

Artikel

Ewald and Driver on Biblical Hebrew "Aspect": Anteriority and the Orientalist Framework¹

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In the history of linguistics and of science generally, excavations in Biblical Hebrew aspectology have their own peculiar fascination. Just the sheer volume of ink and sweat expended, and continuing to be expended, by the brightest stars of many generations on this single question is truly prodigious. Such efforts point to what can only be described as a "permanent crisis"² in the field: a remarkable state of affairs, extending in this case over almost two centuries. Further, excavations reveal a textbook case of a series of epistemological breaks³ induced by tacit reconceptualizing of the one crucial term, "aspect." It would be difficult to find such a comedy of misreadings in any comparable study.

However, the archaeology of Biblical Hebrew "aspect" is much more than some recondite pastime of the historian of science. Hebrew "aspect" is pivotal in two ways. First, within Semitics the Hebrew verb plays the central role, both historically and methodologically, in comparative study.⁴ Further, the understanding of the Hebrew verb, and by extension that of the cognates, is critical for sound exegesis.⁵

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² "Crisis" in the sense employed by Kuhn and others: a phase in the development of a discipline induced by the continued failure to make a major anomaly conform (Kuhn 1970; cf. Feyerabend 1993).

³ From the work of Gaston Bachelard, in the second sense of "epistemological break" as a conceptual shift under a constant term, as explained by Gutting (1989: ch. 1, esp. 16); the example given by Gutting is "temperature" and the series of conceptual breaks hidden beneath that term.

⁴ "Even a glance at the linguistic and philological work carried out on the Hebrew language during the last few decades will show that the Hebrew verb system, and especially the question of the "tenses", has always stood and still stands at the very centre of interest" (Mettinger 1974: 64).

⁵ "If a correct understanding of the Hebrew language is the only basis for sound exegesis, and if the heart of a language is its verbal system, then it must be conceded that in the case of Hebrew we

But the investigation of the semantics of the Hebrew verb has had, and continues to have, a disproportionate impact far beyond the range of Semitics and Biblical exegesis. The basic framework within which the classical Semitic verb was analyzed beginning in the early 1800s, and which I am calling the Romantic or “Orientalist”⁶ Framework for reasons that will become clear, is the fountainhead of much modern theorizing on tense-aspect in natural language. This framework provides the essential concept of “tenseless” language, and also the standard “inflectional aspect” analysis thereof. The framework, first developed in the 1830s for Hebrew and Arabic by Heinrich Ewald, spread like wildfire to the other classical systems in the Near and Far East. In various permutations the framework has been applied to most of the world’s non-European languages (DeCaen 1996); and simply by osmosis, as it were, it has become a central pillar in the theoretical investigation of verbal systems, disseminated by the standard general surveys, especially Comrie (1976, 1985) and Dahl (1985).⁷

1. Background: The Conventional Wisdom Reconsidered

The Whiggish history of Biblical Hebrew aspectology is summarized in the now-standard reference of the Anglo-American tradition, Waltke and O’Connor (1990: §§20.2, 29.1f, 29.2a, 29.3, 29.6, 30.1a), which closely follows the survey by McFall (1982).⁸ The official story is that of a steady linear progression from the second

have not yet acquired a correct understanding of that language, and consequently we lack a sound basis for exegesis of the O[ld] T[estament] Scriptures” (McFall 1982: xii).

This is a slight exaggeration in some sense, for one need not be a mechanic to drive a car, as Paul Dion and others have pointed out (personal communication). The level of understanding for exegesis need not reach the level required for a generative grammar. Binnick echoes this view: “It seems puzzling, given the huge amount of study applied to the Bible ... that there can be such divergent opinion as to the analysis of the verb systems. In fact there is no *real* controversy in regard to the interpretation of *particular* verbs; the problem arises only in regard to the two types [conjugations] of verbs *in general* (1991: §8r, 436).

⁶ I played with a number of tags for this general framework. “Romantic” certainly covers the source and driving spirit (German Romanticism), as well as the general time period; but it misses the original point of application.

“Orientalist” adequately covers the time period (19th century) and the point of application (originally “Oriental” was synonymous with “Semitic”). Further, the term also nets the languages of the Far East into which the framework was first injected, and with which the framework is now generally associated (especially Chinese; also Japanese, Burmese, and Turkish). Finally, the term now bears a slightly pejorative ring that is fully justified in this case (cf. Said 1978 on the term “Orientalist”).

⁷ The full documentation of this genealogy will require some time: indeed, more time than one scholar could spend in a lifetime. But clearly this is the process, confirmed by anecdotal evidence of sufficient quantity and variety. The documentation requires excavations in aspectology similar to the one reported here for each “Oriental” language as well as for a representative sample of other so-called “tenseless” systems.

⁸ “We follow McFall’s review closely up to the introduction of the comparative-historical approach to the subject, around 1900” (Waltke, O’Connor 1990: §29.1e, 457). This is of course the time frame of the present paper. They go on to say, “From that point on his work must be supplemented, because he neglected some significant studies (e.g., Brockelmann, Sperber, Hughes, and Michel)” (§29.1e, 457).

edition of Heinrich Ewald's *Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache* (1835) (and arguably from the first 1828 edition) on to the present day. The impression, in fact, is of little progress at all: just fine tuning of Ewald's slightly "confused"⁹ account. In complete contrast, this paper presents a *caesural* view of Biblical Hebrew aspectology.

The conventional wisdom of the last half-century¹⁰ assigns to the Biblical Hebrew inflectional system the semantic category *perfectivity* on the analogy of the perfective-imperfective contrast of Russian and Slavic cognates.¹¹ On this view there are only two inflected or finite forms, distinguished both by stem ablaut and by the position of the affix registering person agreement. The marked perfective is encoded by the suffixal conjugation on the /CaCaC/ stem; while the semantically unmarked imperfective is encoded by the prefixal conjugation on the /CuCuC/ stem.¹² Not only is the hypothesis of perfectivity ultimately untenable (DeCaen 1995a: esp. ch.

⁹ "Ewald's views were in some respects deficient. Like many of his successors, he confused the concept of *complete* with that of *completed*" (Waltke, O'Connor 1990: §29.3i, 464). Ewald of course was not "confused" with respect to *complete*, as is explained below: he clearly meant *vollendet* or "completed."

¹⁰ The conventional wisdom arguably dates from Brockelmann's prefatory remarks to his 1951 "mile-stone" survey. "It is sufficient to say that it is to Brockelmann that we owe the first sketch of the Semitic verbal system as bifurcating into aspectual oppositions" (Mettinger 1974: 74; cf. Rundgren 1961: 13-14, Segert 1975: 91).

As a matter of fact, the earliest hint of perfectivity is probably B. Landsberger (1926: 360, note 1). The perfectivity analysis can then be found *explicitly* articulated in Kuryłowicz (1949; cf. 1964), in part influenced by the linguistic instruction under A. Meillet. The perfectivity analysis is later dropped in favour of the original anteriority as explained below (Kuryłowicz 1973; cf. 1977), strikingly paralleling the motivation and development of the views of Ewald without apparently being aware that he was doing so.

¹¹ I follow Comrie (1976) in distinguishing "perfective" with the *-ive* from the "perfect" without. On perfectivity, Comrie writes, "perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation" (Comrie 1976: §1.0, 16). He adds, "A very frequent characterisation of perfectivity is that it indicates a completed action. One should note that the word at issue in this definition is "completed", not "complete": despite the formal similarity between the two words, there is an important semantic distinction which turns out to be crucial in discussing aspect. The perfective does indeed denote a complete situation, with beginning, middle, and end. The use of "completed", however, puts too much emphasis on the termination of the situation, whereas the use of the perfective puts no more emphasis, necessarily, on the end of a situation than on any other part of the situation ..." (§1.1.1, 18).

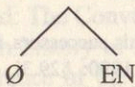
The "perfect" on the other hand "indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation" (§3.0, 52). In this sense the English participle in *-en/-ed* with the auxiliary *to have* is a prototypical perfect, and the notion "completed" (here a participle as well, not coincidentally) is arguably applicable.

¹² This is a drastic oversimplification, but serves the purposes of this paper. Actually, the ablaut alternation /a/ - /u/ is only the most productive pattern: there are several others. Moreover, I have cited the stems with (putatively) Proto-Semitic vowels, which is highly misleading at best; but it spares the non-specialist the arcana of Tiberian Hebrew phonology.

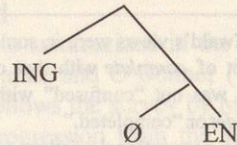
6; DeCaen 1995b), but it is emphatically *not* the position held by either Ewald or Driver, the twin pillars of Biblical Hebrew aspectology.

The essential core of the original, nineteenth-century proposals is clearly *anteriority* on the analogy of Latin (and by extension modern West European systems including English and French), and never the perfectivity of Russian or Greek (for the classic formulation of the distinction *anteriority/perfectivity*, Kuryłowicz 1964: ch. 3). The persistent confusion of these two axes of “aspect” continues to plague many recent, theoretical accounts (including Bybee et al. 1994, Smith 1991, Dahl 1985), as well as Semitic studies in general since 1900. The actual proposals of Ewald and Driver can be schematized in (1) using English aspectual morphemes in capital letters to signal the privative semantic values (*anteriority* [-EN as in *written*] vs. *simultaneity* [-ING as in *writing*]).

(1) (a) EWALD
Standard Theory



(b) DRIVER
Extended Standard Theory



The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The first half considers in some detail Ewald’s proposal (1a) in light of grammatical theory ca. 1800, and also as a by-product of his Romantic understanding of the origins of the Indo-European verbal system. A shorter section considers Driver’s extension of the theory to (1b). A final, still somewhat speculative section explores the radical break between the anteriority of Ewald and Driver on the one hand, and the current consensus on perfectivity on the other, acquiescing in the view that the break can be ascribed to Brockelmann (1951).

2. Ewald and the Standard Orientalist Framework

From the standpoint of the sociology of knowledge, the meteoric rise of the Ewaldian proposal and its virtually complete domination of the field by 1900 begs for detailed study. I have raised the question repeatedly (DeCaen 1995a, 1995b, 1996), but have only thrown out guesses until now. I have answered in part that the field was ready for something new, that the explosion of aspectology mid-19th century centred on Greek (the life-blood of theology), and finally that the model was a compelling advance over previous gropings (DeCaen 1995a: 176).¹³

¹³ “Ewald’s study considerably narrowed the gap between text and interpretation. In scientific thought a theory is created by imagination from the data being investigated, and the theory is then tested by logic against the data. Ewald’s aspect theory, in the minds of many, better satisfied the data than any tense theory; in most grammars the terms “perfect” and “imperfect” replaced the temporal terms. Standard works on the other Semitic languages came to employ similar concepts and terms. The term “aspect” has gradually been applied to these forms” (Waltke, O’Connor 1990: §29.3h, 464).

To these bare bones we can add some flesh with the help of Davies' brief biographical sketch (1903). First, there is no denying Ewald's towering genius, recognized by contemporaries and easily recovered from his scholarly output; nor is there denying the impact of his corpus of writings throughout the 19th century. Ewald was a pioneering genius in the Romantic mould, more or less founding "modern" Hebrew linguistics together with his older contemporary and rival, Wm. Gesenius.

Second, we must reckon with the disproportionate impact of his work through his many star students, leading lights themselves in Semitic studies, who constituted the mainstream of German Oriental studies. One need only recall the foundational roles of his students Th. Nöldeke (Aramaic-Syriac) and A. Dillmann (Ethiopic) to gauge this impact (cf. McFall 1982: 56).

Third, Ewald's proposal clearly rode the wave of German "critical" Biblical study washing over the English-speaking academies. It quickly gained recognition through the two timely English translations, and popularized by the writings and stature of S.R. Driver and other luminaries of the English-speaking establishment, including Davidson.¹⁴

From the first appearance of Driver's 1874 work, the textbook tradition quickly "locked in" on Ewald's hypothesis. Ewald has reigned supreme in the English-speaking world ever since. It is ironic, then, that we in the 1990s are so little aware of what Ewald actually proposed or of what theoretical framework drove that proposal. Before exploring Ewald's *Standard Theory*, however, there are some preliminaries that need to be attended to.

2.1 Preliminaries: Terminology and Text History

A review of Ewald's *perfectum/imperfectum* proposal should be prefaced by two types of general considerations, both terminological and textual. These points surface again in various contexts in later sections.

The first fact crying out for attention is that Ewald himself *never* used the term or the concept "aspect" (from the Russian *vid* "view") or to avoid the anachronism, *Zeitart* "kind of time". And this is despite the fact that the standard Anglo-American sources do actually cite Ewald writing of "the two grand and opposite aspects under which every conceivable action may be regarded" (Waltke, O'Connor 1990: §29.3f, 463; cf. McFall 1982: §1.3.2.1, 44). Since this bold contradiction comes as an unpleasant surprise to Semitists, we should review its resolution under three heads: 1) the German-English translation, 2) corpus-internal reconstruction, and 3) historical-theoretical fact.

One extremely curious fact should alert us to the source of the problem: McFall, for whatever reason, does not cite the source of the quotation he gives (1982: 44), nor do Waltke and O'Connor (1990), "following closely" the account rendered by McFall. But the term "aspect" cannot be found in Ewald's German! In point of fact, the source that has actually given rise to the Whiggish account is *not* Ewald himself, but rather James Kennedy and the latter's 1891 English translation of the third

¹⁴ "This syntax of Ewald in its translated form was very popular in America. Also the popular syntax of Davidson (1901) was strongly influenced by this work of Ewald" (van der Merwe 1987: 163).

section (syntax) of the so-called “8th” edition (actually 7th, see below) of Ewald’s grammar (1870).

It is immediately clear in comparing the translation with the original that Kennedy has silently retrojected both the term and the concept “aspect” into those extremely crucial first lines of Ewald’s introduction under the overriding influence of Driver’s reinterpretation (1874), as is indicated by his translator’s footnote on that very first page. But the German actually reads, “die zwei großen gegensätze ...” (Ewald 1870: §134a, 349), or “the two grand opposites”¹⁵ in keeping with Kennedy’s stylistics, not “the two grand and opposite *aspects*.”

The surprising conclusion – that Ewald never employed the term or the concept “aspect” – is confirmed both by a careful exegesis of his grammar taken in the context of his other grammatical works, and by the simple consideration of the history of aspectology in general. As reconstructed from the text itself, and explained below, Ewald clearly had in mind a species of sequencing or temporal deixis (“tense”): *Zeitunterscheidungen* or “temporal distinctions.” Moreover, we can firmly date the actual introduction of the concept of *vid* “aspect” or *Zeitart* “kind of time” into the mainstream of grammatical theory: Curtius (1846: §§3-4, 144ff; cf., e.g., Fanning 1990: §1.1.1, 10). Ewald could not be writing about *Zeitart* in 1828/1835, though of course Driver in 1874 clearly was.

For the second point under the rubric of terminology, the introduction and understanding of the *perfectum-imperfectum* contrast, it is necessary to rehearse briefly the history of the publication of Ewald’s Hebrew grammar, which in fact reflects three distinct phases of his understanding of Biblical Hebrew’s *Zeitunterscheidungen*.

The first phase is represented solely by the first edition entitled *Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des A.T. in vollständiger Kürze neu bearbeitet* (1828), which is sometimes confused with the much larger 1927 work, *Kritische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache, ausführlich bearbeitet*. He follows Johann Jahn (McFall 1982: §1.3.2, 43-44) in calling the two *Modi* (“moods” or maybe “modes”) *aoristisch* “aorist”: mood I (suffixal conjugation) is both *vollendet* “completed” and *bestimmt* “definite,” whereas mood II (prefixed) is *unvollendet* and *unbestimmt* (Ewald 1828: §§470-471, 223).

The terminological break comes with the second edition (1835) which was translated by John Nicholson (1836); the third edition follows quickly in 1838, terminating the second phase. The relevant sections of the introduction to the verbal inflection (1835: §§260-261, 130-131) are considerably expanded here, attaining more or less the full form of subsequent rewriting. Here we find two important elements: first is the new Latinate terminology, *perfectum* and *imperfectum* replacing moods I and II (§261, 131)¹⁶; second is the major footnote to §261, comple-

¹⁵ The passage is cited in full below. In the context, better perhaps “the major contrast” rather than “the two grand opposites.”

¹⁶ “These names [*perfectum* and *imperfectum*] I employed first in 1839 in my *Gram. Arab.*: the idea presented by them I had already given in the [Hebrew] Grammar of 1828; and the names *I.* and *II. mod.*, which I used at first, were merely an imperfect attempt to find substitutes for the unsuitable names “Preterite” and “Future” (Ewald 1891: note 1, §134b, 3).

tely excluded from consideration in the standard history, but of crucial importance in the reconstruction below.

Es liesse sich nachweisen, dass auf eine ähnliche Urunterscheidung auch die sehr ausgebildeten Tempora und Modi der Sanskrit-Sprachen zurückleiten, so wie die späteren semit. Sprachen schon gerade hier sich am meisten vom Hebr. entfernen (1835: §261, note 1, 131).¹⁷

This footnote undergoes expansion in later editions, achieving the full form in 1870, which in turn points to important work in the intervening 1860s.

For completeness, we can review the last phase quickly, since nothing germane to the present account happens from 1835 on. First, there never was a 4th edition: technically, what is advertised in 1844 as the 5th edition is the 4th to appear. Second, in any case we are justified in viewing the "5th" edition as the "first" of a new, greatly expanded work that incorporates much of the extra material of the larger 1827 *Kritische Grammatik* (cf. Davies 1903: 138). Significantly, the title changes in 1844 in keeping with this break to *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Bundes*. Minor changes separate the 1844 and "8th" 1870 editions; as a historical curiosity, the orthography and punctuation shifts from the standard to an experimental version in vogue in the late 1800s.

The review of the Ewaldian proposal may be broken down into four sections. The first two recover the general theoretical horizon ca. 1800. As it relates to the Biblical Hebrew verbal system, this includes 1) the privileged relation between inflection and the verbal paradigm, and 2) the standard interpretation of (anachronistically) Latin "aspect."

The last two explore the actual driving force of the proposal: the infectious German Romantic passion with all things Sanskrit, embodied in the work of Friedrich Schlegel (esp. Schlegel 1808), and the "discovery" of the Aryan race. There is little doubt that Ewald was deeply influenced in his explanation of the Hebrew *Gegensätze* by his unfolding understanding of the Sanskrit verb and its primitive Indo-European origins. We know that the crucial break between the *Modi III* of 1828 and the *perfectum/imperfectum* contrast in 1835 correlates with an intensive period of study of Sanskrit (1826-1828) under Bopp and Rosen in Berlin (Davies 1903: 76-77). That the origins of the Sanskrit verbal system in a putative Indo-European *Ursprache* drove his analysis is betrayed by the footnote identified above, given now in its final 1870 cast and followed by the review.

... ich habe vonjeher mündlich im vortrage der Sanskrit-grammatik gezeigt daß auch in den Mittelländischen [Indo-germanischen] sprachen alle die jezigen noch so vielfach ausgebildeten tempora und modi nur auf zwei zeitunterscheidungen zurückweisen und sich aus diesen völlig erklären: ganz wie im Semitischen. Dasselbe läßt sich, was die zeiten betrifft, sowohl vom

¹⁷ "It might be proved that even the very developed tenses and modes of the Indo-germanic languages [*Sanskrit-Sprachen*] might be reduced to a similar primitive distinction, just as the later Semitic languages have in this very point departed farthest from the Hebrew" (Ewald 1836: note 1, 136).

Türkischen als vom Koptischen und andern sprachen zeigen (Ewald 1870: footnote 1, §134a, 349).¹⁸

2.2 Inflection and the Verbal Paradigm

The point of departure in this examination of Ewald's work is the silent omission¹⁹ of the participle from the main verbal paradigm. Until the 1800s the long Jewish tradition had recognized the three "natural tenses" dictated by classical theory (Binnick 1991: §1a²⁰): not only a past (suffixed form) and a future (prefixed form), but a "present" realized by the (active) participle. This omission is certainly not original with Ewald; but as we shall see, it is enough to render Hebrew "tenseless" by definition. The loss of a Biblical Hebrew "present tense" is momentous. Crucially, the result is that the Biblical Hebrew inflectional system is *formally binary*.

The theoretical motivation is essentially correct in hindsight: compartmentalizing the verbal paradigm by morphosyntactic category. For the morphological class to which both Hebrew and Greek verbs belong, tense must be realized by fully

¹⁸ "I have always shown, orally, in my lectures on Sanskrit grammar, that, in the Indo-Germanic languages also, all the tenses and moods now employed, which have been variously developed into their present condition, point back to no more than two distinctions of time, just as in Semitic. As regards the tenses, the same thing may be shown to hold in Turkish, Coptic, and other languages" (Ewald 1891: footnote 1, §134a, 2). He goes on to cite Odschi (= Twi) and Kanuri.

Initially, it is puzzling what he means with regard to Turkish and Coptic (both of which he taught [Davies 1903: 35]). Ewald's *Abhandlung* on what today would be called comparative Nostratic studies considerably clarifies this cryptic footnote (Ewald 1861-1862). It is clear, as explained below, that he has in mind for Indo-European the stem ablaut contrast, e.g., in Greek: *leip* "present stem" contrasting with *loip* "perfect stem" (the "zero degree" *lip* or "aorist stem" is considered a secondary development under stress movement). In Turkish, of course, the principal axis of the verbal system is the binary contrast past/perfect vs nonpast/imperfect, on par with the Semitic.

As for Coptic, it is still not immediately clear what he might mean. We need to look back at his previous *Abhandlung* on Coptic *Thatwörter* (1860). There it is assumed without ado that Coptic's system was once identical with the Semitic, "aber ist jede spur von ihnen am ende völlig verschwunden" (Ewald 1860: §8, 173). Mystery solved.

Again, in Twi he is zeroing in on the bare verb contrasting with *a-V* (the "perfect"); however, the facts in Twi are much more complicated, since other "forms" are marked by manipulation of tone and vowel length rather than overt affication (e.g., Christaller 1964 [1875]). It is not at all clear what he is after in the complex Kanuri paradigm, and unfortunately his sources were unavailable at the time of writing: Kölle (1854) and *JAOS* vol. 1.

¹⁹ Perhaps not absolutely "silent." In the last half of the last line of §134a, he writes in passing, "it is only to a limited extent that the participle is employed as a specification of time, in addition to these two [distinctions in time], which still continue to be the main divisions" (Ewald 1891: §134a, 2). The key here is "main divisions" (*grundunterschieden*): the participle is demoted to the periphery.

²⁰ It appears that the threefold division of time is as old as time itself. The classical view is traced by Binnick to Dionysius Thrax in the 2d century BCE: three tenses, and the remainder of the forms as "varieties" of a tense. He also cites the representative views of the 18th century grammarian, James Harris: "The most obvious Division of TIME is into Present, Past, and Future, nor is any language complete, whose Verbs have not TENSES to mark these Distinctions" (Binnick 1991: §1a, 3).

"inflected" forms, i.e., forms signaling gender, number and crucially *person*.²¹ These forms constitute the "core" of any such verbal system. The derived nominals – participles and infinitives – are in some intuitive sense "peripheral."

On the basis of classical European systems, however, Ewald and the tradition as a whole fail to recognize the aspectual properties of those peripheral forms, and indeed of the system taken as a whole. We can readily understand the fallacy, which I have elsewhere dubbed the "Morphocentric Fallacy" (DeCaen 1995a), if we consider what would happen to the English or spoken French verbal systems if attention were exclusively focused on the *inflectional core*. In the indicative, English would be reduced to the binary contrast *love(s)* vs. *loved*; similarly, French would be reduced to the binary contrast *aime* vs. *aimait*. Where did the rest of the verbal system go? It disappeared by definition.²²

In summary, the first crucial step is to reduce the Hebrew paradigm to a *binary* contrast on the basis of the privileged status of the inflectional core system.²³ Not only is this move will motivated, but as we shall see, Ewald also has a hidden agenda in his general study of *Ursprachen*. It remains to take this "binarism" one step further and to show how Hebrew is therefore rendered "tenseless" by definition.

2.3 Latin Tense and "Aspect"

Ewald's brief comments indicating his understanding of his terms *perfectum* and *imperfectum* have led scholars fatally astray. He does say quite explicitly that these Latinate terms cannot be understood "in the narrow sense attached to them in Latin grammar, but in a quite general way" (Ewald 1891: §134b, 3). How should we understand "narrow" and "general"? First, it is quite clear that he wants to avoid at all costs the obvious, "narrow" association with the Latin so-called "past" tenses, viz. the *perfect(um)* (*amāvī*: present tense, "perfect" stem) and *imperfect(um)* (*amābam*: past tense, "present" stem). The fatal mistake is assuming therefore that the terms have *nothing at all* to do with Latin, that the sense is purely "etymological" (e.g., McFall 1982: §1.3.2, 44). In fact, there is a second, highly technical, "general" interpretation of the terms *perfectum* vs. *imperfectum* (though

²¹ Hebrew and Greek are at the synthetic end of the spectrum; for isolating systems like Chinese or the creoles at the analytic end, this generalization does not apply.

²² In DeCaen (1995a, 1996) I note that the "progressive" in most languages is encoded by just such a "peripheral" construction. In addition to the "participle" system of English, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Tamil, etc., there is the basic prepositional system generally employing the locative "at" or something semantically very similar: e.g., Mandarin *zai V* "at V," or Jamaican Creole *a V(*a < at)*.

²³ The binary approach masks the generally ternary systems uncovered by straightforward structuralist method in morphological analysis. As a rule the third form is shunted to a separate "modal" paradigm on the basis of semantics. In Hebrew and Semitic systems generally there is a "shorter" prefixed form which is used for the imperative, but which also has a variety of uses in various systems (including consecution or "tense neutralization" in Hebrew and cognates as proposed in DeCaen 1995a). In Athabaskan systems the third term is an "optative" (which in turn can render the overall system "modal" vs. "aspectual"). In the many isolating systems, the bare verb stem or "zero form" is often overlooked or downgraded (e.g., in Burmese or Mandarin). It is possible to argue that Japanese verbal inflection is formally ternary along similar lines.

usually the latter is termed the *inflectum* in Latin studies), referring not to Latin's two so-called "past" tenses, but to the two Latin *stems* that bear tense inflection. It is equally clear that Ewald intended this technical, comparative Indo-European, "general" sense.

Thus there is no real mystery as to the formal and semantic theory forming the massive substratum of Ewald's work. Of course the source is Latin, at least in the first instance: and in particular, the Stoic-Varronian interpretation of the Latin paradigm.²⁴ Ewald explicitly provides unequivocal pieces of the puzzle, but does not need to spell out what was common knowledge in the early 1800s.²⁵

Hier ist noch garnichts von den drei zeiten die man in spätern sprachen als vergangenheit gegenwart und zukunft genau unterscheidet: inderthat aber kann keine sprache, wenn sie unterscheidungen einführt, ursprünglich von etwas dreifachen ausgehen ... (Ewald 1870: §134a, 349).²⁶

Die einfachste unterscheidung der zeit des handelns ist aber die daß der redende zunächst nur die zwei großen gegensätze unterscheidet unter denen alles denkbare handeln gedacht werden kann. Der mensch hat zuerst gehandelt, erfahren, und sieht fertiges, gewordenes vor sich: aber eben dies erinnert ihn an das was noch nicht (*sic*) ist, was zurück ist und dem er entgegensieht (Ewald 1870: §134a, 349).²⁷

So faßt denn der redende in beziehung auf das handeln alles entweder als schon *vollendet* und so *vorliegend*, oder als *unvollendet* und *nochnichtseiend* möglicherweise aber *werdend* und *kommend* auf: er setz es als etwas gegebenes, oder verneint daß es solches schon sei (Ewald 1870: §134a, 349).²⁸

The salient features of this model are detailed after the Latin paradigm (3sg indicative only) is introduced in (2); the somewhat less opaque spoken French system, which has apparently reconstituted the model, is given in the glosses to aid in identifying the key points of the analysis.

²⁴ Stoic in the sense of concentrating on the formal paradigm, sorting by stems (vs. the threefold tense system of Thrax). Varronian after Varro who applies Stoic theory to Latin. For a sketch of this background, see Binnick's introductory material (Binnick 1991: ch. 1, especially §1e, 20-26).

²⁵ As an exercise, I conducted a survey of Latin grammars from the first decades of the 19th century found in Robarts Library, University of Toronto, and found a proportion of 10 to 1 in favour of the Varronian arrangement.

²⁶ "There is here, as yet, nothing whatever of the three tenses precisely distinguished in later languages as past, present, and future. In fact, however, no language, when it introduces distinctions, can start from anything threefold ..." (Ewald 1891: §134a, 2).

²⁷ "But the simplest distinction of time in an action is, that the speaker first of all merely separates between the two grand and opposite aspects [N.B. *Zeitarten* "aspects" not in German as explained above] under which every conceivable action may be regarded. Man has first acted, passed through an experience, and sees before him something that is finished, or has taken place; but this very fact reminds him of that which does not yet exist, – that which lies behind, and is expected" (Ewald 1891: §134a, 1).

²⁸ "Hence, with reference to action, the speaker views everything either as already *finished*, and thus *before* him, or as *unfinished* and non-existent, but possibly *becoming* ... and *coming*: he states it as something that is, or denies that there already is such a thing" (Ewald 1891: §134a, 1-2).

(2)		(a)	(b)
		Infectum	Perfectum
		or	
		Imperfectum	
(i)	Past	amā-b-a-t <i>aim-ait</i>	amā-v-er-a-t <i>av-ait aim-é</i>
(ii)	Present	ama-t <i>aim-e</i>	amā-v-(i)t <i>a aim-é</i>
(iii)	Future	amā-b-(i)t <i>aim-er-a</i>	amā-v-er-(i)t <i>aura aim-é</i>
(iv)	Stem	amā-(b-) <i>aim-</i>	amā-v-(er-) <i>(av-) aim-é</i>
cf.			
(v)	Hebrew Stems	prefixal /CuCuC/	suffixal /CaCaC/

The basic assumptions for tense-aspect can now be rendered explicit. First, there are two *Zeitunterscheidungen* or "temporal distinctions": the primary axis of *Tempus* or "tense" proper, which for Ewald is by definition *ternary* (2i-iii), crucially including an inflected "true present" (2ii); and a secondary *Zeitunterscheidung*, *imperfectum-perfectum*, which appears to answer to "relative tense" (2a-b). Second, while the secondary distinction answers to formal differences in *stems*, and crucially two stems (2iv), the primary distinction is overlaid, as it were, on these stems through inflection.

Comparing the Latin stems (2iv) with the Hebrew stems (2v) should underscore the cogency of tenses as *ternary*. First and obviously, the distinction is in both cases correlated with *stems* (ablaut in the Semitic). Second, the Hebrew /CaCaC/ stem clearly correlates in some manner with the semantics of the Latin perfect in *-v-*, i.e., some species of past/perfectum.

Were the story finished here, however, one would fail to grasp the importance of *Ursprache* or "primitive language" in Ewald's theorizing, and the added cogency of such an approach within the German Romantic framework. The first step is to recover the importance of the *binary* distinction in the reconstruction of the pre-Sanskrit and Proto-Indo-European verbal systems (virtually identical at the time, in the same way that Arabic is often confused with Proto-Semitic).

2.4 The "Aspectual" System of Proto-Indo-European

The starting point in Ewald's theorizing is the Sanskrit paradigm given in (3i-iii) for 3msg indicative of "leave" in light of the Indo-European ablaut, e.g., "leave" in Greek (3iv) cf. Germanic variant (3v) and the Latin distinction (3vi) from (2) above.

(3)		(a)	(b)
		Present	Aorist
<i>Sanskrit</i>			
(i)	Primary	rinak-t-i	---
(ii)	Secondary	(a)-rinak-Ø < *rinak-t-Ø	(a)-rica-t-Ø
(iii)	Stem	rinak-	rica-
<i>Greek</i>			
(iv)	Stem	leip- *a/e	loip-/lip- *u/o > Ø
<i>Germanic (English)</i>			
(v)		leave	lef-t
		cf. run	ran/run
		sing	sang/sung
<i>Latin</i>			
(vi)		amā-(b-)	amāv-(er-)

Ewald would have no doubt been introduced through Bopp and Rosen to the then-standard theory on the origins of the classical verbal systems that still dominates today. As Kuryłowicz explains in his classic account,

The I.[ndo-]E.[uropean] verbal system was based on the contrast of aspects. Expression of tense was notoriously posterior to this opposition. This is true not only for the aorist stem, where a relatively late formal differentiation permitted the emancipation of the past perfective and of the future,²⁹ but also for the present stem. The double difference between **bhere-ti* [*bhere-* “carry”] and **e-bhere-t* reveals two chronological layers of differentiation. The replacement of **bheret* by **bhereti*, whatever its mechanism, entailed a split between the present imperfective and the secondary functions. The introduction of the augment **e-* in some languages permitted a distinction between the chief secondary function, viz. the past imperfective, and the rest, viz. the modal uses of the present stem ...

The relative chronology **bheret* – **bhereti* – **ebheret* is easily established (Kuryłowicz 1964: §3.29, 130-131).

In other words, the “temporal particles” **a-* (standardly the “augment”) and the suffix **-i* (assumed in origin to be some sort of adverbial “now”) are later innovations on a binary contrast involving stem ablaut.

2.5 Romanticism and Race/Mind

The next step is indeed a short one: the dichotomy of “primitive” vs. “advanced” languages. Verbal systems arise from a “primitive,” crucially binary, “aspectual” contrast (completed vs. incompleted). The “advanced” European systems uniquely developed, in addition to the primitive aspectual distinction, the threefold temporal distinction of past, present, and future. The latter distinction reflects a much

²⁹ Hence the double entry in (3iv) under “aorist.” The idea is that the Indo-European aorist or “zero grade” stem (**lip-*) was reduced under shifting stress assignment (**loip-* > **lip-*).

superior, logical precision which "primitive" non-Aryans are simply incapable of conceptualizing and therefore expressing.³⁰ It is easy to see at this point the consequences of being a speaker of a "tenseless" language and the attendant attraction of this model of the Hebrew *Ursprache* for the German Romantic.

Unfortunately, the history of Semitics is largely unwritten; and it has been easy to ignore the Romantic roots of the field and all those roots entail. To recover the crucial cultural background that alone makes sense of the nineteenth-century pioneers in Semitics, we must travel far outside the mainstream to the pariahs of Oriental studies.

How, then, are we to account for the initial popularity of the notion of Semitic as "primitive"? (Nowadays it might go unchallenged simply due to inertia.) I think it is unavoidable to connect it with the phenomena and mindset discovered and described by Martin Bernal in his *Black Athena* series of studies [vol. 1, 1987], and even in the notorious *Orientalism* of Edward Said [1978]. European civilization found it necessary to deny its Semitic heritage – and to relegate the *indigènes* of the Orient to a second-class humanity; for Bernal, to be denied; for Said, to be described. I do not like to find that in my intellectual ancestors, but I fear it is there (Daniels 1992: 695).

From Schlegel on, there are two types: advanced Aryans speaking logical, complex, inflected languages, and the rest – primitive Orientals speaking simple, arrested languages. The point does need to be belaboured, but the great attraction of this dichotomy from the early 19th century on to the bonfire of the World Wars must be understood for what it is. For this orientation is behind the application of the framework described above far beyond Semitics to the Far East and thence beyond the confines of Oriental Studies. The dichotomy surfaces in modern theorizing on tense-aspect as the contrast between European "tense" systems and the "tenseless" or "aspectual" non-European systems (DeCaen 1996).

2.6 Summary: Ewald and the Indo-European Roots of Biblical Hebrew Aspect

In light of the meteoric rise, rapid dissemination, and complete domination of Semitics (until the challenge of non-semantic or pragmatic-discourse-driven models of the Biblical Hebrew verb in the 1990s) of the Ewaldian Standard Theory, it is ironic that the content and motivation of the theory are so poorly understood. The major break in terminology between first and second editions coupled with the new footnote betray the Indo-European roots of Semitic "aspect." The potent combination of formal and semantic theory derived from the study of Latin with the Romantic spin on the origins of the Indo-European verbal system virtually guaranteed the Ewaldian analysis.

Ewald was clearly dealing in temporal sequence: the concept of non-deictic "aspect" was still far down the road. The standard account is "confused" when it assigns

³⁰ To use Ewald's own words, "so sind auch diese nächsten zeitunterschiede weit entfernt von der bloßen kalten verständigkeit unserer zeitbestimmungen" (Ewald 1870: §134b, 350). ("So also are these most natural distinctions of time far removed from the more cold [*sic*] intellectuality of our tense-specifications" [Ewald 1891: §134b, 3].)

Ewald the credit for the introduction of “aspect.” That credit belongs to Samuel R. Driver.

3. S.R. Driver and the Extended Standard Theory

Driver’s explicitly aspectual theory does not fare well in the standard histories. On the more charitable interpretation Driver is merely a transmitter and “popularizer” of Ewaldian orthodoxy (McFall 1982: 76³¹), a mute footnote in the steady development of Hebrew aspectual theory. On the less than charitable interpretation, Driver represents a major “setback” (Waltke, O’Connor 1990: §29.31, 464), a sad, dead-end detour away from the true linear path from Ewald to the present.³²

It is true that Ewald made his impact in the English-speaking world primarily through Driver (ironically that impact stems in part from a misinterpretation of Driver’s proposal), but the “popularizer” interpretation completely misses the massive epistemological break between Ewald and Driver. Before Driver’s 1874 breakthrough, the concept “aspect,” or more accurately *Zeitart* “kind of time,” simply did not exist in Semitic studies. Fensham is essentially correct in asserting that “aspect” begins with Driver (Fensham 1978: note 8, p. 11; *contra* Waltke, O’Connor³³ 1990).

In the first subsection Driver’s proposal is outlined and the source of his “nascent” *Zeitart* is identified. Then reconsideration of his introductory material in the second subsection will indicate how he was misunderstood and how Ewald was subsequently transmitted with the implication of Graeco-Slavic perfectivity rather than the intended anteriority. Finally, a much more positive evaluation of Driver’s actual proposal is offered.

3.1 *Driver’s Version of Curtius’s Zeitart*

In contrast to the rich theoretical development of comparative Indo-European studies resurrected for Ewald, we begin in Driver’s case with a rather pedestrian misreading of an admittedly challenging passage (both in German and English) in an obscure (from our vantage point) set of notes or “elucidations” to a more or less forgotten student’s grammar of Greek. It is our supreme good fortune, then, that Driver identifies his source (Driver 1892: note 1, §2, 3)! This misreading gains in importance, though, when we consider that the author of these elucidations is none other than

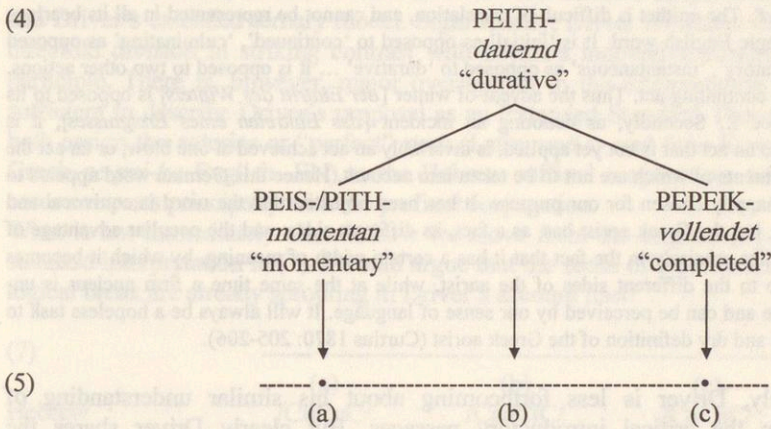
³¹ “He [Driver], more than any other scholar, popularized Ewald’s Complete-Incomplete or Perfect-Imperfect theory” (McFall 1982: 76). Only to the extent that Driver introduced the Ewaldian terms *perfect* and *imperfect*, and introduced the Ewaldian conception of the *perfect* can this summary be considered correct.

³² “The reception and popularization of Ewald’s theory by the influential British scholar S.R. Driver (1846-1914) represents a setback. Though both a great scholar in his own right and a major mediator of German scholarship, Driver made no considerable independent contribution to the study of the tenses” (Waltke, O’Connor 1990: §29.31, 464).

³³ According to Waltke and O’Connor (1990), Fensham (1978) “incorrectly attributes the introduction of aspectual theory to S.R. Driver” (note 48, §29.31, 464). This presupposes that Ewald had an aspectual theory, which is in fact not supported by the review in §2 above.

Georg Curtius (Curtius 1863), the source of the new concept³⁴ of *Zeitart* or "kind of time" (originally Curtius 1845 as noted above).

Before we get to Driver, we need Curtius's hypothesis in a nutshell. First and most importantly, Curtius identifies a semantic category associated with the Greek verbal stems, *Zeitart* "kind of time," which is clearly orthogonal to tense or *Zeitstufe* "grade of time." Further, Curtius isolates three stems (arguably there are more) and assigns them meaning on the basis of the contrasting effects both in the past tense (with augment) and, crucially for Driver's account, in the reading of the participles (which clearly invites a "relative tense" reading of the three *Zeitarten*). It would do no great violence to Curtius's views to say that there are two distinct axes of meaning pivoting on the "present stem" as schematized in (4) for the verb *PEITH-* "persuade."³⁵



Where Driver runs afoul is in the temporal interpretation of the three *Zeitarten* as indicated by the internal time line of some bounded event in (5). The event begins at (5a), progresses for some time (5b), and finally terminates with a resulting state at (5c). In fairness to Driver, this view is strongly suggested in Curtius's opening speculations.

In the Greek sense of language lay a triple distinction of time, which crosses with that of present, past, and future; and runs through the whole rich system of tenses, moods, and verbal-nouns. Not finding a general name for each of these triple distinctions ready to my hand, it became necessary to invent one. Now it was evident that of these two distinctions of time, one was rather external and the other internal (Curtius 1870: 204).

³⁴ In point of fact "aspect" had been around since the early 1800s in Slavic studies; but the breaking of the isolation of those studies and the "discovery" of Slavic aspect only comes in the '40s.

³⁵ I am using the Greek verb *peithō* "prevail" or "persuade" to maintain some consistency in the present account, since Driver himself uses this verb in his introductory material.

Students of Greek will agree that (5b) and (5c) are more or less the correct representations of the “present” stem (*peith-*) and the “perfect” stem (*pepeik-*). But the identification of the “aorist” stem (*peis-*) with the relative future or inception (5a) is bizarre from the traditional perspective (though I would be prepared to argue for its merit³⁶) and calls for some explanation.

When we probe deeper we come up against Curtius’s problematic new term *eintretend* “entering” which in his *Elucidations* has replaced the original *momentan* “momentary.” *Eintretend* is of course the source of Driver’s equally problematic *nascent* (also *incipient* and *egressive*). Curtius is explicit that he is playing on the slippery ambiguity of the German *eintreten*, which indicates both entry as beginning as well as successful entry as an end-point.³⁷

I preferred, therefore, to adopt the terminology of Rost and Krüger, who call the aorist ‘*eintretend*’. The epithet is difficult of translation, and cannot be represented in all its bearings by any single English word. It is ‘initial’ as opposed to ‘continued’, ‘culminating’ as opposed to ‘preparatory’, ‘instantaneous’ as opposed to ‘durative’ ... it is opposed to two other actions. First, to a continuing act. Thus the advent of winter [*der Eintritt des Winters*] is opposed to its continuance ... Secondly, as denoting an incident [*das Eintreten eines Ereignisses*], it is opposed to an act that is not yet applied, is invariably an act achieved at one blow, or an act the single moments of which are not to be taken into account. Hence this German word appears to me very happily chosen for our purpose. It has been objected that the word is equivocal and indefinite, but the Greek aorist has, as a fact, its different sides: and the peculiar advantage of the word lies precisely in the fact that it has a certain width of meaning, by which it becomes applicable to the different sides of the aorist, while at the same time a firm nucleus is unmistakable and can be perceived by our sense of language. It will always be a hopeless task to give a cut and dry definition of the Greek aorist (Curtius 1870: 205-206).

Unfortunately, Driver is less forthcoming about his similar understanding of “nascent” in the critical introductory passages. But clearly Driver shares the “equivocal and indefinite” view of the prefixed conjugation with its “certain width of meaning.” In the later sections devoted to the description of the semantics

³⁶ Admittedly the Greek facts are quite complicated. But if we confine our gaze to the standard “sigmatic” paradigm, there is obviously some room to consider the exemplar *lu-s-* with the endings surfacing with the “present” stem (a) some sort of “future” (b) (aorist in (c) given for contrast).

	(a)	(b)	(c)
STEM	lu-	lu-s-	lu-s-
		+ /o/	+ /a/
INFINITIVE	lu-ein	lu-s-ein	lu-s-ai
NONPAST	lu-ei	lu-s-ei	---
PAST	e-lu-e	---	e-lu-s-e
SUBJUNCTIVE	lu-ēi	lu-s-ēi	---
IMPERATIVE	lu-e	lu-s-on	---
PARTICIPLE (Gen)	lu-ontos	lu-s-ontos	lu-s-antos

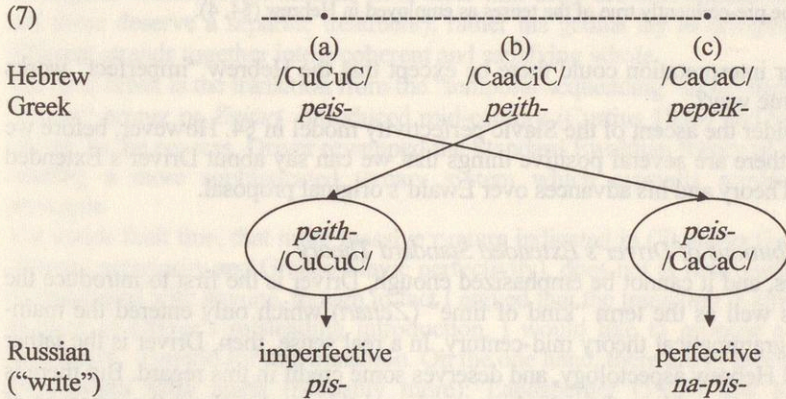
³⁷ On entry as closure, my dictionary gives two examples: *der Eintritt des Todes* “the moment when death occurs” and *bei Eintritt der Dunkelheit* “at nightfall,” “as darkness fell/falls.”

(*eintretend*) of the prefixed form, we find Driver warning of the "indefinitely elastic" value (Driver 1891: §23, 29) and of "uncertainty and indeterminateness" (§24, 29). If we introduce the Hebrew participial stem /CaaCiC/ (with the same *caveats* regarding the phonological representation as above), we can summarize Driver's ternary aspectual proposal in (6) with the stems lined up with the event-internal time line.

	-----•-----•-----		
	(a)	(b)	(c)
Hebrew	/CuCuC/	/CaaCiC/	/CaCaC/
Greek	<i>peis-</i>	<i>peith-</i>	<i>pepeik-</i>

It should be clear that there is a difference between Ewald's simple binary approach and Driver's extended ternary model. Significantly, Driver reinstates the traditional threefold division in striking contrast with Ewald's innovative elimination of the participle. There is, however, major overlapping in the interpretation of /CaCaC/ sufficient to describe Driver's proposal as an Extended Standard Theory: crucially, both assign the anterior or "perfect" stem (Latin *amā-v-* and Indo-European **loip-*; Greek *pe-peik-*; English -EN) to the Hebrew suffixal conjugation, which in both cases contrasts principally with the prefixal conjugation.

What is not immediately clear is how we move from the original (6) to the now-standard interpretation in (7). I would argue that the seeds of that massive epistemological break are already sprouting in Driver's account itself.



3.2 Driver and the Perfectivity Misinterpretation

If we were to excise the last half-line of §2 in which Driver's proposal is unequivocally stated, the interpretation in (7) is actually the most natural outcome. That half-line reads, "they [the Hebrew "tenses"] only indicate its *character* or *kind* [i.e., "kind of time" or aspect] – the three phases just mentioned, those namely of incipiency, continuance, and completion, being represented respectively by the imperfect, the participle, and the perfect" (Driver 1892: §2, 3).

Without that half-line, how would the interpretation of Driver's introductory comments proceed? First, the most natural assumption is that the Hebrew system is *binary*, not ternary. In the opening §1, Driver says up front that Biblical Hebrew "possesses only two of those modifications which are commonly termed 'tenses'"; he finishes §1 by introducing the Ewaldian terms *perfect* and *imperfect* (p. 1).

Second and deciding, when describing the "kind of time" distinction, it is always *binary*. He consistently uses forms that contrast minimally "aorist stem" vs. "present stem": the infinitives *peisai* (aorist stem) vs. *peithein* (present stem) in the critical §2 (p. 2); later in §4 (p. 4), the contrasting past tenses of *lale-* "talk" from the Book of Acts, *elalēsan* ("aorist" on the aorist stem) vs. *elaloun* ("imperfect" on the present stem). Unless indicated otherwise, one would quite naturally assume that this Greek contrast lined up with the Biblical Hebrew distinction.

Finally, as if that were not enough to confuse the unwary reader, Driver systematically confuses the two senses of "imperfect": the Greek "imperfect," which is the past tense with augment built on the present stem (cf. the "narrow" reading of the Latin "imperfect" discussed above); and the Hebrew "imperfect" or prefixal conjugation (which on Driver's hypothesis is neither imperfect in the sense of the Greek past tense form, nor in the sense of the Greek verb stem ["present"] contrasting with both the "aorist" and "perfect"). This confusion more or less guarantees in turn that the Hebrew suffixal /CaCaC/ lines up with the Greek aorist. The most misleading passage in this aspect reads,

'The [Greek] imperfect,' it has been said, 'paints a scene:' true, but upon what part of the canvas? upon a part *determined by the whole picture*. And what has just been said we shall find to be pre-eminently true of the tenses as employed in Hebrew (§4, 4).

What other interpretation could there be except that the Hebrew "imperfect" works just the same way?

I will consider the ascent of the Slavic perfectivity model in §4. However, before we move on, there are several positive things that we can say about Driver's Extended Standard Theory and his advances over Ewald's original proposal.

3.3 Contributions of Driver's Extended Standard Theory

For starters, and it cannot be emphasized enough, Driver is the first to introduce the concept as well as the term "kind of time" (*Zeitart*) which only entered the mainstream of grammatical theory mid-century. In a real sense, then, Driver is the father of Biblical Hebrew aspectology, and deserves some credit in this regard. But there is more that can be said on the actual proposal, and this circles about the presence of the participle in Driver's extended theory.

First, in Driver's hypothesis the Hebrew participle is rehabilitated and fully integrated into the Hebrew "aspectual" scheme. It is a striking curiosity that the participle, with its obvious aspectual contribution, has remained excluded from discussions of Hebrew aspectology down to the present. It is only with Joosten (1989) that a strong case has again been made for just such a "rehabilitation." (An added complication, of course, is that the medieval/modern Hebrew system has undergone

semantic change is this regard. Spoken Israeli Hebrew has moved to a European-style tense-aspect system with all that entails for the use of the participle.)

Second, in some sense Driver's model has introduced an additional aspectual dimension encoded by the participle that is orthogonal to the /CaCaC/-/CuCuC/ contrast. In (6) the participle takes up the region (6b) separating the bounding points (6a, c). This additional aspectual contrast correlates with the morphosyntactic contrast between nonfinite participle and the finite conjugations. What is implicit here is an account of the Biblical Hebrew verbal system that views the inflectional system *as a whole* encoding "punctual" aspect and excluding "linear" aspect (separately encoded, therefore, by the active participle).

What is implicit in Driver's scheme has been rendered explicit in my dissertation (DeCaen 1995a; cf. 1996). Briefly, the Biblical Hebrew tense system (past /CaCaC/ vs. nonpast /CuCuC/) defaults for the "punctual" or *perfective* interpretation of event structures (as does English, Japanese, and indeed *most* of the world's verbal systems [DeCaen 1996]). Non-perfective aspect is obligatorily encoded, as in English and Japanese, by the participle which is "supported" by the tense-bearing auxiliary BE. This semantic approach is then combined with a morphological and syntactic analysis to provide an integrated generative grammar fragment.

4. Conclusion: The Orientalist Framework and Beyond

This paper has outlined a caesural account of the development of Biblical Hebrew aspectology. The first and seminal rupture was the abandonment of the three-tense theory that worked so well for Medieval Hebrew. Ewald in this regard did not make an original breakthrough himself (it is clear that there are antecedents to his work, and these deserve a separate treatment); rather his genius lay in bringing so many different strands together into a coherent and satisfying whole.

The next break is the transition from the "temporal sequencing" of the early 1800s to "aspect" proper or *Zeitart* introduced mid-century (Curtius 1846) and taken up by Driver. In the process, Driver revamped the Standard Ewaldian theory of anteriority, creating a more sophisticated ternary system which crucially reintroduces the participle.

The major fault line, that more massive rupture indicated in (7) above (i.e., the split between anteriority and Graeco-Slavic perfectivity), does not at first blush appear to be associated with anyone, though in fact I argued that the transition is already found in germ in Driver's misleading introduction. I would like to propose a "multiple false starts" scenario for this transition. On the one hand, there are in fact at least two independent false starts (probably more): Landsberger (1926) and Kuryłowicz (1949, 1964). On the other hand, as far as subsequent study of the Biblical Hebrew verb is concerned, the transition must be tied to Brockelmann (1951).

B. Landsberger was technically (and tentatively) the first to introduce perfectivity. In an obscure footnote in a 1926 *Islamica* article, he wrote.

Abweichend von dem indogermanischen Gebrauch versuche ich, den Terminus *Aspekt* im Gegensatz zu der objektiven *Aktionsart* für die verschiedene Anwendung der „Tempora“ je nach der Einstellung des Sprechenden (z.B. Erleben, Berichten, Feststellen usw.) einzuführen (Landsberger 1926: note 1, 360).

This view remained dormant until Kuryłowicz (1949, 1964) explicitly articulated a perfectivity analysis of Semitic aspect. Not only is it ironic, as noted earlier, that Kuryłowicz later abandoned perfectivity³⁸ in favour of anteriority (returning to Ewald's original position); but it is also ironic that he is only remembered for the 1973 *Orientalia* article in which he adopts this new position of anteriority (effectively burying, therefore, the earlier perfectivity analysis). A second false start. As for the most recent literature on the Biblical Hebrew verb, perfectivity begins with Brockelmann (1951). "It is sufficient to say that it is to Brockelmann that we owe the first sketch of the Semitic verb system as bifurcating into aspectual oppositions" (Mettinger 1974: 74). And perhaps in retrospect, this should not at all be surprising. As van der Merwe explains, Brockelmann became a star in Semitics through his 1913 comparative Semitic grammar, and subsequently published one of the best syntaxes on Hebrew in what was otherwise a twenty-year drought (1930-1950) of articles and monographs (van der Merwe 1987: 167). His works were standard by the time that the floodgates were opened on the verbal system beginning in the 1960s.

The reign of perfectivity, at least in the Anglo-American sphere, was virtually guaranteed by the appearance of Comrie's *Aspect* (1976). Ironically, this is despite his warning not to confuse "completed" with "complete" (§1.1.1, 18). The "Comrie connection" is obvious in a casual review of the footnotes in the relevant sections of Waltke and O'Connor (1990). As in the case of Kuryłowicz and Brockelmann (and Ewald and Driver before them), so too in that of Waltke and O'Connor, the source of Biblical Hebrew "aspect" is in some sense "external" to Semitics. Advances in general aspectology anticipate the sea changes in comparative Semitics by an average of two decades.

This preliminary sketch of the history of Biblical Hebrew aspectology has a bearing on the current impasse in Semitics resulting from the breakdown in the conventional wisdom on the verbal system beginning in the 1980s (in part induced by the wave of discourse-related theories of the Hebrew verb). In some sense, to put it bluntly, the conventional perfectivity model is a misunderstanding. And this conclusion no doubt has a bearing on similar impasses in the study of languages into which the Standard Orientalist Framework for the analysis of verbal systems has been introduced.

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³⁸ I believe that Kuryłowicz was essentially correct in abandoning perfectivity. The view is clearly not tenable for Biblical Hebrew (DeCaen 1995a, 1995c); nor is it tenable for classic tenseless systems such as Japanese (Soga 1983) and Mandarin (Melchert 1980).

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Abstract:

Conventional wisdom holds that the inflectional system of the Biblical Hebrew verb encodes Graeco-Slavic *perfectivity*. Standard accounts of Hebrew aspectology suggest a steady linear progression from the pioneering efforts of Ewald and Driver on down to the present. In fact, not only is the perfectivity analysis clearly untenable, but Ewald and Driver never held such a position.

This paper offers up an alternative, *caesural* account of Biblical Hebrew aspectology, with a detailed examination of the original "Orientalist" framework that has become the fountainhead of linguistic theorizing on so-called "tenseless" languages. Somewhat anachronistically we may say that Ewald and Driver posited *anteriority*, but against different theoretical horizons. Ewald framed his proposal against the background of his Sanskrit studies and the Romantic theorizing on the origins of the Indo-European verb. Driver adapted the threefold system of Greek *Zeitarten* proposed by G. Curtius; his proposal added the participle as the third term, and aligned the Hebrew prefixed form with the Greek aorist stem. Slavic perfectivity, it seems, was uncritically introduced from general aspectological study in the first half of the 20th century; this radical revision gained a foothold with Brockelmann's 1951 survey of the verb.

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