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University of Stellenbosch
Private Bag X1, Matieland, ZA-7602
SOUTH AFRICA
Fax +27 (0) 21 808 3480
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Siegfried Mittmann (Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen)

TOBIA, SANBALLAT UND DIE PERSISCHE PROVINZ JUDA

ABSTRACT

Among the opponents of Nehemiah, are the protagonists Tobiah and Sanballat. Who were they, and what role did they play in the conflicts around Jerusalem and Judah at that time? (1) In an ethnic and religious respect, Tobiah was not a half-Ammonite nor a half-Jew (Hübner), but an Israelite in the fullest sense, with established rights and connections in Jerusalem. He neither was a subordinate official of Sanballat, who managed the far-away province of Ammon from Samaria but, like Tubiah of the Zenon Papyri (middle of the second century BC), a halfautonomous magnate, whose territory included the area between the River Jabbok and the Dead Sea, in a western direction right to River Jordan. (2) Sanballat is attested as "governor of Samaria" in the inscriptions. Nehemiah's discriminatory description of Sanballat as "Horonite" has to be corrected to "Hauranite". It describes him as the feudal lord of the south Syrian Hauran plain. Sanballat, too, as could be seen from the names of his sons and family relationships to Jerusalem, was a worshipper of Yahweh and a full Israelite. (3) Tobiah and Sanballat were obviously members of families which had been repatriated with the Serubbabel-Gola and had been settled as colonists by the Persian government in the Ammanitis/the Hauran area. An analogous case is the large clan of the "Sons of the governor of Moab". (4) The last section enquires whether Judah in the Persian age up to the time of Nehemiah and Sanballat was attached to the province of Samaria. This theory, put forward by Albrecht Alt and still widely accepted, does not stand up to a thorough analysis of the relevant texts. From the beginning Judah was an independent Persian province and its first governors were Scheschbazzar and Serubbabel.

Tamar Zewi (University of Haifa)

IS THERE A TRIPARTITE NOMINAL SENTENCE IN BIBLICAL HEBREW?

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the term "Tripartite Nominal Sentence" in Biblical Hebrew, questions its justification, and supports analysis of it as involving extraposition. The paper reviews the so-called "Tripartite Nominal Sentence" in several Semitic languages and Semitic Bible translations in comparison to Biblical Hebrew, and suggests that its basic structure is not tripartite but bipartite. It is also suggested that analysis of it as bipartite should occur on two levels: one of an extraposed subject and a predicate clause, together forming a bipartite construction, and another of a

subject and a predicate within the predicate clause, together forming a bipartite construction again.

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THE COLOMETRY OF HEBREW VERSE AND THE MASORETIC ACCENTS: EVALUATION OF A RECENT APPROACH, PART II

ABSTRACT

In this paper we evaluate the recent use of the Masoretic accentuation as a means to establish the colometry in Hebrew verse. In a previous study (De Hoop 2000a) the system of accentuation in the so-called "poetic (or Three) books" was studied. In the present study (Part II) the "prose" accents are studied and is shown that (1) the accents function according to a system which provides a guideline for the colometry of the text; (2) the colometry of poetic texts from the "Twenty-One books" in studies referring to the Masoretic accentuation agrees to a large extent with these findings; it is also demonstrated that the colometry of diverging passages also could be read according to the Masoretic accentuation; (3) similar to the accentuation in the "poetic books", reference to "a major disjunctive accent" is not sufficient; the value of an accent depends on its position within the complete syntax of Masoretic accents.

JOSEPH FLEISHMAN (BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY)

WHY DID SIMEON AND LEVI REBUKE THEIR FATHER IN GENESIS 34:31?

ABSTRACT

Jacob felt he had no choice but to agree to the marriage of Dinah to Shechem (who had abducted her for marriage), on condition that the men of Shechem undergo circumcision. However, Dinah's brothers – especially Simeon and Levi – opposed this. Their rhetorical question in 34:30 is a clear repudiation of their father's solution and a commitment to avenge the dishonour done to their family at any price.

Andreas Wagner (University of Mainz)

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF ORAL COMMUNICATION. IN SEARCH OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE IN THE BIBLE

ABSTRACT

The article discusses the possibility of reconstrucing the way in which ancient languages were spoken by analysing ancient writings. The Hebrew of the Old Testament serves as a model. It proves the validity of the approach, which is based on linguistic rules generally applied when using written language to reconstruct oral speech. The article especially focuses on the literary language used in the source material, as well as on the problematic aspects of narrative intention and purpose of different texts (e.g. literary, theological, etc.). Interesting insights are gained through comparison of biblical texts with non-biblical ancient oriental writings, such as ancient Hebrew inscriptions.

Jan A Wagenaar (Utrecht University)

"I WILL TESTIFY AGAINST THEM AND CHALLENGE THEM": TEXT AND INTERPRETATION OF HOSEA 14:9

ABSTRACT

The enigmatic אֲנִי עָנִיתִי וַאֲשׁוּרֶנּוּ, "I answer him and look at him", in Hosea 14:9 is, in view of the grammatical and theological inconsistencies in the text, occasionally emended to אֲנִי עֲנָתוֹ וַאֲשֵׁרָנּוּ: "I am his Anat and his Asherah". A consistent interpretation of the grammatical categories in this verse, however, would suggest that the idols mentioned in v. 9a are the antecedent of the suffix third person masculine singular. The verb שׁור, which probably means "to look at from a bent position", may with regard to the idols have the connotation "to lurk", "challenge". The verb ענה may in parallelism with שׁור not so much mean "reply", "answer", as "give evidence", "testify against". Verse v. 9bα may, therefore, be rendered with: "(the idols), I will testify against them and challenge them".

Piet B Dirksen (University of Leiden)

1 CHRON 22:12: THE CHRONICLER *IN ACTU SCRIBENDI*

ABSTRACT

The words "and may he appoint you over Israel" in 2 Chron 22:12 were added by the Chronicler himself in order to deflect the conditions of obedience to the law to Solomon's kinghip so that he could maintain the Moses-Joshua parallel, which enabled him to emphasise the role of David in the temple-building process.

Philip J Nel (University of the Free State)

Social Justice as Religious Responsibility in Near Eastern Religions: Historic Ideal and Ideological Illusion

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the extraordinary religious and cosmic ideals encountered in Ancient Near Eastern societies with their expressed intention of balancing powers in society for the sake of justice. At the same time it will be shown that efforts towards socio-economic reform guided by ideals of justice, were invalidated by the historical realities of vested powers. Mesopotamian and Israelite actions and efforts to establish justice will receive particular attention here.

Paul A Kruger (University of Stellenbosch)

THE OBSCURE COMBINATION כבד משׂאה IN ISAIAH 30:27: ANOTHER DESCRIPTION FOR ANGER?

ABSTRACT

This short note interprets the obscure combination כבד משׂאה in Isa 30:27 in terms of the cognitive model of anger suggested by Lakoff & Kövecses. It concludes that the conceptual metaphor of anger underlying this expression is: "When the intensity of anger increases, the fluid rises". Against this background the following translation of Isa 30:27ab is offered: "See, the name of Yahweh comes from afar, his anger is blazing and his rage (משׂאה, lit. "his rising up") is overwhelming(כבד)".

Johann Cook (Stellenbosch)

LEXICAL MATTERS IN LXX PROVERBS

ABSTRACT

The translator(s) of the Septuagint of Proverbs seems to have had a unique approach towards the parent text, to be defined as one of diversity *and* unity. *On a micro-level (re the lexical), as is the case on the more comprehensive level, diversity is clearly the most outstanding characteristic. This unit exhibits a free, in some instances even a paraphrastic attitude towards lexemes. This is underscored by the rather large number of hapax legomena and neologisms used in this translated unit. The translator also applied a large number of lexemes that appear either exclusively in Proverbs or are shared with a small number of LXX books. As to be expected, he interprets extensively in some instances.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Bernett, Monika & Keel, Othmar 1998. *Mond, Stier und Kult am Stadttor: Die Stele von Betsaida (et-Tell)*. Unter Mitarbeit von Stefan Münger. (OBO 161). Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 175 Seiten mit 121 Abbildungen, 2 in Farbe. ISBN 3-7278-1176-5 (Univ.-Verl.) 3-525-53798-0 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

This book is unique in many respects. The theme is the publication and discussion of an unusual stela found in June 1997 in the excavations of Bethsaida in Israel. However, the prompt publication of the study and the meticulous way in which the iconographical depiction on the stela is compared to other similar and comparable material and interpreted in terms of this material are exemplary.

The normal practice for the publication of archaeological records is that announcements of extraordinary finds are often published promptly, but an elaborate interpretation in terms of the wider context is often published – if it is published at all – much later, sometimes years after the excavations. Bernett (an archaeologist at Bethsaida) and Keel (the iconographer) have set a standard in this book which one can only hope will be adopted by other archaeologists and specialists in related fields.

The Bethsaida stele was published in the 1997 catalogue of the Winter 1997-1998 exhibition of "New Antiquities" at the Israel Museum (Israel Museum Catalogue No. 402, p. 9). The context in which the stela was found is briefly sketched in a short article. This is followed by a description of the stela. The stela depicts a *bull-headed warrior armed with a dagger*. The bull was a symbol of the storm god and is frequently depicted next to this deity. The image seen here, in which the god himself has the head of a bull, is rare in the art of this region (emphasis mine). The authors continue to discuss very briefly the activities of the storm god, the location of Bethsaida and the possible destruction of the stela by Tiglath-Pileser III during the conquest of Aram and Israel in 734-732 BCE. Bernett and Keel focus on two aspects of this special find: the position of the *in situ* find close to the eighth-century BCE gate and the depiction on the stela. They studied the object in the broadest possible context. The book's text is divided into five sections: 1. Die Stele und ihr archäologischer Kontext (pp. 1-7); 2. Forschungsgeschichte (pp. 8-21); 3. Eine Interpretation (pp. 22-44); 4. Kulteinrichtungen beim Tor oder im Tor und ihre Bedeutung (pp. 45-86); 5. Zusammenfassung und Schlussfolgerungen (pp. 87-94). The text (including a frontispiece in full colour) is followed by 68 pages of illustrations, varying from photographs to line drawings and plans of various relevant sites. A bibliography of more than 220 titles concludes the book, which in itself constitutes a valuable source and introduction to the most prominent publications on iconography and its interpretation.

Section 1.1 consists of a typical catalogue description of the stela which actually summarises the results of the study. The authors conclude that: "Das Hauptmotiv ist *weder eine antropomorphe Figur noch ein Tier noch ein Mischwesen*. Vielmehr handelt

es sich um eine Kombination aus figurativen (Stierkopf, Schwert) und abstrakten Elementen (Pfosten mit Bogen, Kugeln)" (p. 1: emphasis mine).

Their interpretation differs significantly from that of the authors of the Israel Museum catalogue. The rest of the book and the hundreds of pictures serve to substantiate their interpretation. Their argumentation is fascinating, but true to the nature of iconographic reportage, it does not make for leisurely reading. Since numerous textual references to illustrations illuminate the parallels, differences and similarities, the reader is required to concentrate on both the text and the relevant picture which appears in the illustration section at the back. Without constant reference to the illustrations, the text cannot be understood. Once again – as was the case when I read other titles in the OBO-series dealing with iconographical material – I wondered about the possibility of publishing the illustrations in a separate booklet included in an envelope attached to the inside of the back cover.

As one has to expect from Keel, each illustration is well documented and references are supplied to a page in the text where the illustration is discussed. According to Keel's own strict rules of how pictures should be interpreted (in terms of "das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden"), the depiction of the Bethsaida stela is interpreted in terms of very close parallels (sehr nahe Parallelen), close parallels (nahe Parallelen) and distant parallels (entfernte Parallelen). The parallels are to be found in the wide ancient Near Eastern area and it is fascinating to realise how much can be deduced from other stelae, stamp seals, roll seals and architecture. In this respect the reader witnesses Keel doing what he does best: the exegesis of a picture, or relating a depiction to other pictures and material which may be relevant. Elsewhere, e.g. in his monumental *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*, one realises the extent of his frame of reference. In this book, as in *Göttinen, Götter und Gottessymbole* (co-authored with Christoph Uehlinger), it is not so much his ordering and cataloguing skills that are put to work, but it is the way in which Keel utilises his vast knowledge of iconography to interpret a specific depiction.

The stela is also interpreted in terms of the cultic site at the city gate where it was found *in situ*, together with a podium with two steps leading to it, a basin, three broken cups for incense burning and three aniconic stelae. The cultic site at Bethsaida is unique, but Bernett and Keel compare it with parallels from close by (Dan, Kinneret, Hazor) and far afield (Karkemiš). It is also considered against the background of the textual references in 2 Ki 23:8b and Ezek 8:3-5. The discussion by Bernett and Keel boils down to four basic problems to which they offer the following suggestions based on the comparative material they have studied (pp. 89-94):

Firstly, they conclude that the combination of non-figurative and figurative elements in the depiction of the Bethsaida stela has parallels in Egyptian art and specifically the system of hieroglyphic writing. In the period between 1250 and 700 BCE a hieroglyphic type of writing existed in south-east Anatolia and northern Syria. These hieroglyphs included a sign with a central post and two beams which represent the meaning

'sculpture' or 'monument', and which may be present in the non-figurative central post and 'arms' of the Bethsaida stela.

Secondly, the four bullets, in the form of a rosette, are found time and again in association with the sign of the New Moon of Harran. The full moon is often depicted as a circle divided into quadrants, and these four elements are sometimes even present in the form of four lines.

Thirdly, the identity of the god represented by the depiction is taken to be the Moon god of Harran. The reasons for this identification are found in the fact that a bull's head is often representative of the Moon god, while there are references in Sumerian and Akkadian hymns to the New Moon as 'Lord of Horns', 'Horned Bull' and 'Strong calf of Anu'. Previously a bull was almost automatically identified with the weather god, who is often depicted as standing on a bull. The bull's head, however, is never associated with the weather god. It is also mentioned that the Moon god of Harran was seen as an aggressive warlike god who jealously guarded justice.

Fourthly, the problem as to why the originally non-figurative and figurative elements were anthropomorphised remains. During the 9th/8th century BCE it was quite normal to represent the Moon god by means of the moon emblem of Harran. However, the opposite was the case with representations of the weather god. He was more often depicted in anthropomorphic form than in the symbolic form of a batch of lightning. Bernett and Keel suggest the possibility that the Bethsaida stela and its close parallels represent a situation where the Moon god was presented in terms of the weather god or, alternatively, that we are looking at a lunarised weather god.

The exchange of characteristics between (and among) gods is one element of inner-religious dynamics and development which can be studied fully by using iconographical material. The advantage of iconographical material is that concepts are depicted. In textual representations such changes are not easy to detect, because the terminology used in connection with a certain god often remains the same, even though conceptions may change. The prerequisite, however, for a study of iconographical material with a view to religio-historiography is that material should be dated and located very accurately. A better example than the stela from Bethsaida as described and interpreted by Bernett and Keel to illustrate the religio-historical value of comparative iconographical work would be hard to find. The excavators, authors and publisher deserve to be commended for their willingness to share a very unique find their thorough and swift preparation of the manuscript and the tidy publication which appeared so shortly after the stela was found.

Willem S Boshoff
University of South Africa

Disse, A 1998. *Informationsstruktur im biblischen Hebräisch. Sprachwissenschaftliche Grundlagen und exegetische Konsequenzen einer Korpusuntersuchung zu den Büchern Deuteronomium, Richter und 2 Könige* (Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten

Testament 56. Teil 1 und 2). St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag. pp. 418 and 83. ISBN 3-88096-556-0 and 3-88096-462-9.

Since the late 1970s various attempts have been made to utilise insights from modern linguistics to better understand the source texts of the Bible. Disse's aim is to determine when the methodology of these applications of the insights of modern linguistics approaches, which were developed for the study of spoken language, to the study of a written corpus (of a so-called dead language) can be justified. Showing a brilliant insight into both the breadth and depth of recent developments in linguistics, he scrutinises the work of, among others, Guttgemans, Richter, Schweizer, Hardmeier, Michel, Vetter/Walther, Schneider and Winther-Nielsen.

He comes to the conclusion that the methodology of these applications (excluding Hardmeier) cannot be fully justified. The most pertinent reasons are that (1) scholars did not fully consider whether the modern linguistic insights they use can indeed solve the problems they set out to resolve (e.g. Richter's and Schweizer's use of formal structuralist criteria that were developed for sentence-based linguistic investigations to raise the accountability of the exegesis of texts) and (2) they applied out-dated linguistic insights in the field of linguistics (Michel's use of content-based grammar). Disse provides convincing theoretical arguments and empirical evidence that when insights from modern linguistic insights are used to better understand the language and text of the Old Testament, they must at least represent the current state of the art in the field of linguistics and must be used for solving specific linguistic problems.

The specific issue Disse then addresses is the interpretation of Biblical Hebrew word order. He uses the widely accepted notion in generative grammar that language is a modular system as his point of departure. By drawing from the current debate in functional grammatical circles, he develops a notional frame of reference and illustrates how formal and functional considerations may be in competition in their influence on the linear ordering of sentence constituents in Biblical Hebrew. This work makes an invaluable contribution towards the critical appreciation of the role modern linguistics did, can and should play in a better linguistic description of Biblical Hebrew and the interpretation of the text of the Old Testament.

C H J van der Merwe
University of Stellenbosch

Miller, Cynthia, L (ed.) 1999. *The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew. Linguistic Approaches* (Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic). Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns. pp. 368. ISBN 1-57506-036-1.

Most contributions in this volume on the verbless clause in Biblical Hebrew are papers read in 1996 at a session of the "Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Section" of the Society of Biblical Literature. The publication nearly 30 years after the pioneering efforts of Francis Andersen and Jacob Hoftijzer to use the insights of 20th-century structural linguists for the description of verbless clauses in Biblical Hebrew.

However, the field of linguistics has developed rapidly and in various directions since the early seventies. One of the most important developments is the shift from the study of the formal features of language (mainly its syntax) towards the study its use (its semantic and pragmatic dimensions). The editor, Cynthia Miller, clearly understands these developments. She also understands the problematic issues of the verbless clause in Biblical Hebrew. She has arranged the papers in the light of these two factors into the following sections: "Basic issues" "Syntactic approach" and "Semantic and pragmatic approaches." She also shows great sensitivity to the needs of her prospective readers who are not familiar with the meta-language of various schools of thought by providing an exhaustive index of topics at the end of the book, which also contains an index of authors and an index of Scripture. From the preface (p. xi) one gets the impression that she expected the contributors to take care to explain carefully the terminology they used.

The book starts with Miller's own paper called "Pivotal issues in analyzing the verbless clause". She uses the *Shema* שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד to illustrate the problematic aspects of the verbless clause and concludes: "Although much progress has been made in describing and understanding verbless clauses, uncertainty remains about their internal syntactic structure, their integration along with verbal clauses into an account of Biblical Hebrew syntax, and their distribution and rhetorical function on a text-linguistic level" (p. 6). In the rest of her paper she gives an overview of the issues to be raised in the rest of the book. She commences fittingly with the terminological issue, viz. must these clauses be called nominal, verbless or small clauses? She points out that the terms used by the various others depends on their own syntactic analyses and their definitions of the categories used, e.g. how do they define the notions subject and predicate; on the basis of which criteria can these two notions be identified? She identifies three different strategies among scholars: the exploration of (1) formal grammatical features, (2) semantic and pragmatic features of constituents and (3) the linear order of constituents. Some scholars use a combination of these strategies and rank these strategies hierarchically (p. 11). However, the linear order of the elements also raises the following questions: do verbless clauses have a basic default order of subject and predicate and why is there a subject-predicate and a predicate subject order? Other pivotal issues she points out are the interpretation of the so-called tripartite verbless clause (e.g. is it indeed a special type of verbless clause, or is another explanation possible?); what is the relationship between verbless and verbal clauses (in particular those with היה); how do verbless clauses relate to existential clauses; how are verbless clauses integrated into larger syntactic structures by means of coordination and subordination; and finally, how are verbless clauses distributed in texts? These are the issues that are addressed by the various contributors. Walter Gross asks the question: "Is there really a compound nominal clause in Biblical Hebrew?" He conclusively refutes the claims of scholars like Michel and Niccacci with solid arguments and empirical evidence. Gross (p. 48)

concludes: "… because it contributes nothing toward our understanding of the structure and function of Hebrew sentences, the category of the CNC should be dismissed from Hebrew studies completely". Cameron Sinclair asks: "Are nominal clauses a distinct clausal type?" After comparing the constituents of clauses with היה and those without it, he concludes (pp. 60-61): "… it makes more sense to see verbless clauses as a phenomenon of the verb היה rather than as identifying a basic dichotomy in the clause-types of the language as a whole". The title of Randy Buth's contribution is: "Word order in the verbless clause: a generative-functional approach". I regard his use of the concept "generative" here as unfortunate, since it creates unnecessarily confusing associations with Chomskyan generative grammar. Nevertheless, Buth's work is valuable. He approaches the interpretation of the word order of verbless clauses from the functional perspective developed by Simon Dik and shows convincingly that the verbless clause has an underlying order, viz. subject, predicate. The pattern one may abstract for heuristic purposes is: (Contextualising constituent), (Focus) Subject Predicate (p. 107). As in the case of the findings of Gross, one gets the impression that Buth's investigation too has settled an important issue for the field of study, viz. the interpretation of the function of the word order of verbless clauses. Vincent DeCaen's approach in "A Unified analysis of verbal and verbless clauses within Government-Binding theory" is, unlike that of Buth, one based on a development of Chomskyn generative grammar. Although he tries to explain his theoretical framework, I must confess I could not understand what he tries do accomplish. A remark in his paper I did understand and which I regard as important for the study of word order pattern in Biblical Hebrew is the following (p. 118 note 22). He points out that one must not confuse the notion of a "basic word order" that is determined on account of surface level patterns with "basic word order" as an abstract notion that is theory-driven (or theory-specific). In other words, when a functional grammarian speaks of the basic word order of a language, he does not necessarily have the same thing in mind as his colleague who is a generative grammarian.

    In their "Paradigmatic and syntagmatic features in nominal clauses" Janet Dyk and Eep Talstra draw from their ambitious project in developing a computer-based text-syntactic database for Biblical Hebrew. One of the basic aspects of this project is making use as far as humanly possible of formal algorithms to parse the Biblical Hebrew text at the level of syntax and text syntax. With illuminating examples they substantiate their claim that "In our view it is possible to base the S-P parsing on formal, syntactic data, arguing from form to function and from simple to complex, using one paradigm. An explanation in terms of categories of semantics or propositional logic is not needed for the linguistic procedure to find the S-P parsing itself, but is useful to describe what kind of statements these clauses make in their context" (p. 185). If one considers Lowery's findings (e.g. p. 271), his views in "Relative Definiteness and the Verbless clause" to some degree confirm Dyk and

Talstra's claims. The concept "relative definiteness", which correlates formally with a set of morphological categories and constructs, is crucial for Lowery. However, he remarks "definiteness is not the only criterion that must be used. Lexical and pragmatic criteria … also need to be taken into consideration" (p. 270). How these remarks are to be harmonised with the views of Dyk and Talstra is not clear to me. Alviero Niccacci describes "Types and functions of the nominal sentence" and Takamitsu Muraoka revisites the tripartite nominal clause. Muraoka provides a useful taxonomy of the so-called tripartite nominal clause. He then, among other things, explains them in terms of categories like "topicalisation", "prominence" and "casus pendens". Unfortunately he does not justify his notional categories in terms of a coherent theoretical frame of reference.

Leonard de Regt investigates the "macrosyntactic functions of nominal clauses referring to participants". He finds that "nominal clauses are found at the beginning of a paragraph but occur especially for the purpose of introducing minor participants and beginning direct speech … When they provide background information, they stand outside the chronological chain of events". Revell's contribution is entitled "Thematic continuity and the conditioning of word order in Verbless clauses". According to him he explores "the implication of the choice of a particular form of clause for use in a particular context rather than attempt to establish an essential meaning that a particular form of clause must carry in any context" (p. 297). Revell offers explanations for the linear ordering of constituents in terms of categories like "topic-comment", "highlighted" (in place of focus), "definiteness" and "referentiality" that he gets from scholars like Crystal and Siewierska. However, in contrast to Buth's clear-cut findings, Revell's explanations (p. 316) are not as convincing to me since his uses of these pragmatic concepts are not formulated in terms of a coherent theoretical framework for the structuring and flow of information in a narrative. In this regard Ellen van Wolde's "The Verbless clause and its textual function" is more satisfactory. She starts with her notional frame of reference, discussing the notions of markedness, grounding, foregrounding and background and grounding in a functional approach and the explains how the structure of verbless clauses can be understood in the light of this framework.All in all this is a very satisfying book. It addresses most issues concerning the verbless clause in Biblical Hebrew, and it tries to apply recent advances in linguistics to solves these issues. Some scholars have done so more successfully than others. Nevertheless, this volume deserves a place on the shelf of every Biblical Hebrew scholar.

C H J van der Merwe
University of Stellenbosch