

**Francis I. Andersen and A. Dean Forbes, 2012 *Biblical Hebrew Grammar Visualized, Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 6, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, ISBN 978-1-57506-229-7, xvii + 394pp, many tables and figures, Index of Authors, Scripture, and Topics, \$69.50.***

Reviewed by Elizabeth Robar

*Biblical Hebrew Grammar Visualized (BHGV)* is perhaps best read and understood along the same lines as an archaeological excavation report. There is an extraordinary abundance of information, the significance of which is often unclear. The purpose of the book is not to provide a final interpretive analysis of all the data but to present the data, sometimes with preliminary analyses, in a format to enable further scholarly study and discussion.

In truth, many more will likely be interested in the later summaries and even fantastic conjectures based on excavation reports, rather than wading through the sea of details themselves; so too will many prefer to wait for the summaries of what corpus linguistics has uncovered, rather than wade through this tome. But for those who seek true engagement, there is no substitute for returning to the original source and becoming intimate with the data as first unearthed. In this light *BHGV* has the distinction of unveiling to the scholarly world how one particular method, corpus linguistics, might yet revolutionise the study of Biblical Hebrew grammar.

Corpus linguistics is like the archaeologist's set of tools. It aims to take a given body of (language) data, remove the encrustations of time and human interaction and recover the original items, as accurately reconstituted as possible in their original setting and orientation. This is the *segmentation* work of a database, splitting language into its smallest meaningful parts. Those parts must then be *tagged*. As archaeologists take photographs, make sketches and perform innumerable tests on artefacts in order to ascertain as much information as possible, so language segments are tagged with every feature deemed useful and possible: from the traditional person, gender and number and tense, mood, aspect and voice features to the grammatical subject, object and indirect object to the larger discourse features of direct speech marker, dependent clause, and even semantic roles such as agent, patient and benefactor. When each individual item is tagged they are then grouped together, much as one would group artefacts belonging to the same archaeological level, or geographical location, or even belonging to the same person. So the language items are grouped in phrases, clauses and larger groupings, which are themselves tagged. This grouping produces the *structure* of the database, which is determinative for nearly all of later analysis. When an archaeologist claims two different kinds of pottery are from the same time period it has far-reaching effects on relative dating wherever that pottery is found; so too when the linguist claims two language segments belong together in a phrase, it has similar far-reaching consequences.

Just as the archaeologist expends months or even years of painstaking work on minor details before a larger picture begins to emerge, so it is with corpus linguistics. The language needs to be analysed minutely, with every oddity dissected and discussed and somehow labelled, before generalisations can begin to be made. This is in striking contrast to traditional grammars of language, in which a familiarity with language in general leads the grammarian to comment first on familiar structures, and perhaps discourse at length upon the regular style and preferred means of expression in the language, without necessarily paying attention to the exceptions and peculiar cases. But, out of necessity corpus linguistics turns that approach on its head, and it is this that makes *BHGV* so welcome in the field of Biblical Hebrew grammar.

The first chapter provides the necessary theoretical preliminaries to the volume, including a brief glimpse into corpus linguistics and phrase-structure grammars. As with an excavation report, the archaeologically-informed reader needs only a concise orientation to the approach taken. This chapter gives ample introductory material for the linguistically and grammatically aware. There are also enough footnotes for the avid, determined beginner to make some headway, while more specialised discussion is found in the appendices. But the reader is warned that the discussions can quickly become very technical.

Chapter two discusses the segmenting of the data. Should לְפָנָי be understood as one word or two? Is לְפָנָי to be construed as one word (as the English 'before') or two words, the preposition לְ with the construct of פָּנָי ('to the-face-of')? The chapter is mercifully brief and always well-written, with analogous English expressions that aid the English speaker to grasp the concepts at hand: 'New York', for example, is two orthographic words but one element, 'tomorrow' was once upon a time a prepositional phrase, 'to [the] morrow,' but it now also is one element and 'in spite of' and 'instead of' are semantically parallel but have developed in syntactically divergent ways; one now has three elements, and the other two.

In chapter three comes the system of parts of speech. Again, where traditional grammars document the most common parts of speech with their prototypical clothing, corpus linguistics has no such luxury. Any system must, to the extent possible, be derived from the data itself. There is no guarantee that the first attempt will be satisfying, and indeed the classification scheme proposed here is an uneven mixture of distinctions based on lexicon (for a particular word), semantics and syntax. The preposition מִן, ordinal numbers, ethnics and adjectives are all considered categories within the same group. Adjectives are defined partly syntactically as *preceding* the noun in question. To the theoretical linguist this is jarring and can never be the final word. But *BHGV* does not claim to be the final word; messy data as natural language inevitably provides tends to generate messy systems. This is a gold mine for scholars of the future as *BHGV* has exposed a field in desperate need of further analysis.

Chapter four should be understood similarly to an excursus in an excavation report on a particular method of analysis used. It is a quick path to boredom for the vaguely interested but of foundational import for those seeking true comprehension. There is no Hebrew grammar involved, only the language of the database structure and presentation, which for corpus linguistics is necessary before the grammar of the Hebrew language can be even remotely accessible.

Chapters five and six discuss the phrase types, those that are 'basic' (with no embedding) and those that are 'complex' (with embedding). The categories within the types return to the ever-present requirement that corpus linguistics justify itself. If these items are considered a phrase, on what basis is that phrase constituted? The bases offered include suffixation, definiteness, prepositional phrases and conjunctions. The examples chosen to illustrate this are generally the unusual phrases,

*When addressed at all, the traditional treatment of constructions such as we are examining here is to make a general statement . . . , provide a few examples, and leave the matter. Having all of the data analyzed allows us to investigate atypical instances and question why they are the way they are: are the exceptions clustered in the text; does their incidence seem to be controlled by identifiable factors; is their occurrence associated with genre; is it random? (82)*

Chapter seven tackles the main clause and the challenge of configurational languages, which have fairly fixed word order and hierarchical constituent structure, versus non-configurational languages. The graphical representation used for clauses, the tree structure, like a sideways tree with its trunk on the left and its leaves all extending to the right, was developed for and reflects the assumptions of configurational languages. In a tree structure, there are no many-to-many relationships between nodes, which means no crossing lines or 'tangling'. Yet, *BHGV* concludes that Biblical Hebrew is non-configurational with relatively free word order and discontinuous expressions, such as 'A man from Bethlehem went to Moab... and his wife and sons'. Just as archaeologists may find that their excavated artefacts do not fit within established theories, the authors of *BHGV* recognise the inadequacy of their chosen analytical tool for their data. Their strategy is to minimally modify the tree structures, to call them 'phrase markers' and not necessarily trees and to permit tangling and crossing lines. As long as there is never 'too much' tangling, perhaps the Hebrew data can still be shoe-horned in!

Chapter eight showcases an example of the authors' intellectual humility and integrity. In the discussion on embedded clauses, the licensing relation (justification) for each clause must be made explicit. But there are times when the licensing relation is simply unclear. At this point, what does a scholar do? Find the best known

category and force the data in? Andersen and Forbes boldly tag their uncertainty by creating a licensing relation called 'paradox' for cases when a complement has no clear connection yet, paradoxically, is intuitively entirely obvious. Their example is from Psalm 119:71, כִּי-עֲנִיתִי לִי-טוֹב-לִי, 'It was good for me that I was humbled'. There is no overt subject, only the subject complement טוֹב, which has an unclear relationship to the nominalised כִּי clause. They suggest a paradoxical cognitive complement. This represents the clauses addressed; the answers are not clear, yet the database demands tagging. The choice to tag these areas of uncertainty as explicitly uncertain drastically increases the value of the data as these areas are likely to be most fruitful for future research.

When I was a student taking classes in archaeology, I remember sitting before a table of broken pots and being told to arrange the pieces in order of age. Suddenly, the diagnostic shapes, rims, colourations and decorations I had half-memorised became of central importance as I understood their role. Chapter nine defines and discusses the 'clause immediate constituents', perhaps the most vital concept of the entire book. They are the top-level members in a clause, not only the traditional predators, operators and grammatical functions, but also the impermanents akin to the 'paradox' licensing relation, including items requiring further attention in the future, as likely discourse-level and not really belonging to the clause after all, and the syntactic isolates such as vocatives and exclamatives. The clause-immediate constituents also include semantic roles, further discussed in chapter ten, such as aims ('I offered it *to atone*') and beneficiaries ('*to atone for your souls*'). Although the diagnostic role of all these is not made clear just yet, they will become as useful as familiarity with the collared-rim jar does for a Levantine archaeologist.

Chapters eleven through sixteen are best read in summary form by most or accompanied by a strong cup of tea in multiple sittings. The clause-immediate constituents (CIC's) are now presented with regard to their distribution, their occurrence with a given verb (incidence charts) and the order in which they occur in a given clause (core pattern charts). Once the various options are introduced, the אָמַר, עָשָׂה, and נָתַן corpora are analysed for their CIC patterns.

The onslaught of statistics is relentless and the jargon at times intense, but in chapter seventeen comes the payoff. If verbs can indeed be syntactically analysed in some comprehensive fashion on the basis of their CIC incidence and order, then different verbs can be compared programmatically by computing the 'distance' between the incidence and order of CIC's for each verb. To offer another parallel, studying the Samaria ostraca and comparing names may be tedious, but if they were understood to record commodities sent from tribesmen to patrimonial leaders, then they could lead to a very significant interpretation that the old clan system was still very much intact. Similarly, if the CIC incidence

and order charts are understood as somehow defining a given verb, then these charts can be converted into a map of verbal similarities and even a hierarchical lexicon that visually represents the relationship between all the verbs compared. Along with the phrase markers, this is the heart of 'Biblical Hebrew Grammar *Visualized*.'

The final chapters, on Quasiverbals, Verbless Clauses, Non-Tree Phrase Markers, and Discourse Analysis and Supra-Clausal Structures are all initial forays into the separate fields based on preliminary computations. Are quasiverbals indeed verbals or not? What are verbless clauses actually made of? Traditional grammars define them as a two-part subject and (nominal) predicate with the main interest being their relative ordering. Instead, the database reveals many one-part verbless clauses, two-part, three-part, all the way to ten-part clauses!

To return once again to the parallels with an excavation report, *BHGV* not only documents its finds in great detail, but it demonstrates where these finds invalidate many current understandings and it points in the direction of new paradigms that might indeed account for *all* the data. But whereas the archaeologist can always hope for a future excavation to disclose new material that may provide answers, the Biblical Hebrew grammarian has little hope of new material and can only look forward to new *methods* for analysing the material we already have. Corpus linguistics, as represented in this volume, is a method that holds much promise indeed.

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**Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul J. N. Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East*, 3 volumes, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012, 1641 pp. + lxxxiv, 1641, 7 charts, ISBN: 978-3-447-06726-3, €289.00.**

Reviewed by Luis R. Siddall

This three volume *Meisterwerk*, totalling more than 1700 pages and weighing 5.6 kilos, is the long awaited production from Kenneth A. Kitchen with his colleague Paul J. N. Lawrence on the treaties, law codes and covenants from the cultures of the Ancient Near East and Egypt. The research for *Treaty, Law and Covenant* began over 60 years ago when Kitchen was inspired by George Mendenhall's 1954 study of the connections between Hittite Treaties of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Sinai Covenant. Kitchen set out to collect, examine and present all known treaties, law codes and covenants from the Ancient Near East and Egypt, in order to determine the precise interrelationships between treaty, law and covenant forms across the cultures of the region. The result is an exhaustive form-critical analysis of 106 texts, which appear in transliteration and translation with accompanying notes and an historical survey.

In the introduction to the first volume, Kitchen states that he was unable to work on the project consistently over the decades (I xviii and xxi). It was not until Lawrence received a two-year grant (2003–2005) to help Kitchen complete the study that the work was able to be completed in April 2011 (I xviii). The labour was divided between the two scholars so that in Volume I, Kitchen edited and examined the non-Semitic, Elbaite and Ugaritic corpora, Lawrence did the same for the Akkadian language texts and both worked on the West Semitic texts. In Volume II, Lawrence was responsible for the linguistic comments and Kitchen the historical notes. Both scholars worked on the overall historical survey presented in Volume III (I, xxi).

The organisation of the material in this study is first-rate. The work is divided into three volumes and the authors and publisher are to be thanked for keeping their audience in mind. Indeed, the reviewer found the best way to work through this study was with all three volumes open on the desk allowing for easy cross reference between text editions, notes and historical discussions. However, since these volumes are printed in A4 format, readers will need plenty of desk space!

The first volume is the largest (1114 pages) and contains an introduction, aspects of which are summarised and repeated in the preliminary pages in the other two volumes, and transliterations and translations of all 106 texts. The texts are arranged chronologically from the Lagash-Umma treaties of the later third millennium to the Babylonian Laws in the mid-first millennium. Within the chronological eras, texts are grouped according to culture and genre. Kitchen and Lawrence define the respective genres as follows,

*Namely, (i) laws (agreed or imposed) were a device for regulating conduct within a given society or social group. (ii) That treaties were used to govern relations (parity or vassals) between separate groups, or group(s) and/or significant individual. (iii) That covenants could be used to define relations between individuals on the purely human level, or between individual(s) and deity (I xxii).*

For Kitchen and Lawrence, these genres are a part of a 'single triptych of organised and organic governance in antiquity and show clear features of interrelation and cross-fertilisation' (I xxii). While the reviewer agrees with this broad view of the interrelationship between law, treaty and covenants, it would have been interesting if the authors had included royal edicts, grants and decrees. While every study has its limits, there is no clear reason, other than some rather terse comments ruling them out, as to why they have not been considered. To the reviewer's mind there is merit in comparing edicts, grants and decrees with treaties and law collections (particularly Neo-Assyrian examples) that govern vassal-like relationships (or relationships of dependence) within a society.

Each text is introduced with a brief description and bibliographical information. The transliterations and