THE HEBREW PARTICLE ָnā

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The Hebrew imperfect, besides the descriptive indicative, contains two other moods, the apocope and the energetic mood. After the final -u, which was characteristic of the indicative mood, disappeared in classical Hebrew, this mood and the apocope have in many cases acquired identical forms. However, the apocope still has a divergent form in the hif'il-forms of the strong verb, in qal and hif'il of the ָnāb-verbs, and in all conjugations of the ָnāb-verbs, just as it may be recognized in its use as a jussive to indicate a command, a wish or an exhortation (jussive is used in the 2nd and 3rd person with the same differences of meanings as is expressed by imperative in the 2nd person) and as a prohibitive (imperative is not used together with negation).¹

The energetic mood is best known from Arabic, where it appears in two forms, first energetic (yaqultulunna) and second energetic (yaqultulan), without any significant difference in use. The two energetic moods are also used in the imperative. In Hebrew morphology we recognize the second energetic in the so-called nun energeticum, which in the imperfect and the imperative exists in the suffixed forms. Syntactically the use of forms with nun energeticum does not differ from the use of forms without this element; but there is a tendency towards using especially the forms with nun as pausal forms. From the imperfect and the imperative, where nun energeticum was placed originally, it is transferred to other verbal forms, the perfect and the infinitive. Likewise, suffixed forms, which are explained as being intro-

¹ See e.g. H. Bauer & P. Leander, Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache, 1932, §§ 46b, 56g l. p², 57e-g. n²-h², 36].
duced by nun energetic, are found in connection with nouns and particles.²

The energetic mood *yaqtilun* is one of the few Arabic verbal forms which has a final consonant. Now, in Arabic, such a final -an under certain conditions (viz., in the nominal declension) appears as -ā in pausa. A final -ā like this we meet in fact in Hebrew in the conjugation of the verb in the so-called volutative הָנַךְ (which in its application expresses the differences which in the 2nd and 3rd person are expressed by the imperative and the jussive) and in the extended imperative הָנַכּ, and it is therefore probable that in reality these forms will have to be considered as pausal forms of the second energetic.³ In context it were to be expected that the final -n is assimilated to the first consonant of the following word, and in Hebrew we frequently meet the volutative and the extended imperative followed by a word of which in the first consonant there is a dagesh, the so-called *dagesh forte conjunctivum*.⁴ It is probable that this phenomenon is exactly the explanation of the origin of the *dagesh forte conjunctivum*,⁵ and that the volutative and the extended imperative with the following dagesh are to be considered as context forms of the second energetic.⁶

That was as far as one could go before the 1890’s and the 1930’s. But with the discovery of the Amarna letters and the Ugaritic texts a new idea of the history of the West Semitic family of languages was arrived at.

The majority of the Amarna letters consists of reports from local rulers in Syria-Palestine to their sovereign in Egypt. They are

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⁵ This is the thesis of Prītorius’ article in *Zeitschr. f. d. alttestl. Wiss.* 3/1883, pp. 17–31.
⁶ So also Bauer & Leander, *op. cit.*, § 41p–q. They maintain thus that the extended imperative followed by dagesh and the same form without dagesh are of quite different derivation. See below, p. 59, n. 16.
composed in Akkadian, which at that time (approx. 1400 B.C.) served as an international language; but it is an Akkadian which is strongly influenced by the native Canaanite vernacular of the vassals, or rather that of their scribes. Thus we often meet, in these texts, the Akkadian verbal form augmented by a suffixed -na.

The verbal form suffixed by -na is applied especially in the following cases: As terms for order or wish, consequently in cases where in Hebrew you would apply jussive, voluntative or imperative, e.g. ḫu-ūs-ṣa-su-na ṣaše bi-ta-li, "that he (viz. the king) shall send camping troops", EA 71,13f., cf. 116,30f. Furthermore in questions, e.g. ḫu-ul li-li-ū-na, "are you not able to?", 82,6, cf. 108,45. Very often the form is used in questions of what can or ought to be done, mi-na ḫu-ūs-su-na a-na-ku, "then what should I do?", 74,63, cf. 90,22; 91,26; 117,92 etc. Finally there is a tendency towards using this verbal form in conditional clauses introduced by šumma, e.g. šu-ma-mi a-na-ku uṣ-su-na, "if I set out", 333,16, cf. 112,19; 103,53; 131,59. In these forms, in accordance with our main thesis, we may see a replica of the West Semitic verbal form, which we know from Arabic as the first energetic in the form yaqṭulanna.

Also in the language of the Ugaritic texts energetic forms are found. In the Ugaritic consonantal writing some of them appear as yqṭln and some as yqṭl̄nn. These two forms appearing in Ugaritic may, however, not be identified immediately with those forms known from Arabic, the first and second energetic, as both yaqṭulanna and yaqṭulan in Ugaritic ought to appear as yqṭln.

7 Referring to this see F. M. T. Böhl, Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kanaanismen, Leipziger semitische Studien V:2, 1909.
8 The Amarna letters are quoted from J. A. Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna-Tafeln I–II, 1915.
4 Acta Orientalia, XXXIII
applying for Ugaritic as the other Semitic alphabet languages that the gemination is not expressed by a repetition of the consonant. It must have been a consideration of this matter which led to Cyrus H. Gordon's consistent interpretation of the form *yqtlun* as a suffixed form. It is beyond a doubt that the suffixed form appears as *yqtlun*, as it is found moreover in the forms *yqtlh, yqtln, yqtlinh, yqtlunh*. As, however, the second *n* in the verbal form hardly is derived from the suffix (3. m. sg. -*hān*, 3. f. sg. -*hān*), it has to be said that the suffix forms *yqtlun* and *yqtlunh* depend on an energetic mood *yqtlun* without suffix. To this one may add that in a number of cases the element -*nn* can hardly be understood as a suffix, sec. e.g. *ybt.nn.aliyn.n.l*., "Aliyan Baal will be ashamed", UT 08:31,12 *wgr.nn.'rm*., "establish yourself (energetic imperative) by the town", Krt 110.

As it will appear, from the reflections above-seen, both energetic moods occur in connection with suffixes. It is the same for Ugaritic as for Hebrew, that syntactically there is no difference in the use of the suffix forms with or without nun energeticum.13 The use of the forms without suffixes is of greater interest.14 There is here especially a tendency to use the energetic mood as an expression for an order, request or wish. For instance, we find the imperfect 1st person in what in Hebrew syntax would be called "a voluntative use": *ahtn ank.wanln*, "I will sit down and rest", 49:III:18, cf. 2 Aqht II:12f.; *rd.lmlk/amlk.ldrkttk.atb/nn*, "Descend, o King, that I may be king, from your throne that I may be enthroned", 127: 52–54.15 The last example gives the evidence that it is not necessary to use the energetic mood to express the voluntative (*amlk* is not the energetic mood); but the energetic mood normally has a voluntative meaning in the 1st person.16 In the imperfect 3rd person we find the energetic mood in the jussive sense: *ystn ydd/bgngnh*, "let him conceal the

12 The Ugaritic texts are quoted from Gordon, op. cit.
14 The following examples are in the mainpart sec. Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 110ff.
15 The oblique lines indicate the line division of the original.
16 This confirms Brockelmann's interpretation of the Hebrew voluntative as an originally energetic mood, see above, p. 48 with n. 3.
beloved in his tomb”, 51:VIII:48f., cf. 68:31 (quoted above). The energetic mood is used also in the imperative: qhm.wiqyn.yn, “do take the wine and drink!” 1 Aqht 215 (where the energetic imperative is continued by an energetic imperfect used as a jussive), cf. Krt 110 (quoted above). However, it has to be stated that a number of energetic moods occur which, in their use, do not differ syntactically from forms without an n.18

In Ugaritic cuneiform writing the distinction between the words is indicated by a cuneiform character, the so-called word-divider, which in the transliteration is represented by a point. Due to this word dividing we are able to ascertain a tendency in the Ugaritic linguistic instinct to conceive the energetic element n or nn as an independent word. Certainly, it is normal that the complete energetic mood is written as one word; but in a number of cases, the energetic element is separated from the rest of the verbal form by a word-divider:19 Thus the imperfect 1st person is found: att.n., 67:V:5; a]aqhm.nn., ’nt pl. vi:V:9; imperfect 2nd feminine: trhs.nn., 127:10; imperfect 3rd masculine: ygbr.nn., 1 Aqht 147, cf. 68:31 (quoted above); imperative: sl.nn.h., 56:18, cf. Krt 110 (quoted above). Even in connection with the perfect the energetic element is found: 1t.nn., 67:II:7, cf. finally in a fragmentary context: 1ths.nn[.], 37:3. After these number of examples given it is hardly of much importance that the energetic element may also be separated from the rest of the verbal form by line division. Admittedly, it is not quite unusual for the beginning of a word to be placed at the end of a line whereas the end of the word is placed at the beginning of the next line.20 However, the fact that

18 See Hammershaimb, Das Verbum im Dialekt von Ras Shamra, 1941, p. 112,
19 Cf. Hammershaimb's comments to Krt 110: “Die Endung nn im einem Wort
20 However, A. Jirku understands the form as absolute infinitive, “Zum
21 In particular, this appears frequently in UT 77. This may be caused by the

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the word-divider is not used at the end of a line must imply that the indivisibility of a word was normally observed when passing from one line to the next. Therefore, a few examples may be quoted here, also because they do indicate that the scribe did not, at least, consider it unnatural to separate the energetic element: \textit{idryn, 49:11:32} f.; \textit{tr}mn/mn, 77:11 f., cf. 127:53 f. (quoted above).

It is my opinion that this beginning development towards an independence of the energetic element, which we find sporadically in Ugaritic, and which was expressed also in the language of the Amarna letters—where the ending \textit{-na} could be added to an Akkadian verbal form—was continued in Hebrew where we recognize the element in the enclitic particle \textit{ni}.\footnote{The literary texts, cf. W. Hermann, \textit{Yarîq und Nikkal und der Preis der Kuṭarāl-Götînen}, Beitfete z. Zeitscr. f. d. attest. Wiss. 106, 1968, p. 48.}

The tendency to apply the energetic mood in expressions of command, exhortation or wish, which we found in the Amarna letters and the Ugaritic texts, was continued in Hebrew where the particle \textit{ni} is nearly always used in such expressions. Hence it is primarily applied in expressions of a voluntative, jussive or imperative character where it is normally placed in direct continuation of the verbal form.\footnote{The relation between the particle \textit{ni} and the Arabic energetic mood \textit{yaqtlanna} was seen already by H. Ewald, \textit{Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache}, 8. ed., 1870, p. 265 n. 1, cf. P. Haupt, who also connected the particle with the enclitic \textit{-ma}, \textit{"The Hebrew Particle -nā"}, \textit{John Hopkins University Circulars} 13/1894, p. 109. The relation to \textit{yaqtlanna} was recognized by E. König, who was not, however, convinced of any relation to enclitic \textit{-ma}, \textit{Historisch-kritisches Lehrgebäude der hebräischen Sprache} III, 1897, § 355 b. A relation to the \textit{-na} of the Amarna letters was recognized by Böh, \textit{Die Sprache der Amarnaabriefe}, 1909, p. 74; but as far as can be seen, Böh did not think that the \textit{-na} of the Amarna letters should be considered as an energetic mood. W. Gesenius derived the particle from the root \textit{rê} “to be beautiful”, with reference to German expressions such as “thue es schön”, “thue das hübsch”, \textit{Thesaurus philologicus criticus}, 1840, p. 833. A connection with the Ethiopic \textit{nà} 'd has frequently been postulated; e.g., Gesenius, \textit{loc. cit.}; Gesenius/F. Buhl, \textit{Handwörterbuch}, 16. ed., 1915, s.v. In any case the Ethiopic particle cannot be regarded merely as a Hebraism in the same way as the Syriac \textit{rê} (see below). In Ethiopic the particle is still in current use, being conjugated as an imperative, cf. A. Dillmann, \textit{Lexicon linguae Aethiopicæ}, reprinted 1955, col. 675 f.; \textit{Grammatik der äthiopischen Sprache}, 2. ed., 1899, pp. 332 f.} It is truly remarkable that no
special tendency to connect the particle with the extended imperative prevails, but that, in fact, it is more often used in connection with the simple imperative. In cases of the particle is connected with an extended imperative (Jde 19,11; Num 22,6), or where it follows a voluntative with a final -d, its nun will by far most cases be supplied with the dagesh forte conjunctivum which we have above connected with the energetic. In its primary application, where the particle is used to “intensify” an immediately preceding voluntative, jussive or imperative, it is applied exactly analogously with the independent energetic element in Ugaritic.

In the conception of the Hebrew language the particle developed to be regarded as an optative particle. Therefore, it could be used not only in the proper energetic verbal forms, but also in succession of the perfectum consequitum, Gen 40,14, as well as being frequently applied in continuation of particles such as ב וַ ה בָּא “lo!”, בַּ נוֹ “woe!”, where these exclamations have the character of a wish. Together with the particle בָּא it forms an expression of polite address. In the prohibitive expression בָּא with the apocope, the particle is added to the negation בָּא and not to the verbal form; as an ellipsis it is also found without a verbal form, בָּא בָּא, Gen 19,18.

The particle flourished in classical Hebrew, where in the Hebrew Bible it is used 180 times. In Syriac it survived as מ or מ or מ. However, it is evident that the Syrians did not understand it. The particle is not well attested in genuine Syriac context. It does occur in the Peshitta as rendering Hebrew מ (which, moreover, most often has no equivalent). According to Syriac grammatical literature it is to be pronounced מ, as it is regarded as being


18 See the examples given by Gesenius, Thesaurus, 1840, p. 834.
19 See above, p. 48 with n. 51. With regard to these cases, Gordon suggests that they represent remnants of the energetic -anna, Ugaritic Textbook, 1965, p. 72 n. 2.
20 Koehler & Baumgartner, Lexicon, 1953, s.v.
21 According to Gesenius the same is the case with regard to the Samaritan version, Thesaurus, 1840, p. 833.
identical with \( \text{י} \) "to me".\(^{28}\) Also, it appears that the particle was not understood by the fact that there is a tendency in the Peshitta tradition to confuse it with the personal pronoun of the 1st person. This confusion was of course especially obvious where the particle was used to emphasize an imperfect of the 1st person;\(^{29}\) but also in other cases a confusion was possible.\(^{30}\)

It is my opinion that in this Hebrew particle we have a remnant of the energetic element -\( \text{anna} \), which acquired independence as being a voluble particle. Contrariwise, it could have been argued that in the Hebrew י we have a particle which in Arabic was connected with a verb to form the energetic mood. The notion that phenomena like the nunation and the energetic, as well as the mimation and the enclitic -\( \text{ma} \), are presumably ultimately related, might support such an argument. It is my opinion, however, that the view set forth in this article is justified by considering the fact that—when the Arabic form is placed at the beginning of the development, as is usually done\(^{31}\)—a line may be traced from the Arabic energetic form, via the partial independence in the Amarna letters and the Ugaritic texts, to the \( \text{floruit} \) of the particle in classical Hebrew, ultimately leading to its virtual disappearance in Syriac.


\(^{29}\) In Cant 3,2 the entire manuscript tradition otherwise has \( \text{ךָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָנָn \), but MS 166 (Churfert, Sem. Libr., Fonds patr., N. 150) has \( \text{ךָנָנָנָn} \) see J. A. Emerton's edition in \textit{The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version}, Sample edition, Leiden 1966.

\(^{30}\) In 1. Gen. 12,5 the entire manuscript tradition otherwise has \( \text{ךָנָנָנָn} \) (imperative with particle), but MS 76 (Milan, Ambros. Libr., B. 21. Inf., published photolithographically by A. M. Ceriani, \textit{Translatio Syri Pescillo Veteris Testamenti . . . 1870} has \( \text{ךָn כֹּn} \) (particle with personal pronoun). The confusion was probably contributed to by the circumstance that a particle followed by a pronoun is frequently written \( \text{ךָn כֹּn} \) (see T. Nöldeke, \textit{Kurzgefasste syrische Grammatik}, 2. ed., 1898, § 64).

\(^{31}\) To what extent it is customary to identify the Arabic and the Proto-Semitic forms, appears from the matter of course with which e.g. H. Donner employs Arabic morphology for vocalization of the Ugaritic texts, see "Ugaritismen in der Psalmenforschung", \textit{Zeitschr. f. d. altastl. Wiss.} 79/1967, pp. 328ff.