4Q543 2 1–2 and the Verb “To Give” in Qumran Aramaic

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1 Introduction

In fragment 2 of the Aramaic text 4Q543 (Visions of Amram), the verb נתן occurs twice (in line 1 and line 2), in both cases preceded by the conjunction *w-*, “and.” The lines are only partially preserved but the verbs are clearly attested: [דָּרִי עֲלָמִין וְנָתַן לֶךְ חֲכָמָה].¹ In Biblical Aramaic, as is well known, the roots NTN and YHB make up a suppletive paradigm. NTN occurs in the prefix conjugation (imperfect) and in the infinitive but is never used in the suffix conjugation (perfect). Instead, when a writer wants to use the verb “to give” in the suffix conjugation (and in the imperative and in participial form), the root YHB is used.²

NTN occurs in Dan 2:16 (יִתְּנוּ); 4:14 (יִתְּנוּ), 22 (יִתְּנוּ), 29 (יִתְּנוּ); Ezra 4:13 (יִתְּנוּ); 7:20 (לְמַתְּנוּ and יִתְּנוּ).

YHB occurs in Dan 2:21 (יָהַב), 23 (יָהַב), 37 (יָהַב), 38 (יָהַב), 48 (יָהַב); 3:28 (יָהַב); 4:13 (יָהַב);³ 5:17 (יָהַב), 18 (יָהַב), 19 (יָהַב), 28 (יָהַב); 6:3 (יָהַב); 7:4 (יָהַב); 11 (יָהַב); 12 (יָהַב); 14 (יָהַב); 22 (יָהַב); 25 (יָהַב);⁴ 27 (יָהַב); Ezra 4:20 (יָהַב); 5:12 (יָהַב); 14 (יָהַב); 16 (יָהַב); 6:4 (יָהַב);⁵ 8 (יָהַב); 9 (יָהַב); 19 (יָהַב).

A similar system of suppletion can be observed in some other varieties of Aramaic.⁶ On this background, the occurrences of נתן in 4Q543 would

1 Émile Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4.XXII: Textes araméens, première partie: 4Q529–549*, DJD 31 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 294.

2 Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1961), 47 and 49.

3 The suppletion only applies to the basic stem.

4 See note 3.

5 See note 3.

6 Classical Mandaic uses NTN only in the prefix conjugation (in the basic stem) and in the infinitive. See Rudolf Macuch, *Handbook of Classical and Modern Mandaic* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), 292. In Syriac, the root in question is NTL rather than NTN due to assimilation with the preposition *l-*, which would often follow the verb “to give”; see Carl Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik mit Paradigmen, Literatur, Chrestomathie und Glossar*, 9th ed. (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1962), 87. However, NTL occurs in the same type of suppletion with YHB as attested for NTN and YHB in Biblical Aramaic, i.e., NTL is used in the prefix conjugation and in the infinitive, YHB in the suffix conjugation. See, e.g., Jessie P. Smith, *A Compendious Syriac*

naturally be parsed as a first-person plural prefix conjugation, i.e. “and we will give.” This is the way Puech translates the forms in DJD 31: “[...] ta parole, et nous te donnerons. [...] les générations éternelles et nous te donnerons sagesse[.]”⁷ Similarly, García Martínez and Tigchelaar render the lines as follows in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*: “[...] your word, and we will give you [...] for ever, and we will give you wisdom [...]”⁸ However, in his recent edition with translation and comments, Robert Duke translates the verbs using the simple past tense, i.e. as third singular masculine suffix conjugation: “[...] your word. And he gave to you [...] eternal generations. And he gave to you wisdom.”⁹ In contrast to Puech’s blanket statement that NTN is used only in the prefix conjugation in Aramaic,¹⁰ Duke correctly notes that we do find cases of NTN in the suffix conjugation in some types of Aramaic. It is clear that the suppletion known from Biblical Aramaic and other dialects is the result of a historical evolution. Folmer states: “Originally, *ntn* ‘to give’ was used in all the conjugations of the Pe’al. Only later was the verb restricted to the imperfect and infinitive while *yhb*, with the same meaning, was used in the perfect, imperative, and participle (suppletion).”¹¹ Duke mentions four examples of suffix conjugation NTN and states that these are only a few “among many.”¹²

This contribution offers a critical examination of Duke’s claim in an attempt to establish the extent of the supposedly widespread use of NTN in the suffix conjugation. It is necessary to decide which types of Aramaic attest to this usage. After a general survey of the use of the verbal root NTN in earlier types of

Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 354. Similarly, in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, the root used for the prefix conjugation is most often NTB, the *-b* being possibly the result of assimilation of the original final *-n* with the preposition *b-*, according to Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press; Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 780. Alternatively, NTB might be seen as a conflation of NTN and YHB. In modern Aramaic, the suppletion known from the earlier stages of the language does not seem to be attested (and in the Eastern varieties, the verbal system has undergone a thorough reorganization, including the loss of the basic distinction between prefix and suffix conjugation; hence, a suppletive paradigm of the older type could not be maintained in these types of Aramaic).

7 Puech, DJD 31:295.

8 Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition: Volume Two 4Q274–nQ31* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1085.

9 Robert R. Duke, *The Social Location of the Visions of Amram (4Q543–547)*, StBibLit 135 (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 14.

10 Puech, DJD 31:295.

11 Margaretha L. Folmer, “Old and Imperial Aramaic,” in *Languages from the World of the Bible*, ed. Holger Gzella (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 128–59 (154).

12 Duke, *The Social Location*, 15.

Aramaic, I examine the occurrences of the two roots NTN and YHB in Qumran Aramaic in order to determine whether there are any other convincing examples of the use of NTN in the suffix conjugation in the corpus. Finally, I will consider the connection between the linguistic analysis and the interpretation of the content of the text.

2 Suffix Conjugation NTN in Aramaic

The four cases of suffix conjugation NTN in Aramaic referred to by Duke are lines 2 and 8 in KAI 214 and two instances in the Egyptian letters designated B1.1 and B4.2.¹³

KAI 214 is the Hadad inscription of Panamuwa; it contains several clear instances of NTN in the suffix conjugation in addition to the two mentioned by Duke, in lines 11, 13, 14, and 20. Furthermore, there are prefix forms in lines 4, 12, 18, and 23. Line 24 contains a form which has been interpreted in different ways, e.g. as a participle.¹⁴ Clearly, the suppletion known from Biblical Aramaic is not operative in this text. However, KAI 214 is from the eighth century BCE from Sam'al (modern Zincirli in Turkey) and it is counted among the inscriptions from that place that are not in “normal” Old Aramaic. Rather, it seems to reflect the local dialect, Sam'alian. Based on a thorough investigation of all the inscriptions from Zincirli—Phoenician, Aramaic, and Sam'alian—Tropper concludes that although Sam'alian probably belongs to the Aramaic group, the dialect displays several deviations from what is normally considered Aramaic usage. In addition, there are some possible Canaanisms.¹⁵ He argues that Sam'alian should be considered an Aramaic dialect, albeit in many respects a very conservative one that must have branched off from the rest of Aramaic at a very early time, at a stage prior to what is usually termed Old

13 Duke refers to both letters as being from Elephantine but, in fact, B1.1 is from the town Korobis in middle Egypt. See Margaretha L. Folmer, *The Aramaic Language in the Achaemenid Period: A Study in Linguistic Variation* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 642 (the letter is called BM in this work, cf. note 17 below).

14 For the text, see Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften I*, 5th ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 49–50. Translation and commentary: Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften II*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968), 214–23. Also cf. Josef Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli: Neue Edition und vergleichende Grammatik des phönizischen, sam'alischen und aramaischen Textkorpus*, ALASP 6 (Münster: UGARIT-Verlag, 1993), 54–97.

15 Tropper, *Die Inschriften*, 47.

Aramaic.¹⁶ Hence, the relevance of the evidence from KAI 214 for the occurrences in 4Q543 seems negligible.

The two cases from the letters noted by Duke are clearly suffix forms:

B1.1:2(–3), נתנת לך חקלי, “I gave you my field.”¹⁷

B4.2:1 (= Cowley 110), נתנת לי כסף, “You gave me silver.”

In addition to these two occurrences, a few other forms of NTN from the same corpus of Aramaic texts from Egypt are quite clearly in the suffix conjugation:

A2.2:(4–)5, ... מסת כספה זי הוה בידי נתתן ופרדת לך, “an amount of money that was in my hand(s) I gave as *wp(d/r)t* to ...” According to this translation (Porten and Yardeni), the form נתתן is a first singular form (either an error for נתנת or with an object suffix). Others see the form as second plural.¹⁸

B1.1:(10–)11, ... ונתנת לך אתננהי, “And] if I do not stand up and cleanse and give (it) to you, I shall give it ...”¹⁹ Note the use of three suffix conjugation forms in the protasis of the conditional clause, and the prefix form in the apodosis. The root NTN occurs in both conjugations.

B1.1:12, ... ונתנת לי, “And you gave me ...”

16 Tropper, *Die Inschriften*, 287–89. Cf. the *Stammbaum* on p. 311.

17 For the texts and translations, see Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English*, 3 vols. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986, 1989, 1993); Arthur Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923). Also cf. Takamitsu Muraoka and Bezalel Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* (Leiden: Brill, 1998). The designations above are from Porten/Yardeni (and Cowley). Some documents have other designations in different works. Thus, the document referred to above as A2.2 is one of the Hermopolis letters, called Herm 2 in Jacob Hoftijzer and Karel Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 2:768. Folmer refers to it as HP 2 (Folmer, *The Aramaic Language*, 643). The document B1.1 is referred to as MAI xiv/2 by Hoftijzer and Jongeling. Elsewhere it is called Bauer-Meissner, BM, or Koopmans no. 19 (see J. J. Koopmans, *Aramäische Chrestomathie: Ausgewählte Texte (Inschriften, Ostraka und Papyri) für das Studium der aramäischen Sprache gesammelt*, 2 vols [Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1962], 1:22–23 and 2:95–99).

18 Cf. the discussion by Folmer, *The Aramaic Language*, 643, note 218.

19 This text “bietet der Interpretation grosse Schwierigkeiten” (Koopmans, *Aramäische Chrestomathie*, 2:95). However, suffix forms of NTN (1s and 2sm) are clearly discernible in lines 2, 11 and 12.

B4.3:12 (= Cowley 3:12), עבֹורא זי נתנת ע[ל ידן, “the grain which you gave in[to our hand.]”

C3.28:79 (= Cowley 81 a 1, with a different reading), חשבֹן עבֹורא זי כתבת, ... [ו]נתנת ל, “Account of the grain which I wrote [and] gave to ...”

Cowley 69 A:12 (= B8.5:15, but in the edition presented by Porten and Yardeni the relevant form is not represented), זי לא באגר יהבת לה אף, נתנת], “which I did not give to him as payment; also I gave” (Cowley’s translation). If this reading is correct, the two roots NTN and YHB seem to be used in the suffix conjugation in indiscriminate interchange.

The dictionary of Hoftijzer and Jongeling locates further cases of NTN in the suffix conjugation.²⁰ According to their overview, one instance is attested in Old Aramaic (in addition to the Sam’alian one in KAI 214). The form referred to is found in the inscription MDAIA ciii 62, on an ornament in the form of a horse’s forehead, dated to the ninth century and of North Syrian origin.²¹ The text may be read as זי נתן הדד למראן חזאל מן עמק בשנת עדה מראן נהר, “That which Hadad gave our lord Hazael from ‘Umqi in the year that our lord crossed the river.”²² However, since the inscription was inscribed in continuous script, an alternative interpretation is possible—the verb may be part of a personal name (Natanhadad), i.e. “the one of Natanhadad” or “donated by Natanhadad.”²³ If this interpretation is correct, the word provides no clear evidence for the actual use of the suffix form of the root in the language of the period since personal names may preserve archaic verbal forms in frozen form.

In later periods, a few more cases of suffix conjugation NTN possibly occur. However, most of those are not entirely clear. The form in RES 1795A 2, mentioned by Hoftijzer and Jongeling as highly uncertain,²⁴ could be a name, cf. Milik’s translation of the passage שלם אחוטב אל ישגא נתן לסון מן אלפא: “Salut Ahûtâb. (Qu’on veille à ce) que Natan ne s’égare point à Syène (en descendant)

20 Hoftijzer and Jongeling, *Dictionary*, 2:767–68.

21 MDAIA = Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung. See Helmut Kyrieleis and Wolfgang Röllig, “Ein altorientalischer Pferdeschmuck aus dem Heraion von Samos,” *MDAIA* 103 (1988): 37–75. Also Israel Eph’al and Joseph Naveh, “Hazael’s Booty Inscriptions,” *IEJ* 39 (1989): 192–200.

22 Eph’al and Naveh, “Hazael’s Booty Inscriptions,” 193.

23 Eph’al and Naveh, “Hazael’s Booty Inscriptions,” 194.

24 Hoftijzer and Jongeling, *Dictionary*, 2:767.

du bateau.”²⁵ In a text from Tell Halaf (TH i vs. line 4; Northern Mesopotamia, late seventh century BCE), the form נתן is probably a third singular masculine suffix form although it has been interpreted as a participle: נתן לה ויהדסמני הן לערריא, “Und Hadadsimanni (?), siehe, (ist) für ihn der Lieferant der Gerste.”²⁶ Lipiński divides the text differently and translates the relevant part of the passage as “If he does not give (back) that barley.”²⁷ In spite of the use of the English present tense in the translation, the form must be parsed as a suffix conjugation form (the use of which is not unexpected in a conditional clause; English usage in such clauses prefers a non-past verbal form).

Another possible instance occurs in a bilingual Greek-Aramaic ostrakon from the third century BCE (BASOR CCXX 55 line 3): בר 6 קוסידע שנת 6 לתמוז חנא קפילסוהו נתן [ל]ניקרתס זוזן 32, “On the twelfth of Tammuz, year 6, Qôš-yada‘, son of Ḥanna‘, the shopkeeper, gave [to] Nikeratos: zuz 32.”²⁸ However, once again, other readings have been proposed.²⁹ Yet another case is RES 496, line 1, which might include a third plural suffix conjugation form of NTN (נתנו). However, an alternative reading is וינתנו (i.e. prefix conjugation with preposed conjunction *w-*).³⁰ The majority of occurrences of NTN noted by Hoftijzer and Jongeling are prefix conjugation forms, as are most of the forms listed in the glossaries in Porten and Yardeni’s edition of the Egyptian documents. In contrast, the lists of suffix forms from the root YHB include a greater number of cases.

An additional (but rather dubious) example from a later type of Aramaic from the Dead Sea region occurs in XHev/Se 26 line 4, an Aramaic papyrus document dealing with deposits and barley: נתן אלך []. Yardeni provides two alternative translations—either נתן is a personal name or a

25 Józef T. Milik, “Les papyrus araméens d’Hermoupolis et les cultes syro-phéniciens en Égypte perse,” *Bib* 48 (1967): 546–622 (555).

26 Johannes Friedrich, Rudolf G. Meyer, Arthur Ungnad, and Ernst F. Weidner, *Die Inschriften vom Tell Halaf: Keilschrifttexte und aramäische Urkunden aus einer assyrischen Provinzhauptstadt*, AfOB 6 (Berlin, 1940), 71–73.

27 Edward Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1975), 118. Cf. Frederick M. Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period*, StSem, nuova serie 2 (Rome: Università Degli Studi “La Sapienza,” 1986), 240: “If he will give back that? barley.”

28 Aaron Skaist, “A Note on the Bilingual Ostrakon from Khirbet el-Kôm,” *IEJ* 28 (1978): 106–8.

29 See the suggestions in Hoftijzer and Jongeling, *Dictionary*, 2:767–68.

30 See Eduard Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine: Altorientalische Sprachdenkmäler des 5. Jahrhunderts vor Chr.* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1911), 236–37; Godfrey R. Driver, “Problems in Aramaic and Hebrew Texts,” in *Miscellanea orientalia dedicata Antonio Deimel annos LXX complenti*, AnOr 12 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1935), 46–70 (58).

suffix conjugation form of the verb NTN: “[...] those deposits Nathan/gave.”³¹ Sokoloff, in his dictionary of Judean Aramaic, prefers the first alternative, stating that the root is not used in the suffix conjugation in this type of Aramaic.³² Folmer notes a few additional cases of alleged suffix form NTN that have been proposed by various scholars (RES 1805, Aimé-Giron 1939 no. 120,1; Saq P [= Saqqara Papyrus] 35,3 and 43 a8). All of these, however, seem to be even more uncertain than the dubious cases mentioned above.³³

In sum, this brief overview seems to indicate that the use of NTN in the suffix conjugation in Aramaic is not very widespread, contrary to Duke's claim. Although around twenty possible examples have been noted, some of the supposed occurrences are in texts that are open for different readings and interpretations. In several cases, it is possible to read the passages in question without claiming that NTN is used in the suffix conjugation. Furthermore, a significant number of cases that do attest to the use of suffix conjugation NTN in an unequivocal way occur in a single document written in a type of Aramaic (the Sam'alian KAI 214) that seems to have no direct relevance for the attestation in 4Q543. The remaining clear cases are from the Elephantine letters and other documents from Egypt, which are, of course, closer to 4Q543 in regard to date and type of language. Still, it is clear that they are substantially older than the Qumran documents, likely from a different geographical background, and contain texts of a type quite different from the literary works preserved at Qumran. However, the Jewish background of the writers of some of the Egyptian documents and the possibility of Hebrew influence might be seen as an important trait that unites these texts with the material from Qumran (cf. below on the idea that נתן in 4Q543 could be a Hebraism). Yet, this cannot explain all the cases of suffix conjugation NTN.

The suppletive distribution of the roots NTN and YHB is a phenomenon that evolved at a comparatively late date in the different Aramaic varieties, and probably not at the same time everywhere. The youngest probable case of suffix conjugation NTN seems to be C3.28:79, mentioned above, from the Hellenistic period (third century, Edfu?), according to Folmer.³⁴ She states that

31 Ada Yardeni, “Aramaic and Hebrew Documentary Texts,” in *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and Other Sites*, ed. Hannah M. Cotton and Ada Yardeni, DJD 27 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 7–129 (96). The exact provenance of the document in question is uncertain (see Cotton and Yardeni's “General Introduction” to the volume, p. 5).

32 Michael Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Judean Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2003), 66.

33 Folmer, *The Aramaic Language*, 644–45, note 222.

34 Folmer, *The Aramaic Language*, 648 and 798.

“if this reading and interpretation is correct, then we must conclude that in the dialect of Edfu (?) the two verbs were still used side by side as late as the Hellenistic period, while in the dialect of Elephantine the use of the sf. conj. of *ntn* had become obsolete early in the 5th century.”³⁵

Hence, although Duke's claim of “many” Aramaic cases of suffix conjugation NTN seems rather exaggerated, it is surely correct to point out that such instances are not unheard of in the history of Aramaic. However, a more decisive question is whether there are any other examples of this usage in the Qumran material.

3 NTN and YHB in Qumran Aramaic

According to a search performed in BibleWorks, YHB occurs 47 times in the Aramaic Qumran manuscripts while NTN is attested 19 times. The general distribution is very clear. In 4Q542 1 i 5 (*Testament of Qahat*) we even have both verbs in the same sentence, YHB in the suffix conjugation and NTN in the prefix conjugation (jussive with אַל):

4 ... וכען בני אודהרו בירותתא די מ^(א)שלמא לכוֹן 5 ודי יהבו לכוֹן אבהתכוֹן ואל
תתנו ירותתכוֹן לנכראין ...

Et maintenant, mes fils, faites attention à l'héritage qui vous est (*ou a été*) transmis et que vous ont donné vos pères. Et ne donnez pas votre héritage à des étrangers ...³⁶

In the corpus as a whole, YHB is employed in the suffix conjugation in 30 cases and in participial form nine times (of course, since there are no vowels, some of the suffix forms might be parsed as participles instead). In addition, there are four imperatives and four prefix conjugation forms.³⁷ The latter are in the *ithpeel*—the suppletion only applies to the basic stem. Of course, since the root YHB is 1-y, some of the third singular masculine forms could be claimed to be in the prefix conjugation rather than the suffix conjugation. In a few cases, the

35 Folmer, *The Aramaic Language*, 648.

36 Puech, DJD 31:268 and 271.

37 Suffix conjugation: 1QapGen 6:8; 10:16; 17:15, 16; 20:29, 31; 21:3; 22:2, 17, 25; 1Q21 34 2; 2Q24 4 15, 16, 17; 4Q204 1 vi 11; 4Q206 4 ii 15; 4 iii 18; 4Q212 1 ii 22, 26; 4Q213b 1 5; 4Q243 27 2; 4Q245 1 i 4; 4Q531 6 3; 4Q532 1 i 11; 4Q542 1 i 5; 1 ii 11; 11QtgJob 38:4, 7; 11Q18 20 6. Participle: 1QapGen 5:17; 10:17; 11:17; 14:18; 19:24; 21:10, 27; 4Q213 1 i 11, 17. Imperative: 1QapGen 22:19; 4Q197 5 10; 4Q343 1 v 13; 4Q543 46 2. Prefix conjugation (*ithpeel*): 4Q212 1 iv 13, 15, 17; 4Q550a 1 5.

context is so fragmentary that we cannot rule this out. However, given the very clear distribution in general, this seems quite unlikely. Of the 19 clear cases of NTN, two are infinitives and 12 have personal prefixes that clearly indicate that the forms are in the prefix conjugation.³⁸

Five cases are ambiguous. Formally, they are simply נתן, which might be a first-person plural prefix conjugation form or a third singular masculine in the suffix conjugation. Two of these are the occurrences in 4Q543 under investigation. The form in 4Q541 5 1 (Apocryphon of Levi^b[?]) is more or less isolated in a completely fragmentary context:]מִן לְמִן[.³⁹ Consequently, nothing can be said about this case. The two remaining cases are both referred to by Puech in his discussion of the forms in 4Q543.⁴⁰ After noting that the verbs in 4Q543 2 1–2 are probably in the prefix conjugation, he mentions the possibility that they could be Hebraisms: “[...] autrement ce serait un hébraïsme. En ce sens, voir Tb 12:1 et 4QGéants. [...] Un hébraïsme est-il impossible: ‘et il t’a donné’, de même ligne 2?”⁴¹ Puech does not elaborate on the two cases alluded to but it is clear that he must be referring to 4Q196 16 1 and 4Q530 1 i 5.

However, in none of those instances is there any persuasive evidence for a suffix conjugation form of NTN. The passage from Tobit (4Q196 16 1: די הוה עמך) is translated as “who was with] you, and we shall give him his wages” in DJD 19.⁴² There is nothing in the Greek and Latin versions that would indicate that the meaning is past, and Puech’s reference to this verb does not seem to shed any light on the verbs in 4Q543.⁴³

38 Infinitive: 1QapGen 22:24; 4Q243 13 3. Prefix conjugation: 1QapGen 21:12, 14; 4Q196 17 ii 14; 4Q197 4 ii 5; 4Q203 3 4; 4Q213 1 ii–2 10; 4Q246 1 ii 8; 4Q343 1r 5; 4Q530 2 ii+6–12 14; 4Q542 1 i 5, 10; 11QtgJob 26:2. One additional occurrence (in 4Q558 46 2) is not found in BibleWorks. Puech reads the form]נתן[(Émile Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4.XXVII: Textes araméens, deuxième partie: 4Q550–4Q575a, 4Q580–587 et appendices*, DJD 37 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009], 213). In a note, he mentions a possible alternative reading (נתן[).

39 Puech, DJD 31:236.

40 Puech, DJD 31:295.

41 Puech, DJD 31:295. On the general topic of Hebraisms in Qumran Aramaic, see Steven E. Fassberg, “Hebraisms in the Aramaic Documents from Qumran,” in *Studies in Qumran Aramaic*, ed. Takamitsu Muraoka, AbrNSup 3 (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 48–69.

42 Joseph Fitzmyer, “Tobit,” in *Qumran Cave 4.XIV: Parabiblical Texts Part 2*, ed. Magen Broshi et al., DJD 19 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1–76 (24).

43 There are two versions of the Greek text, neither of which corresponds exactly to the extant Aramaic text. However, it is clear that the verbs for giving are in the infinitive and clearly do not refer to a past event. Tob 12:1 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Τωβιτ Τωβιαν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὅρα τέκνον μισθὸν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ συνελθόντι σοι καὶ προσθεῖναι αὐτῷ δεῖ. Tob (S) 12:1 καὶ ὅτε ἐπετελέσθη ὁ γάμος ἐκάλεσεν Τωβιτ Τωβιαν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ παιδίον ὅρα δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ πορευθέντι μετὰ σοῦ καὶ προσθεῖναι αὐτῷ εἰς τὸν μισθόν. The verb “to give” occurs in verse 2 as well and again nothing indicates that this

Similarly, in the passage from the Book of Giants (4Q530 1 i 5: ונתן שיציא), nothing compels us to read the verb as a suffix conjugation form. Puech's own translation in DJD 31 is rather odd: "et nous payerons. Il a détruit."⁴⁴ The first part is clearly a (rather free) translation of ונתן, interpreted as a first-person plural prefix form. The second part indicates that he understands שיציא as a verb in the suffix conjugation third singular masculine ("he destroyed"), which is possible. However, it seems more likely that שיציא is a noun ("destruction"). After initially translating ונתן as a prefix form and שיציא as a verb at the beginning of a new sentence, Puech seems to have reinterpreted the whole passage with שיציא as a noun functioning as the object of ונתן ("give destruction" = "destroy"), retaining only the second part of the original translation ("il a détruit") and interpreting this as the translation for the entire expression ונתן שיציא. Otherwise, I can see no reason for his reference to this passage in connection with his discussion of the verbs in 4Q543 2 1–2. Note that if the occurrence of NTN in 4Q530 1 i 5 (with the meaning "and he destroyed") were a Hebraism—as suggested by Puech—the underlying Hebrew would have to be of the unclassical type, i.e., the *weqatal* would be "unconverted" with anterior/past meaning like a simple Hebrew *qatal* (the same would be the case in some of the occurrences in the Elephantine letters discussed above if they are considered Hebraisms). Alternatively, it should be stressed that the influence from Hebrew pertains merely to the use of NTN in the suffix conjugation and not to the meaning of the combined form *weqatal* in Hebrew.⁴⁵ In any case, the passage in 4Q530 1 i 5 makes perfect sense without recourse to Hebraisms,

is a translation of a past referring verb; Tob 12:2, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ πάτερ οὐ βλάπτομαι δούς αὐτῷ τὸ ἥμισυ ὧν ἐνήνοχα. Tob (S) 12:2, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ πάτερ πόσον αὐτῷ δώσω τὸν μισθόν οὐ βλάπτομαι διδούς αὐτῷ τὸ ἥμισυ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ὧν ἐνήνοχεν μετ' ἐμοῦ. Similarly, the Latin Vulgate version provides no support for a past tense reading of NTN; 12:1, tunc vocavit ad se Tobias filium suum dixitque ei quid possumus dare viro isti sancto qui venit tecum. 12:2, respondens Tobias dixit pater quam mercedem dabimus ei aut quid dignum poterit esse beneficiis eius. Fitzmyer provides the Old Latin version of verse 1 (DJD 19:24): Homini illi qui tecum fuit reddamus honorem suum, et adiiciamus illi ad mercedem.

44 Puech, DJD 31:23.

45 Note that the translation of the passage in 4Q530 offered in the *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* seems to presuppose that ונתן is a full-blown hyper-Hebraism (third singular masculine *niphal* "converted" *weqatal*): "[...] and destruction will be given (?)" (Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition: Volume Two*, 1065; the passage is referred to as Frag. 6 col. 1 in this edition). If this line of thinking is followed through, the passage from Tobit mentioned above could be interpreted in the same way ("and his wages will be given to him"). However, in neither case is there any kind of evidence that this quite unlikely scenario is the correct interpretation.

cf. Cook’s rendering “we shall put destruction [on x].”⁴⁶ The preceding verb might support this interpretation—it is clearly a first-person plural prefix form (ונמות כחדא).

4 Why First Person Plural?

After this overview of the use of NTN in Qumran Aramaic it seems safe to say that there are no other instances of this root in the suffix conjugation in the corpus. Although an isolated Hebraism or an out-of-place dialectal archaism cannot be completely ruled out, no positive evidence exists for such a scenario. Hence, even though reading the forms in 4Q543 2 1–2 as suffix conjugation (“he gave”) provides an easy interpretation of the meaning of the passage (with Amram telling Moses that God has given wisdom to him, i.e. Moses),⁴⁷ we ought to investigate how the passage may be interpreted if the verbal forms are read as first-person plural prefix forms (“and we will give”).

To whom does the first-person plural prefix refer? Puech notes that the fragmentary state of the evidence does not permit any clear conclusion, yet he proceeds to speculate that the “we” might designate angelic messengers or the ancestors of Aaron. However, he also notes that the angels do not seem to play any role elsewhere in these lines.⁴⁸ The parallel text in 4Q545 indicates that Amram is the speaker in the preceding passage but because of holes in the surrounding context, we can hardly rule out the introduction of a new speaker or group of speakers after Amram (angels or God speaking in the majestic plural?). If, on the other hand, Amram is still speaking, why is he using the first person plural? As suggested by Puech, he might be referring to himself as a representative of the ancestral line. In fact, there is evidence that a tradition existed in which Amram transmitted various types of wisdom to Moses.⁴⁹ The Book of Jubilees states that Moses learned writing from Amram: *wamaharaka*

46 Edward M. Cook, *Dictionary of Qumran Aramaic* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 162 and 233.

47 This is Duke’s interpretation (*The Social Location*, 15).

48 Puech, DJD 31:295. Whether the statements are addressed to Aaron (according to Puech) or to Moses (under the name of Mal’akyahu, according to Duke) cannot be decided here. See Duke’s discussion of the question (*The Social Location*, 69–79). In any case, the answer to this question does not seem to make a difference for the interpretation of the verbal form as prefix or suffix conjugation.

49 Cf. Pieter W. van der Horst, “Moses’ Father Speaks Out,” in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Émile Puech, Anthony Hilhorst, and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, JSJSup 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 491–98 (491).

‘abrān ‘abuka maṣḥafa, “and ‘abrān [= Amram] your father taught you [= Moses] writing” (Jub. 47:9).⁵⁰ In the late Jewish work *Sefer ha-Razim*, Amram is mentioned as a link in a chain of people handing down mystical wisdom originally revealed to Noah by the angel Raziel. Noah wrote it down in a special book made of sapphire stone, which was later passed on to his descendants. In this way Amram received it and gave it to Moses, who also passed it on:

וכיצאו מן התבה בו היה משתמש כל ימי חייו ובעת מותו מסרו לאברהם ואברהם ליצחק ויצחק ליעקב ויעקב ללוי ולוי לקהת וקהת לעמרם ועמרם למשה ומשה ליהושע ויהושע לזקנים וזקנים לנביאים ונביאים לחכמים וכן כל דור ודור עד שעמד שלמה המלך וניגלו לו ספרי הרוזים והשכיל למאד בספרי בינה ומשל בכל חפצו בכל הרוחות והפגעים המשוטטים בעולם ואסר והתיר ושלח והביא ובנה והצליח מחוכמת הספר הזה, כי הרבה ספרים נמסרו בידו וזה נמצא יקר ונכבד וקשה מכולם.

And when they [or he?] left the ark, he [= Noah] used it [= the book] all the days of his life and at the time of his death he handed it over to Abraham, and Abraham to Isaac, and Isaac to Jacob, and Jacob to Levi, and Levi to Qahat, and Qahat to Amram, and Amram to Moses, and Moses to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the sages, and so on like this for every generation until king Solomon arose. And the books of the mysteries were revealed to him and he became very learned in books of understanding and he ruled over everything that he wanted, over all the spirits and the evil spirits that roam the world, and he imprisoned [or forbade] and released [or allowed] and sent out and brought in and built and prospered from the wisdom of this book. For many books were handed down to him, and this one was found to be more precious and honourable and difficult than every one of them.⁵¹

A similar idea might be referred to in another Aramaic Qumran document. According to 4Q542 1 ii 11 (Testament of Qahat), Qahat states that someone

50 For the text, see James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, CSCO 510 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989).

51 The text is the eclectic version published by Mordecai Margalioth, *ספר הרוזים* (Jerusalem: Yedi'ot Ahronot, 1966), 66. In some manuscripts Shem figures in the list before Abraham. וכיצאו at the beginning of the passage is a bit awkward. Some manuscripts have the more straightforward וכשיצא. The translation above is my own. For an English translation of the entire book, see Michael A. Morgan, *Sefer ha-Razim: The Book of the Mysteries*, SBLT 25, Pseudepigrapha Series 11 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983). Margalioth dated the work to the third or fourth century CE, but a later date (seventh or eighth century) has been proposed by Rebiger and Schäfer (Bill Rebiger and Peter Schäfer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II: Das Buch der Geheimnisse I und II*, 2 vols [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009]).

gave something to his father Levi, which Levi passed on to Qahat himself (ויהבו ללוי אבי ולוי אבי לי יִהב). Unfortunately, the following passage is missing but it seems likely that Qahat passed the things in question on to his own son (Amram) and so on, cf. Puech’s reconstruction אף/ואנא קהת יהב לכה ברי ולבניכה.⁵² The things referred to are probably the books mentioned in line 12 (כל כתבי), “all my books”).

Finally, we must mention a potential argument in favour of the suffix conjugation interpretation of the verbs in 4Q543 2 1–2, viz. the verbal form in the following line (4Q543 2 3). Duke reads this as הוסיף, i.e. a third singular masculine suffix form translated as “he added” (presumably referring to God who is also the subject of נתן according to Duke’s interpretation).⁵³ If this reading is correct it could be taken as support for interpreting the preceding verbs as suffix conjugation forms as well. Puech, however, proposes two other readings, הוסיף or מִהוסיף, i.e. a prefix conjugation or a participle.⁵⁴ Hence, interpreting נתן as a prefix form may lead to a perfectly smooth reading (“we will give you wisdom” and “he [God?] will add” something to that [signs and wonders?], or something “will be added”). In any case, the text is fragmentary and even if we read a suffix conjugation form (הוסיף), there is no reason to let this determine the interpretation of the verbs in lines 1 and 2 – something may have happened in the lacuna leading to a change of subject and temporal frame.

5 Conclusion

Summing up the preceding discussion, there seems to be no decisive evidence that would force us to accept Duke’s interpretation of נתן in 4Q543 2 1–2. Nonetheless, as stated above, a Hebraism or an isolated archaic dialectal oddity cannot be completely ruled out and for this reason, no final judgment can be made with absolute certainty. However, it seems to be sound methodology not to base one’s analysis on a linguistic phenomenon for which there is no positive evidence in the corpus most relevant for the case at hand. The secure attestations of suffix conjugation NTN are chronologically and geographically rather distant from the document under consideration. This state of affairs, combined with the fact that nothing in the context seems to speak decisively against understanding the forms as first-person plural prefix forms, gives reason for scepticism regarding the interpretation of 4Q543 2 1–2 proposed by Duke.

52 See Puech, DJD 31:269, 272, and 278.

53 Duke, *The Social Location*, 14.

54 Puech, DJD 31:294–95.

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