REVIEWS


Grammars have long recognized and documented the types of processes and changes identified as grammaticalization, that is, the development of grammatical elements from less grammatical or non-grammatical ones (on definitions of grammaticalization, see L. Campbell and R. Janda, “Introduction: Conceptions of Grammaticalization and Their Problems.” Language Sciences 23 [2001]: 93–112). However, the last quarter century has witnessed the burgeoning of a grammaticalization “movement,” often referred to under the rubric grammaticalization theory. In this book, Rubin attempts to bridge the divide between the linguistic study of grammaticalization and the traditional comparative and historical study of the Semitic languages. Rubin writes for two distinct audiences with a separate goal for each: for the Semitist, Rubin hopes to shed new light on Semitic grammar by examining select “long-standing problems from a new perspective”—grammaticalization; for the linguist, Rubin intends to make available “an abundance of examples that may be worthy of their attention” (p. 1).

A brief introduction to grammaticalization (chap. 1) is followed by an even briefer overview of the Semitic language family (chap. 2), the former intended primarily for the Semitist, the latter aimed at the linguist. Chapter 3 is perhaps the most useful in the book, providing a compendium of examples of grammaticalization from the geographic and temporal range of Semitic. It is a sort of “Semitic appendix” to Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva’s World Lexicon of Grammaticalization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), illustrating recognized paths of language development in Semitic and very infrequently adding to the list of grammaticalization processes (e.g., copula < presentative).

Chapters 4 through 6 provide extended discussions of three debated areas of historical reconstruction of the Semitic languages in light of grammaticalization theory. In chapter 4, Rubin examines the development of definite articles in Central Semitic, concluding along with J. Halévy (“L’article hébreu.” Revue des Études Juives 23 [1891]: 117–121) that the definite articles developed from two demonstrative sets. In chapter 5, Rubin presents an overview of the development of the Jyt and l- type direct object markers in Semitic, focusing particularly on Canaanite, Aramaic, Arabic, Ge’ez, Tigrinya, and Akkadian. Rubin concludes that the l- direct object marker represents an allative/dative > accusative development. He considers the origin of Jyt to be uncertain, except that it does not represent preposition >
accusative development, as has been proposed. Finally, chapter 6 is a survey of the development of present tense markers in Semitic. There Rubin concludes, unsurprisingly, that except for Yemini Arabic (and possibly Syro-Palestinian and Egyptian Arabic), present tense markers developed from locative verb (e.g., 'stand', 'sit') or preposition constructions. The book ends with a page-and-a-half summary of the results of his studies in Semitic grammaticalization (chap. 7).

Rubin's book is a helpful if small corrective to the neglect of Semitic languages by linguists and specifically in grammaticalization studies. Rubin successfully shows that the neglect is disproportionate with the amount of interesting grammaticalization data in Semitic. It is therefore disappointing that Rubin presents us with only "studies in ..." rather than a more comprehensive examination of grammaticalization in the Semitic languages (e.g., notably absent from Rubin's catalogue in chapter 3 is the parade example of grammaticalization from Biblical Hebrew, $Pmr$ infinitive > complementizer; see C. L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis* [HSM 55; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 2003], pp. 199–212). His excuse of too little "space and time" to treat the data more fully is hardly believable in a book of this length (p. 17).

The lack of attention to the debated status of grammaticalization theory is also disappointing. Rubin rather blithely states that "linguists have a very good idea as to the types of changes that fall into this category" (p. 7). However, this is far from being the case: linguists are divided on how to define grammaticalization (Rubin implicitly recognizes the problem in that he is only able to provide a list of typical characteristics of grammaticalization in place of a formal and strict definition; see L. Campbell and R. Janda, "Introduction: Conceptions of Grammaticalization"), on the status of grammaticalization as a discrete field of linguistic research (see L. Campbell, "What's Wrong with Grammaticalization?" *Language Sciences* 23 [2001]: 113–161), and on the relationship between grammaticalization and language change in general (B. D. Joseph, "Rescuing Traditional (Historical) Linguistics from Grammaticalization Theory," in *Up and Down the Cline: The Nature of Grammaticalization*, ed. O. Fischer, M. Norde, and H. Perridon [Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2004], pp. 45–71). In light of Rubin's admission that he is generally not presenting new data in the book but examining them from the new viewpoint of grammaticalization (e.g., pp. 17, 112), readers (particularly Semitists) would have benefited from a more forthright and rigorous discussion of the debated status of grammaticalization theory.

Finally, some of Rubin's more original contributions to our understanding of grammaticalization in Semitic are questionable. Here I note one in particular. In chapter 6, Rubin argues for two types of grammaticalization of present tense in Semitic: type 1 derives present tense from a locative con-
struction, whether a locative verb (e.g., ‘stand’ in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, ‘sit’ in Baghdadi Arabic) or a preposition (b- ‘in, at’ in North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic); type 2, according to Rubin attested only in Yemini Arabic and possibly also the Syro-Palestinian and Egyptian Arabic dialects, derives the present tense from a subordinate construction (p. 151). While type 1 is “extremely common in the languages of the world,” Rubin admits that type 2 “is far less common cross-linguistically” (p. 151). In fact, Rubin cites no comparative grammaticalization developments to his type 2 present tense derivation, and Heine and Kuteva do not list any sort of derivation like Rubin’s type 2. Rather, grammaticalization studies uniformly show present tense developing from progressive or continuous forms, of which the locative construction (Rubin’s type 1) is a major source.

Rubin attempts to find an analogy for his type 2 in the development of Central Semitic yaqtulu from East Semitic subordinate yaqtulu form. Unfortunately, this reconstruction is problematic not only because it posits an unparalleled subordinate > indicative (on the opposite trend, see J. Bybee, R. Perkins, and W. Pagliuca, The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages of the World [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994], pp. 230–236), but in its concomitant positing of jussive or preterite > imperfective (see J. A. Cook, “The Hebrew Verb: A Grammaticalization Approach,” ZAH 14:2 [2001]: 131 n. 22). A more convincing reconstruction of East and West Semitic yaqtulu can be based on Rubin’s observation that the subordinating particle in his type 2 “ultimately derives from a preposition” (p. 151). Since locative constructions are regularly grammaticalized to form both present tense (locative > continuous > present tense) and subordinate markers (B. Heine and T. Kuteva, Lexicon of Grammaticalization, pp. 93–94, 202–203, 205), I would hypothesize a common Semitic locative-adverbial -u suffix that attached to verbal forms in East Semitic (see I. M. Diakonoff, Afrasian Languages, Languages of Asia and Africa [Moscow: Nauka, 1988], p. 103), becoming grammaticalized as a subordinate marker, and formed a new Central Semitic progressive verb form yaqtulu through the usual path of development: locative construction > progressive/continuous > imperfective (see J. A. Cook, “The Hebrew Verb,” p. 131).

Lyle Campbell has argued that because grammaticalization can only be defined by principles that are neither sufficient nor necessary but only statistically common in changes labeled as grammaticalization, and because grammaticalization relies on processes and mechanisms independent of it, it only has a “derivative” status (L. Campbell, “What’s Wrong with Grammaticalization?” p. 113). He goes on to argue that grammaticalization may nevertheless have a “heuristic” value in informing typological studies of the sorts of changes that commonly occur cross-linguistically (L. Campbell,
"What’s Wrong with Grammaticalization?” p. 158). Rubin is to be complemented for illustrating the heuristic value of grammaticalization for Semitic studies: the collecting of various examples of grammaticalization found throughout the geographic and temporal range of the Semitic languages presents an important step forward both for linguists interested in the data and Semitists interested in typological arguments and explanations for Semitic language change. I am, however, less convinced that Rubin’s brief volume has offered “valuable insights into the history of the Semitic languages” (p. 154) beyond what has hitherto been known but admittedly widely scattered in the literature.

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Lest anyone overlook this modestly-sized and unassuming volume, let me say at the outset that this work is a significant contribution to the study of word order in Biblical Aramaic. Not only does Lamprecht address an understudied topic, he employs a theoretical framework, the minimalist program of Chomskyan generative linguistics, that is underused in biblical studies, even though it is one of the most prominent frameworks in general linguistics. Indeed, Lamprecht hypothesizes that “word order in Biblical Aramaic is not free,” as has been generally thought in biblical and Aramaic studies, and that verb “movement as proposed in the Minimalist Programme … is adequate to explain the various word orders in BA” (p. 9). Given his minority conclusion, that Biblical Aramaic is a recognizable verb-subject language, it is well-worth the time necessary to work through this technical study.

Lamprecht organizes his investigation in seven chapters, the first of which is the introduction, in which he clearly sets out his research questions (p. 8), and the last of which is a summary of his conclusions. In the main body of the work, chapter 2 is a clear and concise introduction to the minimalist program as it was articulated by Chomsky in 1992 and 1994. Chapters 3 and 4 are the crucial sections in that the basic relationships of the subject and verb (chap. 3) and verb and object (chap. 4) are analyzed. Chapter 5 synthesizes the analyses advanced in chapters three and four in