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RESPONSE TO STANLEY E. PORTER

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First, I offer my sincerest apology to Porter for not having located his article on the textual-critical issue in Rom 5:1, which has been published in two separate places. For some reason, neither publication showed up in my searches for articles on Rom 5:1. I am not sure why. It is perhaps equally surprising that neither of the two Romans commentaries published since 1991 (the year of Porter's *JBL* article) in which authors are encouraged to deal significantly with textual-critical issues (NICNT and BECNT series) makes any reference to that article. Moreover, I acknowledge the careless spelling errors that pervaded my footnote 3; editors need proofreading too, as I know only too well—but Porter presumably knows this, too, since within two years of publishing his *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, he felt a need to submit a "second edition with corrections."

If anything good may come of this interchange, it will be that both articles—Porter's in *JBL* and mine in *JETS*, plus this subsequent exchange—will get more exposure than either of these articles would have by itself, now that a controversy has developed. Controversy has a way of producing exposure. When one scholar takes another one to task, people remember and take note, and I suspect that commentators presently working on Romans will now need to examine both sides of this issue and make a determination as to which article presents the stronger case. Porter insists that the internal evidence in the book of Romans points to the use of the subjunctive ἔχωμεν in Rom 5:1, whereas I have argued (and I would still argue) for the indicative ἔχομεν.

Moreover, I scoured a large number of commentaries, both older and contemporary, found in a local theological seminary library, but I somehow missed the 1901 James Denney commentary on Romans in *The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, which thoroughly supports the article I wrote. But similar to what happened with Porter's *JBL* article, Denney's commentary was not noted in either of the International Critical Commentaries on Romans (Sanday and Headlam in 1911, published only ten years after *The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, and Cranfield in 1975). Perhaps it was from Denney's comments on Rom 5:1 that the late Bastiaan Van Elderen, the NT professor from whom I learned the importance of paying attention to the οὐ μόνον δέ in Rom 5:3, had encountered that observation.

I have no intention of going paragraph by paragraph through the arguments that Porter offers relative to my article. But I do wish instead to respond to a few elements. First, Porter refers to "Blass's canon," a term used by Moulton for the pattern that "οὐ (and its forms) appears with the indicative mood form and μή (and

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its forms) appears with the non-indicative mood forms."[1] In my *JETS* article, I called the elucidation of this principle as cited in BDF §426 "a general rule," but Porter insists that I "treat it as a hard-and-fast rule." I categorically deny that charge, since I pointed out at least five uses of μή that, for a number of reasons, occur with the indicative.[2] I fully recognize there is no hard-and-fast rule about the mood of a verb and use of οὐ versus μή.

What surprised me even more was to read the following in Porter's *Idioms in the Greek New Testament*: "There are several exceptions to this rule [Blass's canon] (e.g. questions expecting a negative answer and second class or contra-factual conditionals), but this *rule* has a surprisingly high degree of consistency."[3] How is this different from what I wrote? And why does Porter take me to task for a position he himself espouses?

Be that as it may, Porter's specific statement about Blass's canon in his response to my *JETS* article warrants a comment. Porter writes: "Blass's canon is a descriptive observation, not a prescriptive one, as Verbrugge seems to take it." What I hear Porter saying is that it is not proper procedure to examine a particular grammatical construction (or, perhaps, a word usage) in the NT and then to draw general conclusions from those observations that will have an impact on exegesis. Otherwise put, presumably "descriptive observations" may not be used to determine "prescriptive" grammar. From my twenty-six years as an academic editor, I know that scholars examine word usages and grammatical constructions all the time in order to determine the likelihood of an interpretive choice in exegesis; if this is not a legitimate process, it seems to me that students of the Greek NT might just as well hang up their hats and plead ignorance that we can learn anything valuable from studying and using the original language of God's revelation in the NT. Furthermore, it appears to me that if anyone is using a "hard-and-fast rule," Porter does when he adopts without question and explores the observation of A. C. Moorhouse that "negation is related to perception of the 'concrete or actual' (οὐ) versus the 'notional or ideal' (μή)."

Porter also suggests that I did not explore all the options as to the contrasts being portrayed in the use of καυχώμεθα in Rom 5:3. He insists that "more careful examination of the two contrasting clauses may indicate that it is not the two verbs that are being contrasted"; rather, "the contrast … [is] between the two grounds of boasting—boasting 'upon the hope of God's glory' (Rom 5:2) and boasting 'in the tribulations' (Rom 5:3)." As a matter of fact, I did consider that the contrast in Rom 5:2–3 might be between two grounds of boasting (I did not insert all of my explorations in my article), but I felt that such an option was overruled by the very fact that the verb καυχώμεθα *was repeated*. That very repetition seemed to me to force the interpreter to link οὐ μόνον … ἀλλὰ καί with verbs rather than with preposi-

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[1] See Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) 281. This book has a later publication date than Porter's *JBL* article.

[2] See Verlyn D. Verbrugge, "The Grammatical Internal Evidence for ἔχομεν in Romans 5:1," *JETS* 54 (2011) 563–64.

[3] Ibid. (emphasis added).

tional phrases; after all, Paul rarely repeats a verb unnecessarily when the context would allow for it to be understood. (No, this is *not* a hard-and-fast rule.)

Now for a final comment. I recognize that there is a whole level of language study (linguistics) that has never been a part of my framework of understanding the nature of any language, including Koine Greek. This was made apparent to me when Porter adopted Moorhouse's distinction that in Greek, "negation is related to perception of the 'concrete or actual' (οὐ) versus the 'notional or ideal' (μή)," and when Porter also referred to Moorhouse's differentiation between "word/special negation" and "sentence or nexal negation." I freely admit this is the first time I have ever encountered the word "nexal" (a word I could only find in an unabridged dictionary). I have subsequently spent some time perusing Moorhouse's *Studies in the Greek Negative*. That study of negation (especially Greek negation) is written by someone skilled in the field of linguistics. Moorhouse does indeed make a distinction between "nexal" versus "special" negation; he later makes a distinction between quantitative and qualitative negatives (which I found difficult to understand). But very early in his study Moorhouse cautions his fellow linguists: "It is established practice in modern linguistics to base grammatical description purely on observation of the forms of the language described. Have we departed from this practice and been guided by theoretical and logical notions of what negation might be, in the analysis that has been made? I think that we have not, though the danger of doing so is one for which watch must constantly be kept."[4] I have not done enough reading in Porter to make an authoritative assessment, but I sometimes sense that in Porter, the theoretical takes precedence over the practical.

Moreover, I am fully aware that there has traditionally been little meeting of the minds between those skilled in traditional grammar and those skilled in linguistics. Maybe it has not seemed odd to you, though it has to me, that whereas the Bauer *Greek Lexicon* had a first edition published in 1957 (BAG), a second edition in 1979 (BAGD), and a third edition in 2000 (BDAG), its companion grammar (BDF, published in 1961) has never been revised. I have wondered about this, and in my limited investigation, I have discovered from reputable sources that it is not for lack of trying. A revision committee had been appointed in the 1990s, but about half the members wanted to keep the structure of the traditional grammar as it was and the other half wanted to apply recent models of linguistic theory. This created such an impasse among the committee members that the revision is now considered "defunct" (see, e.g., http://greek-language.com/grklinguist/?p=685, which, among other things, contains an outline to the revised grammar proposed by one of the key members of the committee). Maybe more time is needed for linguists and grammarians to develop mutual respect for each other; perhaps the next generation of such scholars will find a way to meld their approaches into a joint project where they can support rather than castigate each other.

[4] A. C. Moorhouse, *Studies in the Greek Negative* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1959) 4.