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The contribution of Qumran to historical Hebrew linguistics: Evidence from the syntax of participial negation

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Authors:
Jacobus A. Naudé[1]
Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé[1]

Affiliations:
[1]Department of Hebrew, University of the Free State, South Africa

Corresponding author:
Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé, millercl@ufs.ac.za

In this article we examine how Qumran Hebrew can contribute to our knowledge of historical Hebrew linguistics. The premise of this paper is that Qumran Hebrew reflects a distinct stage in the development of Hebrew which sets it apart from Biblical Hebrew. It is further assumed that these unique features are able to assist us to understand the nature of the development of Biblical Hebrew in a more precise way. Evidence from the syntax of participial negation at Qumran as opposed to Biblical Hebrew provides evidence for this claim.

Introduction

During the late Second Temple period Judea was multilingual and culturally diverse. Although Hebrew remained the language of Jewish religious tradition and of nationalistic Jews, Aramaic became the main language of public life from the Persian period. After hellenisation, Greek played a central role in administration and politics, whilst, under the Romans, Latin was also utilised. The Qumran texts, which were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, reflect this multilingual and cultural diversity and are significant for providing a window into the linguistic environment of the late Second Temple period.[1] The texts written in Qumran Hebrew have refuted the previously accepted view that Hebrew was a non-living language during 200 BCE and 68 CE (see Blau 2000:20–25; Goodspeed 1944:59; Qimron 2000).[2] Furthermore, a variety of information concerning a stage of the language about which little or nothing was known before the discovery of the texts became available and thereby filled what had previously been a gap in our knowledge of Hebrew. Chronologically, this language, Qumran Hebrew,[3] falls between Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew.[4] It provides a unique opportunity to observe a language in a state of transition and to assess the impact of dialectical and other linguistic influences (Fitzmyer 1979:57–84).

By using the linguistic aspects of the Qumran texts as well as the other Dead Sea Scrolls in the discussion of the typologies of Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew, Bendavid (1967) and Kutscher (1974, 1982) re-introduced the diachronic study of Biblical Hebrew into scholarly consciousness.[5] Features of Qumran Hebrew include the following (Schniedewind 2013:189–190):

1. Increased use of plene writing, that is, of vowel letters.
2. Elongated forms of pronouns and nominal and verbal suffixes.
3. New spelling for certain words by adding a final aleph.
4. Decrease of the use of the *he locale* as directional ending.
5. Changes in the verbal system.
   a. Decrease in use of forms such as the waw consecutive, the infinitive absolute, and the infinitive construct with the prepositions *b-* or *k-*.

   b.   The archaic passive Qal is replaced by the Niphal.

   c.   Periphrastic verbal syntax (the verb *hyh* 'to be' used with the participle) becomes more common.

6. Use of classical Hebrew lexemes with later Hebrew and Aramaic syntax. For example, the relative ʾšr 'that' is used in a manner similar to the š- of Rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic *dy*, *d-*.

7. Use of asyndetic syntax almost disappears (i.e. relative particles, especially ʾšr and sometimes š-, coordinate clauses).

Naudé (1994b:139–163, 1996) demonstrated that the distribution of independent personal pronouns in Qumran Hebrew is more restricted than in Biblical Hebrew and shows similarities with Biblical Aramaic.

The premise of this paper is that Qumran Hebrew reflects a stage in the development of Hebrew which has unique features (contra Rezetko & Young 2014; Young, Rezetko & Ehrensvärd 2008). It is further assumed that these unique features are able to assist us to understand the nature of the development of Biblical Hebrew in a more precise way.[6]

Joosten (2010:357) claims that the [verbal] 'system as a whole is clearly evolving toward the Mishnaic system where the participle becomes the default tense and *yiqtol* takes on all modal nuances'. However, in his analysis of the participle, Geiger (2012:518) concludes that the BH tense system continues to be used in Qumran Hebrew, whilst there is a clear difference between the tense system of Qumran Hebrew and that of Mishnaic Hebrew. To determine which one of these claims is the most plausible, the specific focus will be an investigation on the nature of negated participle clauses in Qumran Hebrew in comparison to Biblical Hebrew. The main aim of this paper is to show how Qumran Hebrew can contribute to the understanding of specific constructions and thus to our knowledge of Hebrew grammar.

Several opinions have been expressed on the typology of Qumran Hebrew, which features Biblical Hebrew forms side by side with Mishnaic Hebrew. Some of these viewpoints will be exposed in the next section.

The relationship between Biblical Hebrew, Qumran Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew

The *communis opinio* is that there were two major types of Hebrew, namely classical Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew, whilst all other variations (such as Qumran Hebrew) were hybrids of these two. In this view, the authors of the Qumran texts endeavoured to write Biblical Hebrew, but under the influence of the spoken language a type of Mishnaic Hebrew emerged, or alternatively, texts which were originally written in Mishnaic Hebrew were altered so

as to render them more in accord with Biblical Hebrew. Therefore, some scholars consider Qumran Hebrew as an artificial entity that developed in the course of an archaisation process, the product of an attempt to revive Biblical Hebrew by writing Qumran Hebrew in an archaic/old-fashioned style (Kutscher 1974:8–9, 12, 1982:82, 99, 131; Rabin 1965:144–161; Segal 1970:13). Accordingly Qumran Hebrew has been regarded not as spoken Hebrew, but as an imitation of Biblical Hebrew by speakers of Mishnaic Hebrew. However, others view Qumran Hebrew as a direct continuation of Late Biblical Hebrew (Hurvitz 1965:225; Young 1993:83) or that the living substratum is not proto-Mishnaic Hebrew but presents a dialect hitherto unknown (Joosten 2010:355).

The fairly standard scholarly consensus on this classification was challenged by the view that Qumran Hebrew is independent in character and contains features which could only have evolved in a living spoken language (Kutscher 1982:57–114; Leahy 1960:135–157; Morag 1988:148–164; Polzin 1976; Qimron 1986, 1992:349–361; Sáenz-Badillos 1993:132; Waltke & O'Connor 1990:9, 11–20). The Biblical Hebrew forms which occur in Qumran Hebrew side by side with Mishnaic Hebrew forms are not necessarily archaic forms, but may well have been part of the living spoken language (Qimron 1992:356). Two dialects co-existed: a more formal, literary dialect, which utilised a formal variety resembling Biblical Hebrew, and an informal, colloquial dialect or vernacular, which lacked some of the constructions of Biblical Hebrew (Kesterson 1984:172; Smith 1991a, 1991b, 1991c).

Two texts, namely 3Q15 and 4QMMT, are important in considering the classification of Qumran Hebrew. Some classify 3Q15 as belonging to classical Mishnaic Hebrew (Sharvit 1967:135; Wolters 1990). Others claim that it should be regarded as a distinct Mishnaic dialect: the Mishnaic dialect of the Jordan (Milik 1962:222–223) or Copper Scroll Hebrew (Morag 1988). Others are of the opinion that 4QMMT reflects the real spoken Qumran Hebrew (Qimron & Strugnell 1994:101–108). The outcome of such a view is that the other texts must then of necessity be imitations of Biblical Hebrew. However, a closer look at the data (Muchowski 1994; Qimron & Strugnell 1994:101–108) shows that the language of 3Q15 and 4QMMT are not so far removed from Qumran Hebrew (as reflected in other Qumran texts) and Late Biblical Hebrew.

Although, logically, Qumran Hebrew as a living spoken language should reflect more generally prevailing linguistic phenomena of that time, the sociological and historic contexts in which it existed must be taken into account. On the one hand it has to be borne in mind that according to dating, Qumran Hebrew existed over a considerable period, more than 200 years in fact, and therefore shows some linguistic diversity. On the other hand, it would be incorrect to assume that the linguistic features of Qumran Hebrew are representative of all the Hebrew that was written and spoken

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6.Goshen-Gottstein (1958) already demonstrates that Qumran Hebrew shows internal diversity within specific scrolls but also differences among them. This may reflect stylistic features of individual authors and scribes, but one must acknowledge that Qumran Hebrew shares a distinct language system.

at the time. Rather these features form an exponent of a dialectal continuum of Hebrew.[7] It is therefore essential to theoretically accommodate the linguistic varieties of Qumran Hebrew as far as possible theoretically, when grammatical descriptions and explanations of problematic data are offered.[8]

Drawing upon modern linguistic research in language change, Naudé (2003:189–202, see also 2000a, 2000b, 2000c:61–65, 2012; and Ehrensvärd 2003:186-187) first defines the concept 'language' and subsequently the concept 'change'. Language is best seen as idiolect, the output of a single speaker, because language as a socio-political concept has proved to be of little value in linguistic research. Regarding the concept 'change', Naudé stresses the importance of distinguishing between the concept of 'change' and that of 'diffusion'. 'Change' is the imperfect transmission of language from parents to child, giving rise to hitherto unknown forms, whereas 'diffusion' is the spread of such forms. Within this theoretical framework, no change within the domain of syntax occurred between Early Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew – what happened was a diffusion of changes in Late Biblical Hebrew that had already taken place in Early Biblical Hebrew. Qumran Hebrew does not show many changes from Late Biblical Hebrew, but rather a large diffusion of forms which changed in the transition of Hebrew towards Late Biblical Hebrew (Naudé 2000b:128). Diffusion also involves the parameter of time: Qumran Hebrew is datable to a narrow chronological window and thereby provides a firm point to which certain features of Hebrew can be situated (Naudé 2012:70–73). However, Qumran Hebrew represents a situation where different unique grammars (i.e. idiolects) co-existed next to one another in the author's and/or speaker's mind (Naudé 2000b:116). Naudé (2012:70–73) adds also the factor of the nature of written language. The diversity of Qumran Hebrew is confirmed by the classification of texts according to scribal practices by Tov (2004:279–288, 339–343) and the exposition of Reymond (2014) on the orthography, phonology and morphology of Qumran Hebrew, which is especially opposed to the view of Qimron (1986, 2000:232–244) that Qumran Hebrew is a single vernacular dialect (Reymond 2014:1).

According to the chronological model (adapted from the general consensus as represented in Young *et al*. 2008:13–14; see also Hurvitz 1972, 1973, 1974, 1982, 2000, 2006), the position of Qumran Hebrew in the language development of Hebrew is as follows:

7.The relation between languages (or dialects) is no longer done by drawing up a precise family tree or determining a proto-language to explain the common features, since these features go beyond the evidence of the extant linguistic data. The actual situation is better explained by reference to dialect geography, according to which the spread of linguistic features generally moves from the centre outwards towards the perimeters, resulting in clear differences between the dialects from one zone to another (see Garr 1985).

8.See Goshen-Gottstein (1958), especially the important observations on the differences displayed by the major texts from Qumran in their most significant linguistic features. On account of these observations one should avoid generalisations and refrain from any attempt to incorporate the idiosyncrasies of a given text into the overall description of the language no matter how important that text appears to be.

Archaic (pre-biblical) c. 1200–1000 BCE

Pre-exilic c. 1000–587/586 BCE

    Genesis–Numbers (minus P), Deuteronomy–2 Kings 23, Isaiah 1–39, Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, Micah–Zephaniah

Late pre-exilic to early post-exilic c. 600–500 BCE

    2 Kings 24–25, Isaiah 40–55, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Lamentations

Post-exilic c. 539/538–165 BCE

    P in the Pentateuch, Isaiah 56–66, Haggai–Malachi, Qoheleth, Esther–Chronicles

Post-biblical c. 200 BCE–500 CE

    Qumran Hebrew; Ben Sira[9]; Rabbinic Hebrew

In recent years, the generally accepted view concerning the chronological division of the Hebrew Bible has been challenged. This will be the topic of the next section.

Challenges to the chronological model

Biblical Hebrew: Studies in chronology and typology (Young 2003a)

In a collection of essays edited by Young (2003a), the chronological model was challenged by the claim that all biblical literature has its origin in the Persian era or later. Davies (2003) argues that Persian-period scribes wrote several varieties of Hebrew, and therefore it is conceivable that classical Hebrew was one of these.

Young (2003b:314–317) provides the following outline based on the work of Talshir (2003:251–275): a) Early Biblical Hebrew continued to be the language of Yehud until the Persian period, especially in those sources without an eastern bias, such as Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi; b) Late Biblical Hebrew is connected with the eastern diaspora; proto-Late Biblical Hebrew features first began to make their presence felt strongly in literary Hebrew associated with the exiles in the eastern diaspora (Ezekiel being the first example); c) in the days of the Second Temple period, political separation saw the development of a separate dialect, Tannaitic (Mishnaic) Hebrew in the lowlands, whilst in Yehud proper, Hebrew remained more conservative. Although neither Qumran Hebrew nor Mishnaic Hebrew is identical to Late Biblical Hebrew, there are important isoglosses which they share with Late Biblical Hebrew in opposition to Early Biblical Hebrew (see also Rezetko 2003).

The linguistic dating of biblical texts (Young *et al*. 2008)

Young *et al*. (2008; see Naudé 2010) argue that Early Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew do not represent different chronological periods in the history of Biblical Hebrew, but instead represent coexisting styles of literary Hebrew throughout the biblical period and are best taken as

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9.Van Peursen (1999) argues for the uniqueness of the Hebrew of Ben Sira.

representing two tendencies among scribes of the biblical period: conservative and non-conservative. The authors and scribes who composed and transmitted works in Early Biblical Hebrew exhibit a tendency to conservatism in their linguistic choices, in the sense that they only rarely use forms outside a narrow core of what they considered literary forms. At the other extreme, the Late Biblical Hebrew authors and scribes exhibited a much less conservative attitude. Between extreme conservatism (e.g. Zechariah 1–8) and extreme openness to variety (e.g. Ezra), there was a continuum into which other writings may be placed (e.g. Ezekiel).

At Qumran too, the Damascus Document and the Temple Scroll fall somewhere in the middle between Early Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew. The other samples of Qumran (especially Pesher Habakkuk) and Ben Sira studied by Young *et al*. (2008:250–279) fall in the mid to high end of the Early Biblical Hebrew scale, even further from the core Late Biblical Hebrew books.

Historical linguistics and Biblical Hebrew. Steps toward an integrated approach (Rezetko & Young 2014)

This is a reaction to viewpoints in Miller-Naudé and Zevit (2012) *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew*. It is clear that many of the suggestions and ideas of the authors find a place in the volume of Rezetko and Young (2014) (see Rezetko & Young 2014:593–599), for example, their integrated approach versus the idea of complexity theory (Naudé 2012) as well as the ideas concerning the terms change, diffusion, variation, idiolects, etc. as explicated in Chapter 1.

Rezetko and Young (2014:10–11) now use the phrase 'Classical Hebrew' for the four premishnaic corpora: the Hebrew inscriptions, Ben Sira, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Hebrew Bible. Instead of the two main types or periods of Biblical Hebrew (Golden Age, Early, Classical, or Standard Biblical Hebrew on the one hand, and Silver Age or Late Biblical Hebrew on the other hand) they use the term 'Standard Classical Hebrew' and 'Peripheral Classical Hebrew' respectively for linguistic forms/uses that are 'standard' and that are 'peripheral' or 'non-standard' in the same corpus. They use these terms in ways that differ from their usage in dialect geography or historical dialectology, using them as descriptive labels for linguistic items which occur more or less frequently in the surviving written specimens of ancient Hebrew.

Rezetko and Young (2014:56–57) argue that cross-textual variable analysis and variationist analysis can help scholars of Biblical Hebrew to get a much better grasp of the linguistic facts of Biblical Hebrew and therefore to formulate eventually a better history of ancient Hebrew. Their main contention is that historical linguistic study of Biblical Hebrew should aim to target, record, organise, and evaluate individual linguistic items, their processes of variation and change in specific compositions and manuscripts, not only or mainly in the Masoretic Text or in assemblages of biblical books or from the perspective of the conventional (or any other) periodisation of Biblical Hebrew.

Rezetko and Young (2014:115–116, 210) further claim that it should not be postulated that the Masoretic text reflects the original text of the biblical books better or more frequently than any other text. As a result, it also should not be postulated that the language of the Masoretic text reflects the original language of the biblical authors better or more frequently than any other text. For them, neither the Masoretic text, nor any other biblical text is likely to preserve the authentic details of the language of any biblical author (Rezetko & Young 2014:406). They claim that there are many late adjustments and additions to biblical writings. For example, by taking into account Qumran Samuel, the book of Samuel must have a complex history of production that lasted from early in the First Temple period until late in the Second Temple period, with the implication that the language of the book is a witness to written Hebrew throughout this entire extended period of time (Rezetko & Young 2014:210). Their interpretation is that the largest proportion of linguistic variations between the Masoretic text and Qumran Samuel are individual variants, as opposed to large-scale systematic variations which do not support the conventional historical linguistic perspective of viewing each corpus as a coherent whole in its own right with an unambiguously distinctive linguistic profile (Rezetko & Young 2014:210, 328). However, Rezetko and Young (2014:403) acknowledge that it is difficult or impossible to know the precise reasons behind the linguistic variations in the Hebrew Bible. They do not attribute all variation to style, but they keep the explanation on the table (Rezetko & Young 2014:408).

In the following sections, we examine one aspect of Hebrew syntax within Qumran Hebrew, namely the syntax of the negation of the participle in order to discover to what extent Qumran Hebrew is the same or different from Biblical Hebrew (see Muraoka 2000 for a similar approach) and whether linguistic variation should be attributed solely to style.

Negation of the participle in Qumran Hebrew

In this section we survey the syntax of the negation of the participle in Qumran Hebrew. As is well-known, the participle has both nominal morphology (indicating number, gender, and state) and verbal morphology (differentiating the stem formations). Syntactically, the participle may also function nominally or verbally (see Andersen & Forbes 2007; Dyk 1994). It is therefore not surprising that the participle can be negated both by the negative particle *ʾên*, which is ordinarily used to negate nominal clauses, and less frequently by the negative particle *lōʾ*, which is the ordinary negator of verbal clauses. In previous research (Miller-Naudé & Naudé 2015), we have demonstrated that the uses of *ʾên* and *lōʾ* as negators of the participle are syntactically distinct in Biblical Hebrew. In this paper, we examine the Qumran data to determine what

contribution it makes to our understanding of the history of Hebrew.[10]

Before presenting the data on negation, it is important to introduce the concept of scope of negation. The scope of the negation in a language is determined by the syntactic relations between phrasal projections and especially by the relation of the negative marker to subsequent constituents. In Afrikaans, the scope of negation is clearly marked by the particle *nie* at both the beginning and end of the negative phrase. In Biblical Hebrew, there are two kinds of negative scope: sentence negation and constituent negation (Naudé & Rendsburg 2013; Snyman 2004; Snyman & Naudé 2003). In sentence negation, the scope of negation extends to the entire predication, as illustrated in (1):

(1)   Jeremiah 23:21

לֹא־שָׁלַחְתִּי אֶת־הַנְּבִאִים

    I did not send the prophets.

The entire sentence is negated. Sentence negation in Biblical Hebrew is indicated by the negative marker immediately preceding the verb. By contrast, in constituent negation, the scope of negation applies only to a single constituent within the sentence, as illustrated in (2):

(2)   Genesis 45:8

וְעַתָּה לֹא־אַתֶּם שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים

    And now it was not you who sent me here, but rather God.

The scope of the negative marker extends only to the subject constituent, which consists of the independent personal pronoun. In contrast to (1), the entire sentence in (2) is not negated. Rather, the speaker states that it was not his addressees who sent him, but he does not deny that he was sent. Constituent negation in Biblical Hebrew is also determined by word order – the negative marker immediately precedes the non-verbal constituent. The scope of negation extends only to the constituent that follows the negative and not to the entire sentence.

ʾên with a pronominal suffix as the subject of the participle

The most common construction in Biblical Hebrew is also attested at Qumran, namely, ʾên followed by a pronominal suffix as the subject of the participle, as illustrated in (3):

(3)   4Q396 f1–2i:1

אי]נם שוחטים במקדש

    'they do [no]t slaughter in the temple'

The scope of negation extends to the entire sentence.

The usual word order in this construction is ʾên with a pronominal suffix (the subject) and the participle, followed

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by possible objects and adjuncts (e.g. prepositional phrases). In two variants to this word order, a non-verbal constituent occurs in a position before the negative particle. In the first construction, the constituent is moved to the front of the sentence, but remains within the sentence. This construction is referred to as the *topicalisation* of the constituent (Holmstedt 2009, 2014). Topicalisation is typically used either to highlight the informational topic of the sentence, which orients a reader or hearer to the theme from the context, or to the focus of the sentence, which instructs a reader or hearer to contrast information with other alternatives (Holmstedt 2009). In the second construction, the constituent occurs outside of the boundary of the sentence and a resumptive pronoun within the sentence refers to it. This construction is referred to as *left dislocation* (see Holmstedt 2014; Naudé 1990).

Both topicalisation and left dislocation occur with this construction at Qumran. In (4) the object constituent is topicalised before the negative marker:

(4)   4Q394 f8iv:1 (= 4QMMT)

[א]שם אינם רואים

    '[the sin] offering these do not see'

The object of the sentence (אשם) occurs before the negative particle and participle; there is no resumption of the topicalised object in the sentence (contra Geiger 2012:306).

There are two very interesting diachronic facts concerning this construction. Firstly, in a number of cases involving parallel texts in Biblical Hebrew, the earlier text uses *lōʾ* followed by a *yiqtol* form, whereas the later text uses ʾên with a pronominal suffix followed by the participle (see Geiger 2012:303). Compare the examples in (5a) and (5b):

(5a)   1 Kings 22:8

וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוֹשָׁפָט עוֹד אִישׁ־אֶחָד לִדְרֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה מֵאֹתוֹ וַאֲנִי שְׂנֵאתִיו כִּי לֹא־יִתְנַבֵּא עָלַי טוֹב כִּי אִם־רָע מִיכָיְהוּ בֶן־יִמְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט אַל־יֹאמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ כֵּן

And the king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, 'There is one more man through whom we can inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies anything good for me, but only misfortune – Micaiah son of Imlah.' But King Jehoshaphat said, 'Let not the king say so!'

(5b)   2 Chronicles 18:7

וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוֹשָׁפָט עוֹד אִישׁ־אֶחָד לִדְרוֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה מֵאֹתוֹ וַאֲנִי שְׂנֵאתִיהוּ כִּי־אֵינֶנּוּ מִתְנַבֵּא עָלַי לְטוֹבָה כִּי כָל־יָמָיו לְרָעָה הוּא מִיכָיְהוּ בֶן־יִמְלָא וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט אַל־יֹאמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ כֵּן

And the king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, 'There is one more man through whom we can inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies anything good for me but always misfortune. He is Micaiah son of Imlah'. Jehoshaphat replied, 'Let not the king say so!'

Secondly, this syntactic construction continues into Mishnaic Hebrew, where the ordinary pattern is ʾên followed by an

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independent or enclitic pronoun and the participle (Geiger 2012:305). What is different about Mishnaic Hebrew is the fact that the pronoun may be an independent subject pronoun. This structure is not attested in Biblical Hebrew,[11] but it does occur at Qumran:

(6) 4Q372 f1:17–18

ואין אתה צריך לכל גוי ועם לכל עזכה

'you have no need of any people or nation for any help'

In (7), the same construction occurs, but now the subject pronoun is left dislocated and resumed in the main sentence with a second subject pronoun; this is not attested in Biblical Hebrew at all:

(7) 11Q 19 35:6 (= 11QT)

והוא אין הוא לבוש בג[די הקודש

'and he not he is dressed with the sacred vestments'

We can therefore see development in Qumran Hebrew from Biblical Hebrew, as a new construction is introduced, namely, ʾên with an independent subject pronoun, which becomes very common in Mishnaic Hebrew (Segal 1927/1970:162).

ʾên negating a participle with an explicit noun phrase subject

In the second construction ʾên is followed by an explicit noun phrase subject and then the participle, as in (8):

(8) 4Q277 f1ii:11

וא[ין יד[יו] שט[ו]פות במים

'and his hands are not washed with water'

As in Biblical Hebrew, this construction involves sentential negation and the basic word order is ʾên, subject, participle.

In the first two constructions with ʾên, there is an overt subject, either a pronoun as in the first construction, or an explicit noun phrase as in the second construction. Syntactically, participles functioning as verbs need to have a subject, since, unlike finite verbal forms, the participle does not indicate a subject in its morphology.

ʾên negating a participle with no overt subject

In the third construction ʾên negates a participle with no overt subject, as in (9):

(9) 11Q19 LIX:8 (= 11QT)

ואין מושיע מפני רעתמה

'and no one saves (them) because of their wickedness'[12]

The participle functions syntactically as the predicate of the clause in the sense that it governs an adjunct, the prepositional phrase מפני רעתמה ('because of their wickedness'). Semantically,

the subject of the predicative participle must be interpreted as 'no one'. Syntactically, we understand the negative marker ʾên to be in construct with the zero subject of the participle (i.e. a zero noun phrase). Evidence for this analysis comes from examples in which there is a constituent which modifies the zero noun phrase, as in (10):

(10) 4Q405 f23i:10

ואין במה דולג עלי חוק

'and no one among them omits a regulation'

In this example, the prepositional phrase במה ('among them') is dependent upon the zero noun phrase.

In this third construction with ʾên, the scope of negation is only the noun phrase subject and not the entire predication. In other words, the kind of negation is constituent negation rather than sentential negation. This construction is also found in Biblical Hebrew, as illustrated in (11):

(11) Psalm 105:37

וַיּוֹצִיאֵם בְּכֶסֶף וְזָהָב וְאֵין בִּשְׁבָטָיו כּוֹשֵׁל

He led them out with silver and gold and no one among his tribes was stumbling.

Again, the negative ʾên is followed by a prepositional phrase which modifies the zero subject noun phrase.

It is possible for a constituent other than the participle to be topicalised so that it appears before the negative particle:

(12) 1Q33 XIV:11 (= 1QM)

לכול גבוריהם אין מציל ולקליהם אין מנוס

'For all their heroes there is no one saving, and for their swift ones is there no one escaping'.

In this example, the prepositional phrases (לכול גבוריהם and לקליהם) are topicalised.

So far we have seen examples that are syntactically identical to those in Biblical Hebrew. In one example in Qumran Hebrew, this construction with ʾên followed by a zero subject and a participle is attested as the embedded object of a clause:

(13) 4Q381 f45:1

אבינא ואין מבין אשכיל

'And I shall understand and whoever does not understand I shall teach'

In this example, the clause ואין מבין ('and no one understands') is the object of the verb אשכיל ('I shall teach').

Negation of the participle with lōʾ

The negative particle lōʾ is used much less frequently with the participle in Biblical Hebrew and it has syntactic patterns that are distinct from those of ʾên. The same is true at Qumran.

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lōʾ negating a constituent

One of the most important uses of *lōʾ* is its use to negate a single constituent in a clause; this use is never exhibited by *ʾên*. Examples of *lōʾ* negating the predicates of a nominal clause occur twice in the following sentence:

(14) 4Q186 f2i:3–4

<div dir="rtl">

והואה לוא ארוך ולוא קצר

</div>

'and he is not tall and not short'

Note that the negative particle does not occur initially in the clause, but rather it immediately precedes the two predicates. The negative has scope only over the predicate constituents.

lōʾ negating a sentence with a participial predicate

At Qumran the use of the negative *lōʾ* to negate a sentence with a participial predicate is increasing, especially when the participle is passive rather than active, as in (15):

(15) 4Q365a f5i:4

<div dir="rtl">

לוא נראים האופנים אל החוץ

</div>

'the wheels were not visible outside'

Note that the negative occurs in the initial position in the sentence; the scope of negation is thus the entire sentence. It is also important to note that, in contrast to sentences negated with *ʾên*, the word order is verb-subject rather than subject-verb.

An important way in which the Hebrew of Qumran has developed from Biblical Hebrew involves the absence of an explicit subject in participial sentences negated with *lōʾ*. This occurs in particular with passive participles, as illustrated in (16):

(16) CD V:3–4

<div dir="rtl">

כי לא {נפ°°} נפתח בישראל מיום מות אלעזר ויהושע וישוע והזקנים אשר עבדו את העשתרת

</div>

'For it had not been opened in Israel since the day of the death of Eleazar and Jehoshua and Joshua and the elders who worshipped Ashtaroth'

In the history of the development of Hebrew, this is significant because pro-drop (the absence of an overt subject with a finite verb) is an important syntactic feature. However, it is not present in Biblical Hebrew on participles, since participles do not index subjects in their morphology, apart from gender and number. At Qumran, the process is not complete and often occurs in contexts where the subject can be inferred from the preceding context, as in (17):

(17) 11Q14 f1ii:11–12

<div dir="rtl">

ואין משכלה בארצכם ולוא מוחלה שדפון וירקון לוא יראה בתבואתיה

</div>

'and no one will miscarry (feminine) in your land and (she) will not be sick,[13] blight and mildew will not be seen in its (lit. her) harvests'

13. Parry and Tov (2014:310) translate: 'and none be sick'.

In the first sentence, the negative *ʾên* is used to negate the zero subject noun phrase before a feminine participle. In the second sentence, the negative *lōʾ* is used before the participle, but no subject is expressed. However, from the context, the subject must be the same as that of the preceding sentence, namely a female animal. The import of the two sentences is: 'No female animal will miscarry in your land, nor even be sick'.

A similar example occurs in (18), where a coordinate sentence is actually modifying a preceding noun phrase:

(18) CD IX:10–12

<div dir="rtl">

וכל האובד ולא נודע מי גנבו ממאד המחנה אשר גנב בו ישביע בעליו בשבועת האלה

</div>

'and every lost object – and it is not known who stole it from the property of the camp in which it was stolen – its owner should make a maledictory oath'

The clause with *lōʾ* could have been expressed as a relative clause modifying the preceding noun phrase, but rather than being subordinate, it is paratactic. This example illustrates that, whereas the participle in Qumran Hebrew is beginning to exhibit features that we would expect of a finite verb, it is doing so within highly constrained syntactic contexts and specifically in contexts of syntactic embedding or subordination.

The development of Qumran Hebrew from Biblical Hebrew in this regard can be seen as well in the text of Isaiah 44:12.

(19a) Isaiah 44:12 (MT)

<div dir="rtl">

לֹא־שָׁתָה מַיִם וַיִּיעָף

</div>

'(If) *he drinks* no water, he would grow faint'.

(19b) 1QIsaᵃ XXXVII:18

<div dir="rtl">

לוא שותה מים

</div>

'(If) (he) does not drink water ...'

In the MT version, the verb שָׁתָה is a perfect form used in a modal sense. In the Qumran version of Isaiah from Cave 1, the participial form שותה is used. Again, it seems as if the participle at Qumran can be used with pro-drop; in other words, it is beginning to have the syntactic characteristics of a finite verb.

lōʾ negating constituent within a prepositional phrase

In the same way that *lōʾ* can negate a constituent within the clause; it can also negate a constituent within a prepositional phrase, as in (20):

(20) 1QHᵃ XVI:10–11[14]

<div dir="rtl">

ומפריח נצר ק[ו]דש למטעת אמת סותר בלוא נחשב ובלא נודע הותם רזו

</div>

'he who causes the holy shoot to grow in the true plantation hides, without being considered, and without being known, its sealed mystery'

14. In Parry and Tov (2014:312–313), the lines are numbered 11–12.

In the two examples in this passage, a prepositional phrase takes as its object a passive participle negated with *lōʾ*. The following passage is similar, again with a passive participle:

(21)　1QHᵃ XVI:36

ולשון הגברתה בפ[י] בלא נאספה

'But you have made the tongue in [my] mouth strong, without being taken away'[15]

The passive participle is feminine and the implicit subject must be the noun 'tongue' from the previous sentence.

In (22), the passive participle is negated within a prepositional phrase, but there is an unmarked headless relative clause between the prepositional and the negated clause.

(22)　4Q418 f69 ii:5

ומה] השקט ללוא היה ומה משפט ללוא נוסד

'And what is] rest to (one who) has not come into being? And what is righteousness to (one who) has not been founded?'

We must understand that the prepositional phrase means 'to the one who has not come into being' even though the head of the relative clause is not overt and the relative marker is also not overt.

Conclusions

Geiger, who has written an important volume on the participle in Hebrew recently, claims that in the negation of the participle at Qumran, the constructions using *ʾên* and *lōʾ* are formally different but functionally the same (Geiger 2012:298–299).[16] As we conclude, we examine briefly this claim, because if true, it would provide support to Rezetko and Young's claims (2014) that the differing constructions in Hebrew relate only to language variation and style rather than to syntactically different functions or to diachronic development.

Geiger uses the following example to illustrate that there is no functional difference between *ʾên* and *lōʾ*:

(23)　1QHᵃ XV:11[17]

אין פה לרוח הוות ולא מענה לשון לכול [ב]ני אשמה

'there is no word for the spirit of destruction, nor is there a reply of the tongue of all the [so]ns of guilt' (García-Martínez & Tigchelaar 1997:179)

The translation of García-Martínez and Tigchelaar supports the claim of Geiger by translating the two sentences identically 'there is no word ...' and 'there is no reply of a tongue ...' However, we want to argue that the two sentences are not identical. The first sentence with *ʾên* is a negative

existential sentence, literally 'there does not exist a mouth belonging to the spirit of destruction'. The second sentence, by contrast, is a negative predication: 'a tongue does not answer all of the sons of guilt'. The two sentences are thus neither formally nor functionally identical.

In other cases as well, the variation between *ʾên* and *lōʾ* can be seen to relate to functional differences, as in (24):

(24)　1QHᵃ XII:17–18[18]

אמרו לחזון דעת לא נכון ולדרך לבבה לא היאה

'For they said of the vision of knowledge: It is not certain! and of the path of your heart: It is not that!' (García-Martínez & Tigchelaar 1997:169)

In Biblical Hebrew, there is an important difference between the negation of the passive participle *nakon* with *lōʾ* as opposed to *ʾên*. Negation with *lōʾ* is used as in the Qumran example just illustrated to indicate a complete predication, as illustrated for Biblical Hebrew in (25):[19]

(25)　Exodus 8:22

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לֹא נָכוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן

But Moses replied, 'It would not be right to do this'

By contrast, note the use of *ʾên* and the same participle in the late Biblical Hebrew example from Nehemiah:

(26)　Nehemiah 8:10

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לְכוּ אִכְלוּ מַשְׁמַנִּים וּשְׁתוּ מַמְתַקִּים וְשִׁלְחוּ מָנוֹת לְאֵין נָכוֹן לוֹ

He further said to them, Go, eat choice foods and drink sweet drinks and send portions to whoever has nothing prepared, ...'

The clause negated with *ʾên* is a possessive clause in which the participle is functioning nominally. There is therefore a clear distinction in syntax between the passage in Exodus and Nehemiah, which is not related to diachronic considerations but rather to syntactic ones.

We believe that a complexity approach to Qumran Hebrew that recognises both language variation and language change and diffusion whilst paying close attention to syntactic structures and functions, especially those that are not immediately apparent on the surface, reveals that there is both syntactic differentiation and syntactic development that can be seen in the Qumran texts (see Naudé 2012:61–81). We hope in the future to extend our research to include a comprehensive analysis of the syntactic structures found in Qumran Hebrew.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

15.Parry and Tov (2014:315) translate 'unrestrained'.

16.As Geiger notes, there are differences between Qumran texts in their use of the two negative particles (e.g. MMT and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice use only *ʾên* whereas Sirach and the Rule of the Community use only *lōʾ*) and differences relating to syntactic context (e.g. relative sentences are negated only with *ʾên* whereas periphrastic participial constructions with *hyh* use only *lōʾ*) (Geiger 2012:299).

17.Line 14 in Parry and Tov (2014:308–309).

18.Lines 18–19 in Parry and Tov (2014:296–297).

19.See also Psalm 78:37.

Authors' contributions

J.N. was responsible for the conceptual framework of the research, namely, the historical linguistics debate, J.N. and C.M.N. were jointly responsible for the syntactic analysis, C.M.N. was responsible for the editing of the paper.

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