

Wevers, John Wm. (1) *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* SBLSCS 35 Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993. (2) "A Secondary Text in Codex Ambrosianus of the Greek Exodus" pp. 36-48 in V. R. Gryson (herausg.) *Philologia Sacra: Biblische u. patristische Studien für Hermann J. Frede u. Walter Thiele zu ihrem 70ten Geburtstag Bd. I. Altes u. Neues Testament.* (Vetus Latina: Die Reste d. altlateinischen Bibel 24/1. Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1993). (3) "The Earliest Witness to Jewish Exegesis" pp. 115-127 in *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume I.* Haifa: University Press, 1993. (4) **Reviews of:** a) M. J. Mulder, *Ezekiel, The O.T. in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version*, Part III, fasc. 3. Leiden, 1985. in *Bibl Or* 45 (1988) 400-401. b) M. J. Mulder (ed.) *Sysling (exec. ed.) Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity.* Assen/Maastricht, 1988 Pp.xxvi, 929. = *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum.* Section II.1. in *Bibl. Or.* 47 (1990) 188-189. c) C. Houtman, *Exodus vertaald en verklaard. Deel I: Exodus 1:1-7:13.* Kampen, 1986; *Deel II: Exodus 7:14-19:25.* idem 1989. = *Kommentaar op het Oude Testament.* in *Bibl. Or.* 48 (1991) 883-885.

Zipor, M. (1) "Towards a Hebrew Annotated Edition of the Septuagint on the Torah" in *Studies in Bible and Exegesis* (Bar-Ilan University) [in press]. (2) "notes sur chapitres i-xvii de la Genèse dans la Bible d'Alexandrie" *ETL* [in press].

## SOME REMARKS ON THE PERFECT INDICATIVE IN THE SEPTUAGINT<sup>1</sup>

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In volume 24 (1991) of the *BIOSCS*, Timothy Schehr\* published an interesting contribution to the question of the translation of the verb in the Septuagint. His main interest was the usage of the perfect indicative in the first fifteen chapters of Genesis. In these chapters he found only eight cases altogether. In spite of such a small amount of material, he considers Genesis 1-15 "as a representative portion of that book."

I have serious doubts about that. In the first place, if we compare the fifteen chapters studied in the article with chapters 37-50, we find at least some reason to doubt Schehr's conclusions. In the old Greek of Genesis 37, 39-50, the perfect indicative appears 35 times, although there are only 13 chapters. The question naturally arises as to why there is such a great difference.

Secondly, we should need more than eight examples to be able to form a reliable picture of the translator's way of dealing with his text and, in the case of our present subject, why and where the translator used the perfect indicative. For example, when we study the translator's use of tenses in ὄτι-clauses depending on verbs of perception (direct ἐι-clauses act the same way in my judgment in the LXX, for example Gen 8:8), it should be kept in mind that in idiomatic Greek, the tenses of the original statements<sup>2</sup> (oratio recto - direct discourse) are not always retained. On the contrary, if the ὄτι-clause is meant to

<sup>1</sup> I should like to thank Professor Leonard Greenspoon for going through and correcting the English in this paper.

\*There incorrectly spelled Schehr, see correction in volume 22 (1992) p.10. [Ed.]

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Schehr 1991, 24

indicate the viewpoint of the narrator, then the mood and tense of narration should be used; but if only the viewpoint of the subject of the main verb is emphasized, only then does the author use the tense corresponding to direct speech.<sup>3</sup> In order to know what is normal procedure of the translator, we must study a larger body of material.

Considering the different instances where the perfect indicative appears, Schehr notices that in Genesis 1-15 the perfect indicative is found only in direct discourse as well as ὄρι- and εἰ- clauses mentioned above, thus, not in clear narrative sections. As a consequence, the perfect indicative is used by the translator as referring to the present moment. This is quite understandable as Schehr himself gives the meaning of the perfect stem as "that at a certain point in time a state exists which is the result of a completed action," and this point of time in the case of the indicative is the "now" of the speaker/narrator. After having noted this, the author is surprised at "this clear distinction" from the classical period, that is to be found in the Septuagint. This surprise is quite understandable because almost every grammar dealing with Hellenistic usage speaks of the perfect's having entered into the sphere of the aorist.<sup>4</sup> But in their important studies, K. L. McKay<sup>5</sup> and A. Rijksbaron<sup>6</sup> have drawn our attention to the fact that this supposedly widespread mixture of the perfect indicative and the aorist actually occurs only in direct discourse or similar contexts. In the

<sup>3</sup>See Kühner, R. and Gerth, B. *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache. II Satzlehre*. Hannover und Leipzig 1904<sup>3</sup> § 550.3.

<sup>4</sup>The fact has its origin in the works of J. Wackernagel, *Studien zum griechischen Perfektum* Göttingen 1904. (also in: *Kleine Schriften*. Göttingen, 1953, 1000-1021) and P. Chantraine *Histoire du parfait grec*. Paris, 1927.

<sup>5</sup>McKay, K. L. "The Use of the Ancient Greek Perfect down to the Second Century A.D." *BICS* 12 (1965) 1-21; "On the Perfect and Other Aspects in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri" *BICS* 27 (1980) 23-49.

<sup>6</sup>Rijksbaron, A. "Het Griekse perfectum: subject contra object" *Lampas* 17 (1984) 403-419.

same way all the examples Schehr has offered us are from direct discourse; not a single perfect indicative appears in pure narrative.

The examples of letters as well as the examples of Polybius and the New Testament authors given by Schehr are comparable to direct discourse in that they are all connected to the present moment of the author/speaker in question. Letters are always written, and as such connected to the present moment of the writer. Seen in that way, a letter need not be considered as narration at all in the strict sense of the word. The same arguments are valid also in the case of 2 Corinthians 11:25 which is a letter. The examples Schehr gives us from the historian Polybius (ἐδηλώσομεν pro δεδηλώκαμεν) are also not from real narrative, for here our historian breaks the story he is telling and turns to his readers at their present moment to address his words to them. The author of Revelation 5:7 is likewise addressing his readers, revealing to them what he actually sees happening before him in the present moment.

In these texts, the perfect indicative retains its resultative value. This means that the author using the perfect indicative wants to emphasize, from the viewpoint of the present speaker, the result (state) of an event completed in the past.<sup>7</sup> It would be very strange indeed if the perfect indicative had really emerged in the semantic field of the aorist, but that could have happened only in direct discourse, never in narration. Furthermore, the fact that *wayyiqtol*, the narrative verb form par excellence, is very rarely translated by the perfect indicative, is more easily explained if there is no confusion between the meanings of perfect

<sup>7</sup>I do not wish to take a stand here on whose state it is, the one of the object (Wackernagel, Chantraine) or the one of the subject (McKane, Rijksbaron). Maybe the right answer is in the middle: both. For example, *ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ ταῦτα ὁ αὐτὸς Θεοκλυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος* (Th. 5,26.1). If it is the state of the object, it should be translated: "this has now been recorded" but if the state is that of the subject, the translation should be as follows: "Thucydides is the author of. . ." (Rijksbaron, A. *The Syntax and Semantics of the Verb in Classical Greek. An Introduction*. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben 1984, 35-36.

and aorist. From the preceding it is clear that Schehr should carefully consider exactly what he means by his conception of "narration."

If we come to a negative conclusion concerning the possible "encroachment of the perfect into the sphere of the aorist," then we cannot conclude that the translator tried to avoid non-literary characteristics. On the contrary, it is evident that the Septuagint Pentateuch, as a literary work between classical and Hellenistic Greek, included also classical modes of speaking and could not have used forms that developed only later. A. Aejmelaeus has set forth the idea that the translator used more free renderings and expressions of normal linguistic usage in direct discourse than elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

We are able to see the difference between perfect and aorist in sentences like Gen 41:15 and Gen 40:8.

41:15 וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם חֲלָמַתִּי וַפְהַר אֵין אֵין אֹתוֹ  
 εἶπεν δὲ Φαραὼ τῷ Ἰωσήφ· Ἐνύπσιον ἔώρακα. καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς αὐτῷ  
 οὐκ ἔσται αὐτό

40:8 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו חֲלוֹם חֲלָמְנוֹ וַפְהַר אֵין אֹתוֹ  
 εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἰωσήφ· Ἐνύπσιον ἔδομεν. καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἔσται  
 αὐτό

Both sentences are part of direct discourse but the emphasis is different. In the first example (perfect indicative ἔώρακα) the king of Egypt wants to point to himself as receiver of this ominous dream: "I am the one who has seen this dream." On the contrary, the servants of Pharaoh only state the already accomplished fact (aorist indicative ἔδομεν) that the dreams were seen. We do not find differences like these in the narrative. Resultative aspect (perfect stem) would be expressed by pluperfect indicative, but it is rather rarely used as an

<sup>8</sup>Aejmelaeus, A. *Parataxis in the Septuagint*. AASF diss. B 31. Helsinki 1982, 173.

equivalent of *qatal* in the Pentateuch. Having realized that the perfect has retained its aspectual value, we are able to understand why the Hebrew *wayyiqtol* form is not translated with perfect indicative but only the *qatal* or in some rare cases the Hebrew *participle*.

This point is in fact the answer to the question about the limited number of perfect indicative cases in the first fifteen chapters of Genesis; there is less direct discourse and thus more pure narrative in these chapters than in the end of the book. Already in chapters 16-20 there appear eight more cases of perfect indicative. A similar fact, also due to the differences in text material, is the limited number of *yiqtol* forms—the verbal form of direct discourse par excellence. In Genesis 2-15, 98 cases of *yiqtol* appear, but in 37, 39-50, the relevant number is 202.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the content of the discourse material in Genesis 1-15 is more like a report or catalogue of events than a speaking of completed actions, the results of which exist in the present. This suggests that the translator could not have used the perfect indicative as often here as in other chapters of the book.

The text should also be studied so as to see if the translator renders only certain Hebrew verbs by the perfect indicative or uses perfect indicative only with certain Greek verbal roots. For example, if the translator favours the perfect indicative as an equivalent of  $\eta\kappa$  or uses  $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\mu\iota$  in the perfect indicative more often than with other verbal roots, then it is significant for the number of perfect indicatives as a translation equivalent in certain texts if there is not a single  $\eta\kappa$  in the Vorlage. This shows us how important it is to study larger numbers of perfect indicatives in Genesis so as to be able to determine the kinds of contexts

<sup>9</sup>See Voitila, A. "Technique de traduction du *yiqtol* (l'imparfait hébreu) dans l'Histoire de Joseph grecque (Gen 37, 39-50)" VII Congress of the IOSCS, Leuven 1989 SBLSCS 31 Atlanta: Scholars Press 1991, 223-237.

in which the verb form is used and in order to find out if there at least are contexts where the translator could have used the perfect indicative.

I hope I have been able to show how impossible it is to make large scale conclusions with only a limited amount of evidence. The point here is that Genesis 1-15 is not a representative portion of the whole book of Genesis but is rather different from other parts of the book. Thus conclusions based on it concerning the book as a whole have a very weak basis.

## A NOTE TO THE USERS OF MARGOLIS' JOSHUA EDITION

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Between 1931 and 1932 there appeared one of the most important works in the field of the Septuagint of Joshua, Professor Max L. Margolis' *The Book of Joshua in Greek*.<sup>1</sup> Since the publication of the first four volumes, this work has been highly evaluated by scholars.<sup>2</sup> Consequently Margolis' edition holds an important position. Because it is respected, scholars normally trust the notation of the apparatus. The following remarks find their explanation in the present status of this edition.

Because of the complex apparatus system in Margolis' edition,<sup>3</sup> it is wise to use the Larger Cambridge Septuagint of Brooke-McLean (OTG) alongside Margolis' edition. This enables a scholar simultaneously to see evidence from both the recensions and the individual manuscripts (MSS). This can be done if one bears in mind the fact that Margolis' edition is based on a larger number of MSS than the OTG<sup>4</sup> and that Margolis recorded about 900

<sup>1</sup>The complete title of the edition is *The Book of Joshua in Greek according to the Critically Restored Text with an Apparatus Containing the Variants of the Principal Recensions and of the Individual Witnesses*.

<sup>2</sup>James A. Montgomery, "Margolis' Book of Joshua in Greek" *JQR* 23 (1933) 293-295. See also Leonard Greenspoon, *Max Leopold Margolis. A Scholar's Scholar*. Atlanta GA, 1987, 107-108.

<sup>3</sup>There are some divergencies between the manuscript lists given in Margolis' edition and in his article "Specimen of a New Edition of the Greek Joshua" *Jewish Studies in Memory of Israel Abrahams*. New York, 1927, 203-323. For example, according to the edition, the sign  $\text{f1}$  represents the Ms. Paris Nat. Suppl. Gr. 600 (a MS unknown to Alfred Rahlf's, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments*, für das Septuaginta-Unternehmen aufgestellt. Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesell. der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philol.-hist. Klasse. Beibef. Berlin, 1914.) In the Specimen, however, Margolis wrote that this MS. is Paris Nat. Suppl. Gr. 609.

<sup>4</sup>Note that Margolis took evidence of the MSS. AM $\Delta$ 8 cefjlmqrsvwzd2 from the apparatus of the OTG