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***Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon I: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 3rd-5th June 2004***

Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes LVI,3

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***Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II: Oslo-Göteborg Cooperation 4th-5th November 2005***

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Frederick E. Greenspahn  
Florida Atlantic University  
Boca Raton, Florida

The papers in these two volumes were delivered at meetings that took place in Oslo (2004) and in Istanbul (2005) as part of a cooperative venture on Semitic languages sponsored by the universities of Oslo and Göteborg. They cover a wide range of topics pertaining to Semitic linguistics. Many of them draw on massive amounts of information. (One article is based on the approximately sixty thousand verbal forms in the Hebrew Bible!) As a result, the conclusions can be overwhelmed by the mass of detail as well as technical terminology and awkward sentence structure. However, the material is often organized in ways that make it possible to see significant patterns. The volume in which each article can be found is indicated in the listings below.

Two papers focus on the Semitic verbal system. Andrzej Zaborski (“Tense, Aspect and Mood Categories of Proto-Semitic,” vol. 1) reviews current research on the history and development of the Semitic and Hamitic verbal systems. The author enumerates the various prefixed and suffixed conjugations, noting both their function and their morphology in several languages and dialects. The extensive number of verbal forms leads him to the conclusion that both tense and aspect were expressed in Proto-Semitic. There are also sections devoted to periphrastic constructions, imperatives, and the energetic imperative.

Rolf Furuli (“The Verbal System of Classical Hebrew,” vol. 1) examines the Hebrew Bible’s sixty thousand verbal forms in order to determine whether meaning is expressed semantically (within a word’s form) or pragmatically (i.e., from context). In order to explore this, the author compares the forms that are used in parallel passages in the Bible or places where different verbs function similarly within the same passage. That evidence leads him to conclude that tense was not grammaticalized in biblical Hebrew. Moreover, biblical Hebrew had only two conjugations, one marked by prefixes and the other by suffixes; in other words, forms beginning with the conjunction (*wa-* or *wě-*) did not originate from different conjugations than those without them. These conjugations served to express the perfect and imperfect aspects, but not in the same way as their English counterparts.

Although the term *hendiadys* originated in classical rhetoric, it has come to be used in biblical Hebrew. However, Rosmari Lillas-Schuil (“A Survey of Syntagms in the Hebrew Bible Classified as Hendiadys,” vol. 2) argues that the term is often applied to several distinct phenomena. These include verb pairs in which one functions as an auxiliary and noun pairs in which the two words so designated may be either synonyms or appositives. The author calls for biblical scholars to define the term *hendiadys* more clearly in order to eliminate the ambiguity in its use and to consider whether they are dealing with a rhetorical or a grammatical phenomenon.

Hallvard Hagelia (“Philological Issues in the Tel Dan Inscription,” vol. 1) surveys current scholarship on the Tel Dan inscription. The article describes the various scholarly views as to how the inscription’s three fragments should be aligned and the evidence it provides regarding both tense and the *waw*-consecutive. There is also a list of all the instances of each grammatical form that occurs in the inscription.

In addition to these papers, there are several other essays that may be of interest to biblical scholars. For example, Geoffrey Khan discusses compound verbal forms in the various dialects of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (“Remarks on Compound Verbal Forms in North Eastern Neo-Aramaic,” vol. 2). These dialects are typically divided

geographically and according to the religion of the community in which they are used. In all of them, active and passive participles have come to replace *qatal* and *yiqtol* forms. Moreover, these participles are verbalized in order to reflect structure and function. In addition, the copula, which functions as an auxiliary, is fully inflected.

Lutz Edzard examines the formation of compound constructions in several different Semitic languages (“Some Aspects of Compound Formations in Modern Semitic,” vol. 2). Examples include appositives, acronyms, and blends. The author breaks these down typologically and examines their grammatical behavior.

Fifteen of the remaining articles are devoted to Arabic. Those most likely to be of interest to readers of this review are Werner Arnold’s essay on “Arabic Village and City Dialects in the Tel Aviv Area” (vol. 2) and Michael Carter’s discussion of the relative status of the Qur’ān and Bedouin dialects for establishing Arabic norms (“The Qur’ān and the Authority of Arab-Islamic Linguistics,” vol. 2). The other papers in volume 1 that deal with Arabic are “The Number-Gender-Mood Markers of the Prefix Conjugation in Arabic Dialects, A Preliminary Consideration” (Jan Retsö); “From Burden to Asset: Morphological Change in the Arabic Tradition” (Ramzi Baalbaki); “Que signifie ‘dérivée’ en arabe classique?” (Pierre Larcher); “Patterns of Lexis in Arabic Text Types” (Rasoul al-Khafaji); “Pre-Topical Elements in Formal Spoken Arabic” (Heléne Kammensjö); “The Multicultural Background of the *Kitāb al-’Ādāb al-kabīr* by Ibn al-Muqaffa’” (Judith Josephson), “‘Even If You Died a Small (Child), \*the Grief Is Not Small’: Arabic Epitaphs of Children and Other Prematurely Deceased” (Werner Diem). Those in volume 2 are “Thoughts about the Diversity of Arabic” (Jan Retsö); “Two Texts from Jabal Rāziḥ, North-west Yemen” (Janet Watson, Bonnie Glover Stalls, Khalid al-Rāziḥi, and Shelagh Weir); “Sentential Negation in Arabic” (Sven-Olof Dahlgren); “‘Arīb, Women’s Speech and the Language of Sexual Relations in Early Arabic Literature” (Pernilla Myrne); “The Hellenistic Heritage of the *zanādiqa*” (Judith Josephson); “The Use of Colloquial in Modern Egyptian Literature—A Survey” (Gunvor Mejdell); and “Translation of Arabic Literature: A Mission Impossible” (Tetz Rooke).

The remaining three essays deal with issues that pertain to Amharic. They are “Cleft Sentences in Amharic, with Special Reference to Reference” (Kjell Magne Yri, vol. 1); “Syntaktische und lexikalische Merkmale des Amharischen also Sprache in modernen diplomatischen Dokumenten: Die amharische Version der OAU-Charta” (Lutz Edzard, vol. 1); and “Decategorialization of Nouns as Postpositions in Sidaamú’afó and Amharic” (Ejell Magne Yri, vol. 2).