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sent revisions of the end-time scenario outlined after the Roman conquest of Judea, to accommodate sectarian interpretation to a new reality.

Among other articles, James VanderKam writes on common ownership of property in Essene Communities. The late Dan Barag suggests that coins from Alexander Jannaeus' time with the title "priest the king" react to the Pharisaic opposition against Jannaeus' holding the double office of king and high priest early in his reign. Menahem Kister traces ancient material in the mediaeval midrash *Pirke de-rabbi Eliezer* with parallels in the Targums, *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon*, indicating that these traditions date back to the second temple time and were preserved in rabbinic circles for centuries. Shani Tzoref argues persuasively that 4Q252 (*Commentary on Genesis A*) is a unified composition with patriarchal blessings and their fulfilment as overarching theme. The covenants with Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lead up to the coming Davidic messiah and his "men of the community."

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David L. Mathewson, *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation: The Function of Greek Verb Tenses in John's Apocalypse*. Leiden: Brill, 2010. Hardcover. VI + 206 pages. ISBN: 9789004186682. €98.00.

In *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation: The Function of Greek Verb Tenses in John's Apocalypse*, David Mathewson addresses the long-discussed issue of how to understand the peculiar language of Revelation, which most commonly has been taken to reflect a significant Semitic influence. M.'s volume includes five chapters with back matter: "Introduction," "Verbal Aspect Theory," "Verbal Aspect in Revelation," "Shifting Tenses in the Apocalypse," "Conclusion: Verbal Aspect and the Nature of Revelation's Greek"; Bibliography; Author Index; and Reference Index.

Drawing on recent advances in Greek linguistics and particularly research on verbal aspect to understand the Greek tenses (as in works by Porter, Fanning, Campbell, McKay, Decker and Olsen), M. sets out to test if the notoriously complicated use of indicatives in Revelation can be better understood from an aspectual point of view. The backdrop of his attempt are previous, unsuccessful efforts that failed because of (i) their failure to distinguish between various degrees of Semitic influence – translation-Greek, enhancement and intervention – the last of which alone qualifies as a Semitism; (ii) the assumption in almost all studies that the Greek tenses should be understood temporally; (iii) their lack of a rigorous and linguistically grounded approach to the Greek verbal system.

M. notes that "somewhat of a revolution" is under way in the study of the verbal system of Greek. Aspect serves to indicate perspective or viewpoint rather than time or *Aktionsart*. He draws attention to four areas of debate; first, he notes that "aspect takes precedence over time" – a notion that almost all aspect advocates accept; second, aspect is based on the morphology of the tense form; third, the distinct separation of aspect as a mostly subjective category and *Aktionsart* as

a mainly objective category; fourth, M. points to the important distinction between semantics and pragmatics and makes reference to implicature as the fruitful bridge between the two – Fanning’s overload of the tense form serves as an example to illustrate the failure to uphold this distinction. The general agreement as to perfective aspect (viewing the action from the outside and as a complete whole) and imperfective aspect (with a focus on the internal structure) is contrasted by disagreement over the semantic nature of the stative, in which debate M. opts for the stative aspect as *a state of affairs*. The future is seen as non-aspectual and grammaticalizing expectation. M. correctly argues that the aspects are best understood in a network of meaningful oppositions where verbal semantic choices are made. However, he misses the point arguing that there is an opposition between perfective and imperfective aspect – rather the opposition is between perfective and non-perfective. In the aspectual network the Perfective (Aorist) is the least marked, whereas the Imperfective (Present, Imperfect) are more marked. The stative aspect (Perfect, Pluperfect) is the most heavily marked aspect. Their relationship is equipollent as M. maintains, but he errs when he argues that they are not binary – rather they are both equipollent and binary. The aspects are markers of degrees of prominence in discourse, where the perfective is used for backgrounding, the imperfective is used for foregrounding and the stative is used for foreground, which means that the Aorist is used for narrative, the Imperfect for marked past contexts, the Present for climactic points and the Perfect and Pluperfect for what is highly prominent. Supporting himself on Reed, M. argues for prominence as a pragmatic effect rather than the semantic content of the aspects. However, in his analyses in the third and fourth chapters, his treatment seems to lean towards understanding prominence as semantically contained.

First, M. treats John’s work as “an autobiographical narrative of a visionary experience” dealing with the indicative mood in the major tenses. For the aorist, M. demonstrates how it can be used for past, present (11:17), timeless (19:7) and future reference (10:7). M. notes that future referring aspect grammaticalizes aspect in the place of the aspectually vague future, but he rejects Giesen’s assertion that it indicates a greater extent of certainty. However, even though Giesen is temporally motivated he might be right at this point since the aorist has an implicature signalling that something is established. As M. addresses the issue of aorists used with the force of a stative (perfect), he is clearly mixing up the terminology when contesting “the apparent perfective force of the aorist”; obviously he is contesting the *stative* force of the aorist. But he importantly points out that the perceived stative force of the aorist often is the consequence of idiomatic translation into English (e.g. “I have ...”) “rather than [reflecting] the semantics [proper] of the aspect.” M. next deals with the use of the present tense that occurs in past, present, future (1:7; 2:5) and temporally unrestricted contexts. Reference to Semitic influence for the futuristic present is unwarranted since future use of the present is well attested in Hellenistic Greek. Even though ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι may reflect some Semitic influence, its occurrence throughout NT and in extra-biblical Greek indicates that it is not un-Greek. Futuristic present is particularly clear when juxtaposed by futures (2:22–23, 9:6, 11:7–9). The point of using the future-referring present in place of the future would be to indicate the future as a process that

unfolds and develops. M. rejects Thompson's insistence on Semitic influence for past-referring presents since he cannot explain its inconsistency. Despite frequent rendering of *לֵאמֹר* with the present participle of *λέγω* in LXX, attestation of this form in extra-Biblical and Classical Greek suggests Semitic enhancement rather than pure Semitism. In discussing the special case of *ἔχω* that only occurs in the present in Revelation, M. suggests that the semantic choice was limited "since there are no aorist forms attested in Revelation." This is however not a necessary conclusion since the paradigmatic choice was available to the writer of Revelation. As to the perfect M. demonstrates its use in various temporal contexts, and especially to indicate emphatic prominence (as *εἰληφα* in 2:28). So-called aoristic use of the perfect is often conditioned by English translation concerns rather than the proper semantics of the Perfect. While conceding to a Semitic influence on perfect participles in Revelation, M. rejects Semitic interference. Perfect participles are often attached to persons and objects of significance to indicate prominence. For the non-aspectual future tense M. postulates grammaticalization of *expectation* and argues that the future is more marked than the subjunctive in *ἴνα* clauses, but when addressing use of the future in conditionals he confounds the terminology of protasis and apodosis. M. concludes the chapter by asserting the explanatory power of verbal aspect against assumed Semitic influence and temporally and *Aktionsart* based approaches.

Second, M. treats the issue of tense forms in a number of visionary sections in Revelation that refer to the same temporal context. In 7:9–17 (the great crowd standing in heaven) for instance, M. shows that verbal aspect demonstrates a capacity to indicate prominence as well as to structure discourse in such a way as to explain the alternation of tenses. Aorists summarize and introduce dialogue; presents highlight focal points and continuity; the heavily marked perfects introduce key figures and with *εἶρηκα* (7:11) John's utter surprise is indicated; the only pluperfect grammaticalizes stativity and remoteness, placing the circle of angels somewhat further away, allowing the crowd to remain in focus; the futures (possibly reflecting influence from LXX: Ezek 37:27, 34:23; Isa 49:10; Ps 22:1) may be used for cohesion with reference to the same forms in the climactic chs. 19 and 21. In 19:11–21 M. observes the highest density of the heavily marked Perfect in all of Revelation describing the Warrior Messiah and his army. M. notes the appropriateness of this focus on "Christ as the conquering Lamb" in the eschaton.

Overall, as elaborated on in the summarizing fifth chapter, M. does a good job presenting the verbal aspect approach as a viable alternative to help us to understand and perhaps solve the conundrum of the use and shift of indicative tenses in Revelation.

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