

A Hebraic Approach to Luke and the Resurrection Accounts, Still Needing to Re-do Dalman and Moulton

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Translators and commentaries have split over how to read Matthew 28:1
Ὁψὲ δὲ σαββάτων τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων.

- (a) One approach would read this as a reference to **Sunday morning** "after Shabbat at dawn on the first day of the week", a kind of paraphrase of Mark 16:2 καὶ λίαν πρωὶ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων . . . ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου. "and very early on the first of the week . . . after the sun had risen."
- (b) A second approach sees this as a reference to **Saturday evening** "after the Shabbat (late on Shabbat), at the beginning of the first day of the week". This reference to the coming evening after the Shabbat is based on a clear usage of this rare Greek verb at Luke 23:54 as well as an old suggestion that this is based on a Hebrew and Aramaic idiom. *Friday evening at "dawning" of Shabbat*

George Foote Moore, though not the first, provided a lengthy discussion on this second possibility. He argues that Matthew 28:1 refers to Saturday evening and Moore provided both Hebrew and Aramaic options for the wording behind Matthew. Hebrew would be במוצאי שבת במוצאי שבת [on the goings out of Shabbat light to the first in the week—RB] The Syriac gospels unambiguously begin with ברמשא "in the evening".

Old Syriac Sinaiticus: ברמשא דין בשבתא דנגה חד בשבא
Peshitto: ברמשא דין בשבתא דנגה חד בשבא
Palestinian Lectionary: ברומשא די בשבתא דנגה לחד בשובא
"(and) in the evening of Shabbat when the first of the week was dawning"

Some doubt has been raised about this Saturday evening interpretation because the Greek verb is associated with the dawn, the morning, not with the evening. There are no clear references to ἐπιφώσκειν referring to the evening in pre-Christian Greek literature. In fact, the exact word may be unattested in pre-Christian Greek, though we may at least assume that it was a normal Greek word at the time. Structurally, the Greek verb ἐπιφώσκειν does not match the Hebrew and Aramaic nouns אור and נֶגֶה, but conceptually the connection of 'light' referring to 'evening' seems special enough to consider ἐπιφώσκειν 'shining forth' a reasonable translation in Greek at Luke 23:54. In Luke it is unambiguously referring to the evening, "the dawning of the Shabbat". The rarity of ἐπιφώσκειν provides an explanation for its choice for a counterintuitive, foreign idiom.

We agree with Matthew Black's judgment, "A Jewish reader of Mt. xxviii. 1 would certainly understand τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ of the 'drawing on' of the first day of the week on the late evening of the Sabbath: the same applies to Lk. xxiii.54."¹

Our earliest example of the 'light' idiom in Hebrew for the beginning of evening comes from Mishnah Pesahim 1:1.

אור לארבעה עשר בודקים את החמץ לאור הנר.
... לא בדק אור ארבעה עשר,
בדק בארבעה עשר,
לא בדק בארבעה עשר,
בדק בתוך המועד.

1st attestation of the idiom in
Hebrew
Light = Evening
we don't know where it came from

¹ Black, *Aramaic Approach*, 137.

At light [=beginning] to the 14th [of Nisan]
 one searches for leaven by the light of a lamp.
 If one did not search at the beginning of the 14th,
 let him search on the 14th itself,
 if one did not search on the 14th,
 let him search on the festival.

Luke 23:54-56 describes the late Friday afternoon just before the beginning of Shabbat.
 καὶ ἡμέρα ἦν παρασκευῆς καὶ σάββατον ἐπέφωσκεν. Κατακολουθήσασαι δὲ αἱ
 γυναῖκες ...
 καὶ τὸ μὲν σάββατον ἡσυχάσαν κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν.²

An additional problem arises if we assume that both Matthew and Luke are transmitting a source as they received it. The actual shared source would be in Greek in order to account for the word ἐπιφώσκειν.³ In Luke the idiom is used for Friday night after the crucifixion while in Matthew it is used for Saturday night after the Shabbat. If both Matthew and Luke are reflecting a Greek version of a Semitic source, that source either has the idiom twice or else Matthew and Luke are using two separate sources.

Could a source use this idiom twice? Yes!

1. The Mishnaic account uses the idiom twice when describing passover week.
2. The Gospel of Peter uses ἐπιφώσκειν three times and they are connected to the passion-resurrection. One of them certainly refers to Friday evening. While the Gospel of Peter may only reflect a conflation of our canonical gospel texts, it does testify to the ability of this idiom to fix itself in the tradition in multiple attestations.⁴
3. The third thread of evidence relies on the possibility that Luke had access to a Greek source that goes back to either a Hebrew document or at least a Hebraizing document.

Luke 24:1-4 has an idiom καὶ ἐγένετο that requires an extensive discussion. If it can be shown to reflect a pre-Lucan source, then this third thread of evidence supporting a pre-synoptic source is strengthened.

Gustaf Dalman: "Wer Beweise für ein hebräisches Urevangelium sammeln wollte, hätte zuerst dies καὶ ἐγένετο nennen müssen."⁵ I agree, ἐγένετο is a natural place to start.

Dalman thought that he had blocked a Hebrew path: "Selbst der 'Wir-Bericht' is nicht davon frei, s. Ap. 21,1.5; 27,44; 28,8.17. . . . Solche Beobachtungen verbieten die Annahme eines hebräischen Originals."⁶ Most investigators of Luke-Acts treat Dalman's statement as a first proof and assume that Hebraisms must reflect a Lucan Septuagintalizing style.

BUT:

Plummer structure type A: Hebraic ἐγένετο + time/setting phrase + sentence with finite verb (without "and" beginning the sentence)⁷

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ λέγειν αὐτὸν ταῦτα
 ἐπάρασά τις φωνὴν γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου

εἶπεν αὐτῷ (Lk 11:27)⁸ *and it happened in his saying these things, having-lifted up his voice, HE SAID*

Structure A fits Hebrew tightly, like a glove.

² "And it was the Preparation day and Shabbat 'was dawning'. And the women followed behind ... and they rested on the Shabbat according to the commandment."

³ One is reminded of a comparable situation in the Lord's prayer with ἐπιούσιος 'daily, coming-ly'.

⁴ We see the Gospel of Peter as secondary to our canonical gospels. See Alan Kirk, "Examining Priorities: Another Look at the Gospel of Peter's Relationship to the New Testament Gospels," NTS 40 (1994) 572-595.

⁵ "Whoever would collect proofs for a Hebrew source gospel should first start with καὶ ἐγένετο."

⁶ "the We-section is not free from καὶ ἐγένετο, see Acts 21 etc. ... Such observations forbid any assumption of a Hebrew source."

⁷ The structure A occurs twice in Mark (1.9, 4.4); five times in Matthew (7.28, 11.1, 13.53, 19.1, 26.1); twenty-two times in Luke (1.8, 1.23, 1.41, 1.59, 2.1, 2.6, 2.15, 2.46, 7.11, 9.18, 9.28, 9.33, 9.37, 11.1, 11.14, 11.27, 17.14, 19.29, 20.1, 24.30, 24.51); and never in Acts. [Codex Bezae has an example at Acts 4.5]

Plummer structure type B: Hebraic ἐγένετο + time/setting phrase + καί + sentence with finite verb⁹

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς

ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ

καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς

Ἱερουσαλήμ. (Lk 9:51) *and it happened in the fulfilling of the days of his reception, AND HE TURNED to go to Jerusalem*

Against these structures, there is a third structure in Lucan writings that is never found in the LXX. This third structure uses an infinitive for the following narrative clause.

Plummer structure type C: Non-Semitic ἐγένετο + time/setting phrase + infinitive for main event.¹⁰

Ἐγένετο δὲ μοι πορευομένῳ

καὶ ἐγγίζοντι τῇ Δαμασκῷ περὶ μεσηβρίαν

ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανῷ περιαστράψαι φῶς ἰκανὸν περὶ ἐμέ. (Ac 22:6)

and it happened while I was going and approaching Damascus at midday (for) a strong light to suddenly shine out of heaven all around me

This structure does not fit Hebrew.

The main event is an infinitive περιαστράψαι 'to shine around'. This structure never occurs in the LXX. It should not be equated with the Hebraic structures A and B. Structure C fits Greek style and mimics the classic construction συνέβη + infinitive. Luke also has συνέβη + infinitive once at Acts 21:35: συνέβη βαστάζεσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπο τῶν στρατιωτῶν διὰ τὴν βίαν τοῦ ὄχλου.¹¹ The structure C "ἐγένετο + infinitive main verb" may be considered a "non-Semitic" structure.

These structures A, B, C, are remarkable. The "Semitic" structures A and B strongly pattern as non-Lucan. Note well: the Semitic structures A and B never occur in first Acts outside of Codex Bezae and never occur in second Acts in any text. Luke does not appear to choose to use these structures A and B on his own. We need to explicitly point out this basic observation because the opposite is so often assumed. Finally, structure C, the non-Semitic structure, patterns as Lucan and occurs many times in Acts, especially 2nd Acts.¹²

The consistent distinction between structures A and B versus C, undermines the frequently heard thesis that Luke was systematically trying to imitate the style of the LXX with this device. On the one hand, Luke was not so systematic. He allowed C several times in his gospel. We must ask a question, if a Semitist and grammarian of Dalman's stature did not bother with distinguishing

A, B, C in the Gospels, A+B never in Luke, C used frequently in Luke.

⁸ Incidentally, note the non-Hebraic word order with ἐπάρασά τις φωνὴν γυνή. One of the recurring phenomena in Luke is that alleged Septuagintal insertions do not fully mimic a Septuagintal style. I have referred to this as a schizophrenic style. A more natural explanation is that a Hebraism in a Greek source is being reordered according to Greek sensitivities. See Buth and Kvasnica, in *Jesus Last Week*, ed. Notley et al., Brill, 2006.

⁹ Mark never has structure B; Matthew has one example (9.10); Luke has eleven examples (5.1, 5.12, 5.17, 8.1, 8.22, 9.51, 14.1, 17.11, 19.15, 24.4, 24.15.); Acts 1:1-15:35 has zero (Howard correctly listed Acts 5.7 with a question mark since there is an explicit subject. Codex Bezae may be added at 2.1.) More importantly, Acts 15:36-28:31 does not have one example.

¹⁰ Mark has structure C twice (2.15, 2.23); Matthew never has structure C; Luke has structure C six times (3.21, 6.1, 6.6, 6.12, 16.22); Acts has 16 examples, seven in first Acts (4.5, 9.3, 9.32, 9.37, 9.43, 11.26, 14.1), and nine in second Acts (16.6, 21.1, 21.5, 22.6, 22.17, 27.44, 28.8, 28.17).

¹¹ "And it happened that he was being carried by the soldiers on account of the force of the crowd"

¹² N. Turner, *Grammar of New Testament Greek, IV: Style* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1976:47), "The construction with the infinitive occurs, very rarely in non-Biblical authors, but the preponderance of the strictly Hebraic construction in Luke-Acts [*sic*—RB] indicates that even when Luke sometimes uses the infinitive construction he is still writing Biblical Greek influenced by the LXX (II Acts 19:1; We 16:6, 21:1, 5; 27:44; 28: 8)." Turner missed the point. If Luke was writing with a biblical Greek influence, he only used the third structure, never the first two. Notice how Turner's wording "the preponderance of the strictly Hebraic construction in Luke-Acts" neatly slides over the facts that the structure only occurs in the gospel of Luke, but not in Acts.

A and B from C, then who would expect Luke or his audience to be so perceptive? In addition, if Luke were the one producing all of the structures A, B, and C in his Gospel, then he was probably unconscious of material distinction between them. However, this flexibility of A or B or C is stopped abruptly and absolutely when Luke crosses into Acts. Structure C continues, seemingly taking over A and B, so that structures A and B disappear. There is even an excellent place to observe this incongruity. At Acts 22.2 Luke makes a point of stating that the Hebrew language had an effect on the crowd. "Paul was speaking to them in Hebrew."¹³ However, in the two places in the speech where Luke uses an ἐγένετο structure (at 22:6 and 22:17), we find the non-Semitic structure C "ἐγένετο + infinitive main verb"! This restriction in Acts to only structure C should have been highlighted in NT studies.

These three structures, taken together, lead to the following conclusions as necessary working hypotheses for any philologically sound criticism of Luke-Acts.

1. Luke's own preferred style is ἐγένετο + **an infinitive** main verb, structure C.¹⁴
2. Luke was willing to accept ἐγένετο with a finite verb, structures A and B.
"ἐγένετο with a finite verb" is an excellent indicator of sources in the gospel of Luke. It is "Hebraic"¹⁵. This is useful in 33 places in Luke's gospel.

¹³ BDAG suggests that this is Jewish Aramaic. However, the Greek word for Aramaic was συριστί and συριακή. Συριστί and εβραϊστί are correctly used by other first century Jewish writers like Josephus. They are also correctly used in the New Testament. Words like ραββουνει (John 20:16) are correctly called Hebrew (See Codex Kaufman, Mishnah Ta'anit 3:8) because they are Hebrew. The "evidence" for confusion with εβραϊστί is based on a simplistic morphology of words like πασχα and σικερα, where Greek (even in the LXX!) may standardize a Hebrew transliteration with a form that is closer to Aramaic. Names are also used in the discussion on εβραϊστί but without noting that names are notorious for ambiguity and crossing language boundaries. For example, the name 'Ian' may be called English, Scottish, Hebrew and Greek depending on who is talking to whom. There is nothing preventing Γολγοθᾶ from being used within Hebrew speech and being correctly called Hebrew by its users (John 19:17). A different phenomenon occurs with Ἀκελ δαμαχ. It is presented as a contemporaneous act of naming (Acts 1:19) and is clearly Aramaic, though note should be taken that there is no language confusion and it is not called Hebrew. The only ambiguity here would be whether to read 'their language' as if exclusive and monolingual or simply as being a non-Greek language. Except for names, all of our relevant texts correctly apply συριακός and εβραῖς to Aramaic and Hebrew, respectively. Incidentally, Aramaic and Hebrew names are intermixed in original Aramaic and Hebrew documents. Cf. Ken Penner, "Ancient Names for Hebrew and Aramaic: A Case for Lexical Revision," a paper presented at SBL, San Antonio, 2004. He rightly argues that BDAG needs to reverse its definitions, giving Hebrew as the primary meaning and relegating Jewish Aramaic to a proposal.

Perhaps helpful for those coming from a two-language paradigm is the following anecdote from Josephus. Josephus, *War* 5:272, records that the defenders on the wall of Jerusalem during the great revolt referred to in-coming stone missiles as 'the son is coming' ὁ υἱὸς ἔρχεται. Josephus says that this was spoken in the "patriarchal language". This wordplay is uniquely Hebrew. In Hebrew, if one pronounces 'the stone is coming' fast as would happen under fire, it can sound exactly like 'the son is coming'. בָּנָהּ הָאֶבֶן will sound like בָּנָהּ, especially when the bet is pronounced like Spanish bilabial b/v or the initial vowel is elided: ['ben baa]. Neither בָּנָהּ nor בָּנָהּ sounds like Aramaic בָּנָה, and the feminine ending on the verb אָתָּה אָתָּה cannot be swallowed up like in Hebrew ba/ba-a. Josephus only mentions this wordplay for background color, not to discuss the language situation in Jerusalem. He himself, of course, knew Hebrew and claimed to be an expert in the Torah (Josephus, *BIOΣ* 7). It means that common people on the wall in Jerusalem, and down below in the missile's path, are recorded as using Hebrew. Greek and Aramaic can be assumed for some other occasions. The city was tri-lingual, as Acts 22:2 implies.

¹⁴ This Greek structure C may be echoing the LXX from a distance, for example in Acts 22.6 and 22.17, but it is distinctly Greek and not a Hebraism. Structure C is an excellent indicator of Luke's own editorial work and is useful in analyzing six places in Luke's gospel.

¹⁵ Maloney, p. 84-85, in a bizarre turn, argues that the structure is not Hebraic but Aramaic for the first century. This is done by citing one Aramaic example from the 5th century BC. (Only one example, 500 years out of date and geographically distant!) He ignores all Late Biblical Hebrew texts (Second Temple period). He also rejects two Qumran Hebrew examples of the parallel future construction "and it will be . . . that" (ignoring at least eight others 1Q22f1.10, 4Q162c2.2, 4Q163f4-6c2.8, 4Q169f3-4c3.2, 11QT56.20, 58.11, 61.14, 62.6; plus ignoring וְיִהְיֶה in 4Q252c1.12 [rewriting the biblical flood account], 11QT 62.14 [in future context]). Does Maloney think that the Hebrew of Daniel or Esther is irrelevant? Maloney would have been better served to have followed the common sense of Dalman (1930:25) who cited books like 1 Maccabees and Judith as evidence that the structure was still alive in literary Hebrew.

3. Luke did not like ἐγένετο with a finite verb well enough to incorporate it into his own written style.
4. Corollaries 1-3 lead to corollary 4, they suggest a written Hebrew source somewhere in the background of Luke's Greek gospel sources. This Hebraic source is not Mark or Matthew. This source, or sources, may extend from Luke 1 to Luke 24, in other words, the Hebraic source(s) are massive and probably constitute a whole biography as a "Life of Yeshua" or possibly in Hebrew: **דברי ישוע**. (Cf. Eusebius' Papias *Εβραϊδι διαλέκτω τὰ λόγια* 'sacred-words in Hebrew'.)

We will turn to the resurrection accounts and will give serious consideration to evidence of a potential "Hebraic" Greek source.

The resurrection accounts present puzzling differences.

For example, in Luke and Matthew the women run off to tell the disciples, while in Mark they do not run to the disciples but run off in fear, "telling no one."

In John, Mary reports that the tomb is empty, period, no angel, no resurrection report.

In Luke, we find that the Shabbat was the reason for being away from the tomb and we find a curious idiom for evening, an idiom that appears to mimic a non-Septuagintal Hebraism, that is, a Hebraism that is not found in the Septuagint.

In Matthew, we find a conversation between the women and the angels without any reference to soldiers that are apparently lying on the ground between them.

Also in Matthew, we have a reference to Saturday evening, ὁψὲ τῶν σαββάτων τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων **אור לאחד בשבת**. While Mark mentions the buying of spices on Saturday evening, he specifically mentions a visit to the tomb on Sunday morning, ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου.

Lk 24:4 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτὰς περὶ τούτου καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο ἐπέστησαν 'and it happened in their being troubled about this and behold two men stood.' This ἐγένετο is a good non-Lucan Hebraism, as we found by re-doing Dalman's analysis. It is a different tradition from that found in the other gospels or a more direct reflection of a shared synoptic source.

While confusion may have started on Saturday night, the message of a resurrection only appears to begin to spread on Sunday morning.

One way to account for the difference in chronology between Saturday night and Sunday morning would be to assume that Mark misunderstood τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων in his source and produced ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου.

A second line of explaining Mark's sunrise resurrection would be to hypothesize that he has moved it to the morning for dramatic effect. This would be similar to the way that the Gospel of John is often assumed to have moved the crucifixion to the time of the slaughter of the *pesahim*.

A third hypothesis is to assume that the women visited the tomb twice, the first time on Saturday night and the second time on Sunday morning.

However we may read the resurrection accounts, it is time to set the record straight on language methodologies. A careful analysis of the various kinds of ἐγένετο structures leads directly and unambiguously to a large narrative source among Luke's sources. This ἐγένετο-source most probably points to a literary Hebrew narrative behind the Greek source.

It may suggest that our gospel students in the next generation will want to acquire a fluent control of Hebrew alongside a high level control of Greek and Aramaic. **רבו כמורהם** πληθυνθείη

For example, 1 Maccabees has structure A 3 times (5.30 [6:8, 9:23 &]) and structure B five times (1.1, 5.1, 7.2, 10.64, 10.88). The only responsible conclusion is that καὶ ἐγένετο is a Hebraism rather than Aramaism.