The Influence of the Classical Grammar in the Hebrew Grammar

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In the history of Arabic grammar, there is a persistent question that seems always current to specialists in Arabic, the question of the origin of Arabic grammar. While I do not care to delve into this question here, there is a related one concerning the origin of Hebrew grammar. For as regards the question of origins, there exists a notable difference between the origins of Arabic grammar and that of Hebrew grammar[1].

The reason for this difference rests in the fact that there exists a unanimous and general consensus that historically speaking, Hebrew grammar, that is, the grammar that was born with Saadia Gaon, then followed by the grammar that emerged in Spain, had its immediate origins in the Masora and in Arabic grammar[2]. I do not wish to question this consensus. There is not reason to doubt that historically Hebrew grammar derived from the Masora and Arabic grammar.

Rather the question that I wish to broach here is whether there were other influences behind the beginnings of Hebrew grammar apart from those just mentioned. More specifically, the question is whether at its origins, Hebrew grammar was influenced by classical Greek grammar on the one hand, and by classical Latin grammar on the other.

If I pose this question here today, it is not because I feel prodded by the current treatment of the question of origins in the history of Hebrew grammar, but because research into ancient Hebrew grammatical writings forces us to raise the question.

Be that as it may, a reading of ancient Hebrew grammatical writings gives us enough reason to pose the question about the possible influences of the classical Greek and Latin grammar on Hebrew grammar. I refer to the list of gramatical-massoretical terms first published by Baer-Strack, then by Mann and lastly by Nehemia Allony[3]. In this list -*rěshima*-, that Allony traced back to the eighth century (in any case the list is very ancient), there are some fifty terms, and four introduced by the word *lashon*:

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[1] See Michael G. CARTER, "Les origines de la grammaire arabe", *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 40 (1972) 69-97; Kees VERSTEEGH, *Greek Elements in Arab Linguistic Thinking*. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1977; Gérard TROUPEAU, "Nahw", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. C.E. BOSWORTH et alii. Leiden, Brill, 1993.

[2] See the study of Prof. Tene "Linguistic Literature Hebrew" in EJ 16, 1352ss.

[3] S. BAER - H.L. STRACK, *The Dikduke ha-te´amim des Ahron ben Moscheh ben Ascher und andere alte grammatisch-massorethische Lehrstücke zur Feststellung eines richtigen Textes der hebräischen Bibel mit Benutzung zahlreicher alter Handschriften zum ersten Male vollständig herausgegeben.* Leipzig 1879 (new edited by D.S. LOEWINGER, Jerusalem 1970), XXVIII-XIX (from now DT); J. MANN, "On the Terminology of the Early Massorites and Grammarians", *Paul Haupt Anniversary Volume.* Leipzig 1926, 437-445; N. ALLONY, "Rěshimat munaḥim qara'it me-ha-me'a ha-shěminit", *Sefer ha-Zikkaron lě-B. Kongrin.* Tel Aviv 1964, 324-63 (new edited in *Mehqare lashon wě-sifrut* II: 104-44).

lashon ăramit
lĕshon kasdim
lĕshon qodesh
lĕshon yishma´ 'elim u-yĕwanim,

that is, the Aramaean language, the Chaldean language, the Hebrew language and the Arabic and Greek language(s). This ancient list merely states the terms, without noting anything about its utility or purpose. For Mann the terms in the list set out the information ideally in order to do biblical interpretation. Greek would be required, for example, for a correct interpretation of the Bible, such as Daniel 3, 5 which enumerates several musical instruments with Greek names (*qitros, pesanterin, synphonia*). The significance or utility of Greek was not clear to Allony. He thought that Greek would be used for the work of translation that was carried out in that period. But he is uncertain about this and suggests the possibility of reading *yonim*, instead of *yĕwanim*, relying on reading of a manuscript where a *holem* appears on the *waw. Yonim*, therefore, would not mean the Greek language, but rather would be a term characterizing the Arabs as enemies and oppressors.

But given the whole context of the manuscript, this last suggestion of Allony seems to me not unwarranted and unacceptable. I prefer to understand the phrase *lĕshon yishma´'elim u-yĕwanim* as the Arabic and Greek languages.

In order to understand the utility or purpose of the gramatical-massoretical terms of the list it is crucial to know that Dunash ben Labrat cited the main body of the list in the introduction of his *Tĕshuvot* against Menaham ben Saruq. He considers the terms as presentig a repertory of knowledge necessary for accurate philological work in biblical Hebrew. In other terms the listing states the knowledge necessary for an appropriate understanding of Hebrew. "The composition of a book on the interpretation of language" -he writes-, "on its precepts and rules, is not possible except for a person who knows how to connect their foundations and borders⁴"

ולא יתכן בנין ספר בפתרון הלשון והחקים והמשפטים והתורות
כי אם לאיש יאגור אלה היסודות והגבולות

Dunash also introduces the terms *lashon -lĕshon ăramiyyim wa-'ărabiyyim,* but he suppressed reference to *lĕshon kasdim* and *lĕshon yĕwanim*. This indicates that Dunash did not give Greek the significance that the author or the authors of the *rĕshima* gave that language.

In any event, in the eighth or ninth century there was an awareness of the linguistic importance of Greek for biblical exegesis and for an understanding of Hebrew.

In some writings tracing to the beginnings of Hebrew grammar, there are a number of conceptions, notions and ideas that have their origin in the classical Greek and Latin grammar. I refer to the *Diqduqe ha-tĕ´amim,* to the Commentary of Dunash ben Tamim on the *Sefer Yĕṣira* and to the *Tĕshuvot* of Dunash ben Labrat against Menahem (all of the Xth century). The first two pose a critical problem. We have two critical editions of the *Diqduqe ha-Tĕ´amim,* one by Baer-Strack⁵ and another by A. Dotan.⁶ Dotan's edition lacks the clearly linguistic

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⁴ Nehemya Allony, "Haqdamat Dunash li-Tĕshuvot le-Mahberet Menaḥem", *Beth Mikra* 22 (1965) 52, lin. 24; *Tĕshubot de Dunash ben Labrat*. Ed. A. Sáenz-Badillos (Granada 1980, 13*); *Sefer Tĕshuvot Dunash ben Labrat*. Ed. Z. Filipowski (London 1855, 5a); C. del Valle Rodríguez, *La Escuela hebrea de Córdoba* (Madrid 1981, 466ss),

⁵ Cfr. note 1.

sections found in Baer-Strack's edition. Yet those missing sections reflect very ancient traditions, hence belong to the origins of *Diqduqe ha-tĕ'amim*.

There are very few fragments left of the Arab original of Dunash ben Tamim 's commentary on the *Sefer Yĕṣira*, although we do have several Hebrew translations, some of them with clear signs of reworking. A critical edition of this work is absolutely necessary. However, the data that we wish to use here are found in all the Hebrew translations of the *Perush*, thus offering a well-founded suspicion that they come from the Arab original.

I.- Language as a progressive chain

A frequent metaphor in classical Greek and Latin literature is that of language as a progressive chain, running from very simple elements, the phonemes, the letters, to the complex unity found in word and in the speech. Gorgias (V-IV century before Christ) defined language as "an extraordinarily powerful reality that through physically reduced and imperceptible means carry out works that could be called divine" (*logos dunástes mégas estín hos smikrotátô sômati kaì afanestáto theiótata érga apoteleî*)[7].

Another concept that we find in the classical authors is that of language as expression of the feelings of soul (*Esti men oun tà en têi phonêi tôn en te psykhê pathemátôn symbola*)[8]. Aristotle again expresses those ideas in his *Poetics*: "Tês dè léxeôs hapásês tad' esti tà mérê, stoikheîon, syllabê, syndesmos, árthron, onoma, rhêma, ptôsis, logos"[9].

This same idea of the language as a progressive chain is expressed clearly by Varro: "Artis grammaticae initia ab elementis surgunt, elementa figurantur in litteras, litterae in syllabas coguntur, syllabis comprehenditur dictio, dictiones coguntur in partes orationis, partibus orationis consummatur oratio", that is, "grammar arises from sounds, the sounds are represented by letters, the letters are united in syllabes, with the syllabes the word is formed, the word stablishes parts of the discourse, and with parts of the discourse speech is realized"[10].

This idea of the progression of language is to be found in some ancient Jewish writings. In a writing such as *Diqduqe ha-tĕ'amim* :

בישראל עמו ועמו במקרא ומקרא בכתב ובכתב בתיבות ותיבות באותיות ואותיות בנקודות

[11], that is, the chain is set out as follows: *nĕqudot, otiyyot, tebot, kĕtab, miqra. Miqra* , the Bible, is equivalent here to *oratio* or *logos*.

Dunash ben Tamim (10th Cent.) has simplified the chain into four links that, he says, are taken from the first book of the author of the Logic, that is, from Aristotle:

[6] *Sefer diqduqe ha-tĕ'amim le-R. Aharon ben Moshe bar Asher.* Jerusalem 1968.

[7] Gorg B 11 (8), 290:17, in Hermann DIELS, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker.* Berlin 1954.

[8] Aristoteles, *De interpr.* 16a2, en *Aristotelis categoriae et liber de interpretatione.* Ed. L. Minio PALLUELO. Oxford 1949.

[9] *Poetica* 1456B 20 (*Aristote Poétique.* Ed. J. HARDY. Paris 1975).

[10] *M. Terenti Varronis de lingua latina que supersunt.* Ed. Georgius GOETZ - Fridericus SCHOELL. Lipsiae 1910, 228.

[11] DT, pag. XXVIII.

כתיבה, דבור, מחשבה, ענינים בעצמם

that is, writing, speech, thought, the reality/things[12].

ובעל ספר החגיון אמר בספר הראשון ממלות החגיון שבל הדברים הנודעים הם
נמצאים בארבעה מיני מקומות בלבד: בכתיב ובדבור ובמחשבה ובעניינים[13]

It is interesting to observe that Dunash attributed the chain to Aristotle, and that he connects
speech with thought and with reality, things, 'inyanim[14].

II.- The vowels and the consonants

In Hebrew grammar the vowel is understood in terms of its important function in
word formation. The vowel is called *melek, moshel, ab, rabba*. And from its feature as mover
of the consonant, it is called *těnu'a, hǎna'a*.

In classical Greek and Latin grammar the vowel is understood in its physiological
aspect. A vowel is a sound (vox) that can be pronounced by itself and by itself constitutes a
syllable. It does not need the help of a consonant to be pronounced.

From a collection of the definitions of the vowel and the consonant offered by Greek
and Latin grammarians, let it suffice to cite the definitions of Elio Donato: *vocales -quae per
se proferuntur et per se syllabam faciunt; consonantes mutae -quae nec per se proferuntur
nec per se syllabam faciunt[15].*

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[12] *Commentary to the Sepher Yesira,* (=CSY, of ben Tamim) Ms. NY 1908-1909, pag. 9. Cfr, Menasche
Grossberg, *Sefer Yezira ascribed to the Patriarch Abraham with Commentary by Dunasch ben Tamim* (hebr.).
London 1902.

[13] Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, 65r.

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בי אלה העצורים ושתים ושתים אותיות לא הושמו אלא לחגיד ולהורות על עשרים ושתים הברות
והברות אינם אלא יסוד הדבור והדבור מגיד על העניינים שבנפש

Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, 65r.

ובעל הלשון אומר בספר הראשון מספרי הלשון הנקראים מנטקיאה ובלשון יון נקראים
לטוריאה בי כל העניינים חידועים והנמצאים בארבע מקומות לבד: בכתב, דבור ומבעלי
העניינים

Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, 60v (but he eumerates only three)

ובעל ספר החגיון אמר בספר החגיון שבל הדברים הנודעים הם נמצאים בארבעה מקומות בלבד:
בכתיבה ובדבור ובמחשבה ובעניינים עצמם

Berlin, (CSY) Cod hebr oct 243.

[15] Carlos DEL VALLE RODRÍGUEZ, *Historia de la gramática hebrea en España. Vol. I: Los orígenes
(Menahem, Dunash y los discípulos).* Madrid 2002, 46-47 (from now HGHE). Cledonio: *vocales... sine quibus
loqui non possumus... consonantes... eo quod cum vocalibus sonant (Excerpta ex commentariis Donati,* H.
KEIL, *Grammatici latini.* Lipsiae 1923, V.26; from now KEIL); Servio: *vocales dicuntur quia per se sonant et
per se syllabam faciunt et nullae aliae litterae sine ipsis possunt syllabam facere. Consonantes dicuntur quia
non naturali, sed mixtae cum vocalibus proferuntur (Commentarius in Artem Donati.* KEIL IV, 2, pag. 421);
Sergio: *dictae sunt autem vocales quod per se prolatae et solae positae syllabam faciunt (Explanationes artis
Donati,* KEIL IV, 2, pag. 475); Pompeyo: *vocales dictae sunt ea ratione quoniam per se vocalem impleant. Quid
est per se? Ceterae litterae non aliter exprimunt sonum suum nisi iungant sibi vocalium sonos (Commentum
Artis Donati,* KEIL V, pag. 100); Prisciano: *Ex his vocales dicuntur quae per se voces perficiunt vel sine quibus*

The two elements that characterize the vowel in classical Greek and Latin grammar (sound that is pronounced by itself and that does not need speech organs for pronunciation) are to be found in the commentary of Dunash ben Tamim. On the contrary, consonants cannot be pronounced by themselves but need the speech organs:

אותיות... מדברות נמשבות ממציאות הקול לשאר האותיות וי'׳ט אותיות חרשות
אלמות נחות, אין בוח בלשון על תנועתם רק באלו השלש מפני שהם בלתי
מדברות ולא נמשבות... ומהם יודעו בג' נקודות והם רפות מתנועעות בי בהם
מתנועעים שאר האותיות אשר אמרנו שהם חרשים אלמים נחים נעלמים ובהם
יראו ויתנועעו[16]

vox literalis proferri non potest (Institutionum grammaticarum, KEIL II-III. Lib I.8).; Charisius: vocales sunt quae per se proferuntur et per se syllabam faciunt (Artis grammatici Libri V., KEIL I,3.5); Diomedes: mutae sunt quae sine auxilio vocalium non possunt enuntiari (Artis grammaticae Libri III, KEIL I, pag. 423); Dionisio Tracio: "(the vowels, phônêenta, are so called,) "because they by itself sound" (HGHE I, 39); fônêenta mèn ekálesan ósa kai kath' eautá fôneîtai kaì meth' etérôn (Dionisios Halicarnasessis, De compositione verborum, sect. 14); "tà mèn fônêentá esti kath' eautá ekfônoúmena tà dè súmfôna kaloúmena kath' autá mèn ouk ékhei tina fúsin ekfônêseôs, metà dè tôn fônêentôn suntithémena ekfôneîtai kaì autá (Simplicius, In Aristotelis physicorum libros commentarios, vol. 10, p. 12227).

[16] Paris, (CSY) Alliance H 370A, fol. 1r; NY, JThS Ms. 1908-1909, pag. 1.

ג' יודעו בג' נקודים והם רפות מתנועעות בי בהם מתנועעים שאר האותיות אשר אמרנו שהם
חרשים אלמים נחים נעלמים ובהם יראו ויתנועעו

NY, (CSY) JThS Ms. 1908-1909.

ג' אותיות נגלות ומדברות נמשבות ממציאות הקול לשאר האותיות והם רבות וי'׳ט אותיות
חרשות אלמות נחות

NY (CSY) JThS Ms. 1912/2.

ומהן ג' יודעו בג' נקודות והם רבות מנענעות שאר האותיות שאמרנו שהם חרשים אלמים נחים
נעלמים ובהם יראו שאר אותיות ר''כ אותיות הדבור יתנועעו

Varsovie, (CSY) Jewish Museum 616.

בי יש מהן שלש אותיות חלקות ורפות מתנועעות ומנענעות שבמו מתנועעות שאר האותיות
שאמרנו שהם אלמות וחרשות שובנות עלומות וחתומות בי באלה השלשה המדברות החלקות
נגלות ונראות בלל האותיות

Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, fol. 60r.

ובי יש מהם שלש אותיות חלקות ורפות מתנענעות שבמו מתנענעות שאר האותיות שאמרנו בי
הם אילמות וחרשות שובנות עצומות וחתומות בי באלה השלש המדברות החלקות ויגלות
וניראות בלל אותיות

Parma, (CSY) Ms. 3018, fol. 90.

בי יש מהם שלש אותיות חלקות ורפות מתנענעות ומנענעות שבמו מתנענעות שאר האותיות
שאמרנו בי הם אותיות חרשות ושובנות עלמות וחתומות בי באלה השלשה המדברות החלקות
ניגלות ונראות בלל אותיות

Praga, (CSY) Jewish Museum 47.

מהם המדברות ג' והם או''י והם נעות והשאר נחות בי אם אלו הג' והם אדנות
והשאר השפחות בי לא יובל אדם להוציא אחת מהן משפתיו אם לא ישים עמה אחת מהג''

(CSY) Paris, Heb 763, fol. 7r; Parma, Ms. 2784, fol. 83r; BL, Add 15299, fol. 11v.

בי אלה השלש אותיות שזברנו הקלות הממללות

Thus vowels are pronounced by themselves, while consonants need the help of the vowels for their sound. The terms used to describe vowels, using the diverse translations or adaptations are:

mĕdubbarot מדוברות (they are pronounced -by themselves)

niggĕlot נגלות (they are manifested -by themselves)

nehĕgot נהגות (they are pronounced -by themselves)

mitna'a'ot מתנעעות (they are mobilized- pronounced- by themselves).

Other terms, na'ot (נעות), mĕna'na'ot (מנענעות), mamṣi'ot-ha-qol (ממציאות הקול) underscore the function of the vowel as mobilizer of the consonant. The term (חלקות), rafot (רפות) point to the physilogical condition of vowels, pronounced without help of the organs of speech; the same is true of the term nimšĕkot ha-qol (נמשבות הקול). It is possible that the terms rabbot (רבות), ădanot/ădaniyyot (אדנות), that denote the dominant function of vowels, are based on translation errors[17].

On the other hand, the terms used to describe the consonants are: illĕmot (אלמות), illĕmim (אלמים), hĕrĕshot (חרשות), hĕrĕshim (חרשים), hătumot (חתומות), nahot (נחות), nahim (נחים), nehtamot (נחתמות), ne'lamim (נעלמים), 'ălumot (עלומות), shokĕnot (שובנות), šĕfahot (שפחות).

The vowel is a sound that in and of itself has sonority. The consonant, on the other hand, has no sound. For that reason, it is called *deaf, mute, occult, close.*

In one place, Dunash explains the reason why the vowels are called *otiyyot hălaqut* -because while all other sounds are "hard", vowels are "soft"; *otiyyot ha-meshek*, because all other sounds are delimited and cannot be lengthened except with the help of vowels; *otiyyot ha-dibbur*, because all other sounds are hidden and cannot be pronounced without the aid of the vowels; *otiyyot ha-qol*, because all other sounds cannot be voiced without these[18].

Another characteristic of vowels is that they are pronounced without the help of the organs of speech[19]. So says Dunash ben Tamim:

Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, 64 v.

[17] Probably, the translator or new adaptor confounded *rafot* (רפות) with *rabbot* (רבות) and from that came to *ădanot/ădaniyyot* (אדנות), opposed to *šĕfahot* (שפחות).

[18] והם נקראים אצל בעלי הדקדוק ובעלי חבמה חמוסיקי אותיות החליקות ואותיות חמשיבות ואותיות הדבור ואותיות הקול נקראו אותיות החליקות מפני שבלן קשות והן חלקות ונקראו אותיות המשך לפי שבלן קווצות ואינן נמשבות אלא באלה ונקראו אותיות הדבור לפי שבלן שובנות דומסות ואינן מדברות אלא באלה ונקראו אותיות הקול לפי שבלן אין קול למו אלא באלה

Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, fol. 65v.

ונקראים אצל בעלי המוסיקא החלוקות ואותיות המשך ואותיות המבטא ואותיות הקול ונקראו אותיות החלקות שבבולם קשות והם החלקות ונקראו אותיות המשך שהם מקובצות וישמסבו אותם באלו ונקראו אותיות הקול שאין בבולם קיל אלא באלו לבדן

Berlin, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, fol. 65v.

[19] "Porque las vocales suenan por sí, no hiriendo alguno de los instrumentos con que se forman las consonantes, mas solamente colando el espíritu por lo angosto de la garganta e formando la diversidad dellas en la figura de la boca" (Antonius NEBRISSENSIS, *[Gramática Castellana]*. Salamanca 1491, I.4); "Est autem vox secundum Aristotelem in libro de anima secundo, aeris respirati ab anima in partibus vocalibus percussio ad

החא' וחו' וחיוד מחמת מדברות וחם מעלחם ומשובחיחם אך לא נצרבו לבלי
מאלח חתשעח מקומות מן חפח[20]

The vowels possess degrees of nimbleness. The slightest is *patah*[21], followed by *hireq*[22] and ending by *šureq*[23].

For this reason the vowels are called *awiriyot*, that is, the sounds formed with the air of the lungs, because appropriately , they do not need the intervention of the organs of speech.

ואו'"י אויריות אינם צריבות לשום בלי מן חבלים[24]

While the notion of the vowel as a sound pronounced without the help of the organs of the speech, with only the air of the lungs, derives from classical Greek and Latin grammar, it is possible that it is reflected in the term *al-harf al-hâwiy* of Arabic grammarians[25]. The philosopher Avicenna (980-1037) describes the three main vowels of Arabic with some traits from classical Greek and Latin grammar: "In regard to the alif sound and its companion the fatha (=vowel a) I think that it is produced by the emission of a little air (that flows from the lungs) without obstructions. In relation to the sounds *waw* and its companion the *damma* (=vowel u) I think that it is produced by the emission of air with a small narrowing of the articulation and with some inclination to height. In regards to the sounds *yâ* and its companion the *kasra* (=vowel i) I think that it is produced by the emission of air with a slight

arteriam" (REUCHLIN, *Rudimentorum hebraeorum...Liber Primus.* Basileae, s.a., 4.); "tês artêrías sunekhoúsês to pnéûma, kaì toû stómatos aplôs skhêmatisthéntos, tês dè glôssês audén pragmateouménês, all' êremoúsês (Dionisius Halicarnassensis, en H. STEINTHAL   , *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Logik.* Berlin 1863,579.

[20] Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, fol. 65v.;

בי יש מן חאותיות מדברות וחם מעולחם ומשובחיחם אך לא נצרבו לבלי מאלח חתשעח
מקומות מן חפח

Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, ib.

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(פתח) אינח אלא אויר יוצא מן חריאח בלא צורך לשום בלי מבלי חדבור בגון חחזח וחגרון
וחחיך וחלשון וחשנים וחשפתים ואינו יוצא אלא בנענוע חריאח לבד

Munich, (CSY) Cod hebr 92, fol. 60r

חיא רוח יוצא מן חריאח מבלי צורך אל בלי חדבור אך תנועת חריאח יספיק לח

NY, (CSY) JThS Ms. 1908-1909, pag.3.

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וסמוך לח בקלות חיוד וחיא נעימח תקרא אצל חערב חשבר וחתך בסוף חלשון בעזר חמתלעות

NY, (CSY) JThS Ms. 1908-1909, pag.3.

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עוד יסמך לח בקלותח וו חיא יותר בבידח ממח שקדם בי חוצרבח אל תוספת בלי וחיא חשפתים

NY, (CSY) JThS Ms. 1908-1909, pag- 3.

[24] Berlin, (CSY) Cod hebr oct 243, fol. 65.

[25] Mubarrad, *Muqtadab* 292c, cited by Dan Becker, *Měqorot 'arabiyim lě-diqduqo shel R. Yona Ibn Ganâh.* Tel Aviv 1999, 77.

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narrowing of the articulation and with some inclination to lowness"[26].

III.- The parts of speech

Classical Greek and Latin grammar divide speech (or the sentence) into eight parts. According to Dionisius Tracius Greek has: noun (*ónoma*), verb (*rhêma*), participle (*metokhê*), article (*árthron*), pronoun (*antonumia*), preposition (*próthesis*), adverb (*epirrêma*), conjunction (*sundesmos*)[27]. The same division is found in Latin grammar, except that due to its special morphological structure, Latin lacks the article. Yet Latin does conserve the eight parts because it divides the adverb into adverb and interjection.

In Arabic grammar speech (or the sentence) is divided in three parts (noun, verb, particle /*ism, fi'l, harf*). Hebrew grammarians from Saadia Gaon and the grammarians of the Spanish school on follow the same division.

However, *Diqduqe ha-Ṭě'amim* presents a division of speech into eight parts that, evidently, does not derive from Arabic grammar, but as seems reasonable, from classical Greek and Latin:

סדר הסדבר: השמות והאותות והקהל והמלות והתמורות והדבקות והמצדירות
ועין הבדלה[28]

Certainly, there is a problem in the identification of these terms. But I think that the identification done by Baer is largely acceptable: nouns (*shěmot*), particles (*otot/otiyot*), number (*qahal*), verbs (*mil.lot*), pronouns (*těmurot*), adjectives (*děbeqot*), infinitive or adverb (*maṣdir-ot*), article (*en habdala*).

Certainly, the order of this division does not coincide with classical Greek or Latin. But it coincides in the number and for the most part in content. It is also legitimate to see in this division a reflection of classical Greek and Latin grammar by way of direct or indirect influence.

IV.- The levels of significance

Protagoras had already distinguished diverse levels of significance in speech, that, in final analysis, are diverse aspects of verbal action. These are generaly called moods or modes, that is a particular set of inflectional forms of a verb to express whether the action or state it denotes is conceived as fact or in some other manner. He Protagoras distinguished: indicativ (*eukhôlên*), optional (*erôtêsin*), subjunctive (*apókrisin*), imperative (*entolên*)[29]. Quintilian refers to these modes: "Protagoran transeo, qui interrogandi, respondendi, mandandi, precandi quod *eukhôlên* dixit, partes solas putat"[30].

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[26] The Arabic text in Ilan Eldar, "Description aéro-cinétique des voyelles a, u, I en hébreu", *Orientalia* 58 (1989) 531s.

[27] HGHE, vol. I.

[28] DT 71 (pag. 61).

[29] Diog. Laert. IX, 53.

[30] Inst. III.4,10-

Dunash ben Labrat in his introduction to the *Těshuvot* against Menahem ben Saruq makes a clear and unequivocal reference to these several verbal moods. He says to Menahem that whoever wishes to write a book on exegesis or on Hebrew grammar must have some minimum knowledge of the different verbal modes. He lists five: *indicative (asseveration), interrogative, exclamatory, imperative and request*

וכל העניינים המאספים לכל דבר חמשה: הגדה ושאלה וקריאה וצווי ובקשח[31]

We have here, then, the levels of the speech, the moods or modes of speech, as expressed by classical Greek and Latin authors.

V.- The division of the sounds

In the *Sefer Yěṣira* the sounds are divided in five categories according to their articulation in the mouth. All the Hebrew grammarians then followed this division, several with some criticism. Given the great antiquity of the *Sefer Yěṣira*, it is clear that this division does not derive from Arabic grammar.

There are different opinions about the origin of this division. For Abraham Epstein the division derives from Greek and Latin grammarians[32]. According to Yehuda Liebes[33], it is possible that the author of *Sefer Yěṣira* derived the division from Indian grammarians who might have been known in the West during the Hellenistic period. We do not find the division of the sounds into five categories among classical Greek and Latin grammarians, but we know that they did know the system of articulation into different parts of the speech[34].

So we do not exclude the possible influence of classical Greek and Latin grammar.

CONCLUSIONS

From all the points examined here we may conclude that when the first writings on Hebrew grammar appear in the Mediterranean basin, specifically in North Africa and Palestine, vestiges of classical Greek and Latin culture were still alive. Their influence could be verified in the writings that we have examined. At present we are not in position to say whether this influence of the Greek or Latin classical world was direct, or indirect through Syriac or Arabic. But what is sufficiently clear is that the influence went beyond the ideas and principles of Aristotelian logic.

We also verified that the points of contact with classical Greek and latin were not longlived. Eventually what won out was the grammar of Arabic inspiration as first promoted by Saadia Gaon and then by the Spanish philological school.

But I think that it is of interest to set out facts such as those presented here to allow for a more accurate knowledge of the ideas that were present at the first stages of the history of Hebrew grammar.

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[31] *Těshubot* 13*21; EHC 467.

[32] *Mi-qadmoniyyot ha-Yěhudim 2.* Jerusalem 1957, 182.

[33] *Ars poetica in Sefer Yetsira* (in Hebr.). Tel Aviv 2000, 236.

[34] H. STEINTHAL, *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern mit besonderer Rücksicht aud die Logik.* Berlin 1863., 561.