

## SHARP'S RULE REVISITED: A RESPONSE TO STANLEY PORTER

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In the December 2010 issue of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (vol. 53, pp. 828–32), Stanley Porter reviewed my monograph, *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance*.<sup>1</sup> I am thankful for the interaction and the opportunity it affords me for clarification. In his review, Porter offers little by way of positive assessment, with but one paragraph discussing the overall contents. The review is largely concerned with how I have apparently misunderstood Sharp's rule: "the most important shortcoming of the book is Wallace's failure to analyze Sharp's rule adequately and to follow his own evidence where it leads."<sup>2</sup> In this response, I wish to take issue with this assessment.

### I. MY UNDERSTANDING OF SHARP'S RULE

By way of background, Granville Sharp wrote a slender tome in 1798 that went through four editions in less than ten years. Titled *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament: Containing many New Proofs of the Divinity of Christ, from Passages which are wrongly Translated in the Common English Version*, this volume<sup>3</sup> is the best-known and controversial of the scores of books that Sharp penned. Sharp articulated as his first of six rules<sup>4</sup> the following:

When the copulative καὶ connects two nouns of the same case [viz. nouns (either substantive or adjective, or participles) of personal description, respecting office, dignity, affinity, or connexion, and attributes, properties, or qualities, good or ill], if the article ὁ, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the

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<sup>1</sup> D. B. Wallace, *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance* (Studies in Biblical Greek 14; New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Porter, "Review" 828. All references to Porter's review from here on will be by way of the page number in parentheses in the body of this response.

<sup>3</sup> The title of the American edition of 1807, which work I will be referencing throughout this response.

<sup>4</sup> Although there are six rules on the Greek article by Sharp, the first is the one over which the syntactical and theological battleground is fought. Sharp considered the other five rules to be supportive of the first, which he regarded as the lynchpin in his grammatical defense of the deity of Christ.

first noun or participle: i.e. it denotes a farther description of the first-named person.<sup>5</sup>

Sharp's canon relates to a particular kind of article-substantive-καί-substantive construction (TSKS), which has a variety of uses. The minimal semantic force of such a construction indicates some sort of unity of referents, which could rise to equality of referents, and even identity of referents.<sup>6</sup> The TSKS *by itself* does not speak of referential identity, and almost half of my monograph is devoted to a discussion of this construction when it does not fit Sharp's rule. I noted that Sharp meant his principle to be restricted to personal, singular, non-proper substantives in the TSKS and that, when these features were found in the NT, Sharp believed that the construction always implied identity of referents—that is, only one person was in view.<sup>7</sup> As the title of his book suggests, Sharp felt that he had uncovered a syntactical principle that demonstrated the Authorized Version to have mistranslated certain Christologically significant texts that, in the Greek, clearly affirmed the deity of Christ.

## II. PORTER'S CRITIQUE OF MY MONOGRAPH

Stanley Porter understands things differently, however. His critique of my monograph, if I understand him correctly, focuses on three things:

1. Granville Sharp's rule spoke of TSKS as bearing the sense of some sort of conceptual unity, but not necessarily anything more. Thus, I am incorrect to invoke Sharp's rule for affirmations of Jesus as θεός in 2 Pet 1:1 and Titus 2:13.

2. I have modified Sharp's rule, yet I have no right to do so.

3. My motivation was to see Sharp's principle as applicable to two Christologically significant texts, Titus 2:13 and 2 Pet 1:1. Thus, my monograph was tinged with a theological agenda which has, in turn, skewed my understanding of Sharp's canon.

I will address these criticisms in order, followed by a critique of what was not addressed in Porter's review.

1. *Did Sharp include plurals in his Rule?* Regarding my (mis)understanding of Sharp's canon, Porter claims that "Sharp does not address the question of plurals, and ... he states that the second [substantive] 'relates' to the first *or* is a 'farther description'" (p. 829, emphasis added). It is at this juncture that Porter's redefinition of Sharp's rule is open to question: the "or" could be disjunctive or explanatory. Porter apparently takes it to be disjunctive, although that is not what Sharp said. The "i.e." of Sharp's definition is telling ("*the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle: i.e. it denotes a farther description of the first-named person*"). In this definition by the word "relates" Sharp must mean that the two substantives refer to the same person. By noting that Sharp allowed that plural substantives can frequently, though not universally, bear the same

<sup>5</sup> Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article* 3.

<sup>6</sup> Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 89–99.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 47–54.

semantics that his rule spoke of, Porter assumes that “Sharp apparently had a broader view of his own rule, one that knew of no exceptions in the singular but that also recognized exceptions in the plural” (p. 829). The wording here is imprecise: it is true that Sharp believed that plural substantives in the TSKS did at times have an identical referent, and that at other times they encompassed mere unity or equality of referents. But plurals were not included in the components of Sharp’s rule, and thus I believe Porter is incorrect to suggest that Sharp had a broader view of his rule.

Sharp’s use of the term “exceptions,” however, is a bit ambiguous; he meant by it, I believe, *grammatical features that are outside the scope of the rule*. It is these exceptions that Porter has focused on, assuming that Sharp meant that plurals were within the purview of his first rule. Porter claims, “Wallace seems to have a narrower view of the rule” (p. 829). At stake then is whether Sharp intended plurals to be included in his rule or not.

There are two issues here—structure (or components) and semantics: What were the components in the TSKS that Sharp saw as fitting his first rule? And what were the resultant semantics that he claimed the rule displayed? Porter chides me for not including Sharp’s statement that “there are not wanting examples, even of plural nouns, which are expressed exactly agreeable [*sic*] to this rule” (p. 829).<sup>8</sup> By this I understand Sharp to mean that plurals *can* sometimes bear the same *semantics* as singulars, but not that the *components* are the same as what he sees as within the scope of his rule. And because he is not saying anything different from his restrictions of the rule to singulars, I felt justified in leaving it out. But it must be admitted that Sharp’s language is not as clear as we might like. Nevertheless, his follow-up discussions and examples bear out that he restricted the components of his rule to singular substantives.

Porter at times talks about the components of the rule as though they could be either singular or plural substantives (“Sharp does not address the question of plurals”; p. 829); at other times, he speaks about the semantics involved as indicating mere conceptual unity (“it is possible that conceptual unity and some type of sense similarity, and not necessarily only identity of reference, are exactly what Sharp’s rule was about in its broad formulation”; p. 829). But this is a confused and contradictory treatment of Sharp’s canon. These two aspects to the canon—components and semantics—must be treated discretely or else confusion will result.

This confusion can be seen in Porter’s assessment about the semantics of the rule: he says, for example, that I am wrong to insist that Sharp indicated that the semantics of this rule was about “identity of referent,” and that it may include no more than conceptual unity (p. 829). But if so, in what sense are *any* plural constructions in any way outside the scope of conceptual unity? Porter does not tell us; he only argues that the rule, as Sharp formulated it, was meant to include singular personal nouns universally but plural personal nouns occasionally, and yet Porter’s discussion of the semantics of the rule seems to vacillate between conceptual unity

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<sup>8</sup> Quoting Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article* 6. The misspelling is Sharp’s, not Porter’s.

and referential identity. But if the rule had in view only conceptual unity, then all plural substantives, as well as impersonal substantives and proper names, fit this. How then can Porter claim that Sharp only saw the plurals as only occasionally fitting the semantics of the rule? Either Sharp's rule inferred referential identity between the components and was meant to apply absolutely only to singular constructions, or it was broad enough to infer conceptual unity and include plurals. But it cannot logically mean *both* referential identity and merely conceptual unity *and* involve admitted exceptions with plural personal substantives. As I argued in my monograph, the TSKS always implies at least conceptual unity, regardless of the components in the construction.<sup>9</sup> Plurals, like impersonal TSKS and proper-name TSKS, always fit this minimal semantic force. But this is not what Sharp's rule was all about, even broadly speaking.

I maintain that Sharp's canon was restricted to personal, singular, non-proper substantives. I also maintain that the semantics that Sharp envisioned in such constructions in the NT always inferred identity of referents.

Regarding the componential requirements of the rule, that Sharp envisioned only singular, personal, non-proper substantives in the TSKS is easy to demonstrate. A perusal of Sharp's monograph, along with the reviews of his work and Sharp's responses to the reviews, shows that his rule was intended to show that only singular, personal, and non-proper substantives always fit the requirements of the rule in the NT. Two pages after he offers his first rule, Sharp declares, "there is no exception or instance of the like mode of expression, that I know of, which necessarily requires a construction different from what is here laid down, EXCEPT the nouns be *proper names*, or *in the plural number*, in which case there are many exceptions...."<sup>10</sup> He is clearly excluding plural substantives from the components of his rule, and simultaneously claiming that singular, personal, non-proper substantives admit of no exceptions in the NT. His use of the word "exceptions" was evidently meant to show that such constructions did not always bear the same semantics as the singular constructions. In that sense, they do not fit the required components of the rule. This can be seen by the fact that he produced 25 undisputed examples (i.e. apart from those that impact the deity of Christ) from the NT. Every one involves singular, non-proper, personal substantives, in grammatical concord with the article. And every one indicated, according to Sharp, identity of referents.<sup>11</sup> Among them are the following:

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<sup>9</sup> Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 90: "the primary thrust of the article in TSKS is to bring together two substantives into a conceptual unity. This is true of *all* such constructions: the single article connotes some sort of unity."

<sup>10</sup> Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article* 5–6.

<sup>11</sup> It is true, as Porter points out (p. 829), that Sharp did not explicitly say that these twenty-five examples all involved referential identity, but Porter's statement that "it is only when Sharp is discussing Christologically significant examples that he uses such terms as 'identity of person(s),'" is misleading, because Sharp introduces all these examples with the conjunction 'as' immediately after his articulation of the rule. He says, "*When the copulative  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  connects two nouns of the same case, [viz. nouns (either substantive or adjective, or participles) of personal description, respecting office, dignity, affinity, or connexion, and attributes, properties, or qualities, good or ill], if the article  $\delta$ , or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeat-*

2 Cor 1:3	Εὐλογητὸς <b>ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ</b> τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, <b>ὁ πατὴρ</b> τῶν οἰκτιρῶν <b>καὶ θεὸς</b> πάσης παρακλήσεως
2 Cor 11:31	<b>ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ</b> τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Eph 6:21	Τύχικος <b>ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος</b> ἐν κυρίῳ
Phil 4:20	<b>τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ</b> ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων
Heb 3:1	<b>τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα</b> τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν
Jas 3:9	ἐν αὐτῇ εὐλογοῦμεν <b>τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα</b>
2 Pet 2:20	ἐν ἐπιγνώσει <b>τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος</b> Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
Rev 16:15	μακάριος <b>ὁ γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν</b> τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ

In the reviews that followed, one was by Gregory Blunt, an obvious pseudonym meant as a word-play on “Granville Sharp” (Blunt’s real name was Thomas Pearne). In his *Six More Letters to Granville Sharp, Esq., on his Remarks upon the Uses of the Article in the Greek Testament*,<sup>12</sup> Blunt produced multiple examples that included impersonal substantives, proper names, and plural substantives.<sup>13</sup> To these Sharp responded that they were not within the parameters of the features he claimed for his first rule.<sup>14</sup> A more serious adversary was Calvin Winstanley, whose *Vindication of Certain Passages in the Common English Version of the New Testament*<sup>15</sup> is to this day the most robust and scholarly attack on Sharp’s rule. Winstanley understood that Sharp had restricted the semantics of his rule to apply only to singular, personal, non-proper substantives in the NT. He found no exceptions to this in the NT, but did produce four categories of exceptions outside of the NT. All of them involve the features that Sharp required of his rule; Winstanley did not include plurals in his list of exceptions. Significantly, regarding the NT, Winstanley conceded that Sharp’s rule was valid (except for the Christologically significant texts), even going so far as to say, “your first rule has a real foundation in the idiom of the language.”<sup>16</sup> Of

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*ed before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle: i.e. it denotes a farther description of the first-named person; as, —”* followed by his twenty-five examples. Further, on Col 2:2, which reads τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (in the *textus receptus*, the text Sharp was using), he adds a footnote: “The distinction of persons mentioned in this sentence is preserved by the insertion of the article τοῦ before Χριστοῦ, which had been omitted before πατρὸς” (Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article* 4). If Sharp had meant for his rule to include merely conceptual unity, why would this note be necessary? He was evidently claiming that the article before Χριστοῦ both disrupted the construction *and* disrupted the semantics of the rule. At the end of his illustrations, Sharp declares, “there are at least a dozen other places . . . wherein ‘the God and Father’ is mentioned exactly according to this rule,” which is immediately followed by “and there is no exception or instance of the like mode of expression, that I know of, which necessarily requires a construction different from what is here laid down, EXCEPT the nouns be *proper names*, or in the *plural number*” (ibid. 5–6).

<sup>12</sup> Gregory Blunt, *Six More Letters to Granville Sharp, Esq., on his Remarks upon the Uses of the Article in the Greek Testament* (London: J. Johnston, 1803).

<sup>13</sup> Among those included by Blunt were the personal plural constructions in Matt 3:7 and Luke 8:1–2 (*Six More Letters* 45–46).

<sup>14</sup> Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article* 140–41, *et passim*.

<sup>15</sup> *A Vindication of Certain Passages in the Common English Version of the New Testament. Addressed to Granville Sharp, Esq.* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Hilliard and Metcalf, 1819).

<sup>16</sup> Winstanley, *Vindication* 36 (cf. p. 8 for a similar comment).

course, he objected to Sharp's application of the rule to the Christologically important passages, but could not produce any undisputed illustrations within the NT that contradicted the semantics of referential identity that Sharp had laid down.<sup>17</sup>

There were also significant supporters of Sharp's principle, most notably Christopher Wordsworth and Thomas Fanshaw Middleton. Wordsworth, a fellow and later master of Trinity College, Cambridge, examined the Christologically-significant passages that Sharp referenced, and cross-checked them against Latin and Greek patristic commentaries on the same. Although beginning his task with incredulity over the validity of Sharp's rule, Wordsworth concluded, "I fully believe, that there is no one exception to your first rule in the whole New Testament: and the assertion might be extended infinitely further."<sup>18</sup> After an exhaustive investigation, from Greek Christian literature covering a span of over 1000 years, Wordsworth was able to make the astounding comment,

I have observed more (I am persuaded) than a thousand instances of the form ὁ Χριστος και Θεος (Ephes. v. 5)[;] some hundreds of instances of the ὁ μὲγας Θεος και σωτηρ (Tit. ii. 13); and not fewer than several thousands of the form ὁ Θεος και σωτηρ (2 Pet. i. 1.)[;] while in no single case, have I seen (where the sense could be determined) any of them used, but only of *one* person.<sup>19</sup>

This clearly shows that Wordsworth understood the requirements for the rule to be personal, singular, non-proper substantives, and that he saw the semantics of this form of the TSKS to invariably indicate referential identity, in agreement with what Sharp had proposed.<sup>20</sup>

The bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, was the first grammarian of note to endorse Sharp's rule. His massive tome, *The Doctrine of the Greek Article Applied to the Criticism and Illustration of the New Testament*,<sup>21</sup> is a work that Porter calls the "most thorough treatment of the Greek article to date."<sup>22</sup> Middleton gave an extensive treatment on the use of the article in classical Greek, followed by hundreds of pages of exegetical discussions of the article in the NT. This second section was arranged not topically, but canonically. Middleton clearly felt the force of Sharp's rule and lent it credibility from the circle of philology. Dedicating more than a dozen pages to a discussion of Sharp's rule, Middleton confirmed the validity of Sharp's rule. He spoke of the features of personal, singular, non-proper substantives in TSKS constructions as what Sharp had clearly indicated in his *Remarks*, and offered linguistic rationale for their necessity.<sup>23</sup> Concerning plurals, he argued:

<sup>17</sup> See Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 58–65, and chaps. 5 and 12 for extended discussions of Winstanley's work.

<sup>18</sup> [C. Wordsworth], *Six Letters to Granville Sharp, Esq. respecting his Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article, in the Greek Text of the New Testament* (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1802).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 132.

<sup>20</sup> See Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 58–60, for discussion.

<sup>21</sup> Originally published in 1808. The edition ("new edition") used in this response was published in 1841, incorporating notes by H. J. Rose (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1841).

<sup>22</sup> S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992; 2d ed. 1994) 103, n. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Middleton, *Doctrine of the Greek Article* 62–65. See Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 65–68, for discussion of Middleton's defense of Sharp's canon.

What reason can be alleged, why the practice in Plural Attributives should differ from that in Singular ones? The circumstances are evidently dissimilar. A *single* individual may stand in various relations and act in divers capacities.... But this does not happen in the same degree with respect to Plurals. Though *one* individual may act, and frequently does act, in several capacities, it is not likely that a *multitude* of individuals should all of them act in the *same* several capacities....<sup>24</sup>

If I have misunderstood Sharp's rule to be restricted to singular substantives, then so have the scholars—both proponents and opponents of the rule—who were both the earliest and who interacted most with Sharp's canon. For Porter to claim that plurals were in view is to overlook *all* the prooftexts that Sharp produced, his rebuttals of Blunt, Winstanley's concessions, Wordsworth's patristic examples, and Middleton's philological arguments and evidence.

Regarding the semantics of the rule, Sharp saw referential identity as the invariable meaning in the NT. This can be seen in all the NT examples he produced in support of his rule (all of which involved singular, personal, non-proper substantives), his explicit limitation of the rule's absolute validity to singular personal substantives, his corrections of Blunt's plural examples, and his argument that, therefore, the Christologically significant texts *must* indicate that only one person is in view. (If he argued that the Christologically significant texts went beyond his rule's semantics, then he would know that he had proved nothing. But his monograph speaks eloquently to the fact that he considered certain passages, *on the basis of his rule*, to speak of Christ as God.<sup>25</sup>)

I note in my monograph that *all* substantives in a TSKS construction are meant to function in some sense as a conceptual unity. The plurals are no exception to this general meaning, nor are impersonal substantives. Thus, for Sharp to

<sup>24</sup> Middleton, *Doctrine of the Greek Article* 65.

<sup>25</sup> Cf., e.g., Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article* 6–7: “As the examples which I have annexed to my first rule consist of texts, wherein the sense is so plain that there can be no controversy concerning the particular persons to whom the several nouns are applicable, it will be thought, I hope, that I have already cited a sufficient number of them to authenticate and justify the rule. There are several other texts wherein the mode of expression is exactly similar, and which therefore do necessarily require a construction agreeable to the same rule; though the present English version has unhappily rendered them in a different sense, and has thereby concealed, from the mere *English* reader, many striking proofs *concerning the Godhead* ... of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Later he links the semantics of his first rule to both his non-Christologically significant examples and to those that are Christologically significant as a demonstration that the semantics of the first rule implies referential identity: “I may now proceed with more confidence to point out several important corrections that ought to be made in our common translation of the New Testament, if the several sentences, which fall under the *first rule*, be duly weighed and considered; —corrections which may be fairly defended, I apprehend, by the authority of the several examples from which those rules were formed” (20). He then discusses the target passages of his investigation, the Christologically pregnant texts. He introduces these passages with: “*Of sentences which fall under the FIRST RULE, and are improperly rendered in the English version*” (ibid.). Among them are 2 Pet 1:1 where he comments, “As the article τῷ is not repeated before the next descriptive noun, σωτηρος, it is manifest that both nouns are to be referred to one and the same person” (ibid.). In light of this, it is undeniable that Sharp saw his first rule as indicating referential identity—invariably so when the required components (personal, singular, and non-proper) were used in the TSKS—and that the Christologically important texts therefore, on the basis of the first rule *alone*, indicated that only one person was in view.

distinguish between singular and plural personal substantives in terms of their adherence to the *semantics* of the rule must mean that he distinguished between identity of referent and mere conceptual unity.

Porter claims that Sharp only saw “identity of person(s)” when discussing Christologically significant texts (p. 829). But this is not what Sharp saw just for those passages; he clearly saw identity of persons as what the rule itself stated. Porter has misunderstood Sharp’s rule by taking Sharp’s “i.e.” to mean “or” in a disjunctive way. Further, he assumes that Sharp’s “related to” meant only “to be connected to” in some loose, undefined manner, rather than as Sharp explicitly defined it, viz., “it denotes a farther description of the first-named person.” At several junctures, Porter camps on what he thinks Sharp must have meant by the word “relate.” As we have already noted, Porter claims that “Sharp does not address the question of plurals, and . . . he states that the second [substantive] ‘relates’ to the first *or* is a ‘farther description’” (p. 829; emphasis added). On page 831, he speaks of Sharp’s rule as being broader than how I have conceived it, for he cites some patristic examples that he claims are “apparently within the bounds of what Sharp defined in his rule as how one substantive is ‘related’ to the other.” In the next paragraph, he again speaks of “Sharp’s idea that the article is used to indicate *relation* among elements” (p. 831; emphasis added). Finally, he declares “that elements under a common article are related to each other, and in some circumstances are meant to be equated with each other, as in certain Christological passages” (p. 832).

Sharp’s clear explanation of what he means by “relates” is that when one substantive relates to the other it “denotes a farther description of the first-named person.” I have explained in some detail in my monograph exactly what Sharp meant by this, and have summarized that evidence here. How, then, is it possible for Porter to have missed this? Perhaps he read Sharp’s “i.e.” as though it were “e.g.,” with a momentary lapse in understanding. But “i.e.” is the Latin abbreviation for *id est*, and “e.g.” is the Latin abbreviation for *exempli gratia*. The former means “that is” and indicates an explanation, while the latter means “for example” and offers an illustration. This would account for Porter’s disjunctive “or” as the explanation for Sharp’s “i.e.,” and it would explain why he thinks that Sharp’s rule was meant to include, at times, mere conceptual unity as its semantic force. Yet as we have noted throughout this section, Sharp’s rule was never meant to involve mere conceptual unity.

2. *Did I illegitimately modify Sharp’s Canon?* Porter’s second critique is that I have illegitimately modified Sharp’s principle. If my monograph had been intended to be a historical treatment in which I only examined and articulated what Sharp meant by his rule, this critique would have validity. But this was not my intent. I note, for example, in the introduction that one of my four objectives in the study was “to clarify Sharp’s rule and test its validity.”<sup>26</sup> The first major section of the monograph concerns itself with historical investigation of Sharp’s rule *per se* (pp. 27–83), but the other two major portions of the book are focused on establishing the semantics of

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<sup>26</sup> Wallace, *Sharp’s Canon* 6–7.

the various permutations of the TSKS (pp. 87–181) and wrestling with their exegetical implications (pp. 185–285). At the beginning of Part 2: Linguistic-Phenomenological Analysis, I state that “the purpose of this section (chapters 4–8) is to propose several specific hypotheses regarding the semantics of the construction and to test those hypotheses in both the NT and extra-NT literature.”

Porter correctly notes that Sharp's rule was not restricted to *individual* singulars but included *generic* singulars as well. “Sharp does not follow [Wallace's] logic,” Porter notes (p. 829).<sup>27</sup> This is quite true, but since my monograph was not intended only as an articulation of Sharp's canon, to make some linguistically-sensitive modifications as to when the TSKS can be said to bear the force of referential identity seems wholly appropriate. I admit that my own language was imprecise on this point, for I spoke of *modifying* Sharp's rule,<sup>28</sup> when technically I was modifying the componential requirements for adherence to the semantics of the rule. I did not see a need to be more technically correct since my meaning was thought to be clear and since the technically correct description would have been a cumbersome expression to use while trudging through the evidence. This sort of shorthand description is what others had used in their discussions with Sharp on his rule.<sup>29</sup>

I discussed six classes of exceptions to Sharp's canon, noting that when the components of the singular, personal, non-proper TSKS were further refined, along the trajectory of what I believe Sharp envisioned, no exceptions to the rule were to be found. Porter takes issue with the understanding I have of each of these exceptions, and part of his rejection is that this is not what Sharp said. I sought to determine whether Sharp had uncovered, *in part*, a genuine idiom of the language, but I did not idolize his rule. Consider, for example, this note:

Sharp refused to acknowledge the value of Winstanley's extra-NT examples, since such examples were not found in “the language of the *inspired writers of the Greek Testament...*” ([Sharp, *Remarks*] 56). In this refusal, Sharp unwittingly

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<sup>27</sup> Porter cites John M. Anderson, *The Grammar of Names* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) to the effect that singular generics are “closer to being partitive, with generic plurals constituting a different semantic category” (p. 829). He does not give any specific references in *The Grammar of Names*, however. Anderson's main discussion of generics is on pages 228–37. Porter does not tell us that for the most part, Anderson is consciously restricting his treatment to *English* generics, though he compares them at points to French and (modern) Greek generics. Anderson's discussion is hardly conducive to Porter's understanding. He notes, for example, that “**full genericness** demands pervasive non-specificity and non-partitivity” (p. 229). Anderson argues especially that indefinite singular generics may be partitive (p. 230), but this is not within the purview of the TSKS. And he explicitly states that in sentences such as “The lion is a dangerous animal/has four legs and a tail” and “The lion is extinct” are “on one interpretation, fully generic—non-partitive and non-specific” (ibid.). At bottom, Porter's appeal to Anderson is overdone, as Anderson's argument is especially related to English grammar, and even here he does not claim that definite generic singulars must have a partitive force.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 123, 127.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Winstanley, *Vindication* 9, in commenting on generic singulars outside the NT, admits that “the nouns, though personal, are used in a general or universal sense. In this respect, it must be confessed, they differ materially from those of which you [i.e., Sharp] would correct the common version; and so far may be thought inapplicable.” Here Winstanley admits that generic singulars do not meet the component requirements of Sharp's rule even though Sharp himself never restricted the rule to individualizing singulars.

acknowledged the strength of Winstanley's argument: "But the author of the Rules never pretended to insinuate that his first Rule is 'A UNIVERSAL ONE' for *all Greek writings*..." (ibid.). This "Holy Ghost Greek" approach was not followed by Sharp's defenders.<sup>30</sup>

Along these lines, Porter suggests that Prov 24:21—where the TSKS construction involves "God" and "king" in the LXX—"stands out as an exception example in the LXX" (p. 830). Porter claims that I dismissed this counter-example because it is translation Greek (p. 830), yet does not note that after my extended discussion of this passage,<sup>31</sup> I argue that "the construction mixes an individual (God) with a generic class (king), and thus on a deep structure level is no exception to Sharp's principle."<sup>32</sup>

Porter continues this line of argument with the other exceptions to Sharp's rule that I discuss. He notes, for example, my point that Herodotus 4.71, which involves five substantives in a TSKS, is not outside the structural requirements of Sharp's rule but clearly refers to five different individuals. But Porter faults me for making any modifications to Sharp's canon (p. 830), which I do on the basis of both sound linguistic principles and extant data.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding exceptions in patristic literature, I pointed out that occasionally certain Fathers, especially those writing prior to Nicea and Chalcedon, would include "Father and Son" or "Father and Spirit" in a TSKS construction. Formally, this would show that Sharp's rule was not valid in patristic Greek, for it would blur the personal distinctions within the Godhead. Such violations of Sharp's canon were rare, however, and always included members of the Godhead by orthodox writers. Porter claims that I "strangely" state that only regarding trinitarian formulations can such exceptions be found (p. 831). I think it is instead strange that the patristic writers seem to consistently follow Sharp's rule (if we may speak anachronistically) *except* when it comes to the Trinity. "Since the fathers broke Sharp's rule exclusively—as far as we have seen—when discussing the Trinity, something other

<sup>30</sup> Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 64, n. 37.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 123–27.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 127; cf. page 250 where I reiterate that Prov 24:21 "was more likely an instance involving a generic noun, and thus belonging to our first category of exceptions."

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 127–29. Regarding multiple (three or more) substantives in the singular, personal, non-proper TSKS construction, I showed that "Middleton noted that even the best authors did not follow their normal practice with reference to the article. Other grammarians also point out the problem of enumeration, noting, in effect, that in lists of three or more terms, there is a greater tendency to omit the article when it would otherwise be appropriate" (p. 127). In light of this phenomenon, I sought a linguistic reason for the anomaly: "When TSKS fits the rule, the second substantive either further identifies or describes or clarifies something about the first. If so, then typically a *third* epithet would be superfluous. Unless there are special contextual reasons for the third being there—in particular, to *stress* the multi-functional character of the person in view, we might in fact normally expect enumerations to indicate more than one individual. Philippians 2:25 affords an excellent illustration of such multi-functional emphasis: Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην μου, ὡμὸν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου. The five-fold accolade of Epaphroditus by the apostle bears an implicitly apologetic tone. The church at Philippi had sent Epaphroditus, hoping that Paul would retain him as his assistant and send Timothy back to them (Phil 2:19–30)" (pp. 127–28).

than grammatical principle must surely have been driving the syntax."<sup>34</sup> Although Porter brushes aside my answer to this conundrum, the evidence shows that "the early fathers were in the midst of hammering out a Christology that had to await another century or two before it took final form."<sup>35</sup> To argue that my viewpoint on patristic usage is strange, Porter would have to explain why the Fathers seemed to restrict their "violations" of Sharp's rule to discussions of the Trinity yet demonstrated hundreds of times that they understood the personal, singular, non-proper TSKS to indicate referential identity. My explanation was related to theological development in the patristic period, in which I saw the fathers as emerging in their understanding and articulation of the Trinity.

In short, my explicit purpose in the monograph was to seek out the semantics of the various permutations of the TSKS construction rather than to canonize Sharp's principle. Even then, I discovered that Sharp's rule, when further nuanced to capture the intent that he saw in the personal, singular, non-proper TSKS, had an overwhelming validity across the centuries of Attic and Hellenistic Greek. I articulated this as the "Sharper" Rule:

In native Greek constructions (i.e., not translation Greek), when a single article modifies *two* substantives connected by καί (thus, article-substantive-καί-substantive), when both substantives are (1) singular (both grammatically and semantically), (2) personal, (3) and common nouns (not proper names or ordinals), they have the same referent.<sup>36</sup>

This modification of Sharp's rule is believed to be true to the nature of the language, and able to address all classes of exceptions that I raised.

3. *Did I have a theological agenda that disfigured Sharp's Rule?* According to Porter, "What Wallace apparently really wants to do in this volume is *theology*—that is, defend the high Christology of the NT through involving Granville Sharp's rule..." (p. 831). Thus, my monograph is tinged with a theological agenda which has, in turn, skewed my understanding of Sharp's canon. Not only this, but I have done so "at a price that disfigures Sharp's rule and the general nature of the discussion" (p. 831).

This line of reasoning is puzzling. First, if this is true, then Sharp's monograph must be fully discounted since it was tainted by his overtly Christological motives. Yet Porter never calls Sharp onto the carpet, but in fact praises him for reaching new heights as a "grammarian."<sup>37</sup>

Second, Porter ignores my many disclaimers to the effect that I wanted to *test* to see whether Sharp's principle was valid and, in fact, assumed that it would not be so outside of the NT.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 271, n. 110.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 271–72. See pages 267–72 for discussion of the patristic exceptions.

<sup>36</sup> Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 281.

<sup>37</sup> Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 9.

<sup>38</sup> For some examples of this, note the following: "This work consequently is intended, in part, to clarify Sharp's rule and test its validity, especially as it relates to christologically significant passages" (Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 6–7); "What is of utmost concern (i.e., with reference to Sharp's rule per se) is

Third, both the title of my book—*Granville Sharp’s Canon and Its Kin*—and the contents reveal that it addresses much more than Sharp’s rule. Nowhere does Porter discuss these sections. Of the 13 chapters in the book, chapters 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11—nearly half the book—either do not deal primarily or at all with Sharp’s canon. The constructions addressed are those involving impersonal substantives, proper names, and plural substantives. Further, the introduction lays out my method, and the conclusion speaks of more than Sharp’s principle. It is in fact these other TSKS constructions, in which the requirements that Sharp laid down for his rule were not followed, that give us a control group on the validity of Sharp’s rule. I observed, for example, that impersonal substantives, proper names, and plural substantives involve semantics that are broader than or other than what Sharp’s canon calls for. The constructions involving at least one proper name never involved referential identity; impersonal constructions almost never involved referential identity; and plural personal constructions almost never did except when participles or adjectives were involved.<sup>39</sup> Compared to personal, singular, and non-proper substantives in the TSKS, which almost always implied referential identity (with only six kinds of exceptions, which on closer examination are understandable), the semantics of this particular TSKS are seen to be significantly different from the other kinds of TSKS constructions. After I perused three to four million words of ancient Greek texts, the data I supplied regarding *all* the TSKS constructions—including impersonal, plural, and proper names—was certainly large enough to make some informed predictions as to how ancients would antecedently read such texts. To ignore the rest of these TSKS constructions is to prejudicially cut the legs out of the grammatical method of the monograph—and this, “at a price that disfigures Sharp’s rule and the general nature of the discussion” (p. 831).

Fourth, it is quite true that I was motivated by Christological concerns in writing the monograph. But Porter assumes that because I arrived at the view that Sharp’s rule affirms the deity of Christ in Titus 2:13 and 2 Pet 1:1 I must have wanted to “do theology” in this book. It is certainly true that I wanted to see what the theological implications would be from my investigations, but that is a far cry from frontloading my supposed theological conclusions on the method. I happen to believe that all NT exegetical work should ultimately wrestle with theological implications, since the corpus of our investigation makes astounding theological claims. But it must not presuppose those conclusions at the beginning. And even though I believe in the deity of Christ, whether such belief could be found in Titus 2:13 or 2 Pet 1:1 was a different matter. My own convictions about Christ’s deity would not be affected whether or not these passages were seen to affirm it.

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whether it can be legitimately applied to the christologically pregnant texts” (ibid. 133); “My antecedent presumption was that there would be several exceptions to Sharp’s rule in [the papyrus]” (ibid. 121); “In part, this book was an attempt to investigate Winstanley’s evidence” (ibid. 280); “At the outset of this investigation, I fully expected to find several exceptions to the rule, including those that did not readily yield themselves to linguistic explanation” (ibid. 281); “Even though Sharp produced eight christologically significant passages that he thought fit the contours of his rule, only two of these are valid” (ibid. 284).

<sup>39</sup> See the chapters mentioned above for documentation of this.

4. *What is overlooked in Porter's review.* As to what is missing in Porter's review, as mentioned above, it is nearly half of the monograph. Not only do these other permutations of the TSKS tell a different story than the personal, singular, and non-proper TSKS constructions do, their semantic possibilities affect several interpretive *crucis*. I noted that the relations among the plural and impersonal constructions could theoretically involve identity, distinction, or overlap. Proper names could only involve distinction or identity (since one person cannot be a *part* of another person). After producing hundreds of examples in a broad spectrum of ancient Greek, I began to notice some trends among these TSKS, and mapped out the likely meaning of these *crucis* in light of their probable grammatical force. The relations of "apostles" to "prophets" in Eph 2:20, "pastors" to "teachers" in Eph 4:11, the "coming" of the Son of Man and the "end of the age" in Matt 24:3, the "predetermined plan" and "foreknowledge" of God in Acts 2:23, and "the coming of our Lord" and "our gathering" in 2 Thess 2:1 are all informed by the semantics of the TSKS construction. Yet nowhere does Porter note my discussion of such theologically rich texts. Further, when it comes to my defense of the rule for the Christologically pregnant texts, Porter makes almost no comment. Yet the most certain conclusion I arrived at was that even if all six of the "exceptions" to Sharp's rule were fully valid, these exceptions would have no impact whatever on Titus 2:13 or 2 Pet 1:1.<sup>40</sup> In other words, those passages unambiguously affirm that Jesus is called θεός.

At bottom, I wish to express my appreciation to Stanley Porter for the opportunity his review has afforded me to clarify the arguments of my monograph. Porter is well known as a careful linguist, and I am grateful for this exchange. At the same time, I have to express my disappointment in his review of *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin*. He has misunderstood the semantics and components of Sharp's principle, yet he canonized the rule as if to say that I could not modify it in light of linguistic theory or empirical data; he incorrectly assumed that because I recognized theological import in the TSKS construction I must have frontloaded my theological convictions onto the text; and he ignored nearly half of the monograph which addressed the other TSKS constructions that were outside the purview of Sharp's canon—constructions that both functioned as a control group on the validity of Sharp's rule and affected other theological *crucis* in the NT.

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<sup>40</sup> In chapter 12, I discussed, *inter alia*, arguments against the application of Sharp's rule to the Christologically significant texts, and laid out extensive evidence for why these objections were inadequate (Wallace, *Sharp's Canon* 249–72).