

JOURNAL OF NORTHWEST SEMITIC LANGUAGES

VOLUME 17

1991

VOLUME EDITOR:

WALTER T CLAASSEN

*Professor at the University of Stellenbosch
South Africa*

Editorial Board:

Prof T J D Bothma, Prof W T W Cloete, Prof J Cook,
Dr I Cornelius, Dr P A Kruger, Prof P J Nel
Prof J P J Olivier, Prof H F van Rooy

Published by the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
University of Stellenbosch

CONTENTS

<i>Abbreviations</i>	i
<i>From the Editorial Board</i>	vii
Giese, R L, Strophic Hebrew verse as free verse	1-15
Kruger, P A, The evildoer in Hosea 6:8-9	17-22
Malul, M, Law in the narrative: A study of the expressions וַיִּטֹּב בְּעֵינֵיהֶם and הַפִּירוֹ	23-36
Mittmann, S, <i>ûgabûl</i> - “Gebiet” oder “grenze”	37-44
Naude, J A, On the syntax of <i>dy</i> -phrases in the Aramaic of 11QtgJob	45-67
Prockter, L J, Alms and the man: the merits of charity	69-80
Rendsburg, G A, The strata of Biblical Hebrew	81-99
Rosenstock, B, The pronominally suffixed object marker as demonstrative in Mishnaic Hebrew and Late Aramaic	101-115
Stipp, H-J, Offene Fragen zu Übersetzungskritik des antiken griechischen Jeremiabuches	117-128
Van der Merwe, C H J, The function of word order in Old Hebrew – with special reference to cases where a syntagmeme precedes a verb in Joshua	129-144
Van Rooy, H F, A few remarks on the Aramaic treaties from Sefire	145-149
Watson, S J, Death and cosmology in ancient Egypt	151-171
Watson, W G E, The negative adverbs <i>L</i> and <i>LM</i> + <i>L</i> in Ugaritic	173-188
Review Article	189-204
Cloete, W T W, Some recent research on Old Testament verse: Progress, problems and possibilities	
Review Article	205-217
Cook, J, Interpreting the Peshitta: A survey of recent publications	

Reviews

219-229

Book List

231

NO ABSTRACTS

REVIEWS

M. J. Paul, *Het archimedisch punt van de pentateuchkritiek. Een historisch en exegetisch onderzoek naar de verhouding van Deuteronomium en de reformatie van Josia (2 Kon 22-23)*. 1988. pp. 392. Boekencentrum B.V., 's Gravenhage, The Netherlands.

In his *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Paul refers to the fourth edition of 1976) Otto Eissfeldt stated that De Wette's view that Deuteronomy was written shortly before the reform of Josiah provided the criticism of the Pentateuch with the Archimedean point to shift the synagogical and ecclesiastical tradition that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. This was the focal point of Paul's thesis, completed at the University of Leiden in 1988 with Prof. M. J. Mulder as supervisor.

Paul does not pay attention to the composition of the Pentateuch as such, but focuses on the dating of Deuteronomy. He surveys the views of Deuteronomy and the history of the research on the dating of Deuteronomy and related matters, starting with Jewish sources from the period before Christ and ending in 1987. In his survey he concentrates on matters and passages from the Old Testament that are of particular importance for his topic. He points out that for the identification of the law book of Josiah with Deuteronomy the centralization of the cult was of special importance. This is the subject of Deuteronomy 12. De Wette's view is that before the time of Deuteronomy 12 there was no question of the centralization of the cult. Exodus 20:24-26 reflects earlier times, when there was no central cult. Exodus 20:24-26 states, *inter alia*: In every place that I set aside for you to worship me, I will come to you and bless you (TEV). This stipulation De Wette connected to the earlier times, while Deuteronomy 12 reflects a later stage. In addition to these two passages Paul treats the views of scholars on the development of the cult and on 2 Kings 22-23. Paul's survey of the research is exhaustive with regard to the matters he focuses on and he attempts to present the views of different scholars fairly exhaustively and in a fully documented manner. This survey is an excellent starting point for any researcher interested in this central issue in Pentateuchal criticism. He refers continually to primary sources and provides a list of important secondary sources for different periods and scholars.

The survey of the research is followed by Paul's evaluation of the different views, with special attention being given to De Wette and Wellhausen. He also gives attention to the presuppositions of the different scholars, especially from the nineteenth century, and their views of history.

From his research it becomes clear that Josiah's law book was identified with Deuteronomy by early Jewish writers and that Jerome probably played a major role in promoting this view in Christian circles. De Wette was also not the first to suspect that Josiah's law book could have been written in his time. Paul's research demonstrates that a central sanctuary was known in both Deuteronomy and Exodus, but both of them also recognized legitimate places for sacrifice in addition to the central sanctuary. This is also confirmed by the historical books. He judges that De Wette's and Wellhausen's denial of the existence of a central sanctuary in the early history of Israel led to an inaccurate picture of the history of the cult.

Paul calls Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 22-23 a covenant renewal. This refers to the

actions of the vassal. Josiah started with his reform before the law book was found. The centralization of the cult was an emergency measure to keep an eye on the purity of the cult. Paul does not want to make the centralization dependent on Deuteronomy 12.

He relates the law book to at least Deuteronomy 6-31, but states that it is possible that it could have been the whole of Deuteronomy. As there are no clear and compelling reasons to date the book of Deuteronomy to the time of Josiah, the pivotal point for the dating of J, E and P has disappeared. The popularity of De Wette and Wellhausen's thesis can be ascribed to the fact that they paid attention to a matter often ignored, viz. the practice of local sacrifices and also to their brilliant adaptation of current religious, historical and philosophical ideas. Their presuppositions played a more dominant part in their exegesis than is commonly accepted. Paul admits that his arguments in favor of a larger measure of historical reliability in the historical books of the Old Testament have been influenced by his own presuppositions.

This thesis treats a central issue in Pentateuchal criticism. Whether one agrees with it or not will probably depend on one's own presuppositions. Be that as it may, this book is a valuable contribution to Pentateuchal criticism and an invaluable tool for the history of research on the growth of the Pentateuch. It can be highly recommended.

H. F. van Rooy
Dept. of Classics and Semitics
Potchefstroom University for CHE
Private Bag X6001
POTCHEFSTROOM 2520

Studies in Hebrew & Aramaic Syntax (presented to Professor J. Hoftijzer on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday) (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 17). (eds. K. Jongeling, H. L. Murre-Van den Berg & L. van Rompay). 1991, pp. xvi + 219. ISBN 90-04-09520-9. E. J. Brill. Leiden. Price 63.16 USD.

This work is dedicated to Prof. Hoftijzer on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday as well as his retirement from the chair of *Hebrew language and Literature, the Israelite antiquities and Ugaritic* at the University of Leiden. A short preface by A. van der Heide and a bibliography of Hoftijzer's publications (68 in total) are followed by 16 essays on issues in the field of Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac syntax. Although most of these essays concern Biblical Hebrew syntax, the book, unfortunately, is not supplied with a text-index.

1. W. J. van Bekkum, The status of the infinitive in Early Piyut.

Van Bekkum investigated some of the peculiarities of the use of infinitive forms in the poetry of the synagogue that has been composed in the 6th-8th century BC. He found that the infinitive forms had been important tools for the composition of poetic lines and were used with or without their finite verbal forms. They also often adopted the finite forms' functions. Their wide variety of syntactic possibilities were exploited to serve the poets' needs, e.g. infinitives were often used as rhyme words.

2. G. I. Davies, The use and non-use of the particle *ʔet* in Hebrew inscriptions.

Davies illustrates the contribution a systematic description of the use and non-use of the particle *ʔet* in Hebrew inscriptions can make towards a better understanding of the

particle in the OT. Although the evidence from the inscriptions is based on a rather small number of cases, it is significant that Davies's findings support the view that there was a tendency to use ʔet more often in later texts than in earlier ones. He also indicates that pronominal objects of 1st and 2nd person verbs are mainly marked by ʔet +enclitic pronoun in the inscriptions, while the objects of 3rd person verbs are suffixed to them. However, the latter is not the case in the Old Testament. As far as the use of ʔet before nouns is concerned, the findings of Davies are in accord with those of G. A. Khan, viz. that the ʔet does not emphasize the noun it precedes, but must rather be understood in terms of a series of hierarchies which reflect the degree to which a referent stands out from its context. However, Davies also identifies a number of cases that cannot be explained in terms of these hierarchies.

3. W. C. Delsman, *Die Inkongruenz im Buch Qoheleth*.

In a reaction to Jaakov Levi's book *Die Inkongruenz im biblischen Hebräisch* (Wiesbaden, 1967) in which he points out that incongruence in BH is not necessarily due to grammatical mistakes, but rather are tendencies in the development of the grammar itself, Delsman investigated the 222 verses in Qoheleth. He identifies 22 cases of incongruence in Qoheleth which he divides into 9 classes. He concludes that Qoheleth occupies a position between Classical and Late Biblical Hebrew as far as the tendency towards incongruence is concerned (i.e. the tendency in Late Hebrew to use plural verbal forms with collective subjects where Classical Hebrew would have used a singular form of the verb).

4. J. P. Fokkelman, *Iterative Fforms of the Classical Hebrew verb: Exploring the triangle of style, syntax, and text grammar*.

Fokkelman investigated the way in which the authors of 1 and 2 Samuel use iterative forms of BH for the purpose of their story. For him the marked iterative forms in BH are *wqtl-* and *x-yqtl-*, and the unmarked ones are *x-qtl-* and *wyqt-* forms. In 1 and 2 Sm the unmarked forms are normally imbedded in the marked forms. If not, the unmarked forms are lexically clearly marked. Most of the iterative forms occur in strings and are used at strategic positions in the story, e.g. the beginning of the composition as a whole, the end of the chapter on Samuel as a judge of the judge period. According to Fokkelman "In fulfilling such vital functions, the chains reveal the inadequacy of studying the micro-levels of words and clauses only, as traditional grammar had done" (p. 45).

5. M. L. Folmer, *Some remarks on the use of the finite verb form in the protasis of conditional sentences in Aramaic texts from the Achaemenid period*.

Folmer describes the use of the finite verbal form with future time reference in the protasis of conditional sentences introduced by the conjunction *hn* in Aramaic texts from the Achaemenid period. The problem she addresses is the use of *both* prefix and suffix conjugated forms of the verb to refer to future time. According to her the explanation of grammarians that the suffix conjugation refers to a situation that is viewed by the speaker as preceding the situation in the apodasis, is only partial successful, "because the use of either the sf. conj. or the pref. conj. cannot be predicted from it" (p. 59). After examining a substantial amount of texts Folmer comes to the conclusion that no apparent semantic difference can be distinguished between the prefix and suffixed forms of the verbs involved. However, in many instances the choice of the verbs may be related to its position in the sentence, i.e. the suffix conjugated forms tend to immediately follow *hn*, while

the prefixed forms have a less restricted distribution. Furthermore, the latter forms represent a relative younger form of Aramaic. The fact that the suffix conjugation is also used in the Archaemenid period, especially in legal texts, may be due to an influence from Akkadian legal formulary.

6. G. Goldenberg, On direct speech and the Hebrew Bible.

Goldenberg examines the forms and uses of direct speech and related structures in BH with the hope of better understanding such constructions as “syntactic figures” – an understanding which could render to be natural some “quotative forms” that are often regarded as being carelessly formed. He then comes to the conclusion that the problem of differentiating between direct and indirect speech, as well as the possibility of combining direct and indirect elements in various propositions “do not leave sense in sticking to the simplistic description of the two categories, the one of a direct-literal-asyndetic quotation and the other of an indirect, deictically-switched and syntactically embedding, even if these are supplemented with a third category of ‘semi-indirect’, half-switched and asyndetic ‘veiled’ speech” (p. 15). He suggests that “quotation” as a syntactic figure should rather be examined from various angles, viz. (1) its syntactic frame, (2) its personal markers, (3) the tense and mood involved and (4) the actual meaning of the syntactic figure referred to as direct speech, that may range from a real quotation of actual speech, figurative or imaginary speech, “onomatopoeic sounds” that are “quoted” to purely formal “lexicalized verbal compounds in the form {‘say’+base} (e.g. “he said, ‘yes.’”). As far as BH is concerned Goldenberg concludes, “the evidence of Biblical Hebrew is particularly worth notice for the distinction it makes between the most typical uses of direct and indirect speech by employing differentially the various *verba dicendi*, and for the ‘direct’ characterization of the ‘semi-indirect’ construction” (p. 93).

7. J. H. Hospers, Some remarks about the so-called imperative use of the Infinitive Absolute (Infinitivus pro Imperativo) in Classical Hebrew.

According to Hospers the syntactic description of BH had been severely hampered by grammarians who attempted to describe BH in terms of the structure of an Indo-Germanic language and/or the traditional Latin-based frame of reference. In this process the starting-point of syntactic classifications often were the way in which these BH constructions should be translated in the mother tongue of the BH grammarian. This ‘mould’ then prevented grammarians to determine what is really at stake in BH itself. Hospers uses the so-called imperative use of the infinitive absolute to illustrate his point. In his view the function of this use of the infinitive absolute is not to act as a replacement of an imperative form, but as a focusing device at the beginning of a number of commands in order to give a certain emphasis to the command(s) involved. Although Hospers’s criticism of traditional grammars is certainly warranted, his own proposal concerning the function of the infinitive absolute is less convincing. (1) The evidence of his arguments is based on only seven examples, in which the “traditional” explanations make perfect sense. (2) Although the traditional explanation does not explain why the infinitive absolute is used and not the imperative form itself – the infinitive absolute certainly did not act as a reduction-form of the shorter imperative form –, Hospers’s suggestion that the above-mentioned cases of the infinitive absolute function as a focusing device does not explain why the infinitive absolute also replaces other forms of finite verbs and then *as the continuation of the preceding finite verb forms*. (3) From Hospers’s suggested translations of how the infinitive absolute

forms in Ex 20:8 and Is 38:5 should be interpreted, it is evident that he regards them as marking the verbal processes as the topic(s) (focus of topicalization) of the sentence(s) involved (cf. C H J van der Merwe, *The Old Hebrew particle gam*. St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag. pp. 37-47). However, in the case of Is 38:5 he also paraphrases: “As for going, you should < not only go but > speak”, “not only go but” implies that he interprets the infinitive absolute as marking the verbal process as *the focus of the command* as well. This leads one to the conclusion that he operates with a very vague conception of the concept “focus” – despite his appreciation of a recent article in this regard by C H J van der Merwe (“The vague term ‘emphasis’” in *Journal of Semitics* 1 1989, pp. 118-132). His suggestion that the so-called paronomastic use of the infinitive absolute also involves focusing, supports such a conclusion. Focus is a sentence-semantic relational concept that always involves the delimitation of one item from a set of items. A speaker may mark an item for focus for different pragmatic reasons, however, the so-called paronomastic use of the infinitive absolute involves a morphosyntactic construction that expresses epistemic modality or the modification of the lexical meaning of the finite verb.

8. K. Jongeling, On the VSO character of Classical Hebrew.

Jongeling addresses the question whether Classical Hebrew is indeed a VSO language as most BH grammarians claim, or whether Joüon was right in suggesting that it is a SVO language. On account of a description of the word order of the sentences in the Book of Ruth (in both narrative sentences and the dialogue of Ruth) he concludes: “although not the only order, the VSO order is best considered to be the basic order of classical Hebrew.” He then goes one step further and compares Classical Hebrew with another VSO language, Middle Welsh. This comparison then shows that the two languages agree as far as the other major feature of VSO languages is concerned, viz. their modifiers follow the modified expressions. Furthermore, both of them developed towards SVO languages, albeit in different way. The reason for this difference Jongeling finds difficult to explain.

9. C. Meehan, *QallPeal* as the passive of *Hif'il/Afel* in Mishnaic Hebrew and Middle Aramaic.

In his article Meehan shows that due to the fact that the *hof'al* fell into disuse, *qallpeal* forms serve as the passive of the *af'el* in MH and MA, especially in verbs of motion, if the agent is not explicitly stated. If the agent is stated, transitive *hif'il/af'el* forms are rather used.

10. M.J. Mulder, Die Partikel **ו** als Konjunktion und Interjektion im biblischen Hebräisch.

The particle **ו** is described by some lexica, e.g. Gesenius-Meyer-Donner as an adverb as well as a conjunction “zur Verstärkung bei poetischen Wiederholungen ... oder zur Hervorhebung ...” (p. 141). Van der Woude regards it in some cases as an interjection. Mulder examines the 122 cases of the particle in the OT in order to determine whether it is indeed an adverb, conjunction and an interjection and comes to the conclusion “dass die Partikel nicht nur anfänglich, sondern auch späterhin nur als Zeitadverb fungierte. In den wenigen Fällen, in denen **ו** als Konjunktion oder auch als ‘Aufmerksamkeitserreger’ zu betrachten ist, ist dies von allem Folge der Übertragung der Partikel in unsere modernen auf Hypotaxe eingestellten Sprachen” (p. 142). These results of Mulder’s study, in which the semantic contribution of the particle has been distinguished from the semantic and

pragmatic contribution of its context to the sentence in which it occurs, correlate with the findings of similar type of investigations that have been conducted into the meaning of the particles ב , ר , א , י and ה , viz. the particles have a semantic core meaning that should not be confused with the contribution of the context to the meaning of the sentences in which they occur.

11. T. Muraoka, The Biblical Hebrew nominal clause with a prepositional phrase.

Muraoka describes the function of nominal sentences of which the one pole is a prepositional phrase with a locative or existential signification as they occur in the entire Genesis to Judges. Where relevant he also draws from research on Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemia. In the light of the evidence from the above-mentioned texts, he concludes that the “normal sequence of the type of nominal clause under consideration in this study, a sequence which is neutral in respect of the prominence to be given to either of the two constituents, is N=Prep., on condition that the first slot is not a personal pronoun.” (p. 151). Whether the order N-Prep has any semantic or pragmatic value Muraoka does not indicate.

12. L. J. de Regt, Word order in different clause types in Deuteronomy 1-30.

De Regt uses a sophisticated hierarchically structured grammatical database (which he developed for, and utilized in his doctoral dissertation) on the book of Deuteronomy in order to determine whether there is any relationship between a particular word order and particular sentence types. He then found that the traditional distinction between principal (main) and subordinate sentences is only partly reflected by the word order in his corpus. Word order cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish between principal and subordinate sentences. He, nevertheless, observes that in cases where the predicate is a nominal item, the subject tends to precede the predicate in the principal clause. It is also in principal clauses where the most cases of preverbal objects and indirect objects occur. The distribution of preverbal subjects in principal and subordinate clauses is more or less the same. As far as the differences among the different subordinate clauses are concerned, most preverbal subjects occur in relative and causal clauses. In this regard the latter subordinate clauses are like the principal clauses. Apart from in relative clauses and causal clauses, preverbal subjects occur seldom in subordinate clauses. These results of De Regt illustrate very well the significant contribution sophisticated databases can make towards a better grammatical description of BH.

13. P. Swiggers, Nominal sentence negation in Biblical Hebrew: The grammatical status of ל .

Swiggers starts the first half of his article by discussing briefly the criteria according to which a nominal sentence in BH may be defined. He prefers to regard a nominal sentence as a sentence that “is characterized by the absence of a finite verb” (p. 175). As far as negation is concerned, both nominal and verbal sentences can be subject to full or restricted negation. However, verbal sentences do not show the negative marker ל . In nominal sentences the distinction between total and restricted negation is marked by the opposition between ל and ל . In the second half he treats the much neglected issue of the word class of the negator ל . Although some scholars regard ל as an adverb or as particle, Swiggers describes it as “a (strongly fossilized) nominal element, functioning as the head of a negative predication” (p. 179). Swiggers provides to my opinion substantial evidence for his classification of ל , viz. ל takes a suffix, it occurs in a construct word group and it occurs as the predicative nucleus of a nominal sentence.

14. E. Talstra, Biblical Hebrew clause types and clause hierarchy.

Talstra argues in favour of an approach to the building of a database of grammatically analyzed Hebrew text that starts with the flagging of the *forms*, and not the *functions*, of BH texts. He illustrates by means of the establishment of the inter-clause relationships of 1Kg 2:8-9 how his analyzing programs (which consists of a hierarchy of grammatically analyzing programs) operate on a clause- and text-level. He rightly concludes that “computer-assisted research of a textgrammatical type will provide the exegete with a tool to construct the syntactic framework of a textual composition, without being too much dependent on *ad hoc* textual interpretation” (p. 193).

15. Y. Tobin, Process and result and the Hebrew infinitive: A study in linguistic isomorphism.

Tobin sets out to provide supporting evidence for the so-called “isomorphism hypothesis”, also referred to as the principle of “one-form/one meaning.” For this purpose he uses the infinitive forms of the Hebrew roots נגע and נטע. Both of them have two forms for the Qal infinitive viz. לְנָגַע/לְנַגֵּעַ and לְנָטַע/לְנַטֵּעַ respectively. After discrediting the traditional explanations for the two different forms, viz. the syntactic -, the historical or diachronic -, the stylistic -, the diaglossia - and the synonym explanation, Tobin formulates his own hypothesis. For him the alternative forms are not synonyms, “but rather each possesses a single invariant meaning which: (a) distinguishes it from the other, and (b) will motivate its distribution in the language” (p. 199). לְנָטַע/לְנַטֵּעַ he regards as the unmarked forms which make no claims concerning the *process* or *result* involved in the predication (action, state or event). The marked forms לְנָגַע/לְנַגֵּעַ, on the other hand, claims that the action/state/event must be viewed as a result. He then provides data from Biblical and Modern Hebrew to justify his hypothesis and concludes: “Thus, the isomorphic principles of invariance and markedness might be viewed as an alternative means to discover new insight into previously unexplained and problematic linguistic data” (p. 207). Tobin’s approach certainly should be welcomed. However, the exact criteria according to which he distinguishes the notions “result” and “process” are not clear, especially as far as the examples from BH are concerned. Compare e.g. “He shall not *touch* thee anymore ...” (2Sm 14:10) and “Therefore, suffered I thee not *to touch* her” (Gn 20:6). The former Tobin regards as marked for “result” by the infinitive, and the latter as “unmarked.” In the case of Gn 20:6 “the process message is being directly implied while the result message may also – but not necessarily – be inferred” (p. 202).

Tobin rightly points to the fact that some infinitive forms have only marked forms and other have only unmarked forms. His explanation that this state of affairs should be attributed to the fact that the verbs involved are process-orientated and result verbs *per excellence* respectively, may be interpreted as an “easy way” out in order to safeguard his own hypothesis.

16. L. van Rompay, Some reflections on the use of the post-predicative *hwā* in Classical Syriac.

Van Rompay examines the introduction of verbal functions and forms into Aramaic nominal sentences as it had been realized by means of the post-predicate *hwā* in the development of Classical Syriac (i.e. an Aramaic language preserved in texts from the 3rd century BC). He then concludes: “There can be no doubt that when the Syriac literary language was being established, the functions and meanings of *hwā* constituted a complex situa-

tion, which was only partly subject to the strict rules of the classical language. The gradual reduction of the verbal form *hwā* to a status comparable with that of a copula reveals itself in the post-predicative position of *hwā* as well as in its enclitic status and in its loss of some of the verbal functions (the verb instead being used as a pure past tense marker)" (p. 218).

This compilation is certainly a valueable addition to the recent upsurge in publications on the syntax of Hebrew and Aramaic. It reflects the type of approaches that are currently used in the description of Hebrew and Aramaic, as well as the important role computers may play in this regard. The form-to-function approach, advocated by Hoftijzer in his inaugural address in 1974, indeed got a number of faces and made an important contribution to a more intersubjectively testable description of the languages of the Old Testament.

C. H. J. van der Merwe
Eric Samson chair for Biblical Hebrew
Dept. of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH 7600

R. Wagner, *Textexegese als Strukturanalyse. Sprachwissenschaftliche Methode zur Erschliessung althebräischer Texte am Beispiel des Visionsberichtes Jes 6, 1-11*. St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag. 228 pages. Price DM 45. ISBN 3-88096-532-3.

The purpose of this study is for Wagner "den Text selbst auf die unterschiedlichen und widersprüchlichen Intentionen hin zu befragen, die ihm zugeschrieben werden, in der Hoffnung, weitgehend objektiv, nachvollziehbar und, soweit möglich, zunächst unbelastet von vorgefassten Meinungen seinen eigenen Aussagegehalt zu ermitteln" (p. 209). For Wagner it is therefore important to describe a text as objectively as possible. For this purpose she requires an approach (a) in which the criteria according to which conclusions are came to are explicitly described and (b) of which the results are consequently intersubjectively testable.

She discusses two types of approaches that may meet the above-mentioned conditions. The first is the so-called top-to-bottom approaches that are mostly cognitive orientated. Wagner treats various hypotheses concerning the influence of the reader in the interpretation of texts. The hypotheses of amongst others Mandl, Van Dijk and Groeben on the cognitive processes involved during the interpretation of a text she discusses in detail. However, she does not regard them appropriate for her purposes, because if they are to be applied with precision, they are not economical and if they are made economical, they are not precise enough. Furthermore, the "Vorwissen" and/or competence of the reader of a text in a so-called "dead language" is also often difficult to access.

The second approach that Wagner treats and which she finds suitable for her description of Is 6:1-11 is the bottom-to-top approach of Wolfgang Richter (1971, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1983 and 1985). She regards this approach as suitable because it provides her with an elaborate frame of reference to commence with with what we are certain of concerning Is 6:1-11, viz. the graphemes of the Massoretic Hebrew text. Richter's approach allows her to first treat all the surface structure features of the text. The semantic meaning of the text then builds on the intersubjectively testable results of the lower levels of description.

Eventually a literary scientific investigation may then proceed from this firm foundation provided by this approach (p. 30).

The bulk of Wagner's book (154 out of 210 pages of text) consists of the systematic description of Is 6:1-11's surface structure and the structure of its content. As far as the surface structure is concerned, she makes the following distinctions: transcription of the text, description of the wordclasses, description of the word groups, description of the sentence types and description of the sentence relationships. At the end of this section she summarizes the results of the above-mentioned descriptions. She also spells out the implications of these results for the interpretation of Is 6:1-11 (pp. 118-128), viz. that the 11 verses can be divided into ten scenes that again form two sections of five scenes each. In the first five the theme is the prophet's vision that is told in the first person. The temporal and local specifications bind the first section to the real world and may contribute to the legitimization of the prophet. The second section is not so precisely time and place bounded and consists mainly out of dialogue in which the narrator/prophet is actively involved.

On this surface structure analysis Wagner builds her description of the structure of the content. While she follows Richter uncritically in the analysis of the surface structure, her analysis of the content relies on Schweizer (1974) and Witzzenrath (1975) who applied the structural semantics of Greimas (1971) to the description of Old Testament texts. As a consequence she distinguishes between the semantic function of the content on the following levels: sentence content, the content of sentence relationships, syntagm content, semiology (actors, actions and circumstances), time frames and an "Aktantielle" analysis (pp. 129-184). She "summarizes" her findings on the semantic level by providing a translation of Is 6:1-11. In order to avoid extra-textual influences that may negatively influence her ability to interpret the text objectively, she discusses the findings of other studies on Is 6:1-11 only at the end of her own analysis of the text. After her discussion of the secondary literature she remarks: "Die Diskussion der Literatur macht gleichzeitig aber auch deutlich, dass gerade um solche Fehlinterpretationen zu vermeiden, eine Methode notwendig ist, die Urteile von innertextlichen Sacherwägungen ableitbar macht" (p. 196). She then compares her findings with those of the secondary literature and comes to the conclusion that Is 6:1-11 is a very special type of calling vision because its is also a vision of doom. The focus of the text is (1) the fact that the prophet is sent by God and (2) that what the prophet is about to do, viz. the prevention of Israel's repentance.

Wagner's plea for a more intersubjectively testable exegetical approach is certainly warranted - as was Richter's reaction (1971) on the historical-critical exegesis of his time. However, Wagner's neo-positivistic ideal of objectivity in the interpretation of a text implies assumptions that are not necessarily generally accepted. She presupposes the validity of a specific view to the reading and interpretation of a text, viz. that a text has a specific meaning and that with the appropriate tools one should be able to lay bear that meaning. She presupposes that the linguistic frame of reference she is working with is appropriate for the description of a language. In other words, she strives for objectivity with an approach which in itself has not been scrutinized for its validity. She presupposes that the linguistic frame of Richter may be used to analyze a text. As I understand Richter his "Grundlagen" (1978, 1979, 1980) are aimed in the first place at the better grammatical description of Biblical Hebrew grammar, and not the exegesis of texts. Richter does want to make a contribution to the exegesis of the Old Testament, but realizes that it should

commence with a better grammatical and lexical description of Biblical Hebrew. Wagner strives for objectivity in the interpretation of texts, but is prepared to uncritically accept traditional grammatical descriptions of Biblical Hebrew, e.g. she relies on Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley §148c for her interpretation of וַי in Is 6:5c as “begräftigund.” However, a number of recent studies on the functions of וַי have shown that וַי often motivates a preceding speech act. It would be difficult to claim that וַי in 5c does not motivate the exclamation in 5b. The irony is that later in the book Wagner bases relatively significant conclusions on her interpretation of וַי in 5c (cf. pp. 200-201).

To summarize, Wagner’s book illustrates the application of a particular bottom-to-top approach in great detail. In order to understand this approach better this book may be useful. However, whether Wagner’s application of this approach opens up new avenues towards the better understanding of Is 6:1-11 is not certain.

In conclusion I want to point to a few typing errors I came across. On p. 127 footnote 316 should read 326, on p. 166 “Masismorphem” should read “Basismorphem”, on the same page 11d-3 should read 11d-f and on p. 171 “durch” should read “Durch.” Her list of abbreviations is also not complete. It appears that she assumes that one knows Richter’s abbreviations, however the abbreviation [quiet] I could find neither in her list nor in Richter’s.

C. H. J. van der Merwe
Eric Samson chair for Biblical Hebrew
Dept. of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH 7600

Thomas Leiper **Kane**, *Amharic-English Dictionary*, Volumes I and II, 2351 pp. ISBN 3-477-02871-8. Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1990.

Kane, a former student of the well known Prof. Wolf Leslau, has accomplished a magnificent task for which both scholars and laymen who are interested in Amharic owe him a great debt. This is evident not only from the scope and clarity of the dictionary but also from the compiler’s Preface where his sound approach and methods are set out. His introduction consists of a preface, explanation of the order of entries, the symbols and orthography applied, acknowledgements, list of abbreviations, common abbreviations occurring in the Amharic Press, sources in European languages and in Amharic, and the Amharic alphabet with transliterations.

The sources recapitulate the development of Amharic lexicography since the appearance of Antoine d’Abbadie’s *Dictionnaire de la langue amariñña* (1881). Kane himself regards his dictionary as basically a compilation of the existing lexicons: those of I. Guidi (1901, 1940), J. Baeteman (1929), C.H. Armbruster (1920), A. Aklilu (1982) as well as the monolingual dictionaries written by the Ethiopian scholars T. Habtä-mikael (1951) and D. Täklä-wäld (1962). Kane expresses his gratitude for the Ethiopian contributions to the dictionary. If it were not for the lexicographical works of the latter two scholars, the dictionary would have been, according to him, little more than an updating of the available Amharic-foreign languages dictionaries.

Prof. Leslau granted him permission to use material from his publications as well as from his then unpublished Amharic reference grammar, and read through the entire

manuscript.

An interesting fact which Kane brings to the fore is the way Amharic lexicography has to cope with changing situations in order to adapt itself to the modern world. This is even more interesting if one keeps in mind the long history of Amharic which is rooted in Geez, itself linguistically a member of the southeast Semitic family, although not directly derivable from Old South Arabic. The process of Westernization started under the Ethiopian emperor Menelik II who ruled from 1889 - 1913 and has intensified since the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974. The socialist ideology of the regime required its own vocabulary and linguistic nationalism seeks to replace the foreign words so familiar to the educated elite. In an attempt to expand the range of the Amharic lexicon they borrowed extensively from Geez lexemes to which new meanings have often been arbitrarily given. Of course, Geez has always been extensively used in Amharic religious writings and in the past the ability to use Geez words and phrases and to quote from the Geez Bible translation was the mark of an educated man.

At present the Amharic vocabulary is in a state of flux with new words being coined continuously. Kane refers to such a new word *səbṭəroš* (my own transliteration) for "Scrabble" (a word game) in recent issues of the newspaper, *Addis Zemen*, which appeared too late to be included in the dictionary, but compare *səbāṭṭārā*, "to vary in form or color" (p 527). On the other hand, entries from Guidi, Baeteman and Armbruster contain many obsolete words, usages and meanings.

As Amharic is a highly idiomatic language (for example, one author likens a motor that absolutely refuses to start to an extremely recalcitrant ox), Kane includes and explains this expression in the belief that it may help the user to deduce the meaning of similar expressions.

Apart from the influence of the neighbouring Cushitic languages, international scientific and technical terms, such as loanwords (especially through English), are to be considered for an Amharic dictionary. Loanwords from other languages also enter the Amharic vocabulary *via* Geez, Arabic and Italian.

In Kane's dictionary many Amharic words and phrases are followed by transliterations which clarify their meaning for the user.

Finally, the two volumes in hard cover are excellently published and to judge from the short list of *corrigenda* added (only three mistakes are noted!) both the editor and the publisher must be complimented.

L. M. Muntingh
Dept. of Religious Studies
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH 7600