

an artificial literary language, it made good sense to cite Aramaic examples instead. Aramaic was believed to be the primary language of the Jews for both speech and literary production, beginning already in Second Temple times and continuing for centuries afterwards; Mishnaic Hebrew, on the other hand, was believed in the nineteenth century to be an artificial creation. Despite this, Gesenius used Mishnaic Hebrew fairly often.³¹

4.4 Early signs of MH scholarship

§ 15 I would like now to discuss another important aspect of Gesenius' work. When we ask what the relationship is between the *Thesaurus* and modern scholarship on Mishnaic Hebrew, the question need not be limited to his use of data from that dialect. Even when he does not mention anything from the Mishnah or the Talmud in a particular entry or series of interconnected entries, it is possible to discern his involvement with issues which would later be discussed in the context of the modern study of Mishnaic Hebrew. Sometimes this is not limited to a single word, but relates to a general grammatical issue, although the *Thesaurus* itself is, of course, a dictionary which presents words individually and in alphabetical order.

§ 16 Allow me to discuss an example where there is involvement with a larger grammatical issue within Biblical Hebrew, which has implication for Mishnaic Hebrew, as well. More specifically, it can be said that it turns out that Gesenius in his *Thesaurus* reached conclusions which were later to be revealed in Mishnaic Hebrew research. I have no better example of such an issue than the way the *Thesaurus* deals with the secondary entries devoted to words on the pattern *pā'ōl* (פָּעוּל), which are called *nomen agentis*. In my view, the basic conclusions which would be reached in the mid-twentieth century are already contained in kernel form in the *Thesaurus*, although they are distributed throughout the work, primarily in the definitions given in the relevant entries. When these definitions and interpretations are collected, it is possible to see the linguistic theory animating them. I turn now to the details.

§ 17 In the Bible there are at least eight words on the pattern פָּעוּל, with a stable *qamets*: בָּחֵן “one who checks metals,” חֲלֹם* “dreamer,” חָמוץ “one who robs and oppresses,” עָשׂוֹק “one who steals and robs,” צָרוּף “one who refines gold and other precious metals,” רָזַן (which interchanges with רוֹן) “ruler, prince”; and there is one word attested in the feminine form: בְּגֹזֶה “one who habitually betrays.” There is one further word in Biblical Aramaic:

³¹ See above, nn. 4–6.

פְּרוֹז “one who announces on behalf of the rulers.” First it is worth mentioning that the word קְלוֹם is a form restored by M. Z. Segal over seventy years ago;³² the Masoretic text is vocalized with a *hatef-patah*: קְלֹמְתִיכֶם (Jer 27:8; 29:9), but the contexts make it clear that the reference is to dreamers, and not the dreams themselves.³³

§ 18 Of the eight words just mentioned, Gesenius has secondary entries for just six of them: בָּחוּן, תְּמוּץ, עֲשׂוּק, רִזּוֹן, בְּגוּדָה, and פְּרוֹז. Here are the details:

- A. Gesenius defines בְּגוּד (p. 178), which is reflected in the feminine form בְּגוּדָה, in the phrase אַחֲוֹתֶיהָ יְהוּדָה (Jer 3:7, 10), as an adjective, and notes that the *gametz* is irreducible like in the Aramaic קְטוּל pattern and Arabic *qātūl*.
- B. He classifies בָּחוּן (p. 198), in the verse בָּחוּן נִתְתִּיךְ בְּעַמִּי מִבְּצָר (Jer 6:27), as “adj. verbale,” and notes that it is equivalent (“i.q.” = idem quo) as the participle בָּחֵן.³⁴
- C. Similarly, with regard to עֲשׂוּק (p. 1080), attested in the verse וְהִצִּילוּ גִזּוֹל מִיַּד עֲשׂוּק (Jer 22:3), Gesenius writes that this form is equivalent to the active participle עוֹשֵׂק found in the parallel מִיַּד עוֹשֵׂק (Jer 21:12).
- D. In speaking about תְּמוּץ (p. 712) in the verse תְּמוּץ אֲשֶׁר תְּמוּץ (Isa 1:17), Gesenius writes at length. He never actually specifies a grammatical analysis of the word, but he does mention that it is equivalent to the participle חוֹמֵץ in the verse מִיַּד מְעִיָּל וְחוֹמֵץ (Psalm 71:4). Furthermore, he compares it to the word חֲמָצָן, which is attested in the Babylonian Talmud,³⁵ referring to the phrase found twice, וְהָיוּ קוֹרִין אוֹתוֹ, (חֲמָצָן) “they would call him ‘son³⁶ of a thief’ until the day of his death” (b. Yoma 39b; Qiddushin 53a).³⁷ Especially worthy of note is the important comment he appends in parentheses: “Compare עֲשׂוּק and עֲשֵׂק, רִזּוֹן and רִזֵּן, בָּחוּן and בָּחֵן.”

³² See Segal 1939–1940:154–156. The context is unambiguous in pointing to the meaning dreamers.

³³ See Chapter Seventeen below, with n. 13 there, and Bar-Asher 2009a:1.137–139, where I explain how קְלֹמְתִיכֶם became קְלֹמוֹתִיכֶם.

³⁴ As mentioned (above, n. 4), all participles are cited in the *Thesaurus* without a *vav*, even when the word is spelled with a *vav* in the biblical text.

³⁵ This was apparently drawn from Buxtorf’s dictionary (see there, p. 785). Buxtorf cites the example from Yoma, cited below.

³⁶ It appears with בן in Yoma and with בר in Qiddushin.

³⁷ He sees the root חמ"ץ as a biform of the root חמ"ס.

- E. Similar views, although presented in abbreviated form, are found in his discussion of רָזוֹן (p. 1280), attested in the verse וּבֹאֲפֹס מֶלֶךְ, בָּרַב עִם הַדָּרַת מֶלֶךְ, בָּרַב עִם הַדָּרַת מֶלֶךְ (p. 1280), attested in the verse וּבֹאֲפֹס מֶלֶךְ, בָּרַב עִם הַדָּרַת מֶלֶךְ (Prov 14:28). Here, too, Gesenius observes that רָזוֹן is equivalent to רָזַן,³⁸ and parenthetically compares the pair עָשׂוֹק and עֲשֻׁק.³⁹
- F. Gesenius also devoted a discussion to the Aramaic noun כְּרוֹז (p. 712), attested in the determined state in the verse וְכְרוֹזָא קְרָא בַחִיל (Dan 3:4).

§ 19 I have no intention of taking the *thesaurus* writer to task for not including entries for the other two nouns on this pattern, צָרוּף and חָלוּם. For our purposes what is significant is that Gesenius presents a correct understanding of this linguistic phenomenon nearly every time the issue arises. He does not suffice with merely identifying a word as a noun or an adjective, but compares it in a number of instances to the Qal active participle – the פֹּעֵל pattern. More than this, he even enumerated the four examples of פֹּעֵל – פֹּעֵל interchanges: as mentioned, in the discussion of חֲמוּץ he pointed to חוּמָץ and then cited the three other pairs.⁴⁰ No less significant is his citation from the Babylonian *Talmud* of the word חֲמִצָּן, in the פֹּעֵל pattern, as equivalent to חוּמָץ/חֲמוּץ.

§ 20 In fact, Mishnaic Hebrew research later revealed a complete picture of the relationship between the patterns פֹּעֵל, פָּעוּל, and פִּעֵלָן: alongside the participle פֹּעֵל, which had both verbal and nominal uses, there were also two patterns whose usages were primarily nominal (adjectival or true nouns) – פָּעוּל and פִּעֵלָן. Of course, there is no reason that the *Thesaurus* would be expected to cite the Mishnaic forms on this pattern, since the words attested on this pattern in Biblical Hebrew do not appear in the Mishnah. Purely Mishnaic forms, such as גְּרוֹסוֹת (Kelim 12:4) “makers of grits,” דְּרוֹכוֹת (Terumot 3:4) “those who tread on grapes to make wine,” לְקוֹחוֹת (Ketubbot 8:1) “regular purchasers,” and מְשׁוּחוֹת (Eruvin 4:11) “measurers of land,” also do not belong in the *Thesaurus*, since they are not attested in the Bible.

§ 21 The classification “adj. verbale” Gesenius gives to בָּחוּן is interesting. Apparently this is based on the fact that בָּחוּן is in free variation with בּוֹחוֹן,

³⁸ The form רָזוֹן appears in the Bible six times, all in the plural, for example, הַנּוֹתֵן רִזְוִים (Isa 40:23). Ben-Yehuda's *Thesaurus* compares the interchange between singular רָזוֹן and plural רִזְוִים to the interchange between singular בָּן and plural בָּנִים, and other such pairs in which the two forms appear in different patterns. In my opinion, the cases are not comparable.

³⁹ We can add a few פֹּעֵל forms to his list: אָמוֹן (Prov 8: 30) and יְקוֹשׁ (Hos. 9 8). Gesenius (1810:403) defines יְקוֹשׁ as a participle like עָשׂוֹק, חֲמוּץ, בָּחוּן, but in the *Thesaurus* he cites it along with the passive participle יְקוּשׁ. (Ps 91:3). Does he assume that יְקוּשׁ is a variant of יְקוֹשׁ?

⁴⁰ In the discussion of רָזוֹן, on the other hand, he mentions only one other example.

and this gave Gesenius the clue to properly understand the connection of the פָּעוֹל pattern to the verbs in the Qal. It should still be said that פָּעוֹל only interchanges with the *nominal* use of the participle. It goes without saying that one would not expect to find in the *Thesaurus* other insights uncovered by modern scholars working on Mishnaic Hebrew regarding any of the patterns just discussed. In particular the findings of Ben-Zion Gross in his book on the patterns ending in *nun*, such as the difference between the Eretz Israel form פָּעֵלָן and the Babylonian form פָּעֵלָן, and other conclusions which he reached: these would be out of place in Gesenius' *Thesaurus*.⁴¹

§ 22 In sum, when one combines all that Gesenius said about the six words on the pattern פָּעוֹל which have their own entries, it becomes clear that his work contains the core of the findings of more recent scholarship on Mishnaic Hebrew.

On a related point, however, it should be observed that in discussing the word רַחֲמָנִיּוֹת (Lament. 4:16) on p. 1283, Gesenius determined that the singular form was רַחֲמָנִי, instead of רַחֲמָן (although he did cite the Arabic form *rahmān* in that context). Was he unaware of the fact that the feminine form of nouns on the פָּעֵלָן form in Mishnaic Hebrew was פָּעֵלָנִית, and that therefore the masculine equivalent of פָּעֵלָנִית is פָּעֵלָן? Buxtorf's lexicon (p. 498) did, in fact, cite the pair דְּבָרָן and דְּבָרָנִית.⁴²

§ 23 I will conclude with a brief remark: sometimes a particular entry in Gesenius' *Thesaurus* is silent with regard to Mishnaic Hebrew, and yet it is discussed explicitly in his grammar. A relevant example is the *binyan* Nitpa'el in Biblical Hebrew: on p. 207 of the *Thesaurus* he cites the form גִּפְפָּר, and on p. 605 he cites the form גִּנְפָּרִי, and in both occurrences he suffices with the note that these are from the *binyan* Nitpa'el. In his grammar, published in 1817,⁴³ however, he points out that these are from the *binyan* Nitpa'el, which, he says, is the passive of the Hitpa'el. The relationship between these two *binyanim* is not the issue now, but it is important to note that in the discussion, Gesenius compares these words to Mishnaic Hebrew נִתְאַשַׁשׁ and נִזְדָּקָן (and it would be superfluous to note that there is nothing surprising in the vocalization of these forms with a *tsere* under the second root letter, נִתְאַשֵׁשׁ and נִזְדָּקָן, to match the vocalization familiar from Biblical Hebrew).⁴⁴

⁴¹ Gross' book (1993) contains a thorough discussion of these patterns in the dialects of the Tannaim and Amoraim.

⁴² It is true, however, that Buxtorf 1639 gives עֲסָקָנִי as the masculine equivalent of עֲסָקָנִית (p. 1639). Of course, he cites other nouns on this pattern, as well, such as נִפְקָנִית (p. 1374) and רַחֲמָנִית (p. 2239).

⁴³ See Gesenius 1817:249–250.

⁴⁴ See Yalon 1964:16–17; Yalon shows that the original *patah* in the נִתְפַּעֵל was replaced in late printings by the biblically-inspired *tsere* (and sometimes even spelled with נִתְפַּעֵשׁ).