Most of the papers in this volume originated as presentations at the conference Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew: New Perspectives in Philology and Linguistics, which was held at the University of Cambridge, 8–10th July, 2019. The aim of the conference was to build bridges between various strands of research in the field of Hebrew language studies that rarely meet, namely philologists working on Biblical Hebrew, philologists working on Rabbinic Hebrew and theoretical linguists.

The volume is the published outcome of this initiative. It contains peer-reviewed papers in the fields of Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew that advance the field by the philological investigation of primary sources and the application of cutting-edge linguistic theory. These include contributions by established scholars and by students and early career researchers.

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Cover image: Genizah fragment of the Hebrew Bible with Babylonian vocalization (Num. 18.27-28, Cambridge University Library T-S A38.12; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Genizah fragment of the Mishnah (Ḥallah 1, Cambridge University Library MS Add.470.1; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Linguistic analysis of Ps. 1.1 (Elizabeth Robar). Images selected by Estara Arrant.

Cover design: Anna Gatti
THE SHIFT FROM THE BIBLICAL HEBREW FAR DEMONSTRATIVE \( \text{ההוא} \) TO THE MISHNAIC HEBREW \( \text{אותו} \)

_Chanan Ariel_

One of the most prominent differences between Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew is the shift of the far demonstrative pronoun \( \text{ההוא} \) in the Biblical Hebrew (e.g., \( \text{האיש היהוא} \) ‘that man’) to the Mishnaic Hebrew \( \text{אותו} \) (e.g., \( \text{אותו האיש} \) ‘that man’). Since the mid-nineteenth century, scholars have attempted to offer an explanation for this change. This article reviews the development of modifying demonstrative pronouns in Hebrew and Aramaic, supporting the suggestion that the dominant factor in this change was Greek influence. The article also offers a possible explanation for the extreme nature of this change and the exclusive use of the new modifying pronoun in Mishnaic Hebrew.

1.0. Introduction: The Extreme Change in the Far Demonstrative Pronoun between Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew

In Mishnaic Hebrew, the direct object marker \( \text{את} \) is used as a demonstrative pronoun in two ways: (a) the direct object marker
The form of the direct object marker that is inflected with third person pronominal suffixes (אותו, אאות) replaces the distal demonstrative modifying pronoun (ההוא, היא, הם) in Biblical Hebrew. I should note here that, in terms of syntactic function, the respective Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew pronouns וההוא and אאות usually express anaphora or identity, and are not used

1 This structure may have limited precedents in Late Biblical Hebrew, such as וְטוֹב מִשְנֵיהֶם אֵ֥ת אֲש רֵעֵ֖ן לֹא הָיָֽה 'and happier than either are those who have not yet come into being’ (Eccl. 4.3; NJPS). For a comprehensive review of the literature and an updated discussion on the distribution of this structure in the Bible, see Samet (2020).

The form of the direct object marker that is inflected with third person pronominal suffixes (אותו, אאות) replaces the distal demonstrative modifying pronoun (ההוא, היא, הם) in Biblical Hebrew. I should note here that, in terms of syntactic function, the respective Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew pronouns וההוא and אאות usually express anaphora or identity, and are not used

2 This citation, like all citations from rabbinic literature, is according to the Ma’agarim website of the Academy of the Hebrew Language at https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il.

3 The masculine and feminine forms merged into one form (אותן) because of the phonetic shift (under certain conditions) from final /m/ to final /n/ in Mishnaic Hebrew.
as independent indicative pronouns (as distinct from their proximal counterparts).  

This paper is devoted to the use of the inflected form אֶתָּה as a demonstrative modifier. A good example of the shift that occurred between Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew can be seen when we compare the wording of the law of ʿegla ʿarufa ‘the heifer with a broken neck’ in the Bible and its Mishnaic presentation. The Torah states:

(2) וְהָיָֹה הָעִיר הַקְר בֶָ֖ה א ל־ה חָלָָ֑ל וְלָָֽקְח֡וּ זִקְנֵי הָעִִ֨יר הַהִֶׁ֤וא ע גְלַֹ֣ת בָקָָ֗ר אֲש ֶׁ֤ר ל ָֽא־עֻבַּד בֶָ֔הּ אֲש ֵ֥ר ל א־מָשְכֶָ֖ה בְע ָֽל׃ וְהוֹרִ֡דוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִִ֨יר הַהִֶ֤וא עַל־הָעֲרוּפֵָ֥ה בַנָָֽחַל׃

‘And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke; And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley… And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley.’ (Deut. 21.3–6; KJV)

Whereas the text in the Mishnah reads:

(3) קֹנְנִי אֶתָּה תַעַר מֶבִיאֵן עֲרַלְתַּן בָּקָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֻבְּרָה בָּהּ ... וּמְרוֹדֵי אָוֹתָה אַל נֹלֵל איָוָן ... קֹנְנִי אֶתָּה תַעַר וּרְזוֹצֵּן אַתָּדִיָּן בָּכָּם בֵּמֵמָּה עִרְפְּתָה שֶׂלָּעֲגֵּלָה.

‘The elders of that city brought a heifer from the herd which had not been wrought with and which had not drawn in the yoke ... and they brought it down unto a rugged valley... The elders of that city washed their hands in water at the place where the heifer’s neck was broken.’ (Mishna, Soṭa 9.5–6; Danby 1933, 304)

This is a radical change. The inflected pronoun -הו in the relevant syntactic role occurs 67 times in the Mishna (in 56 different mishnayot), while the adjectival demonstrative pronouns היא and הם appear only three times (in two mishnayot).^5

2.0. Documentation of the Change in Sources

Preceding Mishnaic Literature

The shift from אוֹת to היא is completely undocumented prior to Mishnaic Hebrew—whether in the Bible or in the documents from the Judaeans. Józef Milik suggested that this shift may be seen in a disjointed fragment from an Aramaic astronomical work found at Qumran. Milik (1976, 296) reads the relevant words as [מא ואותה בימ] ‘and on [the] same da[y], and on that da[y]’ (4Q211 [4QEnastr^4 ar] 1 iii, 4). However, Beyer (1984, 258, 506) interprets it as a loan from Hebrew אוֹת ‘sign’, which Cook (2015, 4) regards as the better explanation. But the conventional reading may be wrong. Alexey Yuditsky and Elisha Qimron

^5 According to Kaddari (1991, 213), in the three instances in which the biblical pronoun appears, its use may emphasise its deictic (rather than anaphoric or identity-related) function. An example is המעות ההםמחוללים על הפירות האלה ‘Let that money be rendered free for common use by [exchange with] this produce’ (Ma‘aser Sheni 3.4; Danby 1933, 76).
kindly alerted me that the words should be read as [מא]. If their reading is correct, we should probably parse the word מאיתה as an infinitive form of the root את"י, potentially in the function of a verbal noun. The meaning of the phrase would thus be ‘and its entrance on the day.’

Jan Joosten (2002, 14–16) has noted two verses where the Septuagint documents the independent demonstrative pronoun את. In Num. 6.13, the object pronoun in the phrase ‘one shall bring him’ is translated as αὐτός ‘he himself’. Similarly, in Num. 33.8 the place name אֵתָם is translated αὐτοὶ ‘they themselves’. Joosten argues that this translation reflects the influence of the spoken Hebrew of the period of the translators, in which את already served as an independent demonstrative pronoun.

However, the use of the pronouns אתו and אתם as independent demonstrative pronouns is first documented in a Hebrew text only in the Palestinian Amoraic period, some five hundred years later, and is completely absent from Tannaitic Hebrew (see fn. 1, above).

6 Compare the infinitive forms of this root in Qumran Aramaic, לָמָּאתָה, לָמָּאתָה (Beyer 1984, 525). Regarding the digraph א, see, cf. the spelling רֵישׁ flawless ‘summit’ (1Q20 14.9; Muraoka 2011, 29). Milik’s claim (Benoit, Milik and de Vaux 1961, 120) that the pronoun אתו is documented in Mur 22.1-2 ‘sold... the place’ is not probable at all. Depending on the context of this fragmentary document and comparing to other documents (e.g., KhQOstracon 1.4; 5/6Hev 44.6–7), there is no reason to doubt that this את is the direct object marker. Indeed, the analysis as a direct object marker appears in Yardeni’s edition (Yardeni 2000, A, 45–47; B, 27).
Accordingly, it would seem that we should consider other possible explanations for these surprising translations. As Joosten himself noted, there is a syntactic difficulty in the first of these verses (the verse has no antecedent to which the anaphoric object pronoun **וֹא** could refer); this difficulty was resolved in a similar manner in the Tannaitic Halakhic Midrash, *Sifre.*\(^7\) In the second instance, it is not impossible that the translators had a version before them with the spelling **אֹת֔ם** with a waw, rather than the defective **אתם**, as in the Masoretic Text; that they may have had such a reading tradition can be hypothesized in light of the transliterations of the other three occurrences in which this proper name appears (Exod. 13.20; Num. 33.6, 7): *Ὡθόμον,* Βουθάν.\(^8\)

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\(^7\) See Sarfatti (1992, 342); Kahana (2011, 275–76). Yet, though the meaning is the same, the grammatical analysis differs: if the Septuagint, like the *Sifre,* had understood **אותו** to mean ‘(he brings) himself’, it would have used the reflexive pronoun ἐαυτόν.

\(^8\) Prof. Joosten has kindly drawn my attention to three further examples in which the Septuagint translates **אותו** as an independent demonstrative pronoun rather than an object pronoun. Two of these instances appear in just a single textual witness. See Lev. 26.39 in Aquila’s recension (for a discussion of the different versions, see Wevers 1997, 459) and 1 Kgs 9.25 in Codex Alexandrinus. Both instances entail exegetical difficulties. In Lev. 26.39, the antecedent of **אתם** (which the translator read as **אֹת֔ם**) is unclear (Milgrom 1991, 2329; cf. the discussion of Num. 6.13, above). The interpretation of the verse from Kings remains unclear in modern research (Kalimi 2005, 121–22). In the third instance, Ezek. 10.22, all witnesses for the Septuagint (as well as Targum Jonathan) translate **וְאֹת֔ם** as an independent pronoun, i.e., ‘and they’. Medieval exegetes (such as R. David Qimḥi) struggled to interpret the word in its context in the verse, and explanations offered by modern scholars are also forced (Saydon 1964, 202).
Aaron Kaminka (1942, 342) noted that in some cases the Septuagint interprets a difficult Hebrew word as if it were Greek. Thus, the phrase וְחוּשֵַ֥י הָאַרְכִֶ֖י רֵֵ֥עַ הַמ ָֽאָלְךְ ‘and Hushai the Archite was the King’s friend’ (1 Chron. 27.33) is translated καὶ Χοσίον ὁ πρῶτος φίλος τοῦ βασιλέως ‘and Chousi the chief friend of the king’. The translator understood the Hebrew word הָאַרְכִֶ֖י as if it were the Greek word ἀρχή.

In light of Kaminka’s note, one might ask what caused the Greek translator to prefer these ungrammatical translations: did he utilise his familiarity with the Greek pronoun αὐτὸς to resolve the difficulties in these verses, or did he rather take advantage of his knowledge of the Rabbinic Hebrew ההוא, as Joosten has suggested? I prefer the first option, because, as noted, the use of ההוא as an independent (rather than complementary) pronoun is not documented in rabbinic literature prior to the Palestinian Amoraic period.

3.0. Research Questions and Review of Previous Studies

The replacement of the structure ההוא האיש by התואם הוא האיש raises three key questions:

1. Why does the word order change in Mishnaic Hebrew, so that the demonstrative pronoun now precedes the noun it complements?

2. Why was the distal demonstrative pronoun ההוא replaced by the object pronoun און?

3. What was the motivation for such an extreme shift?
The first two of these questions have been discussed in the re-
search literature since the mid-nineteenth century, but, to the
best of my knowledge, the third question has not been examined.
I will briefly review the main opinions in the literature.

Abraham Geiger (1845, 36) argued that the change re-
flexed Aramaic influence. He noted that the third-person plural
pronoun אָנָנוּ is used both as an object pronoun and as a demon-
strative adjective.⁹ Geiger also noted that use of the inflected
forms of יִת instead of the distal pronoun is documented in Chris-
tian Palestinian Aramaic and in Samaritan Aramaic.¹⁰ The same
use is found in a small number of cases in Galilean Aramaic (such
as יִת הָנֵו, ‘those knots’).¹¹ Following Geiger, Nöldeke (1868,
471) and Wright (1890, 113) suggested that dialects such as Sa-
maritan Aramaic and Christian Aramaic influenced the Mishnaic
Hebrew.

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⁹ In Biblical Aramaic, אָנָנוּ serves as an independent demonstrative pro-
noun (Ezra 5.4); some scholars have argued that it also serves as a sepa-
rate object pronoun (Dan. 6.25; see, for example, Bauer and Leander
1927, 70; Vogt 2011, 107). A good illustration of the use of אָנָנוּ as an
object pronoun can be found in מַלְכִּיָּא אֵנָּנָו ‘and he found
them… and defeated them’ (Genesis Apocryphon 20.20). An example
of its use as a modifier may be found in the Bible: מֵלְכֵי אֱנָנוּ ‘those kings’
(Dan. 2.44). The pronoun אֵנוֹמַה usually serves in Biblical Aramaic as an
object pronoun (as in Ezra 4.10, 15), though it also appears as an inde-
pendent subject pronoun (Ezra 5.11; see Bauer and Leander, 1927, 70).

¹⁰ Sokoloff (2014, 168). Prof. Simon Hopkins has drawn my attention
to a similar phenomenon in Christian Arabic; see Blau (1966, 402–5);

¹¹ Sokoloff (1992, 247).
The flaw in the comparison to the object pronoun הוא is that its use as an object pronoun and a demonstrative adjective pronoun is found only in the plural, and not in the singular. It is unlikely that the plural pronoun, which is relatively rare, would influence the singular pronoun, which is several times more common. The suggestion that the Aramaic dialects that have an inflected form of את influenced Hebrew is also problematic, since these dialects are later than Mishnaic Hebrew. Moreover, they use the inflected form of את alongside distal demonstrative pronouns, and in Galilean Aramaic, which has a strong affinity to Rabbinic Hebrew, this form is extremely rare; in Mishnaic Hebrew, by contrast, הוא is the sole form and the grammatical norm.

Isaac Hirsch Weiss (1867, 4, 112) developed Geiger’s argument, claiming that phrases such as באותו היום ‘on that day’ also have their origin in the Biblical Aramaic phrases בַּהּ־שַעֲתָה ‘at the same moment’ (Dan. 3.6); אֶּּנַּהְּבִּיתַכְּרַ ‘at the same time’ (Dan. 4.33). However, Weiss fails to explain why, instead of the expected structure בו ביום ‘on that day’ (which is common in Rabbinic Hebrew and parallels בֵּּבֵּ לוּלְיֶָא ‘on the same night’ (Dan. 5.30), or instead of the unattested structure הבוט ‘on the same day’, Rabbinic Hebrew developed a structure with the object pronoun באותו היום.

GKC (365), Moshe Zvi Segal (1927, 202), Waltke and O’Connor (1990, 178), and others have suggested that this phenomenon has its origins in Hebrew, rather than in the Aramaic dialects. They suggested that the use of the object marker אתה in its uninflected form emerged first as an emphatic form, then be-
came an independent demonstrative pronoun marking the subject (see fn. 1 and example (1) above), and finally the use of the inflected form of את developed as a demonstrative adjective.

However, the claim that את indeed serves as an emphatic form in Biblical Hebrew is in itself controversial. Moreover, it is difficult to explain how the use of uninflected את as an emphatic form in a few exceptional instances in Biblical Hebrew could have totally changed the grammatical structure in the Mishnaic Hebrew. Furthermore, as already noted (above, fn. 1), in Tannaitic Hebrew there is a sharp formal and syntactic separation between the ‘emphatic’ את and the modifying demonstrative את: the former always appears in an uninflected form as the antecedent of a relative clause, while the latter always appears in an inflected form as an attribute not followed by a relative clause. Had the latter form developed from the former, we would expect to find some overlap between the syntactical functions of the two pronouns.

Aaron D. Rubin (2005, 123) has suggested that this structure emerged due to a reanalysis of sentences such as

‘I saw him, the man you saw’,

which was reanalysed as

‘I saw that man you saw’.

Through a process of grammaticalisation, the inflected object pronoun ואת then became a demonstrative pronoun. The problem in Rubin’s explanation is that there is no documented in-

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12 See Blau (1954); Samet (2020).
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stance in Mishnaic Hebrew showing the structure **object pronoun** + **definite noun** + **relative clause**, which according to his reconstruction forms the starting point for this process.\(^{13}\)

Azzan Yadin-Israel (2015, 339) has offered a convincing solution. He suggests that the complementary demonstrative pronoun developed due to the syntactical and phonetic similarity to the Greek word *αὐτός*, which serves as an anaphoric pronoun and pronoun of identity, in a manner similar to the object pronoun אָתָו in Mishnaic Hebrew.\(^{14}\) Yadin-Israel offers no evidence to support his suggestion. I shall seek to examine his proposal below in light of developments in Hebrew and Aramaic, and contact with Greek, and aim to substantiate his argument, while offering an alternative explanation for Mishnah Baba Batra 5.2 which he discusses.

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\(^{13}\) I thank Prof. W. Randall Garr for the reference to Rubin. It should be added that in a similar instance in Biblical Hebrew, we find the repetition of the direct object marker: וְהָיָָ֨ה הַגּ֜וֹי וְהַמַּמְלָכָ֗ה אֲש ָ֨ר לֹֹֽא־יַעַבְד֤וּ א ת ־נְבוּכַדְנ אצִַ֣ר מ ֹֽל ךְ־בָב ֔ל ‘And it shall come to pass, that the nation and the kingdom which will not serve him, the same Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon’ (Jer. 27.8; KJV). A partial similarity to the structure reconstructed by Rubin (though without a nucleus in the subordinate clause, cf. fn. 1 above) can be found in the verse: וַיִָ֣מ ת אֹתָ֑ו אֲש ר־ה פְְק ָּ֥֖י מ ֹֽל ךְ־בָב ֶ֖ל בָאָֹֽר ץ ‘and [he] slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land’ (Jer. 41.2; KJV). For a detailed discussion of prolepsis in Biblical Hebrew, see Kogut (1981–1982).

\(^{14}\) I thank Prof. Gary A. Rendsburg and Dr Uri Mor for the reference to Yadin-Israel.
4.0. Discussion

4.1. Aramaic Influence on the Position of the Complementary Pronoun

In Late Biblical Hebrew, we find several examples of the use of the distal demonstrative pronoun **הוא** before a proper noun. I shall mention two examples here:

(4) וַיְהִִ֧י לִָֽיחִזְקִיָָ֛הוּ ע ֵ֥ש רְבֵֹ֣ה מְא ָ֑ד ... וְהֹ֣וּא יְחִזְקִיָָ֗הוּ סָתַם א ת־מוֹצָָ֞א מֵימֵֶׁ֤י גִיחוֹן

‘And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour ... This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon.’ (2 Chron. 32.27, 30; KJV)

(5) ע זְרָא ב ן־שְרָיֶָ֔ה ... וְהֹ֣וּא־ס פֵֶׁ֤ר מָהִיר בְתוֹרַֹ֣ת מ ש ֶ֔ו

‘Ezra the son of Seraiah ... This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses.’ (Ezra 7.1, 6; KJV)

In one case at least the demonstrative pronoun **הוא** appears before a noun:

(6) בָאָמְרִֹ֣י לָרָשָָ֗ע רָשָ֖ע מֹוֹת תָמֶ֔וּת וְל ֹ֣א דִבֶַ֔רְתָ בְתוֹרַֹ֣ת מְדַרְכָ֑ו הֶׁ֤וְוּא רָשֶָ֖ע בַעֲוֹנֹ֣וּוֹ יָמֶ֔וּת וְדָמֶ֖ו מִיָדְךֵ֥ו אֲבַקֵָֽש׃

‘When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.’ (Ezek. 33.8; KJV)

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15 Some scholars argue that all these instances actually entail an appositional structure (‘he, that is to say: an evil one’) rather than a complementary demonstrative pronoun; for example, see Kogut (1981–1982,
The structure in Late Biblical Hebrew is reminiscent of the use of the demonstrative adjective pronoun הוא in Biblical Aramaic:

(7) והוא צלמא רומשה דירדנה תב

‘As for this image, its head was of fine gold.’ (Dan. 2.32; World English Bible)

The phenomenon of placing a pronoun before the noun to which it refers (prolepsis or cataphora) is well documented in Aramaic. From as early as the Imperial Aramaic of the sixth century BCE, we have documentation of a periphrastic genitive construction with a proleptic possessive pronoun preceding the construct; this is also documented for Biblical Aramaic in the phrase

104). Even if these verses originally contained appositional structures, however, it will become apparent below that the translators of the Septuagint read a complementary pronoun in all three instances.

16 Compare Bauer and Leander (1927, 268, 270). Muraoka (1972, 10; 2011, 49; see also Fitzmyer 2004, 212; Pat-El 2012, 98–99) argues that in ‘For the spirit attacked all of them’ (Genesis Apocryphon 20.20) a demonstrative adjective pronoun precedes the noun: ‘that spirit’. However, it seems to me that this is better parsed as the past form of peʿal, ‘for the wind smote (lit. would smite) them all’ paralleling the form in line 17: והואת כתשא לה ולכול אנש ביתה ‘and it smote (lit. would smite) him and all his house’. See Avigad and Yadin (1956, 44). The scholars who parsed a pronoun here, rather than a verb, did not address this analogy. They rejected the view that הוא is a past form of the verb י׃ו, since they did not find any other instance where the ancillary verb הוא is separated from the main verb by the subject. We should note, though, that it is equally true that there is no other instance in Qumran in which a complementary pronoun precedes the noun.
In Biblical Aramaic there are two instances (in addition to Dan. 2.32 mentioned above) where the demonstrative pronoun appears before the noun: ‘this building’ (Ezra 5.4; אלהים ‘his name of God’ (Dan. 7.17).

However, in most of the instances in which הוא is used as a modifying demonstrative pronoun in the Aramaic dialects preceding Mishnaic Hebrew, it appears after, rather than before, the noun. Moreover, it is even difficult to find nominal clauses containing noun + demonstrative adjective הוא functioning as an object. It is true that in the Nabataean Aramaic, this structure appears in the object function, as for example:

אסמחל בר עבדי כר נטאת והו פרעה דמי קדושת והו
‘smlk son of ‘bdy proclaimed that (same) grove and paid off the price of that same (writ of) proclamation.’ (Papyrus Starcky [P. Yadin 36], Ins 17–18; Yardeni 2001, 132)

Still, even in Nabatean Aramaic הוא is not used as an object pronoun (contrary to the plural demonstrative adjective pronoun ונת). Accordingly, it is difficult to suggest that the use of the

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17 Since Kutscher (1971, 104–9), the growth of this phenomenon in Aramaic has conventionally been explained by way of Akkadian influence. For a review of the literature, examples from various Aramaic dialects, and a comprehensive discussion, see Pat-El (2012, 89–132).

18 In all the ancient Aramaic dialects we have found only two instances where יי ‘it (f.)’ is used as an independent subject pronoun (Muraoka and Porten 1998, 156 §d). However, these instances may be parsed as prominence or focus. See Muraoka (2005, 34).
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4.2. Support for the Hypothesis of Greek Influence

Muraoka (2016, 74) notes with extreme brevity that the use of the Greek αὐτός as a pronoun of identity reminds us of the use of the object pronoun הוּא in Mishnaic Hebrew. He adds that the phrase אֲשֶׁר בִּהְמֵהוֹת ‘at the same moment’ (Dan. 3.6; 5.5) in Biblical Aramaic is translated by the Septuagint as αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ, ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐξῆλθον.

We may add to this that even the instances in which הוּא serves as a pronoun preceding proper nouns, such as יְחִזְקִיָָ֗הוּ (2 Chron. 32.3) and עֶזְרָא (Ezra 7.6), as mentioned above (examples 4–5, above), are translated in the Septuagint as αὐτὸς ὦ Ἑζεκίας and αὐτὸς ὦ Ἑσδρας. The proleptic pronoun preceding the indefinite noun mentioned above (example 7) in ה֤וּא רָשָע ‘that wicked man’ (Ezek. 33.8) is also translated (with the addition of the definite pronoun absent in the Masoretic version) αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνομος.

The use of αὐτός both as an anaphoric pronoun and a pronoun of identity and as an independent pronoun in the oblique cases is known from classical Greek, and is documented extensively in the Greek documents uncovered in Wadi Murabba‘at and in Nahal Ḥever, which reflect the contemporary Greek of the Tannaitic period.

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19 See Smyth (1920, 92–93, §328).
Here are two examples from the Greek Judean Desert documents:

(9) ὅταν δὲ παρανεῖλε Σελα<μ>ψιούς τῷ αὐτῷ Ἰούδατι, τευχιζ[ζ]ει αὐτὴν διὰ δήμο-σίων.

‘And whenever Shelamzious summons the said Judah he will register it with public authorities.’ (Papyrus Yadin 19, Outer text, Ins 25–27; Lewis 1989, 75)


‘which money I will repay to you on the kalends of January in the same year during the said consulship, and the interest of the said money I will deliver to you monthly at the rate of one denarius per hundred denarii per month.’ (Papyrus Yadin 11, Outer text, Ins 19–22; Lewis 1989, 45)

The syntactic analogy to the Greek is complete in all respects—both in the position of the pronoun and in its double function as an independent object pronoun and a pronoun of identity. Accordingly, this seems to us to offer the best explanation for the change in Rabbinic Hebrew. It is even possible that the similarity between the sound of the Greek and Hebrew words facilitated the influencing of the Hebrew structure by the Greek one.

4.3. Additional Instances of Greek Influence on Function Words in Rabbinic Hebrew

A similar example of Greek influence on Hebrew in the area of pronouns has been identified elsewhere. The influence of the
Greek pronoun ἀλλός on the use of the pronoun הוּא in Tannaitic Hebrew to mark a change in the subject of the sentence has been discussed by Breuer (2002, 215 n. 257). This instance shows that Greek pronouns may have penetrated, or at least influenced, Mishnaic Hebrew.20

Lieberman (1950, 298–99) noted an additional function word that shows Greek influence. He clarified the phrase בפרוס הפסח ‘before Passover’ in Tannaitic Hebrew in light of Greek πρός ‘before’. The common feature linking all these four words is the phonetic similarity between the relevant Greek and Hebrew words.

5.0. The Extreme Nature of the Change

The shift הוּא חַכַּמָּה is much more significant than other changes in involving independent pronouns, such as והם יָד. In these pronouns the connection to the Biblical Hebrew pronouns is still preserved and the pronoun accompanies the noun it complements as in Biblical Hebrew. It is also possible that the Mishnaic Hebrew pronouns reflect a dialect of Hebrew that existed alongside Biblical Hebrew. But the dramatic shift of the demonstrative pronoun הוּא חַכַּמָּה required special motivation. I will seek to offer two complementary avenues of research that may resolve this problem: genre and morphosyntax.

20 The fact that Greek ἀλλός did not affect the final vowel of הוּא may indicate that Greek only influenced the meaning and use of existing particles in Hebrew (the element הוּא appears in the existing pronoun הוּא), and was not responsible for the creation of new Hebrew particles.
5.1. The Legal Genre’s Influence

Crystal and Davy (1961, 202) noted that legal documents are careful to repeat the identification of the characters and of the assets to which they refer in an excessive manner in order to prevent any possibility of ambiguity. Examples of this can be found in the Nabataean Aramaic Papyrus Starcky, and in the Greek Papyri Yadin 11 and 19, all mentioned above. The same phenomenon is found in Palestinian Aramaic and Hebrew documents of the period. The heightened use of the pronoun of identity in the legal genre may have led to the routine use of the common Greek pronoun in the casual register.

5.2. Omission of Definiteness in the Phrase Nucleus + Demonstrative Pronoun

Perhaps we should liken this shift to another change between Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew in the field of the definiteness of pronouns. The structure indefinite noun + indefinite demonstrative adjective pronoun appears just once in the Bible: וָפְקָד גֹּפְנוֹת אֶת אֱלֹהִים 'and be mindful of this vine' (Ps. 80.15), but is the standard structure in Rabbinic Hebrew. Based on the set of proximal pronouns — איש זה, אישה זו, אנשים אילו — we would anticipate the following distal set: איש הוא, אישה היא, אנשים הן. However, the absence of the definite article from the demonstrative adjective pronoun was liable to create confusion between הוא as a demonstrative adjective pronoun, and הוא as an independent demonstrative pronoun.

21 I thank Prof. Daniel R. Schwartz for the reference to Crystal and Davy.

pronoun, and הוא as a copula. The use of the new pronoun והוא removed this ambiguity and permitted a distinction between the anaphoric pronoun and pronoun of identity and the independent demonstrative pronoun.

5.2.1. Mishnah Baba Batra 5.2

A good illustration of the syntactic ambiguity created by the omission of definiteness in the demonstrative pronoun והוא can be found in the various versions and interpretations of Mishnah Baba Batra 5.2. In this Mishna, R. Judah discusses whether someone who sells an ass also sells the ass’s trappings. He distinguishes between two instances:

"If a man sold an ass he has not sold its trappings. Nahum the Mede says: He has sold its trappings also. R. Judah says: Sometimes they are sold with it and sometimes not; thus, if the ass was before him and it bore its trappings and he said, ‘Sell me this ass of thine’, all the trappings are sold too; [but if he said, ‘Sell me] that ass of thine’, its trappings are not sold with it.’ (Danby 1933, 372)

The use of the Biblical pronoun והם here instead of simply אתו requires explanation. It may emphasize its
deictic (rather than anaphoric) function, i.e., the ass standing there, and not here (see fn. 5, above).  

In all Mishnaic manuscripts of the Palestinian branch, we find חmontoר החימה/הוא, with a possessive pronoun before the complementary definite demonstrative pronoun.  

Conversely, all textual witnesses of the Babylonian branch have הוא חmontoר. The omission of the definite article from the pronoun in the Babylonian manuscripts (perhaps under the influence of the absence of definiteness in the demonstrative pronoun in the preceding phrase חmontoר זו) created a difficulty in understanding the text.

The sentence חmontoר היא is elliptical—it contains only the object, and does not include the principal component המברך ל׳. As long as the definite article was included before the demonstrative pronoun in the phrase חmontoר היא, it was evident that this was not an independent sentence, but rather a nominal phrase to be completed according to the preceding sentence. However, the Babylonian version חmontoר הוא has the appearance of a regular nominal sentence, and accordingly this led the Babylonian Amoraites, and subsequently many exegetes of the Mishna, to understand the phrase as an independent sentence, which in context must be a

[^23]: It is noteworthy that in order to express the possessive pronoun חmontoר ‘your ass’ with the Mishnaic demonstrative אתה three words are required: אתה חmontoר שלך instead of only two, as in חmontoר היא.

[^24]: This is the version in these manuscripts: Parma 3173 (De Rossi 138); Kaufmann A 50; Cambridge Add.470.1 (Lowe); Pococke 295 (Maimonides’ autograph); T-S E1.107 (Babylonian punctuation).

[^25]: This is the version in these manuscripts: Munich 95; Paris 1337; Escorial G 1.3.1; Vatican Ebr. 115b; Hamburg 165.
question: the buyer asks the seller whether the ass belongs to the seller.

R. JUDAH SAYS: SOMETIME IT IS SOLD, etc. What is the difference between THIS ASS OF YOURS and IS THE ASS YOURS?—Raba said: [When the buyer used the expression,] THIS ASS OF YOURS, he was aware that the ass was his, and the reason, therefore, why he said unto him, “THIS” [must have been] on account of its equipment. [But when he asked], “IS THE ASS YOURS?” [he did so] because he was not aware that the ass was his, and this was [the implication of] his inquiry: “Is the ass yours? Sell it to me.” (Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 78b; Slotki and Epstein 1989, 78b)

R. Yishmaʿel ben Ḥakhmon (prob. Egypt, thirteenth century), who was familiar with the versions in both the Palestinian and the Babylonian branches, offered two interpretations:

26 Yalon (1971, 106) argued briefly in favour of linking the explanation of the Mishna in the Babylonian Talmud to the differences between the Palestinian and Babylonian versions, contradicting Segal (1936, 51), who asserted that the Talmud’s interpretation was ungrammatical. Yadin-Israel (2015, 336–37) also suggested that the interpretation in the Talmud reflects a misunderstanding of Tannaitic Hebrew during the Amoraic period, ignoring the divergence of versions between the Babylonian and Palestinian branches.
'IF THE ASS WAS BEFORE HIM AND IT BORE ITS TRAPPINGS AND HE SAID, “SELL ME THIS ASS OF THINE,” THE TRAPPINGS ARE SOLD TOO, for since the buyer knew that it is his ass, and he said to him זה (‘this’) he intended to buy the vessels on it, and he bought the vessels on it. חמור ההוא (‘that ass of thine’) —that is, a particular ass belonging to you. Some versions of the Talmud have חמור הזה (‘is the ass yours?’), which indicates that he did not know that it was his ass, and asked him “the vessels are not sold,” since he did not intend to buy the vessels.’ (Hershler 1989, 122–23)

In my opinion, this example usefully illustrates the advantage of using the pronounpronoun rather than the indefinite pronounpronoun.

5.2.2. Comparison to the Development of the Demonstrative Pronouns in Palestinian Aramaic

This explanation is arguably supported by an analogous development in the Aramaic dialects used in the Palestinian translations of all the demonstrative pronouns, both proximal and distal. Tal (1979, 46–51) pointed out that a distinction began to emerge between the demonstrative adjective pronoun, which was preceded by ה, such as באורחה הדין ‘in that way’ (Targum Fragments Gen. 28.20 [Klein 1986, 37]; Tal 1979, 48), and the independent pronoun, which remained without ה, as in זה שימן קיימת ‘This is the...
sign of the covenant’ (Targum Fragments Gen. 9.12 [Klein 1986, 25]; Tal 1979, 47). The addition of the ה in Aramaic was presumably intended to create a distinction between these different syntactical functions, independent pronoun as opposed to adjective pronoun. In Rabbinic Hebrew, which removed the definite article from the demonstrative adjective pronoun, the adjective pronoun הוא was replaced by问他 in order to distinguish it from the independent pronoun. In any case, the very dramatic change in the marking of definiteness on pronouns that undermined the biblical pronominal system certainly facilitated the absorption of the new pronoun from Greek.

6.0. Conclusion

The change from问他 to问他 is the result of language contact. Aramaic encouraged the prolepsis, but the change in the pronoun reflects the influence of a Greek pronoun with a similar sound and syntactic functions, as scholars have shown regarding other function words in Mishnaic Hebrew.

In light of this conclusion, it would seem that we should separate the discussion of the development of the pronoun问他 in Tannaitic Hebrew from that of the inflected pronoun问他 + noun, contrary to the prevailing opinion in earlier studies.27

The conclusion reached in this article may also have ramifications regarding the question of the definiteness of the nucleus for which the pronoun问他 serves as complement. In light of the situation in Greek and Aramaic, it might have been expected that

27 See, e.g., GKC (365, §117i); Segal (1927, 202); Oron (1990, 33); Waltke and O’Connor (1990, 178).
Mishnaic Hebrew would also show definiteness in the nucleus, contrary to the accepted view in the literature that this definiteness was added due to the need to separate two consecutive stressed syllables.\footnote{See Mirski (1941); Sarfatti (1980).} This question should be re-examined in light of all the selected witnesses of the Talmudic literature. However, such clarification lies beyond the scope of the present article; I hope to discuss it elsewhere.\footnote{I would like to mention here the late Prof. Edit Doron who asked me about this surprising shift in an email in December 2015 and aroused my curiosity. May her memory be blessed.}

**References**


Ma’agarim = https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/.


