

PREFACE

THE connections between Semitic (or Afro-Asiatic) and Indo-European languages are being investigated more methodically nowadays, but the researchers are still too few and isolated. Every so often I hear of a scholar in Poland or Brazil or Israel who has been studying a certain extensive set of comparative data and working out a theory. Some of these men and women are at a university; others are in a different profession but expert in many languages. There is no learned society or journal for us to share our findings in brief instalments, and thus to profit from mutual criticism and supplementation. But the subject itself is rich, and the individuals attracted to it are impelled to write long monographs; that is the only way to satisfy themselves and to present the sceptical world with a coherent statement of their research. To keep it unpublished, for fear that it may contain errors, would be a disservice all around. Once it is made available, any competent reader can extract for himself all that is profitable to him.

Mr. Joseph Yahuda is in a class apart. He wrote to me from London in 1977, after seeing my book on *The Indo-European and Semitic Languages*; and that opened up a fruitful correspondence, interrupted only by periods of illness. He was my senior by many years and (in the midst of a legal career) the author of several books on subjects of Jewish interest, beginning with *La Palestine revisitée* in 1928 and including the highly relevant *Law and Life according to Hebrew Thought* (published in 1932). His latest book is the outcome of an extended sabbatical, which he has taken from his profession in order to devote himself, fully and vigorously, to a systematic investigation of the vocabulary and grammar of the Hebrew Bible, and its linkage to Greek.

These are facts which I learned gradually as our friendship developed, though we have never had an opportunity to meet. He offered, from the outset, to send me the galley proofs of the present book, which was already in the printer's hands. His cordial manner and my own curiosity would not allow me to

refuse such a preview. It turned out that we often disagreed; but as I read on, I found more and more of truly great value—indeed, some of it astonishingly helpful for problems that had baffled me for years.

To illustrate this I shall make a few observations about particular pages, while commending the book as a whole for careful study by all who have a fair knowledge of Greek and Hebrew or Arabic, the chief languages treated by Mr. Yahuda. Furthermore, those who are expert in Sanskrit, Avestan, Armenian, or Hittite on the Indo-European side, or Akkadian on the Semitic, can from their several perspectives elucidate many of the phenomena noted by Mr. Yahuda. When the recently excavated texts from Ebla are published, they are also bound to have a great bearing on the pre-history of Hebrew.

1. I was most gratified to learn from him (pp. 236, 427, 668, kpi') on the homology of \aleph and χ ($\rho\acute{\omega}$) that \aleph (\aleph), which occurs nowhere in Biblical Hebrew except for *Jonah* 3: 2, means specifically an 'oracular or prophetic proclamation'. Indisputable as that is in the context of *Jonah's* mission to Nineveh, it unblocked for me the relation between the Hebrew root \aleph and the Greek $\chi\rho\acute{\iota}$, $\chi\rho\epsilon(\iota)$. Ever since I had discovered that the Homeric expression $\sigma\epsilon \chi\rho\acute{\iota}$ 'you need, you must' has the same structure as a Semitic verb-root with a prefix and stative vocalization—e.g., \aleph 'you lack, you will lack' (*Deut.* 8: 9)—I kept trying in vain to establish which Semitic root is cognate to $\chi\rho\acute{\iota}$. The meaning of \aleph 'call' seemed too distant from 'need' or 'must'. Besides, the 'emphatic' quality of the consonant \aleph corresponds usually to the non-aspirate κ , not to χ [k^h]. This left me with an uncomfortable surmise that there was no Semitic cognate to $\chi\rho\acute{\iota}$, and that notwithstanding the impressive correspondence in structure the root itself was unparalleled in any known language apart from Greek.

Now, however, I am satisfied that \aleph and $\chi\rho\acute{\iota}$ are indeed cognate, and anchored in the most basic stratum of the Hebrew and Greek vocabulary. The phonetic problem can be eased, if not quite solved, by noting an affinity between the 'emphatic'

* See *The Indo-European and Semitic Languages: An Exposition of Structural Similarities Related to Accent, Chiefly in Greek, Sanskrit, and Hebrew* (Albany, 1971), pp. 516-25; cf. pp. 241-57.

καθαρό in Attic (Aristophanes, *Aves* 214, etc.), *καθαρή* in Ionic (Herodotus 2. 38. 2), but *καθαρό* in other dialects, actually attested in an inscription of Heraclea (southern Italy): *ΚΡΙΘΑΣ ΚΟΘΑΡΑΣΔΟΚΙΜΑΣ* 'pure choice barley' (genitive singular; *Inscriptiones Graecae* 14. 645. 1. 103). The Hebrew form closest to this is הִי־תִּירָה, the feminine singular form of the stative verb in the perfect tense '(she) is pure' (Lev. 15: 28; also the 'converted perfect' הִי־תִּירָה 'and then she is pure', 12: 7). The term is fundamental in both Greek and Hebrew religion.

καθαρό *καθαρό* has no satisfactory Indo-European etymology, but קָטַר has Arabic (including Soqotri) and Ethiopic cognates, possibly borrowed from Hebrew after the Biblical period. The correspondence between the consonants [k-t-r]:[t-h-r] is surprising but, upon reflection, very attractive. If we expected the Hebrew counterpart to *κ-θ-ρ* to be קָטַר because ק is usually transliterated by *κ* in the Septuagint and ת by *θ*, something in the phonology of Hebrew would still block the sequence קָטַר which is not found in any Hebrew root; thus the Hebrew (and Aramaic) cognate of קָטַר 'kill' is קָטַר. The aspiration in *θ*, however, is maintained in the ת of תִּירָה, and the [t] component of *θ* turns up at the beginning of the Hebrew root.

The Hebrew vowels (-a-ā-ā) are best matched by the -o-a-d of Greek dialects outside of Attic and Ionic. For these dialects we lack evidence whether the short o was pronounced open (which the phoneticians now symbolize by [ɔ] or [o]) or closed (which they symbolize by [o] or [o]). The short o in Attic and Ionic was evidently the latter; so the Attic and Ionic o in the first syllable of this word is still as close as possible phonologically to the Hebrew [ɔ], a sound intermediate between [a] and [o].¹ The shortness of the o in *καθαρό* is established at least for one dialect, Lesbian, by the meter of Alcaeus (fragment 38[B6]. 23 Lobel-Page). I am not able to relate the Greek dialect variation *καθαρό*: *καθαρό* to the Hebrew morphological alternation between (-a-ā-) in the stative perfect and (-a-ā-) in the קָטַר ('intensive' or rather causative) imperative and imperfect; e.g. קָטַר 'purify me' (Ps. 51: 4). Greek has, for example, *καθαρούμεν* 'we

¹ The English word *cat* has [a] (in the American pronunciation), *caught* has [ɔ], and *coat* [o].

το κλητικόν ἔργον
 προσεφασκε δὲ, ὡς, ὅτι,
 ἢ δι' ἡγορηστικῆς κινήσεως

PREFACE

and the glottal stop \aleph on the one hand and possibly between χ and η on the other. From the morphological point of view a stative interpretation of $\sigma\epsilon \chi\eta\eta$ fits very well: 'you are called upon' $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ from its form could be stative, but in fact is active: 'you (or she) call(s), will call' $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ however, is stative: 'you are (or she is) afraid, afeared'; for the difference in vocalization between active and stative is neutralized in the imperfect tense of Hebrew verbs that end in \aleph .

The derived noun $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ is of a type that was originally participial: 'something proclaimed'; with the internal vocalization [-i'-] it is a passive rather than a stative formation. Occurring in a relatively late text, it typifies a trend away from the stative [-e-] and toward the passive [-i'-], which has prevailed enormously in post-Biblical Hebrew. It corresponds not quite so well as $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ would to the Greek noun $\chi\epsilon\iota\omega$, which means 'need' often in Homer and 'oracular pronouncement' in the Alexandrian poet Apollonius (*Argonautica* 1. 491). The latter meaning can be safely posited as early as Homer; for he uses $\chi\epsilon\iota\omega$, $\chi\epsilon\iota\omega\varsigma$ in both meanings ('oracular pronouncement' in *Od.* 11. 479). Greek has very few feminine nouns in - ω that are synonyms or near-synonyms of neuter nouns in - $\omega\varsigma$; but Hebrew has many feminines like $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ {- \aleph -}, $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ {- \aleph -} (*Esther* 5: 8) 'something asked for'. At least one of them, $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ 'something stolen', corresponds neatly to $\kappa\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\varsigma$ in every detail.

The imperative form of the verb $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ 'call, proclaim' (to so-and-so) is addressed by God to a prophet in Isaiah 40: 6, 58, Jeremiah 1: 6, Jonah 1: 2, 3: 2, Zechariah 1: 14, 17. The Greek active imperative, $\ast\chi\epsilon\alpha$ in Ionic or $\ast\chi\eta\eta$ in Attic, is not attested but can be inferred from the indicative $\chi\epsilon\alpha\varsigma$, $\chi\eta\eta$ 'he (or she) pronounces oracularly'; the subject is usually the Pythia, Apollo's prophetess, but it can be any prophet or the prophetic god himself (Herodotus 1. 55. 2, 62. 4, 87. 2, 7. 141. 2, etc.; Sophocles, *Electra* 35). Whereas $\aleph\eta\eta\aleph$ in itself conveys nothing extraordinary about the voice except loudness, the Greek $\chi\epsilon\alpha\varsigma$, $\chi\eta\eta$ may have suggested an unearthly tone.

¹ See my article in the *Festschrift for Winifred P. Lehmann* (Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, series IV, vol. iv, 1977), pp. 317-39.

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accent. However, *ὁ δὲ* exists also, but limited to an initial position; with that accent it cannot follow a noun as *ὁ δὲ* does.

3. Another problem of Greek syntax, which Mr. Yahuda's book throws unexpected light on, is the rule that a god's name, in prose (and comic verse), will be preceded by the article: *ὁ Ζεὺς, ἡ Ἀθηναίη*. The name of a man or a woman takes the article only when it recurs.¹ The Hellenists of modern times have explained that the article marks the person as already known to the listener or reader, because of a previous mention if the person is human, whereas a god is already known whenever he is mentioned.

Mr. Yahuda in no way undermines this by equating *ὁ Ζεὺς* with *אֱלֹהִים* (pp. 4, 38, 114), which is conventionally translated 'God Almighty'. But he brings out what no one has ever suspected before: that *אֱלֹהִים* 'God' in the Hebrew expression is functioning like the definite article in the Greek. To grasp the syntactical parallel, we need not adopt his phonetic argument that the Hebrew sounds are just a modification of the Greek sounds. It is only necessary to remark (a) that *אֱלֹהִים* is, beyond question, phonetically close to the Arabic article *ال*, and (b) that *אֱלֹהִים*, without *אֱ*, is characteristic of Hebrew poetry like *Ζεὺς*, without *ὁ*, in Greek poetry. *אֱלֹהִים* 'higher' or 'highest', when referring to God, is also preceded by *אֱ* in prose (Gen. 14: 18, 19, 20, 22) but not in poetry (except for Ps. 78: 35).²

So the problem is now to find the meaning originally common to *אֱ* and *ال*. Was it something like 'the famous'? *Ille* in Latin often had that sense—e.g., *magnus ille Alexander* (Cicero, *Pro Archia*, 10 [24])—when it was just beginning its devolution into

¹ Details in B. L. Gildersleeve and C. W. E. Miller, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, ii (New York, 1911), 229-36.

² *אֱלֹהִים* (p. 67), occurring only in Ezek. 13: 11, 13, seems to incorporate the article of another Semitic language. Although in this high-flown prophetic passage it has commonly been taken to mean 'hail', an alternative and probably a better interpretation is 'gypsum' or 'plaster, cement' (*γύψος*). In Job 28: (8) *אֲבַרְבָּרִים וְאֲבַרְבָּרִים* 'corals and crystal', the element [ʿl-] is absent. See W. Mun-Arnott, 'On Semitic Words in Greek and Latin', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 23 (1892), 70, and earlier scholarship cited by him.

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the definite article of the Romance languages. Putting Hebrew and Greek usage together, I would conclude that in plain speech the essential mark of divinities was their *glory*.

4. My initial reaction to Mr. Yahuda's derivation of ^{לִי} (or ^{לִי}) 'harlot' from *γυνή* 'woman' (pp. 46, 425) was sharply adverse: 'could be taken for a calumny against the whole female sex', I noted in a letter dated March 20 1978. But later I reflected that the Old English word *cwene* 'woman' (related to *γυνή*, though not an exact cognate) was often used disparagingly and served to translate the Latin *meretrix*.⁴ So I can envisage ^{לִי} developing from *γυνή* (or a dialect form such as *γυνά*) in a biased sense, as it designated an *unmarriageable* woman, one presented to the Hebrews through commerce and not one of their own.

5. It can hardly be an accident that the word for 'yesterday'—*χθές* in Greek, ^{לְמָחָר} in Hebrew—is among the very few in either language that sometimes have the sound [E-] prefixed without any change of meaning: *ἐχθές*, ^{לְמָחָר} (p. xxix). In Greek the *ἐ-* is reminiscent, semantically as well as phonetically, of the prefix attached to verbs to show past time, but optionally omitted in poetic narratives. *ἐχθές* occurs only in prose or comic texts, where the *ἐ-* is obligatory with past verbs.

6. In a belated discovery, as important as any taken up in my book or more so, I find that Mr. Yahuda has partly anticipated me. I paid no particular heed to his citation of ^{קָדוֹשׁ} *καθαίρων* (pp. 44, 59), but most recently I have realized that there is an excellent structural match, not only in the consonantal root but in the vowels within it and the suffix. The feminine form of the adjective (nominative singular) that means 'pure' or 'clean' is

⁴ It is the source of *queen*, which is now virtually obsolete, whereas *quene* is from the Old English *cwon* '(king's) wife'. Over many centuries, however, the superior and the inferior word were commonly confused in spelling and no doubt in pronunciation. After 1800, though the distinction in spelling was finally standardized, the two words were irremediably homophonous:

This modern Amazon and queen of queans

(Byron, *Don Juan* 6. 96)

During the long reign of the beloved and respected Victoria people stopped using the pejorative *quean*.

will purify' (Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 18. 6); but the verb happens not to occur in what little survives of the dialects that show the adjective as καθαρός.

The correspondence of -α (-ῆ in Ionic and sometimes in Attic) to the Hebrew feminine suffix (-ֵה) remains somewhat problematical in regard to the quality of the vowel (see above, p. xv); but at any rate it recurs: ἀγορά, ἀγορά: אָהוּרָה 'assembly'; ἀγάπη: אָהוּבָה 'love'; feminine ethnics such as Αἰγυπτία (-ῆ) 'Egyptian'; מוֹאבִּיָּה 'Moabite', etc. The accent on the last syllable is the most momentous feature of all, because it allows us to throw a flood of light upon the original or principal function and placement of Greek descriptive adjectives. καθαρός, καθαρά, καθαρή resembles the Hebrew non-terminal form אָהוּרָה much more than the terminal form, which has a different vowel [é] accented in the previous syllable. Only the 'converted perfect' אָהוּרָה is recorded (Lev. 12: 8); and in general the final position is sparsely recorded for stative verbs. In their function as a predicate—'is pure', 'has become pure'—such verbs are normally followed by a subject rather than preceded. So it was originally (as I infer) in Greek with the adjectives that are most like stative verbs: they served primarily as predicates, followed typically by a noun. In the classical Greek language, although the order of words is remarkably free on the whole, still that collocation is favoured (with the copulative verb εἶναι 'is' optional and very often absent); e.g. καθάρᾳ ἡ κρίσις 'the decision is pure, untainted' (Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 3. 12. 1414^a13-14; cf. Euripides, *Cyclops* 562; Plato, *Menexenus* 245d, etc.).

The alternation of vowel and accent, depending upon the position of a word in a phrase or sentence, is (in my considered opinion) an archaic characteristic of Hebrew. In particular the shifting of the accent, when the word is initial or non-terminal, to the last syllable—so that it comes on a suffix—gives us an idea of what developed in the prehistory of Greek, and perhaps other Indo-European languages. Such an accent on the last syllable is unstable. In Hebrew it will be displaced if the next word has an accent on the first syllable. אָהוּרָה 'the wine-press is full' (Joel 4: 13; cf. Ps. 26. 10). In Greek the vowel-and-accent pattern of any given word is stable, or stabilized, no

matter where it happens to be placed in the sentence or how it functions: whether the adjective *κοθαρά* is predicative '(is) pure' or attributive '(a) pure', nothing will displace the accent to *κόθαρά,¹ nor can there be a terminal form *κοθέρᾱ. But this accent on the last syllable, to judge from all the ancient evidence, is weak, unlike the firm accent—a raised pitch—on the penultimate or antepenultimate syllable of words such as *δευτέρᾱ* 'second' (feminine), *δευτέρος* (masculine), *τετάρτη*, *τέταρτος* 'fourth', and other adjectives that are not primarily descriptive or predicative. The marking of an acute accent on the last syllable, *before a pause*, is a medieval convention, though traceable to the doctrine of the Greek grammarians early in the Christian era; it scarcely counts as evidence of a raised pitch there, rather than a stress. The grave accent, which we find actually written in any other environment (*καθαρά* or *καθαρή*), is somewhat better attested than the acute (*καθαρά*, *καθαρή*); but what sound it stands for is most uncertain.

My accentuation of *κοθαρά* (or *κοθαρά*, for that matter) is conventional, in that our ancient sources give little definite information about accents in the dialects apart from Attic and Ionic. Lesbian alone is amply reported to have had recessive accent in all words—i.e. never on the last syllable. The other dialects, so far as the indications go, agreed on the whole with Attic and Ionic in the accentual part of their phonology, but disagreed on some details. There is *nothing contrary* to my citation of the feminine form of the adjective as *κοθαρέ* in the dialect of Heraclea; what we have for certain is *ΚΟΘΑΡΑ*.

The Indo-Europeanists, attempting to reconstruct the order of words in the prehistoric ancestral language, are frustrated by the exceedingly flexible order in classical Greek, which defies any simple formulation. But in view of my inference that the vowel-and-accent pattern of *κοθαρά* illustrates how descriptive adjectives arose out of *stative verbs followed by a subject*, we can reasonably posit a type of sentence in which the predicate came first.

¹ Only if it becomes the name of a person does the accent then recede toward the beginning of the word: *ἀγαρή* 'noble,' *φαιδρά* 'radiant,' but the princesses *Ἀγαρή* and *Φαιδρά*. The central function of a name is vocative, for addressing the person; and in Greek (as in Sanskrit) the vocative is associated with an accent of raised pitch on the first syllable, or as close to it as the phonology of the language allows.

7. All this is far from an exhaustive enumeration of what I personally have gained from Mr. Yahuda's long and detailed book. But let it serve, since my part is only to contribute a preface. Each reader can surely find for himself the points throughout the book that are most pertinent to his scholarly interests. I would, however, call attention briefly to a few etymologies that strike me as original, ingenious, and often relevant to a comparison between the Septuagint and the original Hebrew text:¹

(a) ἀνοχή 'stopping, postponement, relief' (p. 78): הִנָּחֵה 'remission' (only in Esther 2: 18). αλλή

(b) ἀρά (in Attic), ἀρή (in Homer) הִרָא 'curse' (p. 39). The full vowel [a] remains in the first syllable even when a suffix is added הִרָאֵנִי 'my curse' (Ezek. 17: 19; cf. 17: 16, Gen. 24: 41, Deut. 29: 41, 20). αλλή

(c) δαμάω, δαμάζω 'I tame, I overcome': הִדָּמָה 'he is overcome' (p. 360). The thematic (so-called ה"ו) verb of Hebrew is most closely paralleled by the Greek thematic noun or adjective ἵπποδαμος 'horse-tamer, horse-taming', whose vocative case ends in -ε. αλλή

(d) δίψα הִדָּסָה (this noun only in Jer. 2: 25, although the root is frequent) 'thirst' (p. 402). Such a metathesis and modification of consonants would be unusual but credible. αλλή

(e) ἔδνα, ἐδνα 'bridal gifts' (p. 349): הִנָּחֵה 'these are a gift [of love] to me' (Hosea 2: 14; cf. הָנַח 'give'). αλλή

(f) εὐλή הִנָּחֵה 'worm, maggot' (pp. 51, 109). The [t-] would then be a prefix. αλλή

(g) κατὰ (rarely καται in poetry): הִנָּחֵה 'according to' (Deut. 25: 2, etc.; p. 171). αλλή

(h) κνέφας 'darkness, twilight' (p. 365): הִנָּחֵה 'he will be hidden' (Is. 30: 20). This raises the question whether the familiar αλλή

¹ Some of them were first proposed to me in handwritten memoranda from Mr. Yahuda, responding to the points that I brought up in my letters. Not everything that figured in our correspondence has found a place in the book (which was virtually finished before our acquaintance began). But in any case I am here including etymologies that are too good to leave unmentioned.

noun קַנָּף ^{καυδός} 'wing' was originally perceived as a shadow from a large bird in the sky.

(i) φρέαρ (pl. φρέατα, in epic φρελάται): ^{קנה} קָנָה (pl. construct ^{קנה} קָנָה), Gen. 14: 10 'a well' (p. 81).

Among the issues of linguistic methodology which this book is bound to raise, an important one concerns the occasional, sporadic, or spontaneous deviants from the normal form—i.e. the normal pronunciation—of a particular word or words. Have such deviants had, in the long run, a major or only a minor role in the gradual transformation of languages? The linguistic profession is far from a consensus. But in the examples I have cited, the relation between the known Greek and Hebrew forms can be explained without a need to posit any highly anomalous change.

I have unbounded admiration for Mr. Yahuda's energy, enthusiasm, and thoroughness. As shown in the foregoing pages, I have profited greatly from scrutinizing his book, and particularly from certain inspired passages. Some of his boldest thoughts are the best; and if we criticize him, we ought in fairness to acknowledge that a sternly cautious method would have inhibited those valuable flashes. Once, in 1979, I wrote to him, 'Your book will be here for a long time, after both of us are in our graves.' This preface is intended, in a small way, to help toward the fulfilment of that expectation.

SAUL LEVIN