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*The Verbal Tense System in Late Biblical Hebrew Prose*. By OHAD COHEN. Harvard Semitic Series, vol. 63. Winona Lake, Ind.: EISENBRAUNS, 2013. Pp. xiv + 304. \$49.50.

The work under review, an English translation of the writer's Hebrew University of Jerusalem Ph.D. dissertation, originally written in Hebrew (under the supervision of Steven E. Fassberg), is a methodical and detailed study of the Biblical Hebrew (BH) verbal system as reflected in a limited corpus of Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) prose material—Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the non-synoptic parts of Chronicles—unanimously considered products of the post-Restoration period (thus leaving out such works of debated datation as Jonah and Ruth as well as the almost certainly late Wisdom composition Ecclesiastes). The study is significant because it offers not only a synchronic description of the LBH verb system, but a systematic diachronic comparison between the latter and the verb system of Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH), succinctly summarizing views and offering cogent critiques of accounts and theories relevant to both. The author also judiciously relates to extra-biblical Hebrew, including Qumran and Mishnaic Hebrew.

The discussion ignores the ongoing debate involving the feasibility of the linguistic periodization of BH works, but the approach assumes the possibility of at least relative linguistic dating, its conclusions—which center mainly on morpho-syntax, and to a lesser extent morphology—unambiguously confirming the reality of the linguistic development that distinguishes post-exilic Hebrew sources from their pre-exilic counterparts.

The book is divided into two parts: the first, consisting of two chapters, presents Cohen's research methodology; the second contains eight chapters, each furnishing a thorough discussion of a verbal form (*qatal*, *wayyiqtol*, participle, *yiqtol*, *weqatal*, infinitive construct, volitive forms, and infinitive absolute) from the perspective of use and meaning vis-à-vis other forms in the LBH system and in comparison to CBH.

In chapter 1 the author briefly discusses problems of text, literary development, vocalization, and genre. He goes on to summarize the prevailing view of BH diachrony, according to which, broadly speaking, the Babylonian Exile serves as the watershed separating First-Temple CBH and Second-Temple LBH, noting such challenges as dialect and listing a few of the major relevant scholarly works.

Chapter 2 embodies the author's linguistic account. Central to Cohen's explanation of the BH verbal system in general is Reichenbach's (1947) concepts of *reference time* and *relative tense* (see also Comrie 1985: 36, 58), in the application of which to BH Cohen follows Hatav (1997). The explanatory power of such concepts is subsequently demonstrated in brief with reference to the *qatal*, *yiqtol*, and *waw*-conversive forms. The discussion next turns to the complicated and much-debated nature of the BH verbal system, i.e., whether it marks tense, aspect, mood, or some combination thereof. After critically surveying scholars and theories representative of several approaches, Cohen opts for one that combines relative tense and mood, the latter dimension subsuming aspect.

Chapter 3 focuses on the *qatal* form, which, along with the *wayyiqtol* (chapter 4) and participle (chapter 5), Cohen lists under the subtitle “The Indicative System.” In his view, in both CBH and LBH the *qatal* is defined in terms of relative tense as marking *anteriority*, whether the reference time be past, present, or future, whereas in terms of mood (including aspect), it is +indicative, +realis/actual, –modal, –iterative, –habitual. Even the use of *qatal* in conditional clauses is considered by the author a function of the form’s use for marking anteriority, its essentially +realis character being neutralized when used in unreal hypotheticals like Esther 7:4. As for diachronic development, Cohen substantiates—quantitatively and qualitatively—the widely held view that in LBH the simple tenses (*qatal* and *yiqtol*) had begun to encroach upon the domain of the conversive tenses (*wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*, respectively) in the marking of consecutive actions/events, whether with or without a preceding *waw*.

According to chapter 4, beyond LBH’s penchant for use of the lengthened *yiqtol* pattern in first-person forms and slightly diminished use of *wayyiqtol* in the face of *qatal* (see above), *wayyiqtol* was used in LBH largely as it was used in CBH. All the same, Cohen provides an enlightening disquisition on the nature of the sequentiality of actions/events encoded with *wayyiqtol* forms, emphasizing that this need not be strictly chronological. Significantly, following Kamp and Rorher (1983) and Kamp and Reyle (1993), the author views the conversive forms (*wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*) as encoding their own tense/mood by virtue of the fact that each form in a sequence bears its own reference time.

Chapter 5 focuses on the (active) participle, which, despite its substantival morphology, the author (following the likes of Joosten 1989 and Hatav 1997: 89–116) stresses is rightly considered an integral component of the BH verbal system. In CBH the participle serves mainly to mark what Hatav (1997:103–6) terms *inclusion*, i.e., “on-going-ness” in the past, present, or future. This makes it the default for conveying the actual, i.e., immediate, present as well as for so-called circumstantial clauses in the past (and future). The participle serves relatively rarely in CBH to relate habitual actions, a role chiefly reserved for *yiqtol* and *weqatal* forms. In contrast, LBH witnesses a noticeable expansion in use of the participle at the expense of the latter two forms in the depiction of habitual actions/events. Intriguingly, the participle also replaces the *yiqtol* form in interrogatives.

Chapter 6, dealing with the *yiqtol*, is the first of four chapters dedicated to what the author defines as modal forms. From the perspective of reference time, the *yiqtol* is said to convey *subsequence*. When it refers to generic and habitual actions Cohen argues that its link to reference time is obfuscated. The form also covers a variety of shades of epistemic modality—from certainty, through possibility and doubt, to the unreal, including conditional sentences—as well as types of deontic modality, e.g., imperatives, prohibitions, requests, and wishes. Diachronically, in LBH the form substitutes for *weqatal* in representing consecutive future-oriented actions/events, whether obviously modal or involving future events of a more certain ilk (which Cohen also views as inherently modal). Also, with the more frequent use of the participle for habitual actions, there is diminished use of *yiqtol* in this role.

Chapter 7’s *weqatal* relates to *yiqtol* much as *wayyiqtol* relates to *qatal*. It bears the same basic tense and modal meanings as *yiqtol* in both CBH and LBH, and, like *wayyiqtol*, establishes its own reference time. In LBH specifically it is sometimes replaced with *yiqtol* for purposes of depicting sequential modal or future actions. As in the case of *yiqtol*, there is a decreased use of *weqatal* to convey habitual actions in LBH, the participle having invaded this domain of usage.

In chapter 8 the author discusses LBH’s growing modal employment of the infinitive construct in predicative use.

Chapter 9 deals with the explicit volitive forms (cohortative, imperative, and jussive), the use of which in LBH closely resembles that in CBH, except in the case of Daniel 11, in which jussive, i.e., short *yiqtol*, forms appear in complementary distribution with standard *yiqtol* forms—the former clause-initial, the latter clause-internal—without signaling any obvious volitive nuance.

Chapter 10 describes the relatively rare LBH use of infinitives absolute in tautological structures and their vastly increased predicative use, especially in place of sequential forms.

The book ends with a short concluding chapter and summarizing tables, plus a list of references and an index of texts cited.

Only a few issues merit critical comment. First, while the concept of relative tense is usefully applicable to BH, it is unlikely that the difference, for example, between *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* can be

adequately explained on this basis. Pragmatic concepts governing constituent order, such as *topic*, *focus*, *discourse continuity* and *discontinuity* are also relevant.

Second, though the author supports his contention that certain aspectual and tense categories should be viewed as functions of modality, e.g., the habitual and future uses of *yiqtol/weqatal*, respectively, this will not be universally satisfying and is arguably confusing. It seems preferable to maintain a strict distinction between categories of tense (past, present, future), aspect (perfective, imperfective), and mood (volitive, conditional) even if it is clear that, due to the relative paucity of the BH verb forms, each must convey a mixture of the categories, sometimes changing according to context.

Third, terminological ambiguity arises in reference to various forms. For instance, the adjective “actual” is evidently used to mean both *immediate* (present) and *realis*. Fourth, in Cohen’s discussion of volitive forms, he apparently makes no allowance for their use after *waw* in purpose or result clauses.

Finally, given the author’s methodology and expertise, it is unfortunate that he ignored the recent debate on the feasibility of the linguistic dating of biblical compositions, to which his findings are of clear relevance. These words of criticism notwithstanding, the volume is a worthy contribution to the study of BH, especially its verb system and the question of linguistic periodization, and will doubtless prove of interest to philologists and biblicists alike.

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*Archaeology, Artifacts and Antiquities of the Ancient Near East*. By OSCAR WHITE MUSCARELLA. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, vol. 62. Leiden: BRILL, 2013. Pp. vi + 1088. \$292.

Oscar Muscarella has had a long and distinguished career as an excavator, museum curator, scholar, and public conscience directed at those who collect, display, and study antiquities from the ancient Near East. He has excavated in Turkey and Iran and published extensively on archaeological sites and artifacts from those countries. Currently a senior research fellow emeritus of ancient Near Eastern art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he is well known for his almost encyclopedic knowledge of the art and archaeology of the ancient Near East and also for his direct and unrelenting criticism of those who buy and sell ancient artifacts from this region without regard for authenticity or legitimate context. Muscarella has published widely on all of these topics. The volume under review came into being through an invitation to Muscarella from Brill to select a representative sampling of his papers for publication. Even at over a thousand pages, the volume presents only a portion of Muscarella’s voluminous output, but it touches on many key aspects of his career. The papers are divided into two sections. Part one, entitled “Sites and Excavations,” focuses primarily on material from excavations in which Muscarella took part. Part two, “Artifacts, Cultures, Forgeries, and Provenience,” includes papers on different classes of artifacts, on collecting practices, and on the illegal antiquities trade.

The first section gathers twenty papers drawn from Muscarella’s career as a field archaeologist in Iran and Turkey. The major emphasis here, fifteen papers, is on his work in northwestern Iran. Muscarella was closely involved with the excavations at Hasanlu, a project sponsored jointly by the Univer-