muß. Im besonderen kann unser Satz mit Jos. ii 18b–g verglichen werden: we 'at-t'ābik we 'at- immek we 'at-t'ahyik we 'at-kāl-bēt t'ābik ta'as'ēt 'ēlayik habbāy'ēēh, “und deinen Vater, deine Mutter und deine Brüder und auch das ganze übrige Haus deines Vaters bringe zu dir in das Haus”.

9 Entschiedendes gilt auch für eine englischsprachige Übersetzung wie die oben zitierte Übersetzung von Holladay (Anm. 2), S. 244.

10 Die dreigliedrige Reihe der besonderen Begriffe ist um den allgemeinen Begriff erweitert. Die Erweiterung ist jedoch formal nicht ausgedrückt. In der deutschsprachigen Übersetzung läßt sie sich durch die präzisierende Verbindung “und auch” (kopulative Konjunktion + Modaladverb), die durch die kopulative Konjunktion “sowie” ersetzt werden kann, kennzeichnen.


THE PREFIX CONJUGATION IN CIRCUMSTANTIAL CLAUSES IN THE TEL DAN INSCRIPTION?

In a recent, fresh contribution to this journal,1 J.A. Emerton takes up the disputed line 3 of this Aramaic inscription, which reads, partly reconstructed: wyškb. ʾhy. yhk. ʾl[.ḥbw]h. Emerton has now made it abundantly clear that, according to him, yhk can be interpreted as either plain preterital or circumstantial. By “plain preterital” we mean that the action indicated by the verb is distinct from that indicated by the preceding ħy, and the two verbs would indicate two actions which happened in the past one after the other.

The issue at stake here seems to me to be our understanding of “circumstantial.” When I said “it does not ring true” (Muraoka 1995:20, n. 4) without offering any argument for this judgement of mine, the nature of circumstantial clauses in Semitic languages was at the back of my mind.

S.R. Driver, who recognised the importance of the matter for Semitic syntax, devoted a special appendix to it.2 He defines a circumstantial clause as follows (p. 195):

any word or words expressive of some fact subordinate to the main course of the narrative, or descriptive of some circumstance attaching or appertaining to the action denoted by the principal verb, may form a circumstantial clause or secondary predicate: an adverb, a genitive or ablative absolute, a participle or other word in apposition to the subject—all of which qualify the main action by assigning the concomitant conditions under which it took place, be they modal, causal, or temporal—are familiar instances.

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This certainly provides a good starting point. One must ask whether a circumstantial clause so defined fits our yhk.

1. An indication of how Emerton understands yhk as circumstantial is his translation of it: “he [= my father] died, going to [his fate]” (Emerton 1997:433). “Going to his fate (or: to his forefathers)” does not seem to be subordinate to his dying, though one could speak of an explanatory, exegetical function: “Er starb, indem er zu seinen Vorfahren ging, (um mit ihnen vereinigt zu werden).”

2. As a possible circumstantial imperfect without a Waw in a past context Emerton (1997:435; 2000:32) refers to 1 Sam. xiii 17f., mentioned by Driver (1892:206): \textit{wayyēzē’ hammašhit mimmahē’nē pelēšim šelōšā rā’sīm hārōʾā ʾehād yipme ʾel derek ʿoprā}, “And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies, one company turning towards Ophra . . .” Here we have a picturesque description of a military operation. One can picture in one’s mind three companies each making its way towards a specific target of its own. Jerome skillfully captured the force of this syntagm by varying tenses: \textit{et egressi sunt} (perfect) \textit{ad praedandum de castris Philisthim tres cunei unus cuneus pergebat} (impf.) \textit{contra viam Ephra} . . . Similarly the Septuagint: καὶ ἔξηλθεν . . . ἐπιβλέπουσα . . . The yhk of the Aramaic inscription is hardly asking the reader to visualise the king being on his way to his forefathers’ abode. In other words, it is not describing a circumstance or state or ongoing process. Its aspect is not durative, cursive, but perfective and punctiliar.

3. Emerton (2000:32) further seeks support in Driver’s wording: a circumstantial clause “expressing sometimes concomitance, sometimes a consequence” (p. 206). For Emerton the term “consequence” here is of importance. However, once we admit “consequence” as a function of the syntagm, we are not very far removed from the familiar Waw consecutive with the imperfect, for a consequence, by definition, chronologically follows the principal action. Besides, among the 13 examples mentioned by Driver I cannot find a single case where one can safely speak of “consequence”.

4. Emerton (1997:434; 2000:32) thinks that he has an ally in Lipiński, who speaks of “an imperfect that expresses the finality or the consequence of the action signified by the preceding verb without the use of any coordinating conjunction.” Accordingly, he translates our line: “and my father lay down, so as to go to [his house of eternity].” To support his interpretation, Lipiński quotes, from Old Aramaic, Sefire III 11-12; \textit{wbrk yʾth yqm dm bry} . . ., “and your son must come, so as