

PROFECÍA Y SINTAXIS: EL USO DE LAS FORMAS VERBALES EN LOS PROFETAS MENORES PREEXÍLICOS. (Prophecy and Syntax: The Use of the Verbal Forms in the Pre-Exilic Minor Prophets) [Spanish]. By Francisco Javier del Barco del Barco. Pp. xiii + 259. Madrid: Instituto de Filología, 2003. Paper, € 23,83. \$28.69.

Discourse studies of the Hebrew verb are based on the premise that the traditional, sentence based, semantic analyses of the Hebrew verb are inadequate and ultimately unsuccessful in explaining the Hebrew verbal system *as* a system. Del Barco begins his study of the Hebrew verb from this premise (pp. 1–2). However, in contrast to previous discourse studies, which have largely focused on narrative discourse, del Barco examines the verb in the pre-exilic prophetic books of Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.

Del Barco begins with a justification of his approach and choice of database, followed by a survey of some earlier studies of the verb, focusing on some of the more prominent discourse studies such as those by Talstra, Longacre, and Niccacci (chap. 1). In the second chapter, del Barco presents statistics on the occurrences of verb forms in the database. In chapters 3–6, del Barco analyzes the distribution of the verb forms *weqatal*, *wayyiqtol*, *qatal*, and *yiqtol* in the database. In chapter seven, he analyzes selected texts, drawing on his conclusions from previous chapters (Amos 6, Nahum 2, Zephaniah 1). Finally, del Barco offers in his concluding chapter a recapitulation of the results of his analysis of the individual verb forms and summary of the types of discourse found in the data.

Del Barco's main concern is with the four verb forms to which he devotes a chapter each: *weqatal*, *wayyiqtol*, *qatal*, and *yiqtol*. Like many recent discourse-based models, del Barco views the *waw*-prefixed forms (*weqatal* and *wayyiqtol*) as distinct from the other pair of forms in that they usually occur in verbal chains denoting sequentiality or temporal succession. Thus, he looks first at chains of *weqatal* and *wayyiqtol* and then deals with the handful of individual instances of these forms in the data. Del Barco states that chains of *weqatal* occur in predictive discourse with future time reference and in descriptive types of discourse (e.g., lament) without an explicit temporal reference (p. 89). The form occurs alone (i.e., not in a chain) in predictive discourse, most often following *yiqtol* (p. 97). Chains of *wayyiqtol* occur less frequently in the database. Most often they are headed by a *qatal* verb, and together form a brief narrative sequence (p. 126).

Unlike the *waw*-prefixed forms, *qatal* and *yiqtol* may appear in a variety of positions in the clause. Thus, del Barco organizes his discussion of these two forms syntactically—whether they appear initially in the clause, or are preceded by *waw* conjunction, by a particle, or by another constituent. Del

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Barco observes that *qatal* occurs in three syntactic contexts: by itself (with anterior or perfect meaning), with *waw* conjunction (a rare occurrence), and following a variety of subordinating conjunctions (p. 158). *Yiqtol* occurs at the beginning of the clause with three different functions: as a modal form, as the antecedent to a chain of *weqatal* forms, and in one half of a protasis-apodosis construction or parallel bicola (pp. 194–195). *Yiqtol* prefixed with *waw* shows a close connection with what precedes or expresses a jussive sense, and the form also follows various subordinating conjunctions (p. 195).

Del Barco presents a wealth of statistical detail regarding the verb forms in pre-exilic minor prophets. He also breaks new ground by examining largely poetic prophetic books rather than prose narrative, as in most previous studies. Del Barco begins his concluding chapter optimistically, with the claim that his study has shown that the syntactic analysis of the Hebrew verbs is an integral part of grammatical analysis and leads to a better understanding of the biblical text (p. 219). Further, he reiterates that the failure of traditional sentence-based approaches to the verbal system justifies his discourse approach, and that in contrast to the numerous exceptional examples that sentence-based semantic theories are unable to handle, his own discourse approach can explain them (p. 220).

Unfortunately, a closer look at del Barco's study belies his optimistic claim. First, he has not really "explained" the verb system, but merely presented a taxonomy of syntactic and discourse contexts in which each verb form appears. The question of why specific verb forms are compatible with particular contexts (e.g., *weqatal* and predictive discourse) is left unanswered. To the degree that del Barco does take a position on such traditional semantic questions, his conclusions are similar to those found in traditional grammars (e.g., *wayyiqtol* appears in narrative discourse with a past tense meaning, *qatal* often has a perfect sense), which casts doubt on the advantages of his discourse theory vis-à-vis the treatments found in the standard grammars.

Second, del Barco's discourse approach has difficulty with passages that traditional grammars easily explain. Most notably, del Barco discusses Amos 4:7–8 as "un caso atipico" (an atypical case), in which a series of *weqatal* and *yiqtol* forms is found in the middle of a past tense narrative discourse using *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* forms (cf. verses 6, 9–11). Based on his prior findings that chains of *weqatal* appear in predictive discourse, he claims that these two verses must be understood as a future tense, predictive discourse in the middle of a past narrative discourse (pp. 88–89). In contrast to del Barco's treatment of these verses as atypical, Waltke and O'Connor correctly explain the verbs in these verses as expressing past "customary," action that is "epexegetical to a situation represented by *qtl* in the leading clause." (B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990], pp. 533–534).

Finally, del Barco's claim that the position of the verb in the clause is determinative of its meaning (a view he shares with other discourse theorists, such as Niccacci) appears dubious (p. 159). For instance, he claims that a perfect (aspect) meaning is distinctive of the zero-*qatal* construction (i.e., clause initial *qatal*) (p. 158). However, the fact that *qatal* is clause initial appears to have nothing to do with the perfect meaning of the verb since examples may be found in del Barco's database in which a non-clause initial *qatal* also has a perfect sense. Most notable is נטערתם in Amos 5:11, which del Barco correctly translates with a (subjunctive) perfect sense "aunque hayáis plantado" (although you have planted) (p. 157).

Del Barco's study provides important data for further research on the Hebrew verb, and he has rightfully challenged scholars to move beyond the comfortable domain of prose narrative. However, del Barco's study exemplifies the difficulties associated with discourse studies of the Hebrew verb in general. Namely, without a semantic component (the traditional grammar approach) discourse observations remain just that, observations and not explanations. Explanations require serious attention to the symbiotic relationship between verbal semantics and discourse contexts. Semantic and discourse approaches should not be presented as mutually exclusive options, but as complementary approaches whose explanatory powers mutually enrich each other.

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AMOS IN SONG AND BOOK CULTURE. By Joyce Rilett Wood. JSOTSup 337. Pp. 249. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002. Cloth, \$80.00. £50.00.

This is a revision of a 1993 Ph.D. dissertation completed at the Toronto School of Theology under the supervision of Brian Peckham. His influence is obvious and substantial at several key points, and Wood acknowledges this debt. For example, the origin of prophecy within the poetic tradition, the nature of the redaction of the prophetic books, and their literary analysis and dating find their source in Peckham's work (cf. *History and Prophecy: The Development of Late Judean Literary Traditions* [ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1993]. He mentions this dissertation in a footnote on p. 222.). The foundational idea for the argument of the book is that Israelite prophecy began in the performing arts. The author's goal is to demonstrate how the material that Amos wrote for live public performance was completely revised