. Especially is this true when the

participle occurs in a list of parallel predications alongside an adjective

or other descriptive phrase.21

In meaning, the periphrastic tenses seem in many instances to be

no different from their inflected counterparts. Perhaps the most that

can be said is that, while the simple present tense, for example, is

17 Luke 23:19, βληθείς; 2 Cor 5: 19, θέμενος. The strangeness of the first of these is

underscored by the textual variants which occur; one changing the form to perfect,

βεβλημένος, the other omitting the participle altogether. The other example is com-

plicated by differing interpretations of the first two participles (are they periphrastic or

circumstantial?) and the parallelism in sense between this clause and the final clause of

the preceding verse.

18 Luke 9:18, Col l:21.

19 Cf. ἐξὸν ἦν (Matt 12:4) with ἐξόν (Acts 2:29); also with other similar words,

such as δέον, παρόν, πρέπον, συμφέρον.

20 Turner, *Grammar*, 158.

21 Cf. Luke 1:7, Rom 15:4, Eph 2:12, Rev 1:18, etc.

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capable of a variety of meanings, the periphrastic seems always to

require or to emphasize the continuing action sense.

"Imperatival" Participles

Some grammarians distinguish another use of the participle in

which it seems to stand as the main verb of the sentence in a context

which requires that it be understood as imperative; others strongly

disagree.22 The instances cited may easily be explained as depending

on some other verb present, or by understanding an ellipsis of an

imperative copula. The present writer would in every case adopt the

latter alternative, leaving no examples to present as imperatival parti-

ciples. However, in recognition of this situation, I have chosen to list it

some of the most likely examples in this special category for compari-

son and study.

The most notable examples are found in the list of admonitions

in Romans 12:9-19. Beginning three verses earlier (v 6), this series

proceeds without a governing verb expressed. The first eight admoni-

tions seem to require a verb to be supplied with the sense, "Let us do

it . . . " ("If it is a prophecy which has been given to us, [let us

prophesy] according to . . ."), a simple ellipsis of a verb easily supplied

from the context. The pattern changes in v 9a, where the verb to be

supplied is the imperative of the copulative verb, ἔστω. In vv 9b-13

the series continues with fourteen more exhortations, twelve of which

have a participle and two have an adjective expressing the content of

the exhortation. It would seem most logical that these also be con-

sidered elliptical, either as periphrastic imperative verbs or as predi-

cate adjectives, in either case with the imperative copulative verb23 to

be supplied. The series ends (vv 19b-21) with seventeen more admo-

nitions, seven of which are again participles, interspersed with nine

regular imperative verbs and one infinitive which probably should

supplied with a governing verb such as παρακαλῶ (cf. v 1). This

cluster of participles seem most naturally to be understood as depend-

ing on an imperative supplied from the context, rather than an ex-

ample of a distinct class of participles.

This situation is similar in the other examples listed. In 2 Cor

8:23, 24 a long sentence is without a single finite verb; v 23 requires

22 Supporting this "main verb" use of the participle is J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar*

*of New Testament Greek, vol. I: Prolegomena* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908) 180-

84. Opposing it is Buttman, *Grammar*, 290-94. Robertson, *Grammar*, 1132-35, takes a

mediating position; he shows that these uses can be understood as anacoluthon or

ellipsis, but awkwardly. In practice he recognizes them.

23 The plural nominative participle and the pattern of speech in vv 14, 16, 19-21

point to the second person plural imperative ἔστε (or perhaps γίνεσθε). ἔστε (impera-

tive) is never found in the NT.

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supplying a main verb (one which is not very obvious) and the copula-

tive verb twice; v 24 seems most naturally to require the imperative

ἔστωσαν with the participle ἐνδεικνύμενοι. In 1 Pet 2:18, 3:1, 7 three

participles seem to be in parallel structure, all depending on a main

verb in 2:13, the imperative ὑποτάγητε. This subject of submission

continues throughout the section and includes three specific groups;

each is introduced by a participle agreeing in number and case with

the subject of that governing verb. Thus they are not standing apart

as separate finite verbs (i.e., imperatival participles), but are simply

amplifications applying the main verb to three groups. English idiom

finds it much easier to make three distinct sentences.

Complementary Participle

Robertson uses this narrower designation to include a variety of

verbs which sometimes take a supplementary participle,24 but he does

so without assigning a descriptive name to the type of verb involved.

Blass-Debrunner labels them "verbs denoting a modified sense of 'to

be' or 'to do’.”25 They are verbs which in classical Greek used the

supplementary participle mostly in the nominative case, but this use is

greatly diminished in NT Greek. Here this group includes such verbs

as (a) ὑπάρχω (twice) = to be, exist; προϋπάρχω (3 times) = to be

first; to be continually; διατελέω (once), ἐπιμένω (twice) and μένω

(once); (b) to stop, to cease, to finish, to grow weary; παύομαι (12

times), διαλείπω (once), τελέω (once), ἐγκακέω (twice): (c) to be

hidden, to be manifest = λανθάνω (once), φαίνω (twice); (d) to come

before, anticipate = προφθάνω (once); (e) a modified sense of "to

do" = καλῶς ποιέω (4 times), τί ποίειτε (twice).

Verbs of Emotion

Extremely rare in the NT, this study has listed only two examples,

one each with ἀγαλλιάζω (Acts 16:34) and τρέμω (2 Pet 2:10). Three

instances with χαίρω are sometimes cited as examples, but they seem

more probably to be adverbial (for example, John 20:20, "they re-

joiced when they saw the Lord" rather than "rejoiced at seeing" or

"rejoiced to see" or "saw him gladly").

Verbs of Perception and Cognition

This most frequently occurring type of supplemental participle is

sub-divided into (a) verbs of physical perception (seeing, hearing) and

24 Robertson, *Grammar*, 1120-21.

25 F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other*

*Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by Robert Funk (Chicago: University of

Chicago, 1961) 213.

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(b) verbs of mental perception or cognition (knowing, recognizing,

finding, confessing, etc.). The verbs showing this construction in the

NT, with the number of occurrences, are: βλέπω (15), εἶδον (89),

θεάομαι (5), θεωρέω (22), ὁράω (and ὀπ-) (12), ἀκούω (34), παρακούω

(1), εὑρισκω (51), δείκνυμι (2), δοκιμάζω (1), "γέομαι (1), and ἕχω

when it means "to consider" (2).

Since the participle in this construction goes with the object of

the main verb, it is usually in the accusative case. The genitives here

are all with the verb ἀκούω, which takes the genitive when it speaks

of physical perception. The few instances where this participle is in

the nominative case are due to the passive voice of the governing

verb, where the object of the action has become the subject in the

nominative and the participle agrees.26

Participle in Indirect Discourse

Closely related to the last group, but worthy of separate con-

sideration, is the use of the participle in indirect discourse. It is rare in

the NT, being replaced largely by the infinitive and the ὅτι clause.

The participle is so used with ἀκούω (6 times), εἶδον (once), and

ὁράω (once) from those listed in the last category, plus other verbs of

mental perception, γινώσκω (3), ἐπιγινώσκω (1), ἐπισταμαι (1), κατα-

νοές (1), and ὁμολογέω (2). The contrast in meaning between ἀκούω

used with a supplementary participle and ἀκούω with a participle in

indirect discourse will serve to illustrate the distinction.ἥκουσαν . . .

αὐτοῦ λαλαοῦντος (John 1:37 and frequently) clearly refers only to the

physical perception; it says nothing about the content of what was

heard. But ἀκούσας . . . ὅντα σιτία εἰς Αἵγθπτον (Acts 7:12) is not

physical perception, he did not hear the grain being there. Rather, he

heard "that there was grain. . . ." The latter is clearly indirect dis-

course; the direct would be "There is grain. . . ."

The participle modifies the object of the verb of perception and

as such is in the accusative case.

Appended to this discussion are three statistical tables. Tables 1

and 2 give the total number of occurrences for each of the eighteen

patterns or functions described, as well as a breakdown count by

tense and case for each. This information may be useful to the NT

Greek student in pursuing these studies further, for purposes of com-

parison and evaluation of their magnitude and relative importance.

Table 3 gives additional statistical information relating to one cate-

gory, the periphrastic participle.

26 Matt 1:18, 17:30; Phil 3:9; Rev 20:15. The other is Rev 5:12, where the ellipsis

makes it difficult to account for the case.

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The fact that about one word in every twenty in the Greek NT is

a participle, together with the oft-heard comment from students that

participles are one of the most difficult parts of the language to

master, underscores the importance and need for any help available.

If this study meets any part of that need its purpose will be realized.

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TABLE 3

*Composition of Periphrastic Tenses*

with Present with Perfect with Aorist

Auxiliary Verb Participle Participle Participle

Present

Indicative:

εἰμί 1 2

ἐστί(ν) 12 18

[ ἐστί(ν)] 3

ἐσμέν 3

[ἐσμέν] 1

ἐστέ 6

εἰσί(ν) 1 7

[ εἰσὶ(ν)] 1 1

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

19 Periphrastic 37 Periphrastic

Present Present Ind. Perfect Ind.

Subjunctive:

ᾗ 7

[ ᾗ] 1

ὦμεν 1

ἦτε 2

ὦσι(ν) 2

\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

1 Periphrastic 12 Periphrastic

Present Subj. Perfect Subj.

Present

Infinitive:

εἶναι 1 Periphrastic

Present Inf.

Present

Participle:

ὦν 2 Periphrastic

Perfect Part.

Imperfect

Indicative:

ἤμην 8 1

ἦν 67 36 2 (?)

[ἦν] 2 1

ἦμεν 1 l

ἦμεθα l

[ἦμεν] 3

ἦτε 1

ἦσαν 34 15

[ἦσαν] 2 1

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

118 Periphrastic 56 Periphrastic 2 Periphrastic

Imperfects Pluperfects Aorists

Future

Indicative:

ἔσομαι 1

ἔσῃ 3

ἔσται 2 4

ἔσεσθε 5

ἔσονται 3 1

13 Periphrastic 6 Periphrastic

Futures Future Perfects

\* Bracketed forms indicate probable examples of ellipsis, the bracketed word to be

supplied to complete the sense.

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