

ARAMEES

GZELLA, H. — Tempus, Aspekt und Modalität im Reichs-aramäischen. (Veröffentlichungen der orientalischen Kommission, Band 48). Verlag Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 2004. (24,5 cm, XII, 408). ISBN 3-447-05094-2. ISSN 0568-4447.

This weighty study is the author's Habilitationsschrift written under the supervision of Klaus Beyer and accepted in 2004 by the University of Heidelberg.

Whereas the verbal system, morphosyntax and syntax of Hebrew, notably Biblical Hebrew, have been very intensively studied more than a century, the Aramaistic front has been quiet by comparison. Though the corresponding issues have been studied and dealt with in grammars of specific idioms or corpora such as Old Aramaic, BA, Egyptian Aramaic or some Middle Aramaic dialects like Syriac and Mandaic, there has appeared so far no study dedicated to the tense, aspect, and modality — TAM for short — of Aramaic. One

principal reason for this may be that Classical Aramaic, as far as one can judge from the extant documents, has been regarded primarily as a tense-orientated language and the feature of aspect (and modality) has been relegated to the periphery. The radical shift represented by Mishnaic Hebrew with its incipient traits already visible in Late Biblical Hebrew has sometimes been attributed to Aramaic influence.

A critical survey and assessment of recent studies on the TAM in various Semitic languages and Egyptian, likewise informed by recent developments in general linguistics, leads G away from the currently widespread purely aspectual orientation. He proposes instead to study the issue under the assumption that tense, aspect and modality coexist in the verbal system and may interact with one another (pp. 20, 35).

A matter which is of cardinal importance for the method of analysis adopted by G is that he does not start from forms, but from functions. In other words, his analysis is not morphosyntactic; he does not ask what the suffix conjugation, *qatal*, for instance, signifies or marks. Instead, he starts from a set of notional categories, which are assumed to be language-universal and are marked by morphological categories of the verb inflection. In other words, he sets out to find out with which Aramaic verb forms the notion of the preterite or a given feature of the deontic modality or the perfective aspect etc. is indicated (p. 58). Nor does G believe that a given form necessarily has one basic meaning or fulfills one basic function. For the immediate purpose of his study the TAM constitute such essential functions. Hence a description of the five principal forms of the Aramaic verb, namely the perfect, imperfect, imperative, participle, and infinitive is presented in a chapter entitled “Synopse der Funktionen,” which occupy barely ten pages.

Whilst the approach adopted by G is undoubtedly a valid one, there could occur problems. One such is that, just as it is wrong to assume that one inflectional form corresponds to one basic function only, one notional category or one function can be expressed with more than one inflectional category, as can be illustrated by G's discussion of the category of extratemporalis, namely utterances which can be applicable irrespective of time, whether past, present or future (pp. 203-05). G states that this notion can be marked with either Imperfect or Participle. Incidentally, one should add here nominal clauses.

Another is that one runs the risk of imposing distinctions on a language to the grammatical structure of which such are foreign, as admitted by G himself, for instance, “Offensichtlich beansprucht die konzeptuelle Differenz zwischen faktischer und gewünschter Zukunft in Texten von solcher Art also gar keine Relevanz” (pp. 221f.). A good example in this regard is the widespread notion that Semitic languages indicate hypotactic relationships through paratactic syntagmas. See pp. 280, 285, and our critique at T. Muraoka, “The alleged final function of the Biblical Hebrew syntagm <w + a volitive verb form>,” in E. van Wolde (ed.), *Classical Hebrew Narrative Syntax* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 229-41 and P. Joüon — T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* [henceforward JM for short] (Rome, 2006), §116b, 2nd f.n. The putative distinction often comes down to the question of elegance of style when such clauses are rendered into some other language, as shown by G himself, who points out the variety of modes of translation in the ancient versions where the putative subordinating function of the conjunction Waw is involved (pp. 289f.).

The reviewer is inclined to think that the two approaches, the one starting from form and the other from function, are not mutually exclusive, but ought to be complementary. The exclusion of the former by G is probably the reason why one misses a proper analysis of the inflectional category **yaqtulan* as in יִבְהִלֵּנִי Dan 4.2 as distinct from יִבְהִלֵּךְ ib. 4.16.

With the author's expertise in the classical languages G presents at various points a refined assessment of how the issues he is analysing were handled by his ancient predecessors, the anonymous translator of Daniel into Greek, the so-called Old Greek of Daniel, and Jerome. One is curious to know how ancient translators into cognates, namely Syriac and Arabic, have faced the issues. The Peshitta translation is mentioned once (p. 150) in connection with a discussion on a past action taking place in the background at the same time as another past action (pp. 136-51). A look at the examples from Dan 4 discussed by G shows that in most cases the Peshitta uses suffix conjugation, but in 4.8f. the participle is used. The same applies to 7.9f., where the Septuagint leaves out nominal clauses in the middle! Saadia, as printed in the edition prepared by Sh. Morag in *The Book of Daniel: A Babylonian-Yemenite Manuscript* (Jerusalem, 1973), the following picture emerges: 4.2 /fa'afza'ani.. yud'iruni/ (note /fa/); 4.8f. /wabalaḡ... yastazillu... ya'wyī... yum'anu/; 4.30 /ya'kulu.. yunṣabaḡu/; 4.31 /raja'a/; 7.16 /'iltamastu.. qāla.. wa'arrafani/; 6.20 /qāma wašāra/.

All in all, specialists in Aramaic and Semitic linguistics are grateful to the author of this substantial and innovative contribution. Bible scholars not familiar with linguistic approaches would also find much of interest here. To name only one example, they would find G's analysis of the narrative participle in four Daniel passages (pp. 126f.) extremely and refreshingly illuminating.

Here follow a series of detailed observations:

p. 3. G doubts the suitability of (Biblical) Hebrew as a starting point for comparative analysis of the TAM in Aramaic. One eminent Semitist is reported to have said that the verb syntax of Biblical Hebrew is an ideal training ground for any competent, aspiring Semitist. G is concerned about what he perceives as “aramäisch beeinflusste Vokalisation der Masoreten.” Even if this were true to a certain extent, what real implications would it have for our analysis of the verbal syntax? Possible, occasional mixups between *w-yiqtol* and *way-yiqtol* should not put us off that much. In comparison to RA (= Reichsaramäisch) with no vocalisation tradition we should be rather grateful for the data transmitted to us by the Masoretes! The Tiberian Massoretic data on Biblical Hebrew can be compared with those on BA (= Biblical Aramaic), and we could determine how real the feared Aramaic influence is.

p. 29. On the putative West-Semitic *iparras*, one misses a study by I. Kottsieper, “*yaqattal* — Phantom oder Problem? Erwägungen zu einem hebraistischen Problem und zur Geschichte der semitischen Sprachen,” *KUSATU* 1 (2000) 27-100.

p. 42. No 2m.pl. pronoun ending with *m* is attested in Ezra. The only form attested in BA is with *-n* in Daniel.

p. 43. There is nothing significant about the use of the preposition *l* marking a destination as shared between BA and RA. This is pan-Aramaic. G probably means the use of עַל marking a personal destination as against a place. The causative forms without *h* as prefix are not unique to BA, either, for the feature is shared by RA, with the only significant difference

that, in the latter, *h*-less forms occur only when the prefix is not word-initial, thus in the imperfect, infinitive and participle.

p. 44. G maintains that there are no linguistic data which enable us to attempt a relative dating of the Aramaic of Ezra and that of Daniel. Given the relatively limited size of the two corpora, and even granted that the current MT was possibly exposed to all sorts of subsequent modernisation, the differences which have resisted putative attempts at modernisation call for an explanation. One such example, *הָמוֹן* as against *הָמוֹן*, is not to be thrown away, for on the basis of data known from other contemporaneous and later Aramaic idioms the latter is certain to be a later development.

p. 50. In *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* (Leiden, 2003: MP hereafter) we have not uncritically (“kommentarlos”) followed the text presented in B. Porten — A. Yardeni, *A Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (Jerusalem, 1986-99). At a couple of places MP departs from this edition with a commentary (e.g. MP, p. 332, n. 1262). G voices his reservation about the label “Egyptian Aramaic.” The label is geographical as clearly indicated in the title of Porten and Yardeni’s *Textbook*. Ours is a description of the Aramaic language as was current in Egypt, whether written there, copied there, or read there. The label is no more chronological of nature than *Reichsaramäisch* is. See further in MP, pp. 365f.

p. 67. Due to his extremely cautious attitude G emphasises that the shape *wayyiqtol* is attested for the first time in the Tiberian Massoretic tradition. One would like to know whence such a form came about in the first place. When G speaks of “die Begriffe in der aramaisierenden, masoretischen Gestalt,” one is prompted to ask where in Aramaic we find *wayyiqtol*. How can one be certain as G is that the original Hebrew form was *wa-yáqtol* (p. 323, f.n. 67)? Cf. our position on this question in JM, § 47 a, n. 2.

p. 118. Theodotion’s *κατεῦθεν* at Dan 6.29 can be either an imperfect or aorist. If the latter, the translator has missed the point G is crediting him with.

It is not only the Perfect, but also the Participle (Dan 4.34; Ezr 5.16) and Imperfect (Dan 5.12) which, in conjunction with *כָּעֵן*, round off a series of events.

p. 119. Whilst G agrees to accept the few instances of *yqtl* in the now famous Tel Dan Aramaic inscription as apocopated, preterital Imperfects, he seems to us again a shade overcautious when he hesitates to see them as genuine Aramaic forms, but as influenced by Hebrew. A similar phenomenon had been known from an equally old Aramaic inscription (from Zakkur). We are not talking about a phenomenon unique to Biblical Hebrew, but Semitic universal, so it is no “Fremdkörper” (p. 324) in Old Aramaic!

p. 124. The use of the Imperfect attached to the conjunction Waw and said to mark a purpose is regarded by G “für das gesamte Reichsaramäisch als gesichert,” but at the referred place (pp. 287ff.) we find only two examples from Daniel and one from Driver’s edition of the Arsames archive.

p. 126f. G’s attempt to acocut for the apparently aberrant forms *יְבִהֲלִינָה* and *שְׁנוּהִי* sounds ad hoc.

p. 127. It is not Classical Ethiopic alone that can take pronominal suffixes attached to a verb which have the function of indirect object (dative). The phenomenon is quite widespread in Biblical Hebrew and other cognates: see JM, §15 b, ba.

p. 131, f.n. 45. In MP, §55 d we are not discussing the narrative Participle nor the combination of *אָמַר* and *עָנָה*.

p. 132, f.n. 46. The Hebrew examples are not of the same verbs (*אָמַר*, *עָנָה*). Besides, Dan 8.12, 11.32, 1Kgs 8.32 have the same verb *עָנָה* in different positions, so that they are not of the same syntagm.

p. 133. Qumran Aramaic, taken as a whole, does not show the neat orthographic distinction as in the Daniel fragments, namely *ה*- for the Perfect and *א*- for the Participle: e.g. ptc. *מתמחא* || *דמה*; pf. *בכא* || *אתה*; see U. Schattner-Rieser, *L’araméen des manuscrits de la mer Morte, I. Grammaire* (Prahins, 2004), p. 81.

p. 133. G’s otherwise interesting attempt to account for diverse BA syntagmata diachronically leaves a hybrid syntagm *עָנָה וְאָמַרְתִּי* without a satisfactory explanation.

p. 135, n. 56. In an attempt to reduce the number of participial *אָמַר*, G wants to see in *אָכַל אָנָה* an Imperfect form, but he ignores the syntactic fact valid for Egyptian Aramaic that the personal pronoun mostly precedes with merely a couple of exceptions which can be reasonably explained: MP, §39 e.

pp. 137-39. In all the examples the PKLs can be replaced with Participles. Especially instructive is Dan 4.8f. where the PKLs are found next to nominal clauses. In Dan 7.9-10 we find a discourse structure G earlier indicated: namely Perfect — Participle — Perfect. Moreover, in Egyptian Aramaic the energetic form and the PKK are often mixed up in that we find energetic forms where we expect PKK.

p. 139. PKL can be identified not only in the pl. 2/3, but also in the sg., again because of the energetic Nun, e.g. Dan 7.10 *יְהוֹדְעֵנִי* and a few others in the quoted passages.

p. 143. The argument that the use of the PKL is conditioned by the attached pronominal suffix, which does not occur in Aramaic with Participles, is rather ad hoc; one must first establish such a rule independently of the question under discussion here.

p. 148. On *יִבְכֶּה יִבְכֶּה* we would rather follow the text as in the editio princeps by J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ‘Alla* (Leiden, 1976) rather than the speculative reconstruction in *KAI*.

p. 162. The Syr syntagm /qta(w)ā/ is not for the pluperfect: cf. our *Classical Syriac for Hebraists* (Wiesbaden, 1987), §70 with f.n. 90.

p. 173, f.n. 168. The reason we do not distinguish between the two systematically in MP, §55 b-f is simply that the distinction is of no consequence for questions discussed in these passages. Elsewhere (e.g., §54 c) we offer a discussion of the passive Participle from those perspectives which G is interested in.

p. 175. In Dan 6.10 LXX: *θυρίδας ἤνοιξεν* for *פָּתַח דְּלָתִים* the active translation is purely grammatically and architecturally (realien geschichtlich) possible. But the use of the active voice does not necessarily mean that Daniel himself opened the windows; see JM §54 d.

p. 194. “Einfache Gegenwart” is not the same as actual present; none of the BA examples illustrates it. Nor is there a sure example of such in Egyptian Aramaic.

p. 197. On the function of the added existential particle *אִתִּי*, see T. Muraoka, *Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden/Jerusalem, 1985), 80f.

p. 207. *שָׁנְאָה* in B2.6:23 is hardly performative. See MP, §51c. There seems to be some fundamental confusion here. The woman is not acting out her statement by making it. The same criticism applies to G’s analysis of *לֵךְ לְמַלְכָּא* (p. 211).

p. 213. An alternative, equally plausible analysis of a formula such as D7.21:3 is mentioned in MP, §51 *b*.

p. 214. In addition to Akkadian and Ethiopic, Biblical Hebrew has also received a fair bit of attention as regards the performative suffix conjugation: JM, §112 *f*.

p. 222. It is doubtful how much sense there is in speaking of the subjunctive in Aramaic, when G himself admits that no such trace is to be found in the oldest remains of the language. If one starts from concepts, a consequence that actually happened in the past has nothing subjective or modal about it, as is proven by the use of an indicative in Greek, namely an actual result (“wirkliche Folge”), and not an intended result (“beabsichtigte Folge”). E.g., Gal. 2.13 καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει “and the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that Barnabas, too, was drawn into their hypocrisy.” Jerome’s use of a subjunctive, *ut... duceretur*.. is merely dictated by the Latin syntax, and has nothing to do with the question whether or not he was absolutely certain of the historicity of the incident.

Likewise at Ezr 5.5 discussed by G (p. 223) the use of the Imperfect in יהי עמם לדריש יהוה is, *pace* G, not a stylistically conditioned exception for the Perfect, which G expects to find here. For the sense here is that the returned exiles remained confident — see the preceding stative הוה “God’s oversight remained with them” — of the divine providence, and they confidently waited for the arrival of the petition to Darius. Thus the version of the apocryphal 1Esd 6.6 μέχρη τοῦ ὑποσημανθῆναι Δαρείῳ is to be preferred to that in 2Esd 5.5 ἕως γνώμη τῷ Δαρείῳ ἀπηνέχθη.

p. 254. Dativus ethicus. G’s definition of the formal structure of this syntagm is not sufficiently accurate: the identity of referent between the suffix and the subject of the verb is the most essential feature here. Not even one RA example is discussed, but see MP, §74*p* with two examples mentioned.

pp. 255*f*. The Perfect of stative verbs can indicate the perfective aspect: in the ingressive or inchoative Hifil in BH (/hilbin/) or Hitpaël in Modern Hebrew /hizdaqen/, cf. L. Glinert, *The grammar of Modern Hebrew* (Cambridge, 1989), §40.9.

pp. 260*f*. Whilst the aspectual distinction may have a tenuous correlation with the definiteness or indefiniteness of the subject or object, it is doubtful that the periphrastic durative syntagm, whether of the Hebrew/Aramaic type or Classical Arabic type, has got to do with the emergence of the definite article in these languages.

p. 266. f.n. 63. The correction of the usual analysis of the example in Sefire III 6 הוה חלפה is already to be found in MP, p. 207, n. 899. *Pace* G the same criticism, however, cannot be levelled with such confidence against the analysis of D20.5:4 הוה פלחה נמעת, for it all depends on one’s interpretation of the last word. If it means “the righteous one” (MP, p. 346), *פלחה* cannot be a substantivised participle, but a genuinely verbal form.

p. 267. The view that the periphrastic Imperative indicates politeness depends on the false assumption that the Imperative is by definition a rude form. See JM, §114 *m* with the second f.n. there. Our view that it marks a sense of urgency or insistence is said by G to be a mere *in fugam vacui* solution, since “Nachdruck läßt sich nun einmal nicht messen.” Emphasis needs to be measurable for our analysis to stand. G quotes *Shicke doch bitte!* as an example of polite language in German, but I dare say that the politeness is marked by

bitte, not by *doch*, which latter does rather indicate emphasis: *Do send, please!* See G himself at p. 271.

ib. In asserting that the Participle in Biblical Hebrew as a tense form is not on a par with the Perfect and Imperfect G says: “mit Ausnahme einer Handvoll Beispiele im Biblisch-Hebräischen,” a still common indefensible assumption; see T. Muraoka, “The participle in Qumran Hebrew with special reference to its periphrastic use,” in T. Muraoka and J.F. Elwolde (eds), *Sirach, Scrolls, & Sages. Proceedings of a Second International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben Sira, & the Mishnah, held at Leiden University, 15-17 December 1997* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 188-204, esp. 194-200. On this syntax in Mishnaic Hebrew one would profitably consult M. Azar, *Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew* [Heb.] (Jerusalem, 1995), p. 4*f*., and esp. M.Z. Kaddari, *Post-biblical Hebrew Syntax and Semantics, Studies in Diachronic Hebrew* [Heb.], vol. I (Ramat-Gan, 1991), pp. 300-04, 307-18. About the situation in Qumran Hebrew, of which G makes no mention, see our study mentioned above.

p. 271. Interjectionalising of Imperatives is well-known in Hebrew, too: see JM, §105 *e* with the recent literature, among which J.F. Diehl, “„Steh auf, setz dich und iß!“ Imperative zwischen Begriffswort und Interjektion,” *Kurze Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt* 1 (2000) 101-32.

p. 273. G’s statement that the orthography of RA reflects no longer the morphological differentiation between the long and short Imperfect is puzzling. The place in MP he refers to says precisely the opposite, as it should, though on p. 304 he expresses himself otherwise.

p. 275. On the gnomic Perfect, see MP, §51 *d* and M. Rogland, *Alleged non-past Uses of Qatal in Classical Hebrew* (Assen, 2003), pp. 15-48, too.

pp. 290*f*. The hypothesised subjunctive is said to have survived in the use of the PKL in subordinate clauses. But in Classical Arabic the PKK is also common in conditional utterances, both in protases and apodoses.

p. 292. The Infinitive prefixed with the preposition Lamed and the ו/י followed by a PKL may be functionally identical, but syntactically they differ in one significant respect, namely when the subject of the main verb and that of the subordinate differ we can use only the second syntagm: cf. MP, §56 *d*.

p. 295, f.n. 77. We have suggested (MP, §56 *g*) a possible Akkadianism in the temporal infinitive לממטה ‘on arrival’ in the Bisitun inscription.

p. 312. One is surprised to read that Aramaic as a distinct language can be postulated already in the 4th millennium.

p. 315. On the long imperative in Biblical Hebrew with a paragogic /-ā/, see JM, § 48 *d*.

p. 315, f.n. 23. On milra’ forms such as עֲלָא, see MP, §22 *c*.

p. 323, f.n. 67. G’s critique misses the point. The reviewer was arguing against the careless application to Old Aramaic data of the traditional, technical label *wayyiqtol* typical of Biblical Hebrew.

329. The assertion that the Greek translators of Dan, in fact only one of them (not Theod.), knew the grammatically passive *manā kr.tam* construction rests on a piece of very slender evidence, one example Dan 6.11 (p. 174), where the use of the active ἤνοιξεν is too flimsy on which to build such a far-reaching theory.

Transliteration

The author has transliterated RA texts he analyses, which sometimes helps us better comprehend his analysis. There are, however, some problematic cases. To mention only a few: /hōmu/ “they” for BA הִמוּ (p. 117); /talayhōn/ “their weapons,” even when spelled תַּלְיָהֶם (ib.); /‘emm/ “with” (ib.); /mawmiyā/ מוּמַיָּה “the oath” (p. 131).

Some transliterations are either debatable or erroneous: /‘alaw/ “they entered” (p. 131); /nekasīn/ נִכְסִיָּא (p. 153); /kenawāteh/ “his colleagues” (p. 156); /baḥayyayy/ “in my life” (p. 208); /šarrirūt... ‘awšert/ “I send... strength” spelled שַׁרְרִית .. אֹשֶׁרֶת (p. 209); /separā/ “the document” (p. 284); /attōn/ “you (m. pl.)” spelled אַתְּנָם (p. 287).

It is to the credit of the author and the publisher that there are only very few typos and the like: p. 208, l. 1 בַּחֲיִי > בַּחֲיִי; p. 259, l. 7 ohne keine > keine; p. 272, l. 12, mit den den > mit den; p. 277 מִנִּיחָן > מִנִּיחָן; p. 326, l. 11 lead > led; p. 329, last line, falsificate > falsify; p. 330, l. 14 by force > perforce *or* necessarily; p. 330, l. 17 unities > entities *or* features.

Bibliography

One misses a small number of items:

- J.A. Fitzmyer, “The syntax of Imperial Aramaic based on the documents found in Egypt,” Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University (1956); H.L. Ginsberg, “Aramaic dialect problems, II,” *A/SL* 52 (1936) 95-103; I. Kottsieper (see above ad p. 29); E.Y. Kutscher, *A History of Aramaic*, Part I [Heb.] (Jerusalem, 1972); A. Moriya, “Aramaic epistolography: The Hermopolis letters and related material in the Persian period,” Ph.D. diss., Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati (1994).

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