ETHNORÊMA

Lingue, popoli e culture

Rivista annuale dell'associazione Ethnorêma

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INDICE

Presentazione

La scrittura è senz'altro una delle forme più importanti di comunicazione. Lo scritto rimane, dicevano i latini. Ma quando nasce la scrittura? Per quale motivo? Non lo sappiamo con esattezza e varie sono le ipotesi, destinate a rimanere tali. Possiamo però guardarci indietro, e scoprire che ci viene detto quando sarebbe nato il *segno*, inteso come elemento portatore di messaggio. La storia è quella biblica di Caino e Abele. Caino uccide suo fratello Abele e Dio lo condanna a vagabondare per una terra che gridava per il sangue innocente che aveva dovuto accogliere. Caino ritiene la condanna troppo dura ed è spaventato dall'idea che chiunque lo incontri lo possa a sua volta uccidere. Allora "il Signore mise un *segno* (*'ot* in ebraico, *semeion* in greco) su Caino, perché nessuno, trovandolo, lo uccidesse" (Genesi 4:15). Il primo *segno* della storia avrebbe quindi portato un messaggio a tutti i popoli, invitandoli a non fare le proprie vendette, a non alzare le mani su un altro uomo, nemmeno su un assassino.

Non sappiamo cosa fosse quel *segno*. Una scritta? Un disegno? Poco importa. Quello che conta è che era chiaro a tutti e che indicava una parola o un oggetto (un *rêma*) che serviva da messaggio per il popolo (l'*ethnos*).

A questo dovrebbe servire la comunicazione, in ogni sua espressione, a diventare un mezzo di relazione positiva tra gli uomini. Anche un mezzo di riflessione che produce un'azione. Purtroppo sappiamo che spesso così non è, perché non si è capito e seguito il modello e il significato di quel primo *segno*.

Noi vorremmo, attraverso gli articoli di questa rivista, conoscere un po' di quello che è espressione dei popoli, per cercare di capire. Sia che si tratti di un aspetto linguistico, di una tradizione popolare, di una pagina di storia o quant'altro. Vorremmo quindi che chi scrive non abbia solo conoscenze tecniche, ma anche occhi per vedere, orecchi per sentire e voglia di imparare dall'altro, per poi trasmettere quanto appreso.

La rivista vuole essere solo uno degli aspetti dell'opera di Ethnorêma, che è principalmente la promozione culturale. Vari di noi lavorano spesso 'sul campo', vagabondando tra lingue, popoli e culture. Molti si legano alle situazioni e ne nascono relazioni, affetti e azioni concrete.

Questo è lo scopo, il *segno* che vorremmo lasciare.

Il Direttore Responsabile

Moreno Vergari

Some Expressives in So

Brian Migliazza, Payap University and SIL International

SOMMARIO

La presenza di espressivi (ideofoni) è ampiamente attestata in molte lingue del mondo. Mentre in alcune aree linguistiche sono stati sufficientemente studiati, nelle lingue asiatiche questo fenomeno non è ancora ben documentato.

L'articolo, dopo averci presentato i So della Thailandia e averci introdotto alla fonologia della loro lingua, ci fornisce vari esempi di espressivi usati da questo popolo, dandocene una semplice classificazione. Un breve lavoro che può contribuire ad uno studio comparato degli espressivi nelle lingue asiatiche.

1. The So People

The So people are a minority people group currently living mainly in northeastern Thailand and in central Laos. In Thailand most of the estimated So population of 35,000 live in Sakon Nakhon and Nakhon Phanom provinces. Approximately another 100,000 So people live in the central Lao provinces of Khammouan and Savannakhet.

The So usually refer to themselves as /lakɨ̯ɤy tʰrɔ:/ "people So", i.e., "the So people". The So use this term to distinguish themselves from other language groups, though there are some speakers of the So language in Laos who go by the larger ethnic group name "Bru". In Thai they are called ไทโซ่/tʰay sô/.

Sometimes they are called "Bru", in an ethnic sense, when they are lumped together with their neighbors living in nearby provinces. There are various Bru dialects living in Mukdahan, the next province south of Sakon Nakhon. Other references lump the So together with all minority peoples called /kʰa:/, a word that may also have come from Lao, meaning "slave" (Gainey 1985:13). Seidenfaden (1942) visited some minority peoples living in Kalasin Province and wrote that they called themselves "So" or โซ่ in Thai, but the local Thai people called them "Kha".

2. So Linguistic Affiliation

The So language belongs to the Katuic branch of the Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic) subfamily.
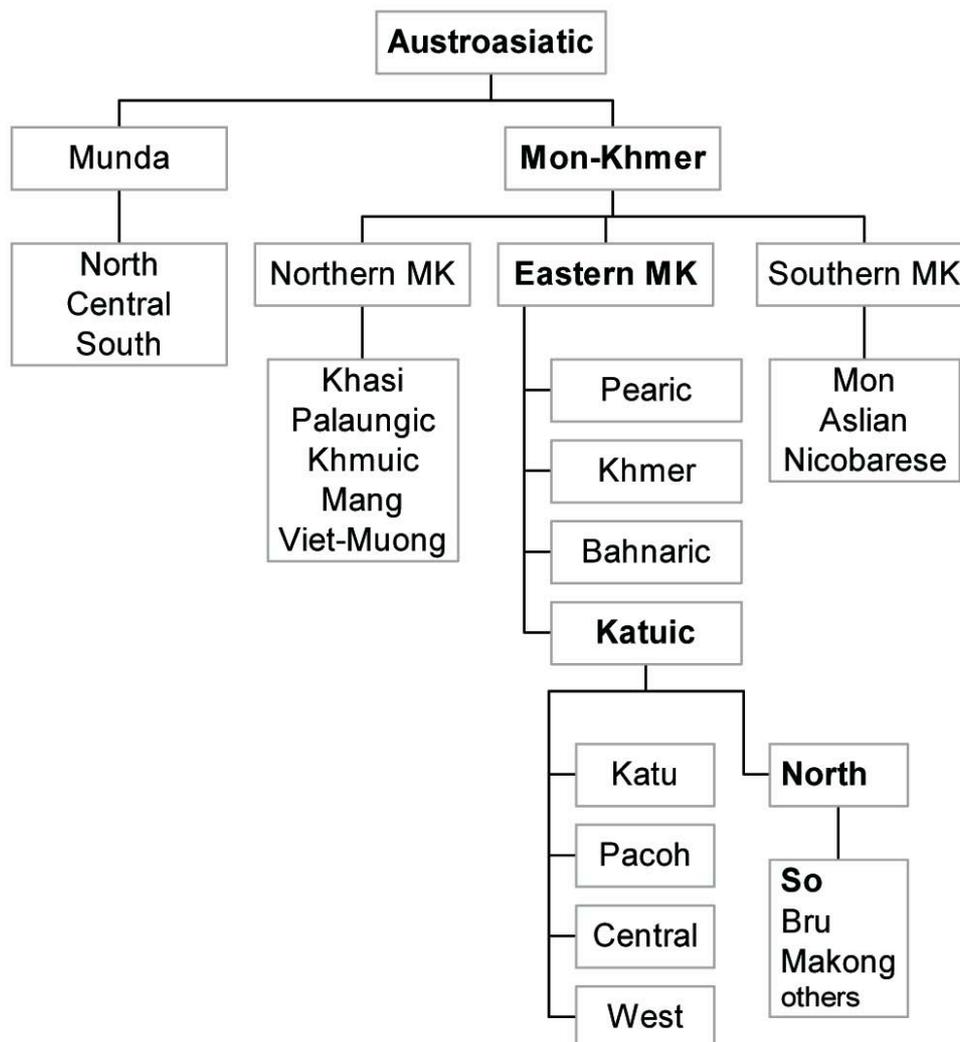
Figure 1 Austroasiatic Language Family (Diffloth 1976)

More specifically So may be classified as: Austroasiatic, Mon-Khmer, Eastern Mon-Khmer, Katuic, North Katuic family. Other languages such as Bru, So Tri, and Makong are closely related in the North Katuic grouping with So. Katuic languages are spoken in northeastern Thailand including Kui (Suay) in Sisaket and Surin Provinces and Bru in Mukdahan Province. Katuic languages are also spoken in central Laos and in Vietnam including So, Bru, Kui, Ta-oih, Katang, Makong, Tri, Katu, and Pacoh.
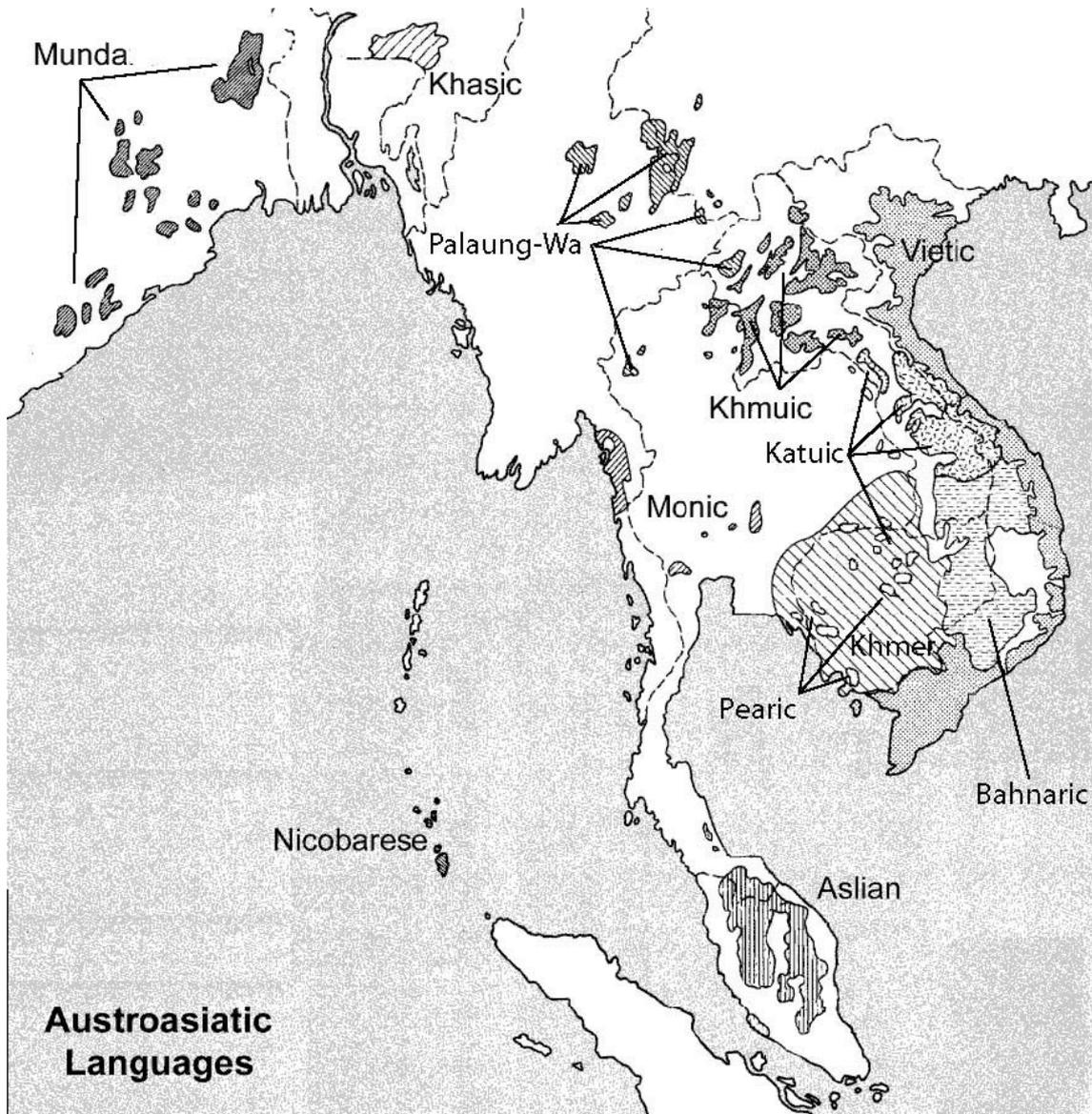
Figure 2: Location of Austroasiatic (Mon-Khmer) Language Groups (Sidwell 2003)

3. So Location and Population

The Katuic peoples are spread throughout the four countries of Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia, but the majority of them are in southern Laos (Diffloth 1991).

The approximately 100,000 So people are mainly located in the Laos provinces of Khammouan and Savannakhet. In Thailand a few So are reported to live in Mukdahan and Kalasin Provinces, but, as mentioned earlier, most of the 35,000 speakers live in the northeast Thailand provinces of Nakhon Phanom and Sakon Nakhon. The Thailand So population is concentrated along a corridor stretching from Tha-uthen and Phonsawan Districts in Nakhon Phanom Province to Kusuman District in Sakon Nakhon Province.

Figure 3 Northeastern Thailand Area

Seidenfaden (1942) says the original habitat of the So was in the hilly, jungle parts of Laos around Tha-Khaek. During the Annam-Thailand war in the 1840s, some So moved to Nakhon Phanom (Tha-uthen and Wanonniwat Districts) and Sakon Nakhon (Kusuman District) Provinces. He estimates that in 1912 there were about 7,000 So people in both Sakon Nakhon and Nakhon Phanom Provinces. In 1915 he estimates about 4,250 So people in Tha-uthen District. Apparently some So were also living in Mukdahan Province where the So had mixed some with the Phu-thai and were called "Soai". Kalasin Province had about 800 So people with most of them living in Warichaphum District (in the southern parts of the PhuPhan hills) and in Kutchinarai District.

Today the So language in Thailand is mainly spoken in three northeastern provinces; Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, and Mukdahan. There are various reports of So people scattered through other adjacent provinces, though these other So are not necessarily mutually intelligible. The cultural center of the So is in Kusuman district, Sakon Nakhon province. Researchers usually agree on this, and the So people themselves also declare that the So spoken in Kusuman is the "pure" and "good" type of So language. The So and Bru speakers in other districts and provinces also refer to the So of Kusuman district as being "good" So where even the children still speak the language.

Smalley (1994:365-367) estimates the Thailand populations of various minority groups as:

• So - 40,000: with 40% confidence factor the population range is 24,000 to 56,000,

• Bru - 10,000: with 40% confidence factor the population range is 6,000 to 14,000,

• So Tri - 5,000: with 40% confidence factor the population range is 3,000 to 7,000.

Gainey (1985) says that the So originated in the middle Lao provinces around the area of

Thakek, Sawannakhet, and Kham Muan. He estimates there are a total of 90 So villages in Thailand, located in the following districts but gives no population figures:

Sakon Nakhon Province (central & western)	Nakhon Phanom Province (central & northern)	Kalasin Province (northeastern)	Mukdahan Province (northern)	Nong Khai Province
Kusuman Phanna Nikhom Muang Song Dao	Phonsawan Tha-uthen Ban Phaeng Muang Pla Pak Si Songkhram	Khao Wong Kuchinarai Somdet	Dong Luang	So Phisai

Figure 4 So Village Locations

The So population figures are mostly educated guesses since there is a lack of rigorous data. The estimates for Thailand range from 40,000 to 60,000 and for Laos they range from 100,000 to 200,000.

In the same general area as the So people there are also non-Katuic speaking groups of Phuthai, Saek, Nyoh, as well as various other Katuic groups such as So Tri and diverse types of Bru. All of these communities are, of course, intermixed with the dominant Thai and Lao (Isan) peoples that populate the northeastern part of Thailand.

4. So Multilingualism

There is a hierarchy of languages in Thailand (Smalley 1994) which has helped to maintain many minority languages, including So. Smalley suggests that it represents Thailand's language hierarchy as below:
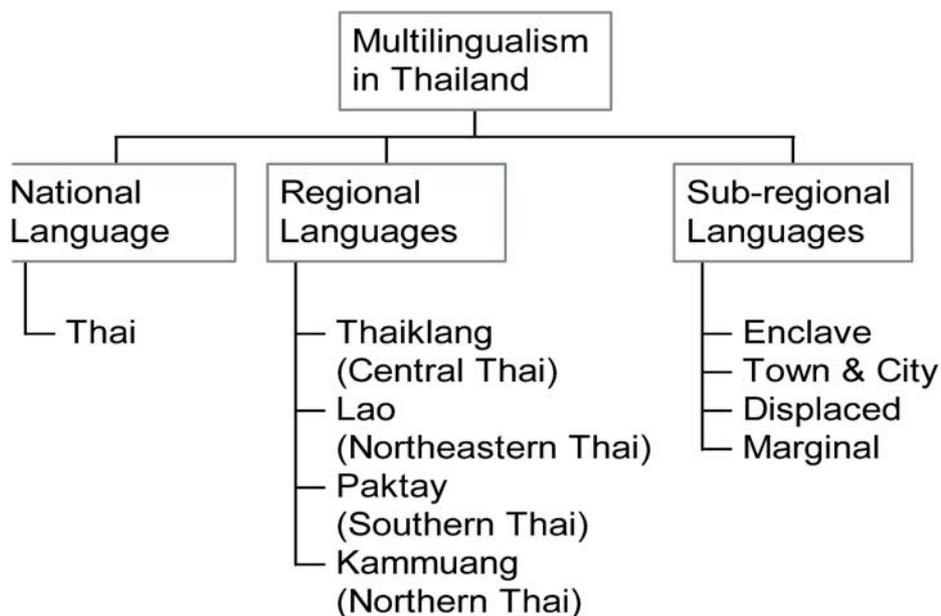

Figure 5 Thailand's Hierarchy of Languages (Smalley 1994:69)

At the top of Smalley's hierarchy is Thai as the national language. At the next level are the four main regional languages of Central Thai, Northern Thai, northeastern Thai, and Southern Thai. Under each regional language there are various sub-regional languages (enclave, town & city, displaced, and marginal). Enclave languages are small languages completely surrounded by other different languages, such as Nyahkur, Mlabri, etc. Town and city languages are Chinese, Vietnamese, etc. Displaced languages are Phuan, Song, Tai Lue, etc. So (along with Kuy, Malay, Northern Khmer) fits in Smalley's marginal language category defined as a language group with the majority of people living on the other side of the border. Languages spoken at home with family and with neighbors in the immediate community are the enclave, displaced, and marginal languages. But when these same speakers move out of their community then they would speak a regional or national language depending on whom they are speaking to and where they are at that time.

Of course, the reality is that these levels are not strictly distinct. There is a gradual trickling down of words, phrases, expressions from the upper levels to the lower. Thus an educated Bangkok person speaks Thai-English (since English is an international language), an Isan person speaks Thai-Lao, and a So person speaks So-Lao. This means many educated Bangkokians speak high register Thai with a lot of English sprinkled in, an Isan person will speak central Lao with a lot of Thai words added in, and many So people will speak So mixing their speech with a lot of Lao words and a few Thai words.

The So of northeastern Thailand (around 55,000) are, as noted above, a marginal language in Thailand, since the majority of the So speakers (over 100,000) live in their homeland of the central Lao region. They speak So in the home, within their immediate home community, and within their extended community of other neighboring So communities. When they move out of their immediate community they speak northeastern Thai (Isan Lao), which is their regional language. They also speak Lao whenever they are unsure if the other person is a So speaker or not. If they move out of the northeast, such as going to work in Bangkok, they attempt to speak Standard Thai as best as they can. Most So people under 45 years of age have attended some primary schooling (at least for a few years) at a local elementary school where they would have been exposed to reading, writing, and speaking Standard Thai. The So people are bilingual (Malai 1980) with the degree of bilingualism depending on the distance of the home from the Thai centers. The So vocabulary shows many loanwords. They may have borrowed more words from the Phu Thai groups with whom they live in close proximity than from the Lao (Gainey 1985:18).

5. Overview of So Phonology

Most of the Thai letters can be used in the So language with close to the same phonetic value. This means that many of the So sounds are also found in the Thai language. But some So sounds are unique with no clear correspondence to a Thai letter. In these cases a Thai letter (graph) that most closely resembles the different sound in the So language has been chosen.

5.1 So Initial Consonants

There are 21 initial consonants phonemes in the So language.

	Labial		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
Plosive Aspirated	pʰ	พ	tʰ	ท	cʰ	ฌ	kʰ	ค		
Plosive Voiceless	p	ป	t	ต	c	จ	k	ก	ʔ	อ
Plosive Voiced	b	บ	d	ด						
Fricatives					s	ซ			h	ฮ
Nasals	m	ม	n	น	ɲ	ญ	ŋ	ง		
Flaps			r	ร						
Approximates	w	ว	l	ล	y	ย				

5.2 So Final Consonants

There are 14 single final consonants in the So language.

	Labial		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
Plosive Voiceless	p	บ	t	ด	c	จ	k	ก	ʔ	ห์
Fricatives									h	ฮ
Nasals	m	ม	n	น	ɲ	ญ	ŋ	ง		
Flaps			r	ร						
Approximates	w	ว	l	ล	y	ย				

5.3 So Initial Consonant Clusters

There are 8 initial So consonant clusters.

	Labial		Alveolar		Velar	
Plosive Voiceless	pr	ปร	tr	ตร	kr	กร
	pl	ปล			kl	กล
Plosive Voiceless Aspirated			tʰr	ทร		
Plosive Voiced	br	บร				
	bl	บล				

5.4 So Final Consonant Clusters

There are 3 final So consonant clusters.

w?	ว ห์
y?	ย ห์
yh	ย ฮ

5.5 So Basic Vowels

There are 11 basic (monophthong) So vowels all of which have contrastive length: there is both a long and a short version for each of these eleven vowels. Since the Thai language only has 9 basic vowels, Since the Thai language only has 9 basic vowels, this means that So has two additional vowels which the Thai language alphabet does not have a symbol œ These two vowels are an extra central mid vowel and an extra low back vowel.

	Front		Central		Back	
	Short	Long	Short	Long	Short	Long
High	i	i:	ɯ	ɯ:	u	u:
Open	กิ	กี	กื	กื	กุ	กู
Closed	กิก	กีก	กืก	กืก	กุก	กูก
Mid	e	e:	ɤ	ɤ:	o	o:
Open	เกะ	เก	เกอะ	เกอ	โกะ	โก
Closed	เก็ก	เกก	เกือก	เกิก	กก	โกก
Low-Mid	ɛ	ɛ:	ʌ	ʌ:	ɔ	ɔ:
Open	แกะ	แก	แกอะ	แกอ	โก๊ะ	โก๊
Closed	แก็ก	แกก	แกือก	แกิก	ก๊ก	โก๊ก
Low			a	a:	ɑ	ɑ:
Open			กะ	กา	เกาะ	กอ
Closed			กัก	กาก	กือก	กอก

5.6 So Diphthongs

The So script writes 5 diphthongs.

	Front		Central	Back	
	Mid-glided	Low-glided	Glided-mid	Mid-glided	Low-glided
High	iɤ	ia	ɯa	uɤ	ua
Open	เกีย	เกียา	เกือ	กัว	กวา
Closed	เกียก	เกียาก	เกือก	กวก	กวาก

5.7 So Register

The So language does not have tones like Thai, but it has register consisting of two contrastive phonation types, clear and breathy. Register 1 is the clear or normal voice while register 2 is the breathy voice which has the effect of making words sound deeper. Register 1 is unmarked and register 2 (breathy) is marked with the Thai script "may eek" over the consonant as in the word /kʰṵː/คู่

Register	Thai Symbol		Example	Example in IPA	Example Meaning
1	--	ก	มัด	mat	near future
2	a̤	ก่	มั่ด	ma̤t	eye

5.8 So Syllabic Nasals

The So presyllable can consist of a syllabic nasal which assimilates to the point of articulation of the initial consonant of the major syllable.

m̩	ม่	ม่แปก	m̩pɛːk	to divide
n̩	น่	น่ต่ฮ	n̩to̤h	riverbank
ɲ̩	น่	น่จัก	ɲ̩cak	second person singular
ŋ̍	น่	น่กัร	ŋ̍kar	animal skin

6. So Expressives

6.1 Introduction

Various terms have been used to describe an interesting feature of Southeast Asian languages in which words are reduplicated with a wide range of possible meanings. These words are usually easy to notice but often hard to define as a class. In general these seem to be iconic in that there is a more direct relationship between some of the speech sound properties and the meaning of these phrases.

A variety labels have been used œ expressives, reduplication, echo-word reduplication, sound symbolism, intensification, descriptives, onomatopoeia, size sound symbolism, iconicity, vowel sound and size, sound symbolic value of vocatives and of involuntary noises, 'conventional sound symbolism', phonesthemes, ideophones, exclamations, four-syllable idiomatic expressions.

These can be described as a special class of the lexicon as in "expressives", or a part of the syntax as in "intensification". It can be part of the phonology as in "reduplication", "size sound symbolism", or "vowel sound and size". It can also be described as part of the semantics as in "descriptives", "onomatopoeia", "iconicity", "sound symbolic value of vocatives and of involuntary noises", "conventional sound symbolism", "ideophones", "exclamations", "four-syllable idiomatic expressions".

The idea of expressives is that the speaker wishes to convey extra sensations (emotional feelings, visual impressions, sounds, tactile feelings, etc) that are not quite captured with the normal vocabulary range in the language. Another way to look at this is that the external situation has some animate volition whereby it can speak and somehow express itself - i.e., through this special set of expressive phrases. This can be thought of as "expressions from nature" in which nature 'speaks' through various sensations. The message from nature is iconic in that the original sensation is preserved as much as is possible.

> In English we see something similar in:
>
> *I lit the match and the whole kitchen went "bang".*
>
> *He hit the pavement with a "thud".*
>
> *He talked on "yack, yack, yack".*
>
> *She touched the bruise and he yelled "ouch".*

Generally, though, in English these are one-word items which approximate some sound. But in Southeast Asian languages these are usually at least two syllables and many times there is some form of reduplication. Some or all of the following properties may be seen (Hsu 1989):

> 1. Phonologically - a little different (segments, stress-patterns, or other phonotatics not found in the general vocabulary, etc)
> 2. Grammatically - different from other words (uninflectable when other words are typically inflected, restricted to special constructions, or able to function as complete utterance, etc)
> 3. Semantically - usually the "meaning" is difficult to define (they are often described as characterizing an entire situation, or describing sense-based properties in several modalities at once, e.g. color, size, and speed, etc)
> 4. Stylistically - provide additional color not available from the general lexicon

6.2 Expressives

Expressives describe the appearance, sound, or feel of something happening. Usually this takes the form of some kind of reduplication.

They can be in doublet form:

ak ak	the sound of laughing
paŋ paŋ	the sound of shooting
kʰɯp kʰɯp	the sound of many people doing something together
caːŋ paːŋ	the sound of the earth dividing
c̣ịaw c̣ịaw	he sound of steam rising
pɛk pɛk	the sound of clapping
piŋ piŋ	the sound of slapping
pok pok	the sound of cutting (i.e., of trees)
puːt puːt	the sound of stretching
tʰaːt tʰaːt	the sound of a storm

And they can come in longer forms:

tum.taːm tum.taːm	the sound of shooting
ɔːk aːk ɔːk aːk	the sound of many people screaming
li lɤː li lɤː	the sound of searching
pạl.la.pụːt pạl.la.pịac	the sound of war

6.3 Description of Sounds

Some examples of expressives with the meaning of description of sounds.

EXAMPLE 1 (from Daughter-in-Law 011 Text)

puːt puːt	sound of stretching

ciːa	la	mụɣy	maŋ	ka.tɯy	ka.tɯy	ka.tɯy	tẹh
eat	and	tired	only	pull	pull	pull	leech

hɤːy	tị̈ː	i.tɑh	tị̈ː	puːt.puːt
already	pull	tear	pull	sound_stretching

She ate and tried to tear the leech until she was tired.

An example is seen below where the daughter-in-law is looking, trying hard to find a way out of the inner room of the house.

EXAMPLE 2 (from Daughter-in-Law and The Spirit Room Text)

li.lɤː li.lɤː   ʌːt   ti klɔːŋ kiː
sound_looking exist at inside there

She was still looking everywhere for a way out of the room (inside the room there was the sound of searching/shuffling).

Another example is where the turtle laughs when he is able to beat the monkey (from the *Turtle* text).

EXAMPLE 3 (from Turtle Text)

an   kaː ci.caŋ ak.ak   lɛwʔ
3psg then laugh sound_laugh PRT_emphasis

He then really laughed and laughed.

6.4 Intesification

Some examples of reduplication with the meaning of intesification.

EXAMPLE 4 (from Thresh 02 Text)

pʰiːaŋ pʰiːaŋ   smooth smooth

ta.mit a.lay ka: kʰua bat a.lɑ̥h   tah liːan   waːɣʔ ta.rah
first   3p   then cut   grass take_out from thresh_ground before cut

ku.tɛːk ɔːn   an   pʰiːaŋ pʰiːaŋ
dirt   cause 3psg smooth smooth

First they clear the grass from the threshing floor before (and then) cutting the dirt so as to make (the ground) very smooth.

EXAMPLE 5 (from Thresh 04 Text)

kʰak kʰak   clean clean/good good

kʰua bat cɣ̰ː   ta.rah ku.tɛ̰ːk pʰiːaŋ cɣ̰ː   kaː kuaːt pʰon kuaːt
cut   grass already cut   dirt   smooth   already then sweep dust   sweep

ko̰ːl ɔːn   an   aːc   kʰak kʰak
stone cause 3psg clear clean   clean

After cutting the grass and after smoothing out the dirt, then (you) sweep away the dust and the stones thus making it (the ground) very clean.

EXAMPLE 6 (from Thresh 32 Text)

sa.ŋɑːt pʌ sa.ŋɑːt pʌ   withered go withered go

an   hɣːm maŋ ta.nʌːmprḭat kʰɑːŋ a.caw kaː   sa.ŋɑːt pʌ sa.ŋɑːt pʌ
3psg see   only   tree banana belong   self   then   withered go   withered go

He saw his banana tree only becoming more withered.

EXAMPLE 7 (from Thresh 34 Text)

pu̯ːt a.cɔːn   pu̯ːt a.cɔːn   big ascend   big ascend

bat	an	ta.wa̯ŋ	lo̯ːn	prɨat	kʰɑːŋ	na̯w	piːt	pat	hɤːm
grass	3psg	look_far	examine	banana	belong	Mr	turtle	then	see

pu̯ːt a.cɔːn   pu̯ːt a.cɔːn
big   ascend   big   ascend

When he looked at Mr. Tutrle's banana tree, he could see that it was growing bigger all the time.

6.5 Four-Syllable Idiomatic Expression

Some examples of four-syllable phrases with an idiomatic meaning.

EXAMPLE 8 (from Growing Rice 01 Text)

ta.mit ta.mi̯ː   begin first (at first/in the beginning)

ta.mit.ta.mi̯ː	hi	kaː	pʌ	tʰay	ta.liːŋ
at_first	1ppl	then	go	plow	rice_field

First, we go out to plow the rice fields.

EXAMPLE 9 (from Daughter-in-Law 05 Text)

ta   ŋu̯ːaːc ta ciːa do drink do eat (eats and drinks)
ta.wi̯a ta.ŋi̯ːaːn   do job do work (working)

mi̯ː	maŋ	ta	ŋu̯ːaːc	ta	ciːa	ɔːn	ciːa	dɑ
have	only	do	drink	do	eat	give	eat	not

ta.wi̯a	ta.ŋi̯ːaːn	n̯troːw	paːy
do_job	do_work	what	said

"Mother only eats and drinks and does not do any work" she said.

EXAMPLE 10 (from Daughter-in-Law 03 Text)

hun.hu̯ː hun.hay   easily angered

lɛː	ku.man	ki̯ː	hun.hu̯ːhun.hay
and	daughter_in_law	that	easily_angry

The daughter-in-law was easily angry and annoyed.

EXAMPLE 11 (from Thresh 04 Text)

kuaːt pʰon kuaːt ko̯ːl   sweep dust sweep stone

kʰua	bat	cɤː	ta.rah	ku.tɛːk	pʰi̯ːaŋ	cɤː	kaː	kuaːt
cut	grass	already	cut	dirt	smooth	already	then	sweep

pʰon	kuaːt	ko̯ːl	ɔːn	an	aːc	kʰak	kʰak
dust	sweep	stone	cause	3psg	clear	clean	clean

After cutting the grass and after smoothing out the dirt, then (you) sweep away the dust and the stones thus making it (the ground) very very clean.

EXAMPLE 12 (from Thresh 05 Text)

taːm ka.ruːm taːm kɔ̥   around underneath around fence

cɤːkaː pʌ cuːayʔ krɛ   ci.rɨ̥ːak taːm ka.ruːm taːm kɔ̥
and_then go search excretion buffalo around underneath around fence

muː.kɨ̥   naː
anywhere_there PRT_cmd

And then go searching for buffalo dung anywhere around underneath houses or around fenced enclosures (animal pens).

EXAMPLE 13 (from Samat Pig & Dog 08-09 Text)

tiːn pʌ   tiːn cṳː   step go step return

a.cɑː pʌ lɨap̚ː   lo̥ːn   tiːn pʌ tiːn cṳː
dog go walk_around examine step go step return

The dog walked around checking on things going (stepping) out and coming (stepping) back.

EXAMPLE 14 (from Turtle 060 Text)

pak ŋ krɛ pak klo̥ŋ   insert buttock insert back

nạw ta.mṳr bat ci.lɨ̥ːa pak ŋ krɛ   pak klo̥ŋ an cɤː
Mr   monkey when thorn insert buttock insert back 3psg already

(as for) Mr. Monkey, when the thorns poked into his bottom and back already (... he then crawled over to the piece of wood, where the turtle was hiding inside the hole).

EXAMPLE 15 (from Sipriang the Liar 079 Text)

krṳɤŋ a krṳɤŋ nɨːạːy   region grandparent (mother's) region grandparent (father's)

cu krṳɤŋ a   krṳɤŋ nɨːạːy   cɤː
until region grand parent (mother) region grandparent (father) already

I return to the grandparent's region (the place of the dead) already.

EXAMPLE 16 (from Daughter-in-Law 031 Text)

ɲɨ̥.doŋ ɲɨ̥.wɨ̥ːl   everybody (all house all village)

tɤ   sa.ŋay poŋ a.tʰaw kaː a.sɛːŋ   lɛwʔ   a.sɛːŋ   iː pʌ
arrive day   cremate 3pol then climb_down PRT_emph climb_down will go

ci   ɲɨ̥.doŋ.ɲɨ̥.wɨ̥ːl kraːŋ   kaː m̥pɨ̥ːayh pɤːt
PRT_cmd everybody   carry_2people then neg   able

On the cremation day, everyone tried to carry the body but no one was able to.

EXAMPLE 17 (from Daughter-in-Law 027 Text)

ɲɨ̥ doŋ ɲɨ̥ krṳaŋ   everybody (all house all country)

ku.ciːt cɤː.lɛː   ɲɨ̥ doŋ ɲɨ̥ krṳaŋ nay sʌ
die   and_then all house all country this not_do

She said, "Later when I am already dead, do not let anyone carry my body (or - it is not right that anyone should carry my body) except the daughter-in-law".

Here is an idiomatic expression which doesn't quite fit the four-syllable pattern.

> ***EXAMPLE 18*** (from Turtle 067 Text)
>
> mu̯ɤɤ maŋ a.tɔk   mu̯ɤɤ maŋ a.klḁw   try only poke tired only poke_dull
>
> ta.mu̯r an   mu̯ɤɤ maŋ a.tɔk   mu̯ɤɤ maŋ a.klḁw
> monkey 3psg tired   only poke   tired   only   poke_dull
>
> *The monkey, he was tired of only poking and poking (the turtle).*

6.6 Reduplication

Reduplication of some sort is a feature of all these phrases. Sometimes there is a complete reduplication of the morpheme (two syllable form) CVC - CVC.

> kḁk   kḁk
> clean   clean - very clean

Complete reduplication of morpheme (four syllable form) CVC_CV - CVC_CV .

> ɲaŋ.mɯː ɲaŋ.mɯː
> when hand   when hand - i.e., all day

Partial reduplication of the morpheme (two syllable form) C_1VC - C_2VC.

> pi̯ŋ di̯ŋ
> very still

Partial reduplication of morpheme CV_CV_1C - CV_CV_2C.

> la.ŋit laːŋɑːt
> to act lazy

Partial reduplication of morpheme $CV\_CV_1C_1$ - $CV\_CV_2C_2$.

> sa.baw sa.bot
> to speak loudly

Semantic reduplication has two free morphemes with the same general meaning but there is also phonological reduplication of part of the phrase.

- CVC_word1 - CVC_word2
  nam.doŋ nam.suː
  in house   in hut - i.e., all over the house

- CVC_CV_word1 - CVC_CV_word2
  pan.ci.tu̯ac pan.ci.klɛc
  in steal is thief - i.e., person always stealing

- word1_VC - word2_VC
  tʰɯː.ʌːt a.dɯːŋ.ʌːt
  respect exist bring exist - i.e., pay respect (to the spirits)

Reduplication of adverbs or verbs is used to show intensification as seen in this example:

EXAMPLE 19

kuaːt koːl ɔːn an aːc kʰak kʰak
sweep stone for 3psg clear clean clean

Sweep away the stones so that it is clear and very clean.

7. Southeast Areal Features

Areal features of Southeast Asia have been described by many linguists down through the years. Pinnow (1960) listed areal features of Southeast Asia which contrasted with those he had found in South Asia:

1. genitive postposed
2. head-modifier
3. noun-adjective-genitive
4. verb-object (object postverbal)
5. no extensive morphology
6. predominantly prefixes (loss of affixes generally)
7. tendency towards monosyllabicity
8. no dental/ retroflex distinction
9. tendency to develop tonemes

Henderson (1965) wrote of concentration areas where there is a confluence of features in specific geographical areas:

1. tone (presence or absence)
2. register (presence or absence)
3. initial consonant patterns
4. syllabification patterns
5. vowel systems
6. final consonant patterns

Suriya in 1988 gave an initial listing of areal typological features:

1. numeral classifiers
2. sentence final particles
3. formation of ordinal numbers from cardinal numbers - such as Thai thii3
4. comparative construction - such as Thai kwaa2 "more than"
5. continuous aspect marker - such as Thai juu2 "exist"
6. V not V questions (tag questions)
7. nouns used as prepositions - such as Thai khong5 noun "thing" or the preposition "of"
8. "suffer-type passive" construction in which there is some adverse effect on the subject - such as Thai thuuk2
9. compound Noun/ Verb - such as Thai paa2 + dong "forest + forest"
10. verb serialization (verbs as coverbs, prepositions, and serial constructions) - such as Thai hay3 verb "give" and preposition "to"
11. tonogenesis in compensation for a change somewhere in the syllable

She then made a subset of this list (Suriya 1990) for Thai Languages, which would be generally applicable (with some modifications) to the whole Southeast Asian region:

1. monosyllabicity
2. tonality
3. no morphology
4. simple syntax
5. verb serialization
6. numeral classifiers
7. final particles

Finally Edmondson and Solnit (1988) propose a list of features, which also includes elaborate expressions:

1. monosyllabicity
2. glottalized consonants
3. isolating/ analytic syntax
4. four-syllable elaborate expressions

Along with Edmondson and Solnit, we can add "expressives" or more generally "elaborate expressions" to this bundle of features that are seen thourghout the various language families of the Southeast Asian linguistic area. The So language confirms this feature among MK languages. This provides further documentation of this attribute among Southeast Asian languages in general.

8. Further Work

Expressives (ideophones) have been attested around the world in many languages. They have been particularly noted among African language families but have not been as well documented in Asian languages. More work is needed to compile a cross-linguistic study of this phenomenon in Asian languages. This would help in providing some idea of how widespread the phenomenon is which would assist typological studies of variation across the world's languages.

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Mozzarella of the East
(Cheese-making and Bai culture)

Bryan Allen and Silvia Allen - SIL International

SOMMARIO

La produzione del formaggio non è comune in Cina, ma ci sono alcuni gruppi etnici come i Tibetani, i Mongoli e i Sani, che ne producono alcuni tipi. L'articolo descrive brevemente i formaggi prodotti da questi gruppi etnici, in particolare due tipi (conosciuti come *rubing* e *rushan*) prodotti dalla minoranza Bai nella provincia dello Yunnan. La storia e le tecniche di produzione sono descritte in dettaglio. Comparazioni fra il formaggio dei Bai e quello dei Sani, possono suggerire collegamenti storici fra i due gruppi etnici.

Introduction

Marco Polo, the first Western traveller to visit China, described many things he observed, but even though he almost certainly came to Dali, he never mentions cheese. This is a great pity as there are similarities between Bai cheese and Italian cheese that he would have found interesting. Since Marco Polo omitted cheese from his travel guide to China, we will attempt in this brief article to help modern travellers to Dali understand more about this little known yet fascinating food.

It is well known that the Chinese traditionally are not fond of eating dairy products. Only in the last few years, under Western influence, have milk, yoghurt, butter and cheese become available in large cities. Most Han Chinese still feel a certain revulsion when it comes to cheese. Yet the Bai have produced and consumed two varieties of cheese for centuries. This is doubly surprising when one considers that very few minority groups in the whole of China traditionally make any kind of cheese. Of further interest is the fact that the Sani, a small minority group living near Kunming, make the same kind of cheese as the Bai.
This suggests some kind of connection, and we argue that their common cheese is evidence that at least some of the Sani people migrated from the Dali area.

The Bai

The 1.6 million Bai people live in north-west Yunnan province in south-western China. They are one of the 55 minority nationalities officially recognised by the Chinese government. The origins of the Bai people are shrouded in mystery. Although there was a time when it was believed they were a Tai-speaking group, that theory has been discredited and they are now commonly accepted as being of Tibeto-Burman origin.[1] The Bai language, however, has not been definitively shown to be related to other Tibeto-Burman languages, and because of its overwhelming borrowing from Chinese, claims have alternatively been made that Bai is Sinitic.[2] Bai culture, too, has drawn heavily on Han culture, so much so that when Francis Hsu found himself in a Bai area during the Second World War, he felt no misgivings about basing his study of Chinese family structure on a Bai community.[3] C. P. Fitzgerald, writing in the 1940's, says "The lack of any strong national feeling among the Min Chia (Bai) has led many travellers to regard them as an absorbed people".[4]

The impression one gathers from these ethnologists is that the Bai are a people who are being absorbed by the Han, who have no distinctive cultural characteristics of their own. However, our three years of fieldwork reveals that in Bai areas outside large towns such as Xiaguan and Dali, everyone speaks Bai; nearly all the women wear traditional costumes; in their religion, the Bai pay respect to distinctive 'tutelary spirits'; and the people have a strong musical tradition which is uniquely Bai.

The vast majority of the Bai people live in the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, which is centred on Erhai lake. The Erhai basin is very fertile and intensely cultivated, the principal crops being rice, wheat, beans, rape, maize and tobacco. Further north, around Dengchuan and Eryuan, the land is wetter and there are rich meadows and grasslands, where dairy cows are raised. The Jianchuan and Heqing regions are hillier and are more suited to the raising of sheep and goats. Using the milk of these animals, the Bai make two kinds of cheese, known as 'rubing' and 'rushan' respectively in Chinese. The local Han Chinese have also adopted the custom of eating the cheese (both *rubing* and *rushan*), using it at holiday times and festivals, and in some cases even making it themselves.

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[1] XU LIN and ZHAO YANSUN (1984) *Baiyu jianzhi*. Beijing.

[2] STAROSTIN, Sergej (1995) "The historical position of Bai", *Moskovskij Lingvisticheskij Zhurnal* 1:174-190.

[3] HSU, Francis (1948) *Under the Ancestors' Shadow*. P. 17. Stanford University Press.

[4] FITZGERALD, C. P. (1941) *Tower of Five Glories*. Pp. 14-15. London: Cresset Press.

Cheese-making

Rubing

'Ru' in this context means 'milk'. 'Bing' means 'a round flat cake' or by extension 'something shaped like a cake', so *rubing* is 'a cake made of milk'. *Rubing* comes in fist-sized cakes, shaped like a rounded brick, creamy white in colour, and with a spongy texture. It is made in the Jianchuan and Heqing areas mainly, though there are individuals outside those areas who produce it too. Traditionally, *rubing* is made of goat's milk, and this is still the case in Heqing, but in Jianchuan, cow's milk is often used in its place. In fact, the Bai term for *rubing*, 'youdbap', means 'goat's milk'. Every day buses transport *rubing* to Dali and Xiaguan to be sold in the markets. The Bai normally slice *rubing* and fry it in shallow oil. It is then eaten with a sprinkling of salt or sugar. It has the property of not melting when heated. Sometimes it is coated in a batter of egg and cornflour, and deep-fried. If eaten raw, it tastes a little like mozzarella. It is considered a special dish which is served to guests or eaten at banquets.

To make *rubing*, the milk is first boiled well, and then when taken off the heat, a souring agent is added which causes the milk to curdle. The souring agent is extracted from the dried stems and leaves of a cultivated vine. The dried plant matter is boiled up to produce the agent, which has a bitter-sour flavour, and is called 'naiteng' (a Chinese term meaning 'milk-vine'). The curdled milk is then warmed up a little more to accelerate the process, and the milk quickly separates into white curds and yellowish whey. The curds look and taste like cottage cheese, and are sometimes eaten without further preparation, usually by children, with sugar added.

The curds are scooped up and poured into a handkerchief-sized cloth. The cloth is then wrapped around the curds and pressed tightly to squeeze out the whey. The tightly wrapped cube of cheese is then placed in a press. The press consists of two rectangular pieces of wood, each about half a metre long and five centimetres wide. There is a bolt running through a hole at each end of the pair of boards, tightened by wing nuts, to apply even pressure. In this way the pieces of wood can be joined together and tightened, applying pressure to the bags of *rubing* between them. The *rubing* is left in the press for several hours to squeeze out any remaining liquid. After this, the cheese is ready to eat. The left-over whey is very nutritious and is fed to pigs.

Rushan

Rushan is quite different from *rubing* in appearance. 'Shan' in Chinese means 'fan', so *rushan* is usually translated 'fan cheese'. In Bai it is called 'nvxseiz', the etymology of which is unclear. Sold in sheets about 30-40 centimetres long and 7-10 centimetres wide, it has a yellowy cream colour, is shiny, and hard to the touch, though pliable. It is made in Eryuan, Dengchuan and many other places including Xizhou. It may be eaten raw, though people usually deep-fry it. The cheese is cut up into small chunks and fried very quickly in hot oil, which causes it to puff up. It becomes light and crispy, and melts in the mouth. Like *rubing*, it is considered a special dish that is often served to guests and is eaten at festival times.

Rushan is one of the ingredients in the Bai three-course tea, which is a kind of tea ceremony, nowadays accompanied by dancing girls and music. The three-course tea actually dates back to the Tang dynasty, when the Nanzhao and Dali kings used to offer it to their important guests.[5] The first cup is a bitter tea, the second is sweet, and the third has a strong aftertaste. The first bitter cup is made from roasted tea. This is supposed to represent the hardships of life that one must endure before one can attain happier times. It is also called 'one hundred struggles tea' or 'hardship tea'. The second cup contains pieces of walnut, brown sugar, and some *rushan*. The sweet flavour reminds the drinker of the good times in life. Honey, ginger, pepper and cinnamon are added to the third cup, which therefore has an interesting tangy flavour which lingers in the mouth. The thought behind this cup is that one should look back over one's actions and consider which have been good and which bad.

Rushan is made by warming fresh cow's milk (never goat's milk) in a wok, and then adding either household vinegar or some sour milk to curdle it. Since the milk is never pasteurised, the natural live bacteria work quickly in curdling the cheese. The milk is stirred with chopsticks and quickly separates into curds and whey. The fresh curds have the consistency and taste of mozzarella, and when cooked, melt in a stringy way in the characteristic fashion of mozzarella. However, the Bai never eat the fresh curds, but always dry them first.

The warm curds are pulled out from the wok with the chopsticks and are manipulated with

the fingers for a while before being stretched over a bamboo frame. The frame consists of two parallel 2.5 metre-long bamboo poles fastened together about 10 centimetres apart. Several strips may be spread over the frame, and when full it is placed outside, usually on a covered porch, to allow the cheese to dry. The cheese is left for about twenty-four hours, and then is removed from the frame. The sheets are basically oblong in shape but taper at the ends to a curled up point where they had

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[5] Xuxia Keyouji

been wrapped around the bamboo poles. Two sheets are placed together, one on top of the other, in such a way that the ends of the lower sheet curl round the upper one, holding them together. Stacked in pairs, they are then taken to the market to be sold.

History and possible origins

Because making cheese is a highly unusual activity in China, we are particularly interested in its origins. We have examined all historical records available to us, and have sought help from local Bai historians, but the fact remains that cheese is seldom mentioned in written records. According to the Dengchuan Gazetteer,[6] *rushan* was already being made in the Ming Dynasty. In 1641 Ai Zixiu listed goods produced in Dengchuan: "felt hats, socks, blankets, bamboo arrows, butter, cheese, black tea, honey...". To be precise, it does not say '*rushan*' for 'cheese' but '*ruxian*', meaning 'milk thread or string'. The gazetteer also states that a family with four cows could produce 200 sheets of *ruxian* daily. This figure is commensurate with today's production levels.

A book on Chinese minority cuisine[7] recounts a legend describing the origin of *rushan*. At the time of the Nanzhao kingdom there was once a village headman called A Kuo. He raised a large number of dairy cows, and to look after them he employed long-term farmhands, whom he used to pay in milk. One day, one of these hands named Zhang Zhi poured some left over sour milk into a wok to heat it up. By mistake he added some fresh milk, and when he stirred it he found that the mixture quickly solidified. He scooped some out, moulded it with his hands, rolled it into thin sheets and left it to dry. After this, everyone else learned the technique.

This simple story would indicate that the Bai discovered cheese-making by accident, which is entirely possible. The fact is that these cheeses are extremely simple to make. There is therefore a strong chance that any people involved in dairy farming for long enough will find that they can extend the life of their milk by converting it into cheese. A cheese similar to *rubing* is found in South America, where it is called 'queso blanco'. A similar cheese known as 'paneer' is found in India. Thus one cannot rule out the possibility that the cheese-making process was independently discovered by the Bai themselves or by their ancestors. We do not wish to rule out, however, the possibility that they learned how to make cheese from another group. Buddhist monks could have passed on the skill, along with Mahayana Buddhism, when they arrived from India during the Tang dynasty, but the absence of historical records make this impossible to confirm. Perhaps more likely is the theory that the Bai learned how to make cheese from another Chinese group: the Tibetan, Mongolian and Sani peoples all make cheese, and all have had contact with the Bai.

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[6] Dengchuan Gazetteer, chapter 3
[7] *Zhongguo Shaoshu Minzu Tesecai* (Chinese Minority Delicacies) (1997) published by Guangxi Kexue Jishu Chubanshe.

Tibetan cheese

The Tibetans live in relatively close proximity to the Bai, and the two peoples have had centuries of contact: Tibetan traders come to the Bai Third Month Fair, bringing horses and medicinal herbs; Bai artisans have produced furniture and silverware for Tibetan rulers.[8] It is therefore possible that the Tibetans brought cheese with them to Dali. Tibetan cheese is quite different from Bai cheese, though: it tends to be extremely hard and is eaten raw. It is made from 'dara' (buttermilk), which is boiled for five minutes, then cooled to 20 degrees centigrade or less. It then separates into soft curds and a thin whey, which is drained off and fed to livestock. Sometimes a handful of curd is squeezed out from between the fingers, creating noodle-like shapes which are left to dry. Other times, melted butter and sugar are mixed into the curd, which is then formed into pretzel-like shapes and dried in the sun. The result is white, hard and sweet, and has the consistency of a peppermint. It is called 'chura kampo', which means dried hard cheese.[9]

There is a second type of cheese, 'chhurpi', which is even harder. It is made from solidified yoghurt, which is then cut into three-centimetre squares and strung on yak-hair necklaces. One of these yellowish brown pieces can last for at least two hours before one can finish eating it, and so it is suitable for chewing on lengthy journeys. One could therefore speculate that Tibetan traders brought some on their long treks down to Dali. The cheese differs from Bai cheese in several ways. The milk used is of course that of yaks,[10] and what is used for cheese-making is buttermilk—the milk left over after making butter. The cheese is allowed to dry out completely rather than being eaten fresh, as in *rubing*. Even *rushan* is only allowed to dry for twenty four hours and then should be eaten before it becomes too hard. Although *chhurpi* is sometimes boiled in soup to soften it a little, Tibetan cheese is generally consumed raw, not cooked. Because of these differences, it seems unlikely that the Tibetans taught the Bai how to make *rubing* and *rushan*, though they could have had some influence .

Mongolian cheese

The Mongolians are the other main minority group making some kind of cheese. Zhang Weiwen and Zeng Qingnan write, "Mongolian traditional food is divided into two types, white and red, each with its own special characteristics. White food is made from the milk of horses, cows, sheep and camels. Red food is made from the meat of cattle, sheep and other domestic livestock. According to Mongolian custom, white is a symbol of purity, good luck, and sublimity. For this reason, it is the most courteous way to greet a guest. When a guest arrives at a herdsman's home, the host lays out milk skin, cheese, milk cakes and milk tea."[11]

Mongolian cheese is normally made of cow's milk, though sometimes sheep's milk is used instead. A tablespoon of yoghurt is added to about five litres of fresh milk which may or

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[8] GOULLART, Peter (1955) *Forgotten Kingdom*. London: John Murray.
[9] RINJING DORJE (1985) *Food in Tibetan Life*. P. 96. London: Prospect Books.
[10] In Tibetan a female yak or *gyak* is called a *'bri* (pronounced *dri*).
[11] ZHANG WEIWEN, ZENG QINGNAN (1993) *In search of China's minorities*. Beijing: New World Press.

may not have been boiled. When it curdles the mixture is placed in a cheesecloth bag which is hung up to allow the whey to drain off. The bag is then placed on a table and a weighted board is put on top to press out more fluid. After about half a day, the cheese is removed from the bag and is stood up on end to allow it to dry for a few more hours. The outside will take on an off-white or light tan colour. If it is dark tan, then it has dried too long. Inside it is creamy white with a smooth solid consistency and a rather bland flavour. The finished cheese, called 'byslag' in Mongolian, is usually a square shape with sides about 20 centimetres long, and is about 5 centimetres thick. It is eaten raw, sometimes with sugar sprinkled on top, and is accompanied by bread and tea. While in the countryside the cheese is eaten quite often, in the city it is usually eaten on special occasions such as weddings or is offered to guests.[12]

The procedure used to make the cheese is quite similar to that employed by the Bai. The first real contact between the Mongolian people and the Bai would have been in the thirteenth century, when Kublai Khan conquered Yunnan, defeating the Dali kingdom in 1253. One could speculate therefore that the Bai art of cheese-making was introduced by the Mongols.

Sani cheese

The Sani people also make cheese. Although not officially recognised as an independent minority, the 90,000 Sani maintain a distinctive language and culture, and are often referred to as the Sani minority. Actually they are classified as a branch of the Yi, who live in Lunan, 70 kilometres south-east of Kunming in Yunnan province. A guidebook to Yunnan states, "Lunan is famous not only for the Stone Forest, but also for its dairy product—the 'rubing' (milk curd) of goat's milk. About five pounds of goat's milk can be made into one pound of 'rubing'. 'Rubing' of good quality is yellowish, giving no sour scent."[13] In the Sani language their cheese is named 'sheep tofu'. The Sani make their *rubing* in the same way as the Bai, except that they do not use a press; while the curds are wrapped in a handkerchief, they simply use their hands to squeeze out as much whey as they can. Instead of using a vegetable extract to curdle the milk, they use a little of the previous day's whey which has been left to sour. If this is not available, they can also use vinegar. The resulting cheese is also eaten fried, generally on special occasions. Much of the *rubing* on sale in Kunming comes from Lunan.

It is interesting that there are two minorities in Yunnan province who traditionally make the same cheese yet live five hundred kilometers apart, a considerable distance when one considers the lack of communications in the past. Although it is conceivable that they each discovered *rubing* independently, it would seem unlikely. Although many Yi are pastoralists, they do not make cheese or use any milk products. The Sani are an unusual Yi group in this regard, though even for them, raising goats is a peripheral activity: theirs is a wet rice economy.

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[12] Darjaa Bazarsad, personal communication.
[13] *A Tourist Guide to Yunnan.* P. 303. Yunnan Provincial Travel and Tourism Administration, 1991

Of even greater interest is the fact that "Sani origin myths say that their ancestors traveled east from Dali to settle in their current territory."[14] The Sani people say that this occurred at the time of the Nanzhao kingdom (734-902 AD). At that time, a Yi-led kingdom united several other kingdoms to create a state called Nanzhao which eventually was to conquer the whole of Yunnan and extend its power into Sichuan, Burma and northern Thailand. Nanzhao was succeeded by the Dali kingdom, led by the Bai, which only fell before the all-conquering Mongols in the thirteenth century. The Nanzhao-Dali political entity is the only state formed by minority peoples in South China that maintained its independence for five centuries. It could well be that as a result of the expansion of Nanzhao, some of the ancestors of the Sani people migrated from Dali to Lunan. However, the Sani also say that some of their ancestors traveled from Guizhou, much farther to the east. More research remains to be done into the history of the Sani people.

What would seem likely, though, is that *rubing* was already being made during the Nanzhao kingdom. When the Sani left, they took the skill with them, and the Bai, who remained in the Dali area, continued to make it too. Thus *rubing* may be corroborating evidence for the Sani's having come from Dali. The fact that the Sani do not make *rushan* may indicate that *rushan* was a later development. Indeed, it is a more complicated procedure and may have been a refinement of *rubing*, evolving gradually into the *rushan* of today. Alternatively, since *rushan* is made from cow's milk, it could be that Lunan territory is unsuitable for raising dairy cattle, and so the Sani were only able to continue making *rubing*. Of course, if *rubing* were already being made at the time of the Nanzhao kingdom, it rules out a Mongolian origin. The question remains: who made it first, the Bai or the Sani? There is not enough evidence to come down on one side or the other; it is even possible that a third party invented it and the Bai and Sani both adopted it during the Nanzhao era.

The exact makeup of the peoples of Nanzhao is still not entirely clear. Chinese sources speak of 'Baiman' (White Barbarians) and 'Heiman' (Black Barbarians). Michael Blackmore writes, "It seems not unlikely that the White Barbarians were the main inhabitants of Han-period Yunnan, and that during four or five centuries of Chinese dominance they lost their own language, coming to speak a garbled form of Chinese. The Black Barbarians would then have been later arrivals, between the Han and T'ang periods, probably bringing their pastoral economy with them from the Tibetan borderlands."[15] It is conceivable that they also brought a knowledge of cheese-making, possibly similar to Tibetan cheese, but at the very least this could mark the introduction of dairy farming. There in the rich pastures around Eryuan, a pastoral economy flourished, while in other areas, it was impractical. Put simply, the Black Barbarians would be the forerunners of the Yi, including the Sani, while the White Barbarians would be the ancestors of the Bai.

Conclusion

The Bai people have a long-standing tradition of making cheese, a custom that is little known to outsiders. The Sani people make the same kind of cheese, which would indicate a common origin, thus providing support for the theory that at least some of the Sani people originally came from Dali. Since contact with the Mongols only came later, the resemblance

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[14] SWAIN, Margaret Byrne (1995) "Pere Vial and the Gni-P'a". In HARREL, Stevan (ed.), *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*. P.162. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
[15] BLACKMORE, Michael "The Ethnological Problems connected with Nanchao"

with Mongolian cheese would therefore only be coincidental. It is more likely that there was a Tibetan influence which gave early pastoralists the impetus to begin making cheese, which then evolved into the *rubing* and *rushan* of today. We hope that this brief introduction may help to build up a fuller picture of cheese-making in China and particularly of its place in Bai culture.

La magia della moneta: il cauri

Andrea Semplici - giornalista free-lance; Ethnorêma

SUMMARY

In today's Africa, discovering what remains of one of the world's most ancient currencies, the *cowrie*, a shell of the Cypraea family. Coming from the Maldives, it followed the routes of the Arab merchants, crossing the Sahara as far as West Africa, where, for centuries, it was used not only as currency, but also in divination rites. A voyage through ancient and modern African history, viewed from the perspective of a shiny little shell.

La donna, un'anziana al *gran marché de Togo*, a Lomè, sta per chiudere il suo negozio-baracca. La precaria bancarella è ingombra di feticci, noci di cola, frammenti di ossa, *kohol* per gli occhi, frutti essiccati, tappini di birra, pietre sminuzzate, ciocche di crini di cavallo, denti di cane. Il sole, pallido sotto le nebbie dell'*harmattan*, vento del lontano Sahara, sta per svanire in tremolii di calore. Non è prudente fare tardi: la donna, per tornare alla sua capanna di fango, deve attraversare tutta la città. Ma trova il tempo per gli importuni *yovo*, per i due bianchi che sfiorano con le mani la ciotola dei cauri, la zucca ricolma di queste strane conchiglie bianco-porcellana, poggiata nella confusione delle merci di questa bottega africana dei miracoli. Nei suoni sincopati della lingua *ewè*, la donna spiega: "Le compro dai mercanti nigeriani. Sono antiche. Le hanno raccolte i loro padri nei fiumi. Le rivendo ai *féticheurs*, agli scultori, ai muratori, agli indovini, a chi cerca talismani". E la vecchia affonda le mani in quel mucchietto di conchiglie forate. Costano 10 *Cefa*, 10 franchi africani, un centesimo e mezzo di euro. Ne compriamo dieci: la donna le avvolge in carta di giornale. Adesso abbiamo anche noi i nostri amuleti da viaggio. Ne avremo bisogno per poter scoprire i sorprendenti segreti e la storia straordinaria dell'avventura di queste piccole conchigliette che hanno modellato, per secoli e secoli, mercati e abitudini, povertà e ricchezze, infinite architetture sociali di gran parte dell'Africa e di grandi regioni dell'Asia.

La terra, nelle regioni centrali del Benin, è rossa. Color del sangue. La polvere entra dappertutto e risucchia ogni colore. In uno spiazzo di Covè, villaggio remoto, smarrito nella *brousse*, decine di donne, decine di vedove, aspettano sotto una tettoia di foglie di palma. Sono appena uscite dalla tenda dove, per giorni, avevano rinchiuso il loro lutto. Hanno il capo rasato, indossano tuniche blu, in mano hanno anche loro ciotole di zucca. Sono piene di cauri. Hanno sacrificato capre e montoni. Le donne aspettano. In silenzio, con occhi muti. E il rumore dei grandi tamburi sacri, gli *asè*, sale dalle strade del villaggio. I musicisti arrivano danzando, saltando, correndo agli ordini di due uomini che battono il tempo con urla agitando, nell'aria, un frustino a coda di cavallo. Suoni ossessivi, ritmati, profondi. Fanno tremare la terra. Le donne si alzano in fila indiana, fendono la folla degli spettatori,

alzano la mano verso i musicisti e gettano cauri ai piedi dei tamburi. Porgono le conchiglie ai suonatori, si inchinano, sfiorandoli, davanti a loro. Il tempo del lutto è finito. Ogni cinque anni questa festa libera le donne dal loro dolore, dalla loro solitudine: adesso potranno risposarsi, inventarsi, se possibile, una nuova vita. Riconoscenti, le vedove pagano i musicisti, venuti da lontano, con i cauri che spariscono, con gesti rapidi, nei fazzoletti degli uomini. I tamburi verrano percossi per ore e ore, fino allo sfinimento, fino a quando la pelle non verrà sfondata dai colpi violenti degli uomini che, stremati, solo allora si affloscerano nella terra rossa. Solo allora conteranno i cauri della loro povera ricchezza. Le donne avranno già ripreso il cammino delle loro capanne.

Alì Yacobo è giovane e svelto come una gazzella. Ha 21 anni, musulmano, mercante *hausa*, etnia di commercianti di tutta l'Africa Occidentale. Vive a Wa, estremo Nord del Ghana. Nel cortile della sua casa, bambini e vecchi contano una piccola montagna di cauri. Fanno mucchietti, selezionano le conchiglie secondo la grandezza. Alì ha occhi furbi: "Vengono emissari del re degli Ashanti, vengono mercanti dal Ciad e dal Togo. Ma ho clienti fedeli perfino negli Stati Uniti e a Hong Kong. Vogliono i cauri. Sono gli ultimi. Non se ne trovano più". Devo crederti, Alì, mercante di pelli e cauri? I ragazzini non smettono un minuto di dividere le conchiglie. "Le compro nei villaggi del *bush*, vado nelle case, le pago care, 500 *cedis*. Ma li rivendo a 800, a 1000". E bravo Alì: le conchigliette, in questo avamposto di Sahel, sono molto più care che a Lomè, sulle sponde dell'oceano. A Wa, invece, valgono più di 15 centesimi di euro l'una. A proposito: il *cedi* è la moneta del Ghana, unico paese anglofono di questo parte dell'Africa, e sapete cosa significa in lingua tradizionale? Cauri, naturalmente. E, naturalmente, sulla moneta esagonale da 200 *cedis* è impressa una lucente conchiglia bombata.
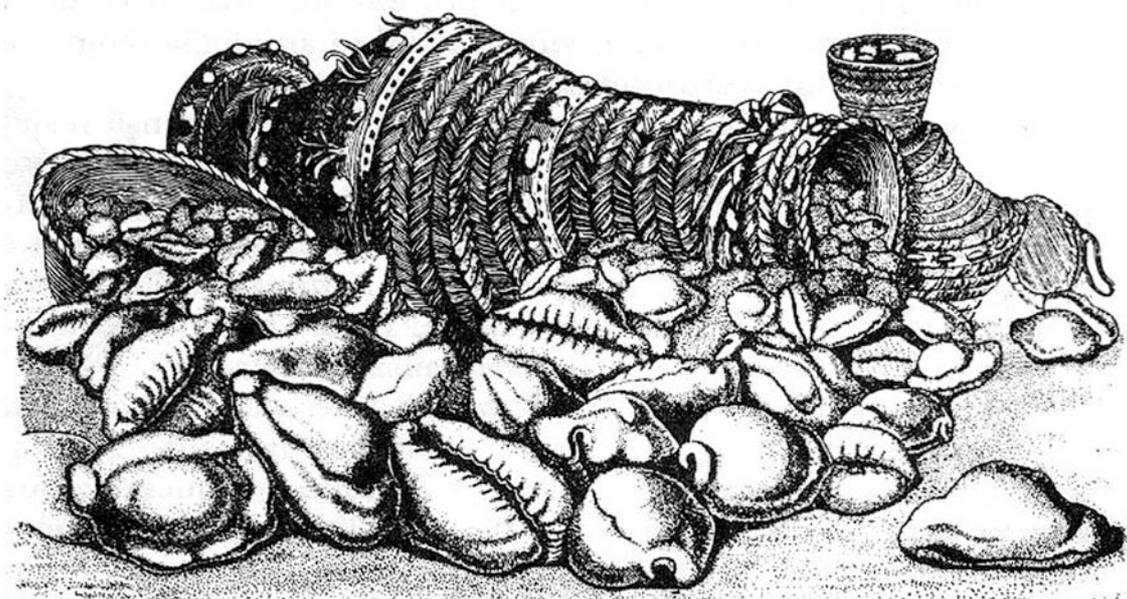
Nei mercati remoti e spossati dei villaggi *Lobi*, sempre nel Nord del Ghana, i vecchi comprano noci di cola da masticare, rasoi usati, pezzetti di zucchero, frammenti di sale, pizzichi di tabacco con i cauri. I venditori, riottosi, accettano ancora questo strano denaro. Del resto, nella lingua comune di queste regioni, i cauri si chiamano *libipiela*, 'white money', moneta bianca.

A Boga, introvabile villaggio *Lobi*, perso in una geografia di baobab, il guaritore Bote Da,

'colui che libera dai problemi', è nascosto in un antro pestilenziale. Spiriti intagliati nel legno lo assistono, lo sorvegliano e controllano i suoi gesti. Lui getta mucchietti di cauri nella polvere, porta un dito alla bocca, strizza gli occhi, sfiora le conchiglie e ci racconta del nostro futuro. Le statue di legno hanno occhi di cauri. Ha occhi di cauri anche il serpente inciso sulle pareti delle splendide case decorate dei *kanesa* in Ghana. A Ouidah, Costa degli Schiavi, antico porto negriero del regno del Dahomey, un *fa*, spirito della divinazione, vecchio e lercio, getterà sedici cauri sul piatto divinatorio del *vodoun* per interpretare la linea Gbé-Yekou, il 'grande cammino della vita'. Le conchiglie cadute con l'apertura verso l'alto danno un tratto, segno maschile. Se cadono verso il basso, sono due tratti, simbolo femminile: solo il vecchio sa interpretare la combinazione dei segni, solo il vecchio sa leggere il destino nelle conchiglie. A Ketou, regno tradizionale degli Yoruba, popolo a cavallo della frontiera fra Benin e Nigeria, il re, rimbambito e maestoso, devastato e imponente, *sa majesté* Adiro Adétoutou, ci affiderà al suo oracolo personale, l'astuto Pierre Lailo. L'indovino reale sacrificherà un pollo, ne verserà il sangue su grumi di statue orrende, sputacchierà sui feticci, verserà gocce di gin per terra, omaggerà gli antenati spiegazzando pagine del Corano e toccando il disegno della croce prima di lanciare per aria i sedici cauri: e, dopo un lungo silenzio, ci dirà di altri passaggi, a noi incomprensibili, del nostro futuro. Lailo venera i suoi cauri: la sua camicia è decorata con mille file di queste conchiglie che un tempo dovevano riflettere come la madreperla.

E ora? Ora che abbiamo visto, parlato, fotografato? Gettiamo via i libri delle nostre letture sui cauri? Dimentichiamo le stupefacenti pagine di economisti, storici e antropologi sul più straordinario strumento di mercato delle antichità africane? Già, perché sui cauri si è davvero costruita l'economia e la società dell'Africa. Mercanti e indovini, ciarlatani e poveracci, vedove e venditrici ai mercati sono, oggi, solo l'ultima tappa di un viaggio cominciato più di mille anni fa sulle spiagge, bianche come la luna, delle isole Maldive. Per mille e più anni queste conchiglie bellissime, cresciute nella nicchia ecologica di lontani mari caldi, sono state la moneta, per eccellenza, dell'Africa. La *Cypraea moneta*, delicata, lattea, elegante, quasi un frammento di porcellana, era la ricchezza dei regni grandiosi del Mali, del

Dahomey, della Costa degli Schiavi, della Nigeria. Per secoli e secoli i forzieri delle casse reali, le casseforti di metallo dei grandi mercanti transahariani sono state avide di questa conchiglia tropicale preziosa più dell'oro. Che, davvero, poteva essere trovata e raccolta solo fra le onde che accerchiano gli atolli delle Maldive, isole che nessuno conosceva. Arrivarono con le navi arabe sulle coste del mar Rosso, i cauri erano zavorra per le loro stive vuote, venivano cedute a carovanieri dalla pelle secca come un osso e gli occhi da faina, caracollavano per mesi e mesi sulle dune del Sahara in groppa a lenti dromedari e, infine, erano vendute ai neri dei mercati e delle città dai palazzi di fango che sorgevano lungo le sponde del Niger: ventimila chilometri di viaggio, distanza immensa, inimmaginabile, tale da mettere al riparo dall'inflazione e dalla circolazione eccessiva di moneta. I cauri erano il segno della ricchezza e della gloria negli immensi territori che correvano dal rigoglio tropicale delle coste oceaniche del Golfo di Guinea fino alle sabbie stremate delle savane saheliche. Nelle grandi feste di ogni reame dell'Africa Occidentale,

nella saga cruenta dei sacrifici annuali, ogni sovrano regalava cauri ai poveri. Gli stregoni e i *griot*, gli indovini e i cantastorie "dai capelli rasati e il torace nudo" avevano braccialetti di cauri attorno alle caviglie e ai polsi: simbolo di potere e potenza. L'esploratore Mungo Park, alla fine del XVIII° secolo, affittò una capanna nel villaggio di Soubou, lungo le anse del fiume Niger, per 200 cauri al mese. Il re di Segù, città meravigliosa, porto del più grande fiume dell'Africa Occidentale, fu generoso con il primo viaggiatore bianco che osò avvicinarsi alle mura del sua reggia: non permise a Mungo di entrare, ma gli donò 500 cauri per poter comprare cibo e animali al mercato. Il capitano francese Binger, nel 1889, si fece radere la barba a Bobo nell'attuale Burkina-Faso: pagò dieci cauri. Prezzo da bianchi. Un teologo musulmano, a Timbuctu, in Mali, negli stessi anni, si faceva pagare le lezioni coraniche sette cauri a settimana da ogni allievo. Nei giorni di arsura e festa, i 'furbi', ancora a Segù, vendevano una zucca d'acqua per la somma di un cauri. I vassalli del grande imperatore dei Moro-Naba, signore di Ouagadougou, versavano, ogni anno, un tributo di un milione di cauri. Ma fin dal 1300, la casa mercantile della famiglia di Marco Polo acquistava cauri dai commercianti che tornavano dall'Oriente e, da Venezia, li rispediva in Niger per comprare polvere d'oro. Il grande viaggiatore arabo Ibn Battuta compilò, in quegli stessi anni, meticolosi rapporti sul tasso di cambio (stabile per secoli e secoli) fra oro e cauri: occorrevano 1150 cauri per un dinaro d'oro. Due secoli più tardi, il valore dei cauri si è impennato: ne bastavano 400 per avere un ducato. Segno della forza dell'economia africana. Roba da far impazzire i cambisti di questa antica Wall Street che teneva le sue sedute all'ombra dei *caïlcédrat* o delle acacie spinose: nel corso del 1600, uno schiavo, sui mercati negrieri della Costa d'Oro, costava 55 libbre di cauri. Caro: ma era merce pregiata. Il contabile della nave negriera Dahomet, dal canto suo e con pignoleria, annotava sul libro di bordo che per comprare una donna, nei porti negrieri del Golfo di Guinea, occorrevano, oltre a tre barili di acquavite, due pezzi di stoffa e otto scampoli di cotone bianco, anche 123 libbre di cauri. E l'oscuro ragionere ottocentesco è preciso come un economo di curia: 41 libbre è il peso di 16mila cauri. Moltiplicati per tre facevano 48mila cauri. Mica poco: a Sokoto, nella Nigeria profonda, nel 1855, potevi comprare un ragazzo con appena 30mila cauri. Nel Bornou ti procuravi uno schiavo con meno di 20mila cauri. Prezzi, comunque, da capogiro: oggi fra i Lobi del Ghana e del Burkina-Faso il prezzo della sposa ancora vergine è calcolato in 10mila cauri. Ma la somma diventa impagabile se qualcuno pretende, dal marito, una donna già sposata: potrà averla, ma dovrà sborsare ben 50mila cauri.

Negli anni coloniali, i cauri avevano un tasso di scambio fisso con le monete dei nuovi padroni: ne occorrevano duemila per cinque franchi nell'Africa francese nel 1897, 800 per una rupia nell'Uganda inglese del 1901. Ci vollero decreti ed eserciti quando inglesi e francesi decisero di proibire l'importazioni di cauri. I contadini della regione del fiume Volta si ribellarono con durezza quando i francesi, nel 1909, non accettarono più i cauri come moneta per pagare le tasse. Bruce Chatwin racconta che Francisco De Souza, vicerè di Ouidah, il più celebre fra i negrieri della Costa degli Schiavi, andò in malora quando gli Stati Uniti misero

> **cauri** [kawri] dall'urdu *kaurī*. Conchiglia di vari molluschi del genere Ciprea e Monetaria.

fuori legge i cauri. Ancora oggi, nella casa di famiglia dei de Souza, a un passo dalla spiaggia dalla quale salpavano le navi negriere, l'ultimo discendente dello spietato brasiliano, Norberto Prosper de Souza, *'instituteur en retraite'*, rimpiange quella ricchezza perduta.

Africa dei misteri e della magia. Questo è il regno del *vodoun*, qui hanno potere feticci e natura, antenati e maschere. I *revenant* hanno il volto coperto da mosaici di cauri: sono gli *Egungun*, 'coloro che ritornano', maschere *yoruba* e società segreta, spiriti ancestrali che, quando appaiono correndo, seminano il panico fra la folla. Dietro la maschera, ci spiegano,

non vi è nessun essere vivente: solo il fantasma degli antenati. Qui i simboli sono il mondo, sono la vita. Qui "i morti sono più vivi dei vivi". Nessuno, qui, ha mai sentito parlare delle Maldive. Nessuno crederà mai al viaggio, folle e interminabile, fra oceani e deserti, di quelle conchiglie lungo le piste dell'antichità. Alì Yacobo, a Wa, ci spiegherà con convinzione: "Mio padre gettava una pelle di vacca nelle acque del Volta. Le conchiglie vi si aggrappavano e lui le raccoglieva. Nascevano sulla schiena dei coccodrilli". E ora? "Ora sono finite. Non ce ne sono più nel fiume. Io non ne ho mai viste. Noi vendiamo le riserve di mio nonno e di mio padre". A Grand Popo, spiaggia del Benin, ci avrebbero raccontate storie più macabre: "Si affogava uno schiavo nell'oceano. Poi si ritirava il corpo: era cosparso di cauri. Era il sacrificio che volevano gli dei". Oppure fu Agwa-Gede, rivale del primo re del Dahomey, Hwegbadja, a creare i cauri? Agwa era un sovrano locale e mal accettava il dominio di un guerriero venuto da altre foreste. Per dimostrare il suo potere chiamò a raccolta il suo popolo e urlò forte: "Se questa terra appartiene davvero a mio padre, se strappo una pianta d'erba, vedrò dei cauri". Lo fece e appesa alle radici vi erano davvero dei cauri: "Ora le gente trovava cibo da mangiare e non barattava più i beni. Ora c'era la moneta". Ancor oggi i palazzi sbrindellati delle banche centrali del Benin e del Mali, a Cotonou e a Bamako, hanno architetture intessute di cauri giganti. Chi ha ragione nel narrare l'epopea e il successo dei cauri? Gli storici seriosi delle università o i cantastorie delle leggende africane?

E chi mai ha detto che *l'Afrique des tam-tam est morte et interrée*? Si sbaglia, si sbaglia di grosso. Nella stagione secca, ogni notte, i tamburi del *vodoun* e delle maschere rullano nella savana, fra le capanne dei villaggi, come nel caos delle città africane asfissiate da nuvole di smog nerastro. Gli spiriti degli antenati vigilano ancora su di noi: a Ouagadougou, dolcissima e fantastica capitale del Burkina-Faso, nelle ultime ore della mia Africa, cercavo di respirarne più polvere possibile davanti al cancello dell'albergo. Si avvicina un ragazzino, dagli occhi come lucciole, e non chiede nulla. Sta lì, in piedi sulla sua bicicletta, accanto a me. Poi, con un gesto della testa e un sorriso, indica il suo braccio: ha un braccialetto di cauri annodato al polso. Ne stacca uno e me lo porge. Io mi perdo nello stupore. Alzo lo sguardo sul ragazzo, ma lui sta già pedalando: svanito, come un'ombra gentile, nella bruma lattiginosa della notte di Ouagadougou, smarrito fra centinaia di *mobylettes*, fra folle di uomini in cammino e di matrone solenni avvolte nei loro pagne colorati come coralli. Quella conchiglia lucente, forata, color del latte, moneta antica, è qui, davanti a me, poggiata sul video del computer mentre scrivo questo articolo.

The Pragmatics of the X+verb Structure in the Hebrew of Genesis:

The Linguistic Functions and Associated Effects and Meanings of Intra-clausal Fronted Constituents[1]

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SOMMARIO

Il carattere pragmaticamente marcato degli ordini diversi da VSO in ebraico biblico viene esaminato sulla base della lingua del libro della Genesi. L'ipotesi che l'ebraico biblico abbia un ordine VSO basico, cioè neutro dal punto di vista pragmatico, viene sostenuta facendo riferimento a diversi criteri. Contestualmente viene ribadita l'importanza di studiare l'ebraico biblico tenendo conto di principi di carattere *pragmatico* e dell'*analisi del discorso*. L'anteposizione dei costituenti viene spiegata alla luce di due dimensioni pragmatiche: la *struttura informativa*, e la *continuità* (o *discontinuità*) *della comunicazione* o *del discorso*. La prima di queste dimensioni viene utilizzata per spiegare diversi tipi di anteposizione a carattere *focale*, la seconda per diversi tipi di anteposizione a carattere *non focale*, che viene studiata in maniera particolarmente circostanziata. Tra gli aspetti di quest'ultima che vengono presi in esame vi sono:
- il carattere pragmaticamente marcato del costituente anteposto riguarda solo questo, o la frase nel suo complesso?
- l'associazione tra la forma *wayyiqtol* e la sequenzialità e, dall'altro lato, tra la forma *X+qatal* e la mancanza di sequenzialità;
- diversi tipi di mancanza di sequenzialità;
- i significati e gli effetti diversi ma, a volte, in parte coincidenti che vengono associati alla struttura *x+verbo*.

Aaron Hornkohl

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Introduction

Purpose

This MA thesis deals with the Biblical Hebrew (henceforth BH) construction that is here termed the *X+verb* structure. Against the neutral backdrop of a basic VSO word order[2] in the BH verbal clause, those clauses having preposed constituents must be considered marked constructions. Arguments for basic (which is to say, pragmatically neutral) VSO word order in Biblical Hebrew constitute the subject matter of Section 1. As defined in this paper, the fronted *X* element may consist of any intra-clausal verbal argument (e.g., subject, direct object, indirect object, adverbial of manner, time, place, *et cetera*).[3] Further, the verb in question must be either a *qatal* or *yiqtol* form.[4] Finally, as defined here, the *X+verb* structure may be either syndetic or asyndetic (i.e. may appear either with or without a particle explicitly linking it to the preceding clause[5]).

Students of BH have recognized and commented upon the particular characteristics of the *X+verb* structure since at least as early as the Middle Ages (note, e.g., the comments of Rashi (1040-1105 CE) on אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה אֶת-יָדַע וְהָאָדָם in Gen 4.1; see below). The traditional grammars typically list certain meanings and effects associated with the *X+verb* structure (e.g., emphasis, circumstantial clause/parenthesis, the pluperfect tense). More recent scholarship has sought to establish the linguistic basis (or bases) for these meanings and effects, along

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[2] The term 'word order' is used in deference to the accepted norm in linguistic articles. It would, of course, be more accurate to speak of 'constituent order'.

[3] Thus, extra-clausal constituents that occur before the clause (a phenomenon known variously as *casus pendens*, *nominative absolute*, *extraposition*, *Y-movement*, *left-dislocation*, and *theme*) are excluded from the present study. It is important to note, however, that it is only due to limits of space that such clauses are excluded from the present discussion. Despite important pragmatic and generative differences, there are striking functional similarities between intra-clausal frontings and extra-clausal constituents occurring before the clause, both in BH and cross-linguistically. It is worth briefly mentioning those differences and similarities here. Pragmatically, extra-clausal constituents are rarely if ever *focal*, whereas this is common for intra-clausal fronted constituents. Generatively, there is a marked difference between how the two elements relate to the rest of the clause. Dik (1981:127-44) discusses the distinction between what he terms *topic* (i.e. a non-focal intra-clausal fronted element) and *theme* (i.e. an extra-clausal element occurring before the clause), the main point being that the former should be regarded as integral to the utterance, while the latter cannot be regarded as being part of the underlying predication. *Topics* and *themes* (to adopt, for the moment, Dik's terminology) in BH are functionally similar, however, in that both can specially mark the entity about which an assertion is made or more specifically define the domain in which a given assertion holds true. This similarity extends to the *theme* created by the insertion of a resumptive pronoun. See Khan (1988) for a discussion of the function and various uses of extra-clausal constituents that occur before the clause. See Buth (1999) for an insightful discussion of *themes* created by the insertion of a resumptive pronoun in the BH verbless clause. It is worth noting that, despite the exclusion of such clauses from the present study, it is predicted that the theories proposed herein could be used effectively to explain them.

[4] In other words, this paper does not examine verbless (e.g., nominal and participial) clauses, imperatival clauses (though *yiqtol* forms used as negative injunctions are included in the study), or conditional clauses. It is important to emphasize, however, that the decision to exclude such clause-types derives from concerns of space, not from the inadequacy of the theories proposed herein to account for similar word order phenomena in such clause-types. The pragmatics of word order variation in the verbless (i.e. nominal and participial) clause has already been capably dealt with by Buth (1999).

[5] As a definition for *verbal clause*, this thesis basically follows Moshavi (2000:72): "We define the *verbal* clause as a syntactic unit containing a verbal form, e.g., קָם 'He arose.'"

with other effects associated with the structure. Many recent studies have been influenced by advances in modern linguistics, particularly in the areas of *pragmatics* and *discourse analysis* (or *textlinguistics*). Both fields are briefly introduced in Section 2, where their importance in understanding the *X+verb* structure in BH is also emphasized.

This paper unabashedly and gratefully builds on the foundation laid in previous scholarship, both that which concerns BH specifically and that of more general linguistic scope. Each study, whether the theories proposed therein are accepted here or not, has contributed to the defining of the theories proposed in this paper, the principle goal of which is to ascribe the various meanings and effects associated with the *X+verb* structure to recognized cross-linguistic phenomena. This goal requires, among other things, a critical assessment of some of the theories proposed by discourse analysts in relation to BH. It is also important to devote some space to certain, more traditional syntactic questions, such as, for example, the BH verbal system in general and the so-called *waw*-conversive forms more specifically. Also, an effort has been made to illustrate theoretical concepts with a large number of examples. Some of the essential points made in this thesis are summarized here:

(1) The rules of science demand that a given theory be as simple and general as possible. In light of this demand, an attempt is made here to unify the explanations for the various phenomena associated with the fronting of a constituent in the BH verbal clause. It is for this reason that the general term *X+verb structure* is employed, a construction including all types of fronted verbal arguments (i.e. not just the subject and/or object), both the *qatal* and *yiqtol* forms, and both syndetic and asyndetic clauses.

(2) The goal of providing a unified theory to account for the variety of meanings and effects associated with the *X+verb* structure should not, however, lead to an analysis in which distinct factors and processes are indiscriminately lumped together. In this work, two separate (though not entirely unrelated) pragmatic dimensions are considered with regard to their effects on word order. The first dimension, typically referred to by researches as *information structure*, concerns the cognitive status of the information expressed in an utterance and the ways in which that information is represented at the surface-level. Of particular interest is the clausal constituent that the writer/speaker[6] marks by fronting as containing the information which he or she considers most important or salient in the given context. This type of marked

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[6] A note on the use of the term 'speaker' in relation to direct speech in Genesis: the extent to which the representation of direct speech in the Bible accurately reflects (one of) the spoken idiom(s) of the day remains unclear. Segal (1927:11) held that BH was strictly a literary language, while the spoken Hebrew of the day more closely resembled Mishnaic Hebrew. See Rendsburg (1990:1-33) for an introductory discussion and relevant bibliography. See also Miller (1996:10-13). Of particular interest are specific features of BH; for example, was the *waw*-conversive employed in the common speech of the Biblical period or was it strictly literary? Inscriptional material may be of some use in answering this question, as there are many epigraphic sources that cannot properly be characterized as 'literary'. Even here, however, the data are open to opposing interpretations. Interestingly, Blau (1977a:24) and Joüon-Muraoka (1996:§111a, n. 3) view the apparent *weqatal* form ושלחתי in Arad letter 16:3-5 as an unconverted *we+qatal* form (cf. Buth 2003:353), in spite of the former's opinion that the spoken language of the Biblical period employed the *waw*-conversive (1977a:23). Note also וצוך חנניהו in Arad 3:2-3, which is also taken as an unconverted form (Aharoni 1981:17; Ahituv 1992:58; see also Smith 1991:20). However, converted *weqatal* forms do appear among the Arad letters. Garr (1985:180) (see also Smith 1991:20) notes ושלחתם (Arad 24:13; Aharoni 1981:46; Pardee 1982:59; Ahituv 1992:78; see also Smith 1991:20) and והבקידם (Arad 24:14-15; Aharoni 1981:46; Pardee 1982:59; Ahituv 1992:78; see also Smith 1991:20). There are still many questions regarding the differences between the literary and spoken versions of ancient Hebrew. Note, in a related vein, the controversy among linguists over the linguistic value of written texts, as opposed to spoken 'texts', as summarized by Bodine (1987:42-4). For the sake of simplicity, the term 'writer/speaker' is employed here.

constituent is here termed *focus*. Focal frontings are discussed in detail in Section 3. The second pragmatic dimension, *discourse* or *communicative continuity*, relates specifically to the flow of the information expressed in a series of utterances and especially to reasons for interrupting that flow. Thus, the discussion in Section 4 centers on disruptions of *discourse* or *communicative continuity*. Also discussed in relation to *continuity* and *discontinuity* are several types of fronted elements that have traditionally been labeled *topic*. Finally, Section 4 includes a discussion on the link between *discourse continuity* and *sequentiality*.

(3) One of the most vexing issues in past studies of the *X+verb* structure in BH has been the sometimes uncritical application of linguistic concepts and terminology to the lingual data of the Bible, a practice which has all too often led to unnatural, theory-driven readings. Conceptual and terminological confusion plague the study of pragmatics and discourse analysis alike. Scholars often use a single term (e.g., *topic*) to refer to a multitude of phenomena or, *vice versa*, use a multitude of terms (e.g., *topic*, *basis*, *topicalized constituent*, *pseudo-topic*, *contextualizing constituent*) to refer to a single phenomenon. In every new study of the relevant issues the analyst must confront the decision of whether to redefine existing terminology, to develop new terminology, or to employ clumsy circumlocutions instead of shorter, but perhaps poorly understood, technical jargon. In this paper, the issue is sidestepped to some extent, the main distinction being made between *focal frontings* and *non-focal frontings*. Both functional categories are then sub-divided into their more specific effects. It is hoped that the terminology utilized in the taxonomy of functions and effects presented here will serve to clarify what has become something of a terminological nightmare.

(4) The analysis of some of the individual examples from BH in this thesis emphasizes the fact that a given non-focal *X+verb* structure can conceivably achieve more than one desired effect in a single clause. For example, an *X+qatal* structure may signal the beginning of a literary unit (episode or paragraph), a pluperfect flashback, and non-story-line, background information at the same time. The purpose of certain non-focal *X+verb* structures has been too narrowly defined in some past treatments. Here it is argued that the overall pragmatic *discontinuity* function of the non-focal *X+verb* structure is amenable to a variety of effects and meanings, even within the same clause (see Section 4). Specific effects and meanings are categorized according to whether the fronted element is itself marked or marks the entire clause and according to whether the effect derives from the natural (though indirect) association between *non-sequentiality* and *discourse discontinuity* or directly from *discourse discontinuity*.

(5) Finally, this paper attempts to describe the functions and effects of the *X+verb* construction without assuming that writers/speakers were obligated to use it. It is assumed here that writers/speakers of BH generally and unconsciously adhered to the pragmatic norms of their language, but that these pragmatic norms allowed for a certain amount of freedom to alternate between marked and unmarked constructions.

The Corpus

The statistical analysis regarding basic word order concentrates only on the book of Genesis (excluding chapter 49). Most, but not all, of the examples which follow also come from this

book. This being the case, all citations refer to Genesis unless otherwise stated. The advantages of choosing Genesis involve its length, the variety discourse-types it encompasses (including narrative and direct speech), and the number of previous studies of Genesis with which it was possible to interact. One disadvantage of working with the book of Genesis is the paucity of legal, hortatory, wisdom, and prophetic materials.

Limitations of the Study

Given the linguistically oriented research aims of this work, it has been necessary to relate to the book of Genesis in its present form. In other words, virtually no attempt has been made to relate to the literary sources from which the book of Genesis may have been composed. This should not be taken as an argument against the existence of such sources, but rather as the natural consequence of focusing on the Massoretic text as a linguistic artifact. Regarding those sections of text that are clearly composite in nature, it is assumed here (a) that the language of both original authors and subsequent editors was governed, at least to some extent, by the pragmatic principles discussed below and (b) that subsequent editors exercised enough freedom to compose a literary product whose language still reflected, despite reshaping, the pragmatic principles discussed below. It should also be noted that limitations of space preclude detailed discussion of each verse, including evaluation of existing translations, interpretations, and commentaries, and suggestions on exegesis and renderings. Regarding examples, the method adopted in this study provides multiple examples of a given phenomenon, even where some of the examples may be questionable, rather than only a few choice passages. It is hoped, however, that the present study may serve as a small part of a foundation for future work in these areas. Finally, is must be emphasized that the goal of this paper is not to propose a system that unambiguously defines the function, effect, and meaning of every fronted element dealt with here, but is rather to erect a framework within which reasonable discussion can take place. More important than the specific categorization of the individual examples listed are the general parameters suggested herein.

Section 1: Basic Word Order in BH

Linguistic Typology and BH

Linguists are generally agreed that most languages have a basic syntactic word order (Greenberg 1966:76; Siewierska 1988:1; Payne 1992a:1; Mithun 1992:58-9[7]). This basic order is typically discussed in terms of the relative positions of the syntactic subject, verb, and object.[8] The analyses presented in the present work rest on the assumption that the basic, unmarked relative word order of subject, verb, and object in the BH verbal clause is VSO.[9] Most BH grammars assume such a word order,[10] as do a number of recent studies.[11] However, there have been a handful of scholars over the years who have questioned this view. For example, in his influential grammar, Joüon (1923:§155k) wrote "L'ordre des mots dans la proposition verbale … est normalement: Sujet – Verbe." Greenberg (1965:§27.4) also sees SV word order as dominant, noting that order of subject and verb is flexible outside the *waw*-conversive clause, but that "normally the order is subject – verb." In a more recent

[7] Marianne Mithun's article, often cited as the opposing view in discussions of basic syntactic word order, in no way contradicts the idea that BH has a basic syntactic word order. She deals with several American Indian languages which seem to differ from languages with syntactically based word orders at some basic, typological level. In these languages: all word orders seem to reflect pragmatic considerations (such as 'newsworthiness'), pragmatic reordering of constituents is not highly marked, and the *theme-rheme* (i.e. *given-new*) informational order which so frequently results from pragmatic reordering in syntactically based languages is virtually reversed. Mithun does not, however, argue against the basic validity of syntactic word order typologies – "Pragmatically based languages do not provide strong evidence against most word order typologies" (59) – but rather proposes an additional, pragmatically-based typology which simply does not apply to BH.

[8] Note, however, that several linguists place more emphasis on the relative positions of verb and object (see, e.g., Lehman 1973, as cited in Givón 1977:182). Cf. Givón (*ibid.*). With regard to BH, there is no controversy regarding the basic (i.e. pragmatically neutral) relative order of verb and object. Sentences in which the object precedes the verb are clearly marked. For as Holmstedt (2002:127, n. 1) notes, "BH is unquestionably a head-complement (i.e., VO) language. The crux in BH studies is the placement of the subject and the verb with regard to each other."

[9] It is necessary to speak of "relative" word order, because, on the one hand, many verbs do not have an overt subject and, on the other, many verbs take no object. With specific regard to the pragmatically neutral position of the object, the VSO order only applies to objects expressed as full nominal clauses. For pronominal objects, the dominant word order is different. This difference can be explained pragmatically. There exists a 'slot' immediately following the verb (and before the subject, if one is overtly expressed) that is reserved for highly presupposed information. This slot is often filled by a preposition (or by the direct object marker אֵת) with attached pronominal suffix or by some other anaphoric deictic marker like שָׁם (e.g., Gen 1:17 וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים, where אֹתָם refers to the sun, moon, and stars, highly presupposed information in the context, i.e. items mentioned in the immediately preceding verse). The difference in placement between nominal and pronominal objects is thus clearly explicable in terms of pragmatics. See van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze (1999:341) and Buth (2003:109). Givón (1977:190) links this phenomenon to "the general pragmatic principle that more topical old-information goes to the left [i.e. towards the head of the clause: AH]." Note also that the *Language Independent Preferred Order of Constituents* (or *LIPOC*) proposed by Dik (1981:191) predicts this very order: "If the position of a pronominal Obj is different from the position of a nominal Obj, then the former position will come before the latter in the structure of the clause." I am indebted to Dr. Randall Buth for this last reference.

[10] GKC (1910:§142f), Ewald (1879:§306a-b), Müller (1882:§130), Lambdin (1971:§45), Kutscher (1982:§67), Kelley (1992:87), Seow (1995:151), Joüon-Muraoka (1996:§155k), van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze (1999:336-50).

[11] Givón (1983:28), Muraoka (1985:29-32), Jongeling (1991:106), Bandstra (1992:115), Buth (1995:80-3), Longacre (1995:331), Moshavi (2000:1, 84-88).

article, Gross (1999:30, n. 46) criticizes Muraoka's revision of Joüon's *Grammaire*, arguing that the former wrongly corrected the latter's statement on basic word order from SV to VS. Likewise, DeCaen (1999:118, n. 22) delivers a harshly-worded attack on the validity of argumentation for basic VS word order in BH. Finally, in what is perhaps the fullest treatment to date of basic word order in BH, Robert Holmstedt devotes half a chapter of his doctoral dissertation to a critique of basic VS word order and to the support of basic SV word order.[12] Relating to several recent word-order studies on BH[13] he expresses surprise "that the presentation in each of these works focuses on discourse issues without supporting their assumption that BH is a Verb-Subject (VS) language. Yet, it is safe to assume that these authors would agree that an adequate understanding of 'basic word order' is necessary before addressing the pragmatic or discourse issues" (2002:127-8).[14] Holmstedt is correct about the importance of basic word order. While it may difficult to *prove* basic word order in BH, any discussion of the function of pragmatically marked word order should at the very least rest on a reasonably well-founded assumption of what constitutes unmarked word order. It is appropriate, then, to dedicate some space to the justification of the view adopted in this study, namely that the BH verbal clause does indeed exhibit a basic VS word order.[15]

One fundamental challenge in such an undertaking is that there exists no one accepted methodology for defining a given language's typologically basic word order. However, some of the most frequently used arguments rely on the following criteria: *basic sentence type*, *textual frequency*, *typological universals*, *descriptive simplicity*, and *pragmatic neutrality*. It is admitted at the outset that none of these criteria is sufficient in and of itself to furnish incontrovertible proof of basic word order, particularly in a language where the data may be given to multiple explanations. As Holmstedt (2002:130-2) notes, the arguments are best considered collectively. Furthermore, while some may question Mithun's conclusion, namely that there exist languages with no basic typological word order, her arguments, if nothing else, make it clear that there are languages that simply defy classification in terms of the usual arguments. As will be seen, however, BH should not be considered one of these 'typologically marginal' languages.

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[12] Van Wolde (1997) does not state what she considers to be the basic word order in BH. However, she does speak of the verb being "fronted" in the *wayyiqtol* construction. See also Schlesinger (1953) as cited by Muraoka (1985:29, n. 66).

[13] Jongeling (1991), van der Merwe (1991), Rosenbaum (1997), Goldfajn (1998), Heimerdinger (1999), and Moshavi (2000).

[14] Contrary to the claim made by Holmstedt, however, Jongeling (1991:106; see below), Rosenbaum (1997:217-224), and Moshavi (2000:87-8; see below) do indeed provide justification for the basic VS view adopted in their studies.

[15] It is worth noting that some scholars cannot be properly numbered with either camp. For example, the view represented by Niccacci (1991) is simply incompatible with a discussion of basic word order in the verbal clause, because he classifies all verbal clauses beginning with subject or object as *nominal clauses*. According to this view, then, VSO word order is not a transformation of underlying SVO word order. Nor is SVO word order a transformation of underlying VSO word order. Rather, VSO word order is the *necessary* order for verbal clauses, with SVO the *necessary* word order for *compound* or *complex* nominal clauses. While such a view may seem to give a tidy picture of BH word order, and while it recognizes some of the functions that *X+verb* clauses have in common with verbless clauses, this artificial dichotomy between verb-initial verbal clauses and non-verb-initial verbal clauses actually prevents intelligent discussion of the functions of the various word orders which occur in such clauses, because it conceals the pragmatic process which generates the surface structure. See Gross (1999) for a detailed critique of this approach with special regard to the BH verbless clause.

The Arguments for Basic Word Order

The argument from *sentence type* defines basic word order as the order that obtains in the simple (i.e. not complex), main (i.e. not subordinate), declarative (i.e. not interrogative, imperative, or presentative), prototypically transitive clause, with full nouns for subject and object (Mallinson and Blake 1981:125; Siewierska 1988:8; DeCaen 1999:118, n. 22). This methodology, while at first glance attractive, is problematic for two reasons. First, it rather arbitrarily limits evidence to the types of sentences that language teachers have traditionally written on the blackboard, thereby forcing the exclusion of a wealth of potential evidence. The implicit assumption is that the 'context-free' clause necessarily exhibits basic word order. However, as Lambrecht (1987:215-6) has argued, some of the so-called 'typical' sentences used by linguists to illustrate their respective theories are not at all representative of real language use. For, as Buth (1999:88, n. 22) has noted: "there is no such thing as context-free constructions. For example, initiating, intermediary, and ending propositions are all part of a larger context." As will be shown, the evidence culled from a variety of different clause-types is indeed significant in establishing an empirically-based argument for basic word order for BH.

Second, the decision as to what constitutes a simple, main, declarative clause is not necessarily clear-cut in BH. Where in the Bible does one find such a clause? For example, both DeCaen and Holmstedt assume that a clause beginning with a *wayyiqtol* form does not constitute a simple, main, declarative clause.[16] While this may be the case, it does not necessarily follow that the dominant word order in the *wayyiqtol* clause (i.e. VSO) represents a variation of basic word order.

According to the *textual frequency* argument, the basic word order of a language is the one which occurs most frequently in attested texts of the language. In the case of BH, VSO easily wins out according to this parameter. Siewierska (1988:8-14), however, cautions against assuming that the statistically dominant word order is necessarily identical to the basic (i.e. pragmatically neutral) word order. Furthermore, Muraoka (1985:28-30), DeCaen (1999:118, n. 22), and Holmstedt all stress the theoretical unreliability of the frequency criterion with specific regard to BH, given that the bulk of the verb-initial clauses in BH have *waw*-conversive verb forms, which, as a 'rule', occur in clause-initial position.[17] Says Holmstedt (2002:133):

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[16] DeCaen (1999:118, n. 22) speaks explicitly of "the crucial *assumption* [italics mine: AH] that the statistically prevalent, narrative construction with *wayyiqtol* is morphologically, syntactically and semantically marked." Notably, DeCaen ignores considerations of pragmatics entirely. The question of the *wayyiqtol* form's markedness is dealt with below. For his part, Holmstedt believes that direct speech (rather than narrative) gives the best picture of real language use in BH and that studies of word order should thus be based on quoted material. His arguments are dealt with below.

[17] However, evidence from both Biblical and extra-Biblical literature shows that users of BH and close cognate languages did not always follow the 'rules.' Technically speaking, there are at least four clause-types for which it can be argued that the *waw*-conversive verb is not clause-initial. First, there are clauses (though, admittedly, very few) in which an adverbial of time precedes the *waw*-conversive form. Examples are Gen 22.4 בַּיּוֹם, Isa 17.4 עוֹד מְעַט וּסְקָלֻנִי, Ex 16.6-7 עֶרֶב וִידַעְתֶּם...וּבֹקֶר וּרְאִיתֶם אֶת-כְּבוֹד יהוה, הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו 6.1 בִּשְׁנַת-מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ עֻזִּיָּהוּ וָאֶרְאֶה אֶת-אֲדֹנָי, and Hos 11.1 כִּי נַעַר יִשְׂרָאֵל וָאֹהֲבֵהוּ. Second, there are clauses in which an adverbial of time including an infinitive construct precedes a *waw*-conversive form. Examples, which are fairly numerous, include Gen 28.6b כְּבֹאָךְ בָּבֶל וְרָאִיתָ and Jer 51.61b בְּבֹאֲךָ בָבֶל וְרָאִיתָ and Jer 51.61b בְּבֹאֲךָ בָבֶל וְרָאִיתָ It is worth noting here that this structure also occurs in Arad inscription no. 16, lns. 3-5 (though the כ, ת, and י of כצאתי are unclear) (Ahituv 1992:250-1): כצאתי מביתך ושלחתי את הכ[ס]ף (cf. Joüon-Muraoka (1996:§111a, n. 3) and Blau (1977:24), who take the apparent *weqatal* form as a non-conversive structure). Third, there is the more common structure of וַיְהִי (or וְהָיָה)+time adverbial+*waw*-conversive. Among the numerous examples are: Gen 38:28 וַיְהִי בְלִדְתָּהּ וַיִּתֶּן-יָד and Ex 33.22 וְהָיָה בַּעֲבֹר כְּבֹדִי וְשַׂמְתִּיךָ. Finally, there are the very rare structures represented by the *qere* (!) reading of Jer 38.2 הַיֹּשֵׁב בָּעִיר הַזֹּאת יָמוּת בַּחֶרֶב בָּרָעָב וּבַדָּבֶר וְהַיֹּצֵא אֶל הַכַּשְׂדִּים וְחָיָה

> *However, the overwhelming predominance of the 'narrative verb' form* wayyiqtol*, a verb form that exhibits unique morphological characteristics, should serve as a methodological red flag. For instance, out of the almost 5,500 clauses in the text of Genesis, there are over 2100 clauses with* wayyiqtol *(that is almost 40 percent of the book!).… If non-VS word order is impossible with the* wayyiqtol*, then it is methodologically precarious to use it when determining basic word order; the* wayyiqtol *clearly skews the data towards a VS analysis.*

Though it is indeed "methodologically precarious" to establish basic word order in BH on the sole basis of textual frequency – and according to DeCaen and Holmstedt, this is precisely what most scholars have done[18] – it is just as problematic to decide *a priori* that *waw*-conservative clauses must be excluded from consideration. For as Moshavi (2001:87-88) notes:

> *Eliminating* waw-consecutive clauses, however, merely begs the question: why do these clauses, and not others, have consecutive verb forms? It cannot be that the presence of the* waw *requires the consecutive form, since many clauses can be found which contain a waw and ordinary verb forms.*

> *Several scholars[19] have argued convincingly that it is the word order of the clause that determines the verb form. If the verb is first in the clause, the verb takes the* waw-consecutive form. If, on the other hand, any element, including a subject, adverbial phrase, or the negative particle* לא*, precedes the verb, the verb takes the ordinary, non-consecutive form. Consecutive and non-consecutive forms are thus in complementary distribution, i.e., they occur in mutually exclusive syntactic environments, with the position of the verb conditioning the choice of verbal form. It makes no sense, therefore, to exclude consecutive verb forms from a study of word order: this will simply have the effect of eliminating the vast majority of clauses with normal word order from the data.*

In other words, the Holmstedt-DeCaen-Muraoka argument against including *waw*-conservative clauses in a discussion of basic word order is valid only if it is first established that the BH verbal clause has a basic SVO word order. For if BH has a basic VSO word order, then the statistically prevalent VSO order of *waw*-conservative clauses does not "skew the data towards a VS analysis," but rather reflects this underlying, basic word order. But this is the very issue under discussion. In summary, the essential question can be phrased as follows: Is it the prevalence of *waw*-conservative forms that causes the numerical dominance of VSO clauses or, conversely, is it the typological dominance of VSO word order (coupled with the ubiquitous *waw* conjunction) that produces so many clauses beginning with a *waw*-conservative verb? Since this question cannot be answered definitively on the sole basis of the criterion of textual frequency, it is necessary to turn to another argument.

(where the subject precedes the *weqatal* form וְחָיָה), by Isa 44.12 חָרַשׁ בַּרְזֶל מַעֲצָד וּפָעַל בַּפֶּחָם (where both subject and object (?) precede the *weqatal* form וּפָעַל (though textual emendations have been suggested for this verse; see BHS)), by Job 36.7 לֹא-יִגְרַע מִצַּדִּיק עֵינָיו וְאֶת-מְלָכִים לַכִּסֵּא וַיֹּשִׁיבֵם לָנֶצַח וַיִּגְבָּהוּ (where, according to GKC (1910:§111bN), the *wayyiqtol* "is joined to an abrupt statement of the place"), and by Is 45.4 לְמַעַן עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחִירִי וָאֶקְרָא לְךָ בִּשְׁמֶךָ (where, again according to GKC (1910:§111bN), the *wayyiqtol* "is joined to an abrupt statement of the cause"). Note that a similar construction is also found in lines 4-5 of the Moabite Stone: עמרי מלך ישראל ויענו את מאב ימן רבן, where the subject עמרי מלך ישראל comes before the *wayyiqtol* form ויענו (theoretically, the words עמרי מלך ישראל here could constitute a separate verbless clause, but such a declaration seems altogether out of place given the context).

[18] DeCaen (1999:118, n. 22): "The naive and theoretically uninteresting sense of *statistically prevalent* is the basis for the standard VSO account of Biblical Hebrew." Holmstedt (2002:132-3): "Most modern treatments of BH word order have accepted the VS analysis, although the justification tends to be based upon the frequency criterion…: VS order is statistically dominant throughout the Hebrew Bible." It is of particular interest in this light to note that Muraoka (1985:29-30) posits basic VSO word order in BH on the basis of statistical dominance *despite* his refusal to remove *waw*-conservative clauses from consideration.

[19] Moshavi cites Bergsträsser (1962:§6c) and Blau (1993:§76).

The argument from *typological universals* finds its basis in the influential work of Joseph Greenberg (1966), in which he propounded a total of 45 universals describing inflectional morphology and word order. Most of the universals take the form of implicational statements – "given *x* in a particular language, we always find *y*" – where the converse – "given *y*, we always find *x*" – does not necessarily hold true. Both Jongeling (1991:106) and Longacre (1992:332) argue that BH is best seen as a basic VSO language from the perspective of Greenberg's universals. In grouping BH with other "strongly VSO languages" Longacre notes: "not only are they verb first languages but they are (1) prepositional rather than postpositional; (2) item possessor ('noun-genitive') rather than possessor-item; and (3) head-attribute ('noun adjective') rather than attribute-noun." DeCaen (1999:118, n. 22), responding specifically to Jongeling's statistical-typological comparison of BH and Welsh, forcefully counters by noting (a) that VSO and SVO languages generally "pattern together along the major parameters;"[20] (b) that the relevant typological universals are statistical, and as such, not necessarily indicative of basic word order (see above on textual frequency); and (c) that they are unidirectional, that is, "if *x*, then *y*," but not necessarily "if *y*, then *x*."[21] In summary, then, the argument for basic word order from typological universals, while indicative of the fact that BH shares meaningful characteristics with languages whose basic word order is considered VSO, is by no means incontrovertible.

For some scholars, *descriptive simplicity* is the overriding concern in identifying basic word order. In other words, the basic word order is the one that permits the simplest overall syntactic description of a language (see Mithun 1992:15 for bibliography). Jongeling (1991:106) refers to this as "economy," explaining:

> *The question is now, whether it is more appropriate to describe the verb-initial sentence as the standard, describing the environment in which deviations from this standard occur or to take another sentence-type as a starting point, e.g. the SVO type, as is done by Joüon. Taking economy as a criterium a description starting from the VSO viewpoint is the most appropriate, because the SVO sentences are more easily described as deviations from a VSO order than the other way round.*

Clearly, it is true of any scientific analysis that the theory capable of explaining the greatest number of data with the fewest exceptions has the highest level of validity.

According to the final argument, that of *pragmatic neutrality*, the basic word order is the pragmatically unmarked[22] word order, i.e. the word order for which there is no functional explanation (Dik 1981:172; Mithun 1992:15). This argument is both the most compelling and the most complex for establishing basic word order in BH. It is the most compelling because it links the concept of *basic word order* to those of *neutrality* and *pragmatic markedness*. In BH this is decisive, as the vast majority of clause types with SVO order can be shown to be

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[20] It should be pointed out that Jongeling is aware of this fact: "In typical VSO and SVO languages the normal order of elements is: modifiers following modified expressions" (1991:106). Incidentally, Hawkins (1983:16) argues against SVO as a type indicator altogether, writing: "SVO is no longer a type indicator; that is, nothing correlates with SVO in a unique and principled way, according to our evidence. There are, of course, many languages with SVO, but there is no 'SVO-type.'"

[21] DeCaen (1999:118, n. 22) argues: "In other words, correlations with putative VSO Welsh along the parameters of noun-adjective or adjective-adverb, for example, are irrelevant in determining basic word order. The correlation only works the other way: if it can be established that a given language is VSO (in what sense?), then it is predicted that adjectives follow nouns, and so on."

[22] Within the theory of *markedness*, as developed by the Prague School of linguistic theory, a marked phonological, morphosyntactic, or syntactic element is a more specialized form than its unmarked counterpart. For a discussion on markedness in relation to language typology see Croft (1990:64-94). Van Wolde (1997) provides a useful discussion of markedness with specific regard to BH syntax.

marked, while such is not the case for the majority of clause types with VSO word order. It is the most complex, however, because it requires in-depth analysis of a large number of individual clauses in context. This is the purpose of Sections 3 and 4 below. The results of the analysis provide support for the validity of the view that BH is a language with a basic, which is to say pragmatically neutral, VSO word order.

The Preliminary Case for Basic VSO Word Order in the BH Verbal Clause

The purpose of this section is to present preliminary arguments which support the assumption of a basic VSO word order in BH. The four arguments adduced here deal with over-all *statistical dominance*, *statistical dominance with preceding particles*, *the markedness of non-VSO word order with preceding function words*, and *descriptive simplicity*. It is on the basis of these four preliminary arguments that further analysis of word order pragmatics against the neutral background of a basic VSO word order is done below in this thesis. That analysis itself, in turn, provides further, even stronger, evidence for a basic VSO word order in BH, in that it demonstrates a correlation between pragmatic markedness/functions and specific word orders.

Overall Statistical Dominance of Relative VS Word Order

The following chart gives the raw statistics for VS, SV and XV[23] word orders in the book of Genesis, distinguishing between Narrative and Direct Speech.[24]

Narrative			Direct Speech		
VS	SV (XSV or SXV)	XV (XVS)	VS	SV (XSV or SXV)	XV (XVS)
966	116 (3)	86 (26)	200	132 (10)	186 (33)

There are a total of 1108 (966 VS + 116 SV + 26 XVS) narrative verbal clauses with explicit subjects. 966 of these clauses, or approximately 87%, are verb-initial. Another 26 of them have a fronted X element but still exhibit relative VS word order. In total, then, 992, or just under 89.5% of narrative verbal clauses exhibit relative VS word order. For direct speech, the raw statistics are much more balanced: 200 of a total of 365 (200 VS + 132 SV + 33 XVS) verbal clauses with explicit subjects, or about 54.8%, are verb-initial. Adding the 33 clauses with fronted X that also exhibit relative VS word order, there are 233 of 365, or approximately 64% of direct speech clauses with an explicit subject that exhibit relative VS word order. Overall, then, out of the 1473 verbal clauses with explicit subject, some 1225, or approximately 83.2%, exhibit relative VS word order.

At first glance, there is a clear numerical dominance of relative VS word order. However, several things should be noted. First, the dominance is much more marked in

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[23] X here refers to any intra-clausal constituent other than subject. Note that the SV column includes both XSV and SXV word order (in both of which the relative constituent order of subject and verb is SV) in the total, with the exact number given in parentheses. The XV column includes clauses both with and without an overt subject. The total number includes both, while the figure in parentheses represents the number of clauses with fronted X constituent and an overt subject (XVS).

[24] These data include both main and subordinate clauses.

narrative than in direct speech.   Second, if *waw*-conversive and modal (jussive and cohortative) *yiqtol* forms[25] are excluded, then the numbers are as follows:

Narrative			Direct Speech		
VS	SV (XSV or SXV)	XV (XVS)	VS	SV (XSV or SXV)	XV (XVS)
101	116 (2)	86 (26)	112	132 (10)	186 (31)

Without the *waw*-conversive and modal *yiqtol* forms, the picture changes drastically.   The cases of relative VS word order (VS+XVS above) still outnumber those of relative SV word order 272 to 247, but the statistics are nearly balanced; neither table, thus, provides data sufficient in and of themselves to establish basic word order.   The raw statistical evidence is ambiguous and open to more than one interpretation.   The clause-initial nature of the *waw*-conversive forms may transform what would otherwise be basic SV word order into marked VS order or, conversely, VS may be the basic word order, with the numerous *waw*-conversive forms merely reflecting such and the SV (and XV) clauses marked.

In passing, it is also worth noting that overall XV word order is also more prevalent than SV word order, with the former outnumbering the latter both in direct speech and overall.   See below for more on the evidence provided by XV clauses.

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[25] It is a well-known fact that clause-initial *yiqtol* forms and *we-yiqtol* forms are often (though not always) jussive or cohortative in force.   They are identifiable as semantically modal on the grounds of (a) context, (b) morphology, (c) the choice of negative particle used, and (d) word-order.   Niccacci (1990:76-7) correctly asserts the partial unreliability of morphology and the choice of negative particle as indicators of modality. Apocopated עי״ו/י, לי״י, and 3s *hif'il* forms often indicate the jussive, but not rigorously.   The same holds true for the negative particles לא (indicative) and אל (modal).   However, Niccacci's assertion with regard to clause-initial *yiqtol* (*ibid.*) "that indicative YIQTOL never comes first in the sentence," is certainly too strong.   Note, for example, תָּכִין in Deut 19.3, יְקִימְךָ in Deut 28.9, יָבִיא in Isa 7.17.   Of the 27 clause-initial *yiqtol* forms in the narrative portions of Genesis, only one is indicative: 17.13.   The jussive/cohortative clauses are: 1.6, 9.26, 27 (*bis*), 16.5, 18.4, 19.20, 22.17, 24.60, 27.38, 29 (*ter*), 30.3, 31.44, 33.9, 14, 41.33, 34 (though clearly indicative in form; note (a) the word order, (b) the context, and (c) the following *we-yiqtol* form וַיִּפְקֹד), 42.16, 20, 44.18, 33, 47.4, 19, 48.16.   The *we-yiqtol* form has been illumined by a pair of recent studies: Fassberg (1991:76-82) and Muraoka (1997).

Statistical Dominance of Relative VS Word Order with Particles

Since the evidence from *waw*-conversive clauses is open to opposing interpretations, it is useful to examine word order in those clause types in which *waw*-conversive forms cannot occur, namely clauses headed by particles such as: בְּטֶרֶם, טֶרֶם, בַּעֲבוּר, לְמַעַן, פֶּן, עַל־כֵּן, לָכֵן, לֹא, הֶנֵּה, אָז, אַם, אַחַר, אַחֲרֵי־כֵן, אֲשֶׁר, כַּאֲשֶׁר, and כִּי. In the following tables, VS, SV, and XV clauses are separated into those occurring in narrative and those occurring in direct speech.[26]

Particle	Narrative			Direct Speech		
	VS	SV	XV (XVS)	VS	SV (XSV or SXV)	XV (XVS)
לֹא	11[27]	7[28]	8[29] (1[30])	23[31]	14[32] (2[33])	9[34] (2[35])
לָכֵן	0	0	0	0	1 (1)[36]	0
עַל־כֵּן	2[37]	0	0	1[38]	0	0
פֶּן	0	0	0	5[39]	0	0
לְמַעַן	0	0	0	1[40]	0	0
בַּעֲבוּר	0	0	0	3[41]	0	0
טֶרֶם	0	4[42]	0	0	0	0
בְּטֶרֶם	1[43]	0	0	0	0	0
הִנֵּה(־נָא)	4[44]	0	0	5[45]	0	2[46] (1[47])
הֵן	0	0	0	0	1[48]	3[49]

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[26] Once again, clauses with modal *yiqtol* forms in clause-initial position are excluded.

[27] 2.5, 8.9, 13.6, 31.32, 34.19, 36.7, 40.23, 43.32, 45.1 (*bis*), 45.3.

[28] 16.1, 20.4, 24.16, 38.14, 42.8, 42.23, 47.26.

[29] 2.20, 4.5, 9.23, 15.10, 30.42, 38.9, 42.4, 47.22.

[30] 42.4.

[31] 6.3, 9.11 (*bis*), 9.15, 11.7, 15.4, 17.5, 21.10, 24.5, 24.8, 24.39, 31.7, 35.10, 38.21, 38.22, 41.31, 41.36, 42.11, 42.38, 43.8, 44.22, 44.23, 49.10.

[32] 8.22, 19.19, 21.26 (*bis*) 23.6, 28.16, 31.32 (the subject in this clause is the rather strange construction עִם אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֶת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ), 31.38, 31.52 (*bis*), 38.23, 39.8, 45.8, 47.19.

[33] 8.22, 23.6.

[34] 9.4, 11.6, 24.8, 31.38, 31.39, 32.29, 40.15, 41.44, 47.19.

[35] 11.6, 41.44.

[36] 4.15.

[37] 2.24, 10.9.

[38] 42.21.

[39] 19.19, 26.7, 38.11, 42.4, 45.11.

[40] 27.25.

[41] 27.4, 27.19, 27.31.

[42] 2.5 (*bis*), 24.15, 24.45.

[43] 41.50.

[44] 8.13, 16.2, 19.28, 38.29.

[45] 19.19, 22.20, 37.7 (*bis*), 48.11.

[46] 27.36, 27.39.

[47] 27.39.

[48] 3.22.

	Narrative			Direct Speech		
אִם	0	0	0	5[50]	1[51]	0
אָז	1[52]	0	0	0	0	0
אַחַר	3[53]	0	0	0	0	0
אַחֲרֵי־כֵן	3[54]	0	0	0	0	0
אֲשֶׁר	35[55]	0	0	22[56]	0	0
כַּאֲשֶׁר	16[57]	0	0	2[58]	0	0
כִּי	22[59]	2[60]	10[61] (6[62])	24[63]	3[64]	32[65] (8[66])
TOTALS	98	13	18 (7)	91	20 (3)	46 (11)

It is readily apparent from the above table that relative VS word order is much more common than relative SV word order, and, more importantly, *that this statistical dominance holds true even in those syntactic environments where it cannot be claimed that waw-conversive forms 'force' VS word order.* In narrative, 105 out of a total 118 clauses with an overt subject, or nearly 89%, exhibit relative VS word order. Likewise, in direct speech 102 of a total 122 clauses with an explicit subject, or 83.6%, exhibit relative VS word order. Overall, then, 207 out of a total 240 clauses where some particle prevents use of the *waw*-conversive, or 86.25%, exhibit relative VS word order. Note, further, that in narrative relative SV word order is statistically more prevalent than relative VS word order only with the particle טֶרֶם. This fact can also be explained in terms of pragmatic markedness (see below).

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[49] 15.3, 27.37, 44.8.

[50] 13.16, 28.20, 32.9, 47.16, 47.18 (with כִּי־אִם).

[51] 35.10.

[52] 4.26 (the subject of this sentence is the infinitival clause לִקְרֹא בְּשֵׁם יהוה).

[53] 10.18, 33.7, 38.30.

[54] 23.19, 25.26, 45.15.

[55] 1.21, 2.3, 2.19, 3.1, 6.4, 6.22, 7.5, 9.24, 10.14, 11.5, 13.3, 16.15, 19.29, 21.2, 21.3, 21.25, 22.3, 22.9, 25.10, 25.12, 26.15, 26.18, 27.41, 30.38, 35.15, 35.27, 41.50, 45.27, 46.5, 46.18, 46.20, 46.25, 47.22, 49.28, 50.13. It is important to note, however, that while rare, both אשר+S+V and אשר+X+V word orders are possible. These orders are marked. See, for example, Lev 4.22, Job 3.23, Ps 1.3, 89.22, 144.8, 11, Isa 58.2, 66.13, and Zeph 2.3. Note especially the argument of Creason (1993:7-8) as cited in Rosenbaum (1997:224).

[56] 5.29, 9.2, 14.24, 17.21, 21.12, 24.44, 24.47, 26.5, 27.27, 27.44, 28.4, 29.8, 30.29, 31.16 (*bis*), 33.5, 44.5, 44.16, 44.17, 48.9, 48.15, 49.30.

[57] 7.9, 7.16, 12.4, 17.23, 21.4, 24.22, 24.52, 27.14, 27.30, 29.10, 30.25, 37.23, 40.22, 41.54, 43.17, 47.11.

[58] 20.13, 24.51.

[59] 5.24, 6.1, 6.12, 8.11, 13.6, 14.14, 20.18, 26.8, 27.1, 27.23, 28.6, 28.11, 31.22, 36.7, 38.14, 41.57, 42.5, 43.30, 47.20 (*bis*), 48.17, 50.15.

[60] 3.20, 31.32.

[61] 2.3, 10.25, 11.9, 21.31, 29.2, 34.7, 35.7, 37.4, 40.16, 43.25.

[62] 2.3, 10.25, 11.9, 21.31, 35.7, 37.4.

[63] 3.1, 4.25 (*bis*), 6.13, 12.12, 16.11, 19.13, 20.7, 21.17, 26.28, 27.20, 29.21, 29.32, 29.33, 30.13, 31.49, 32.18, 32.27, 33.11, 38.14, 41.51, 41.52, 44.15, 46.33, 47.15.

[64] 30.26, 43.5, 44.32.

[65] 2.17, 2.23, 3.19, 4.23, 4.24, 7.1, 9.6, 13.17, 15.13, 17.5, 19.2, 20.6, 21.12, 21.18, 21.30, 22.12, 24.4, 26.3, 26.22, 29.32, 31.6, 31.42, 32.11, 42.12, 43.10, 43.16, 44.27, 45.5, 46.3, 46.32, 49.6, 50.17.

[66] 2.23, 4.24, 15.13, 21.12, 29.32, 43.16, 44.27, 45.5.

In summary, the dominance of relative VS word order with particles that prevent use of the *waw*-conversive forms must be seen as supporting a basic VS word order in BH.

Pragmatic Markedness of Relative SV Word Order with Particles

Narrative

While the statistical dominance of relative VS word order is remarkable, even more significant is the fact that the word order of most of the relative SV clauses with particles is readily explicable in terms of pragmatic marking. This is especially clear in BH narrative. Consider the following cases, in which SV word order occurs with the negative particle לֹא (the preposed subject in each example is given in boldface type; preceding context is included where necessary).

וְשָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם לֹא יָלְדָה לוֹ וְלָהּ שִׁפְחָה מִצְרִית וּשְׁמָהּ הָגָר׃	16.1
וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ בַּחֲלוֹם הַלָּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנְּךָ מֵת עַל־הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר לָקַחְתָּ וְהִוא בְּעֻלַת בָּעַל׃ **וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ** לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמַר אֲדֹנָי הֲגוֹי גַּם־צַדִּיק תַּהֲרֹג׃	20.4
וְהַנַּעֲרָ טֹבַת מַרְאֶה מְאֹד בְּתוּלָה **וְאִישׁ** לֹא יְדָעָהּ וַתֵּרֶד הָעַיְנָה וַתְּמַלֵּא כַדָּהּ וַתָּעַל׃	24.16
וַתָּסַר בִּגְדֵי אַלְמְנוּתָהּ מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתְּכַס בַּצָּעִיף וַתִּתְעַלָּף וַתֵּשֶׁב בְּפֶתַח עֵינַיִם אֲשֶׁר עַל־דֶּרֶךְ תִּמְנָתָה כִּי רָאֲתָה כִּי־גָדַל שֵׁלָה **וְהִוא** לֹא־נִתְּנָה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה׃	38.14
וַיַּכֵּר יוֹסֵף אֶת־אֶחָיו **וְהֵם** לֹא הִכִּרֻהוּ׃	42.8
וַיַּעַן רְאוּבֵן אֹתָם לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹא אָמַרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר אַל־תֶּחֶטְאוּ בַיֶּלֶד וְלֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם וְגַם־דָּמוֹ הִנֵּה נִדְרָשׁ׃ **וְהֵם** לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שֹׁמֵעַ יוֹסֵף כִּי הַמֵּלִיץ בֵּינֹתָם׃	42.23
וַיָּשֶׂם אֹתָהּ יוֹסֵף לְחֹק עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־אַדְמַת מִצְרַיִם לְפַרְעֹה לַחֹמֶשׁ **רַק אַדְמַת הַכֹּהֲנִים לְבַדָּם** לֹא הָיְתָה לְפַרְעֹה׃	47.26

Here only summary explanations are given; see below for details. In Gen 16.1, the SV word order signals the beginning of a new literary unit. The fronted subject in 20.4 signals a retreat in story-time (i.e. the pluperfect). The fronted noun וְאִישׁ in 24.16 marks the clause as generally off the sequential line of events or, in other words, as circumstantial, descriptive, or explanatory. The same holds true for the fronted constituent וְהֵם in 42.23. Both the preposed element רָחֵל in 31.32 and רַק אַדְמַת הַכֹּהֲנִים לְבַדָּם are specially marked as *focal* (i.e. the constituent marked as expressing the most salient piece of information in the clause). In both 38.14 and 42.8 pronouns are fronted for what is typically called *contrastive topicalization* (or *double-difference contrast*[67]).[68]

Direct Speech

Identifying the linguistic motivation, be it pragmatic or otherwise, for relative SV word order in direct speech is more difficult than it is in narrative. Be that as it may, pragmatic patterns are, nevertheless, discernible.

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[67] See Dooley and Levinsohn (2001:72).

[68] The marked nature of SV word order in narrative is nicely evidenced in the book of Jonah, where it occurs in 1.4 (*bis*), 1.5, and 3.3. In 1.4a, the SV structure marks the beginning of a new scene. In 1.4b, it may mark a dramatic slowing of the events (see the section on *dramatic pause* below) or perhaps a shift in scene (e.g., "And as for the boat,…"). In 1.5 it marks an event anterior to those reported in the immediately preceding clause (and perhaps a change of scene). Finally, in 3.3 it provides an off-line parenthetical or circumstantial description of Nineveh (not a pluperfect description of how great Nineveh had been).

3.22	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן **הָאָדָם** הָיָה כְּאַחַד מִמֶּנּוּ לָדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע וְעַתָּה פֶּן־יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלָקַח גַּם מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וָחַי לְעֹלָם׃
4.15	וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יְהֹוָה לָכֵן **כָּל־הֹרֵג קַיִן** שִׁבְעָתַיִם יֻקָּם וַיָּשֶׂם יְהֹוָה לְקַיִן אוֹת לְבִלְתִּי הַכּוֹת־אֹתוֹ כָּל־מֹצְאוֹ׃
19.19	הִנֵּה־נָא מָצָא עַבְדְּךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַתַּגְדֵּל חַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי לְהַחֲיוֹת אֶת־נַפְשִׁי **וְאָנֹכִי** לֹא אוּכַל לְהִמָּלֵט הָהָרָה פֶּן־תִּדְבָּקַנִי הָרָעָה וָמַתִּי׃
21.26 (*bis*)	וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא יָדַעְתִּי מִי עָשָׂה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְגַם־**אַתָּה** לֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי וְגַם **אָנֹכִי** לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי בִּלְתִּי הַיּוֹם׃
31.32	וַיַּעַן יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר לְלָבָן כִּי יָרֵאתִי כִּי אָמַרְתִּי פֶּן־תִּגְזֹל אֶת־בְּנוֹתֶיךָ מֵעִמִּי׃ **עִם אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֶת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ** לֹא יִחְיֶה נֶגֶד אַחֵינוּ הַכֶּר־לְךָ מָה עִמָּדִי וְקַח־לָךְ וְלֹא־יָדַע יַעֲקֹב כִּי רָחֵל גְּנָבָתַם׃
31.38	זֶה עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ **רְחֵלֶיךָ וְעִזֶּיךָ** לֹא שִׁכֵּלוּ **וְאֵילֵי צֹאנְךָ** לֹא אָכָלְתִּי׃
31.52 (*bis*)	עֵד הַגַּל הַזֶּה וְעֵדָה הַמַּצֵּבָה אִם־**אָנִי** לֹא־אֶעֱבֹר אֵלֶיךָ אֶת־הַגַּל הַזֶּה וְאִם־**אַתָּה** לֹא־תַעֲבֹר אֵלַי אֶת־הַגַּל הַזֶּה וְאֶת־הַמַּצֵּבָה הַזֹּאת לְרָעָה׃
35.10	וַיֹּאמֶר־לוֹ אֱלֹהִים שִׁמְךָ יַעֲקֹב לֹא־יִקָּרֵא שִׁמְךָ עוֹד יַעֲקֹב כִּי אִם־**יִשְׂרָאֵל** יִהְיֶה שְׁמֶךָ וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל׃
38.23	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה תִּקַּח־לָהּ פֶּן נִהְיֶה לָבוּז הִנֵּה שָׁלַחְתִּי הַגְּדִי הַזֶּה **וְאַתָּה** לֹא מְצָאתָהּ׃
43.5	וְאִם־אֵינְךָ מְשַׁלֵּחַ לֹא נֵרֵד כִּי־**הָאִישׁ** אָמַר אֵלֵינוּ לֹא־תִרְאוּ פָנַי בִּלְתִּי אֲחִיכֶם אִתְּכֶם׃
45.8	וְעַתָּה לֹא־**אַתֶּם** שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵנָּה כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים וַיְשִׂימֵנִי לְאָב לְפַרְעֹה וּלְאָדוֹן לְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ וּמֹשֵׁל בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם׃
47.19	לָמָּה נָמוּת לְעֵינֶיךָ גַּם־אֲנַחְנוּ גַּם אַדְמָתֵנוּ קְנֵה־אֹתָנוּ וְאֶת־אַדְמָתֵנוּ בַּלָּחֶם וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְאַדְמָתֵנוּ עֲבָדִים לְפַרְעֹה וְתֶן־זֶרַע וְנִחְיֶה וְלֹא נָמוּת **וְהָאֲדָמָה** לֹא תֵשָׁם׃

Again, the explanations here are brief; see below for details. The fronted subjects in 3.22, 4.15, 31.32,[69] and 43.5 appear to be topics, entities specially marked as the (new) subject of discussion. The SV word order in 19.19, 21.26a, 31.38, and perhaps 31.32 can be explained as a 'thematic pause', a general break in the continuity of discourse for the purpose of inserting an explanation or for changing 'tack'. The preposed subjects in 21.26b, 31.52a-b, 38.23, and 47.19 are contrastive topics. Both יִשְׂרָאֵל in 35.10 and אַתֶּם in 45.8 are focal. Only a few cases remained unexplained.[70]

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[69] The subject of the verb יִחְיֶה here is composed, rather peculiarly, of the prepositional phrase עִם אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא. One would have expected אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֶת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ אִתּוֹ, as in Gen 44.9-10, or perhaps אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֶת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ אִתּוֹ, as in Ex 35.23.

[70] The reasons for the relative SV word order in 8.22, 23.6, 28.16, 30.26, 39.8, and 44.32 are not entirely clear. However, it is worth noting that the language of one of the cases (8.22) is clearly poetic and, therefore, subject to aesthetic concerns with regard to word order. While it is true that word order variation in poetry can be pragmatically motivated, it is important to bear in mind that stylistic, rather than linguistic, issues may also be determinative in poetic environments. Regarding the other unexplained examples, it is interesting to note that three of the six cases (28.16, 30.26, and 39.8) involve the occurrence of an optional subject pronoun before the *qatal* form of the verb יָדַע. This also occurs in 20.6, 30.29, 31.6 and 44.27 (and frequently in the Hebrew of other Biblical books). Muraoka (1985:36) relates this phenomenon to the circumstantial clause: "It appears that in certain places the use of a special group of verbs – chiefly verbs of movement and knowledge – is responsible for the otherwise inexplicable fronting of the subject, and significantly the perfect tense exclusively used there can be understood in the sense of the Engl. perfect tense, which somehow relates these sentences to the nominal clause sentence type in the deep structure." Elsewhere (*ibid*.:53), however, Muraoka equivocates, arguing that the use of the pronoun in a phrases such as אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ "may be viewed as motivated by the desire to call special attention of the addressed, esp. when the speaker requests something on the basis of the knowledge of the addressed or seeks his agreement." A further possibility, not unrelated to Muraoka's linking of this sort of phrase to the circumstantial or nominal clause, is that BH users may have inserted otherwise unnecessary subject pronouns on the basis of an analogy between the basically stative force of certain *qatal* forms (such as יָדַע here) and the *subject+participle* structure that more regularly indicates the present tense. Note the relatively frequent occurrence of subject pronouns with such stative *qatal* forms as שָׂנֵא, זָקֵן, רָאָה, חָפֵץ, and שָׁמַע. On the stative character of these verbs see Joüon-Muraoka (1996:§112a).

Descriptive Simplicity

When one takes into account only the relative order of subjects and verbs, it may seem that the SV and VS theories have equal explanatory power. However, when XV clauses with overt subjects are considered the situation becomes clearer. Buth (1995:80-81) offers a sound argument. If BH had as a basic SV word order, he argues, then it would be reasonable to expect the fronting of an element X to lead to XSV word order. Conversely, if basic word order in BH were VS, then the fronting of an element X should lead to XVS word order.[71] According to the statistics given above, there are some 69 clauses in Genesis that have both a fronted X and an overt subject. Of the 69 clauses 57 have XVS word order,[72] while only three have XSV word order.[73] This being the case, a theory positing basic SV word order for BH must account not only for the verb-initial predominance associated with *waw*-conversive forms and for the relative VS dominance of clauses in which various clause-initial particles prevent the use of the *waw*-conversive forms, but also for the statistical dominance of VS word order after fronted X constituents. It is certainly an embarrassment to a theory of basic SV word order that it is capable of predicting word order in clauses with fronted X constituents in only three of 69 cases in Genesis. It is descriptively simpler to posit basic VS word order, whereby the vast majority of clauses are explained as nothing more than the surface-level outworking of basic VS word order. See the example from Gen 19.27.

19.27   וַיַּשְׁכֵּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר

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[71] Dik (1981:180) proposes the same strategy for identification of basic word order. He argues:

Notice that this treatment of Dutch constituent order comes down to the claim that the basic word order in the main clauses is   Vf [= finite verb: AH] S O. But the initial P1 position and the rules determining which constituents must or may go to P1 make for a variety of actual orderings in the main clause. A situation such as that obtaining in Dutch is not at all uncommon in languages. In other words, quite a few apparent SVO languages can be reinterpreted as P1VSO languages. A good criterium for whether such a reinterpretation is possible is the following: take some apparent SVO language and see what happens if some other constituent than the Subj is put in preverbal position. If, in that condition, the Subj itself appears in postverbal position, then the language can be reinterpreted as a P1VSO language. If, on the other hand, the Subj remains in preverbal position as well, then the language is a 'real' SVO language, i.e., in terms of our approach, a P1SVO language. Applying this criterium to Dutch and German shows that these languages can be reinterpreted as P1VSO languages. English, on the other hand, comes out as a 'real' P1SVO language, at least as far as the functional pattern for declarative main clauses and for subordinate clauses is concerned.

[72] Gen 2.3, 2.23, 3.3, 4.24, 6.9, 7.11, 7.13, 7.20, 8.5, 8.14, 9.19, 10.5, 10.11, 10.25, 11.6, 11.9 (*bis*), 13.5, 14.5, 15.1, 15.13, 15.18, 17.12, 18.12, 21.6, 21.12, 21.31, 22.23, 24.50, 25.6, 25.10, 27.39, 29.32, 29.34, 30.20, 30.40, 31.8, 31.40, 31.42, 34.22, 35.7, 37.4, 39.19, 40.13, 40.19, 41.40, 41.44, 41.50, 41.54, 42.4, 42.36, 43.16, 44.27, 45.5, 46.34, 47.9, 48.20.

[73] The cases of XSV word order are: Gen 6.20, 8.22, and 39.22. However, Gen 6.20 may be better considered a *casus pendens* construction; Gen 8.22 is highly poetic; and the subject pronoun in Gen 39.22 is highly marked (for *focus*; see below). The remaining nine cases (Gen 4.15, 14.10, 17.9, 23.6, 25.23 (*bis*), 31.29, 48.5, 48.6) exhibit SXV word order. The complexity of the individual cases that constitute this category make it difficult to draw conclusions regarding basic word order. If basic SV word order is posited, then it must be argued that X has been inserted between S and V. If basic VS word order is posited, then SXV word order entails a double fronting, which is the explanation adopted in the present work. To use Dik's terminology (see note 70 above), BH would thus have a *P1P2VSO* word order in the verbal clause (where all constituents except the verb are optional).

With a basic VS word order, it is a one-step process to front X into a preverbal slot.

X	Subject	Verb	Preverbal Slot	Conjunction	
בבקר	אברהם	להשכים	---	ו	Deep Structure
	אברהם	להשכים	בבקר	ו	Transformation #1
	אברהם	השכים	ובבקר		Surface Structure

With a basic SV word order, however, the transformation is a two-step process. To arrive at surface-level XSV word order, first the element X must be moved forward, then the S and V must switch places.

X	Verb	Subject	Pre-Subject Slot	Conjunction	
בבקר	להשכים	אברהם	---	ו	Deep Structure
	להשכים	אברהם	בבקר	ו	Transformation #1
אברהם	להשכים		בבקר	ו	Transformation #2
אברהם	השכים		ובבקר		Surface Structure

Notably, Holmstedt (2002:148) recognizes both the statistical dominance and the pragmatic neutrality of relative VS word order in the relative clause, with preceding "function words," and after other fronted elements. The fact that he is forced to posit a fronting rule entirely devoid of pragmatic motivation[74] only demonstrates the explanatory inadequacy of his

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[74] Holmstedt (2002:148) attempts to explain the neutrality in BH of VS word order in the relative clause, after function words, and after other preposed X elements in light of the Modern Hebrew phenomenon known as "triggered inversion." Citing Glinert (1987:413-417), Doron (1996), and Shlonsky (1997), Holmstedt argues that Modern Hebrew exhibits a basic SV word order, but that a change from basic SV to basic VS is "triggered" by elements being placed before the subject and verb. Glinert argues that the inversion is motivated by a desire for "balance." First of all, the comparison with Modern Hebrew fails to explain the statistical dominance and pragmatic neutrality of relative VS word order in the BH negative clauses. For unlike BH, where the unmarked word order in the negative clause is לא+VS, in Modern Hebrew, it is S+לא+V that is the more dominant (and evidently the pragmatically neutral) structure. Second, while the explanation of "triggered inversion" may suffice as a description of surface-level word order in different syntactic environments, it is entirely devoid of explanatory power. Givón (1976; see also the brief summary in Givón 1977:181-187) argues that the dominant SV word order in Modern Hebrew is the result of a typological drift from VS to SV motivated primarily by pragmatic factors. If Givón is correct, then the neutrality of clause-initial SV word order in Modern Hebrew constitutes an historical development, whereby the marked

theory, especially in light of the fact that numerous scholars have already identified linguistic functions associated with SV word order.

Preliminary Conclusion and Summary

While the above arguments cannot be said to furnish incontrovertible proof of the basic VSO character of BH, they do nevertheless constitute sufficient grounds for the analysis of BH that follows, an analysis founded on a basic VSO perspective.

It is worth pointing out at this point that a basic VSO word order entails certain norms in BH. First of all, in unmarked clauses that are subordinate, negative, or simply asyndetic, basic VSO word order will result in the use of *qatal*+subject+object or *yiqtol*+subject+object. Likewise, in unmarked clauses with a connecting *waw*, VSO order will obtain, but use will be made of the corresponding *waw*-conversive forms: *wayyiqtol*+subject+object or *weqatal*+subject+object.[75] Movement of any element before the verb virtually requires use of the non-conversive forms.[76]

SV word order has become grammaticalized as unmarked due to the commonness of marking the syntactic subject as the pragmatic topic. The statistically dominant (and perhaps pragmatically neutral) SV word order of Modern Hebrew is thus not at all indicative of basic SV word order in BH. On the contrary, it is probable that the neutral VS word order that obtains in the protected environment of relative clauses, after fronted constituents, and after function words in Modern Hebrew preserves the historically basic word order (see the argument of Dik (1981:180) above). The preservation of ancient forms in protected environments is well-known from Hebrew phonology, where, for example, the original ת- ending of feminine singular nouns is preserved where it is protected by a pronominal suffix or by the governing noun in a construct relationship, but lost in other environments. Note also the evidence of verbal agreement with conjoined subjects cited by Doron (1992) as indicative of a differentiation in basic word order between BH and Modern Hebrew.

[75] Moshavi (2000:88, n. 29) lists six exceptions to this rule from Genesis: 15.6 וְהֶאֱמִן, 21.25 וְהוֹכִחַ, 31.7 וְהֶחֱלִף, 34.5 וְהֶחֱרִשׁ, 37.3 וְעָשָׂה, and 38.5 וְהָיָה. She considers these forms simple *waw*+*qatal* forms rather than *waw*-conversive *weqatal* forms, but provides no discussion of the issue. It is true that modern translations and commentators (e.g. Speiser 1962) tend to shy away from an imperfective rendering of the *weqatal* forms in these verses (and others: 28.6 וְשִׁלַּח), as do some linguists (e.g., Longacre 1994:58ff.), on the grounds that they are not preceded by clearly imperfective *yiqtol* forms or other indications of imperfectivity. This is due, at least in part, to a superficial understanding of the imperfectivity expressed by the *weqatal* form. The issue of problematic *weqatal* forms has long been the subject of controversy and merits further study. It is worth citing here the foundational principles laid down long ago by Driver (1892:§120):

But the most noticeable use of the perfect and waw consecutive [i.e. the qatal form with preceding waw conversive: AH], though the one least likely to attract attention, is as a frequentative....[T]he reader will find no difficulty in recognizing this force in the perfect and waw after a preceding dominant imperfect: but where no such imperfect precedes, it will irresistibly occur to him to ask why the waw may not be simply copulative instead of consecutive; the more so, inasmuch as owing to the verbs being almost always in the third person, the crucial change of tone cannot take place? Why, he will not unreasonably ask, should it be asserted that וְשָׁפְטוּ *Ex. 18, 26 means and used to judge, when the obvious and natural rendering seems to be simply and judged? why seek to import a far-fetched and improbable sense into such a plain combination of verb and conjunction?*

The answer to such objections will be found in the manner in which the perfect and the waw thus appears. In the first place, it does not occur promiscuously: it is not intermingled with the construction with · וַ in equal proportions, but is commonly found thickly sprinkled over detached areas (e.g. I Sa. 7, 16). Now when a writer abandons a construction which he employs in nine cases out of ten in favour of another, and that, too, under the peculiar circumstances just described, it is, at least, reasonable to infer that he means something by the change. In the second place, our knowledge that the perfect with waw consecutive follows the imperfect as a frequentative, coupled with the analogy presented by its use in the last § [i.e., §119, where Driver refers to the future force of the weqatal form without a preceding yiqtol: AH], raises the suspicion that it may possibly have the same value even when no imperfect precedes. This suspicion in strengthened by the fact that it is constantly found in company with a bare imperfect, even though not actually preceded by it. In the passage from Exodus, for example, ושפטו *is immediately followed by* יביאון *and* ישפטו: *if, then, these verbs are frequentative (as they clearly are), it is reasonable to infer that* ושפטו *is so too. It is inconceivable that in a multitude of passages the change from · וַ to the perfect and waw (in itself a striking variation) should take place concurrently with another change, that, viz. from the perfect (which, as we know from § 85, is the regular alternative for· וַ) to the*

imperfect, without the existence of some common cause accounting for both: but the reason why the imperfect is chosen is patent, it must, therefore, have been the same reason which determined the choice of the perfect and waw. Having once vindicated for this idiom a frequentative force, we shall not hesitate to adopt it in cases where no imperfect follows to precipitate our decision. And the change of tone in Jer. 6, 17 וַהֲקִימֹתִי *is a final confirmation of the justice of our reasoning.*

It is at least worth considering the possibility that the questionable forms in Genesis (and elsewhere) are imperfective in force (either habitual/frequentative or in-process). Note that GKC (1910) is certain that two of the six supposed exceptions, 31.7 (§112h), 37.3 (§112h), are imperfectives and open to the possibility that three more can be read as such: 15.6 (§112ss), 21.25 (§112rr), 34.5 (§112ss) (they take וְהָיָה in 38.5 as a corruption of וְהִיא on the basis of the LXX). Driver, too, thinks 34.5 וְהֶחֱרַשׁ and 37.3 וְעָשָׂה "probably" imperfective (noting the similarity between the latter and 1Sam 2.19) (§133, n. 1), with 31.7 וְהֶחֱלֶף "possibly" such (§132, n. 2). Buth (2003:359-360) argues that ambiguous *weqatal* forms should generally be taken as *waw*-conversive forms. Environments where they may be read as simple *waw+qatal* forms include (a) poetry, (b) *hendiadys* (e.g. אָכַל וְשָׁתָה, Jer 22.15), and (c) Late Biblical Hebrew. Buth notes, however, that even in these environments, the *waw*-conversive *weqatal* form was employed: (a) poetry and (b) *hendiadys* – Isa 19.5 וְנָהָר יֶחֱרָב וְיָבֵשׁ, (c) Late Biblical Hebrew – Eccl 2.24, 3.13 יֹאכַל וְשָׁתָה. Cf. Bergsträsser (1962:§9b-k), who argues that the apparent *weqatal* forms in Gen 15.6, 28.6, 31.7, and 34.5 are textual corruptions in which either a *wayyiqtol* form should be read or the *waw* of the apparent *weqatal* should be erased.

[76] Much has been written on exactly how the *waw*-conversive forms developed. The origin of the *wayyiqtol* form is clear. There were actually two *yiqtol* forms in use, one long and one short. The short form, which had both past and modal force, appears as a past-tense form in BH almost exclusively with the *waw*+doubled prefix, but occasionally without it (e.g. יַצֵּב in Deut 32.8; note that with *yiqtol* forms of strong verbs it is no longer possible to tell whether they were originally short or long). The long form was past/present imperfective and future in force. That the short form was used to denote the past tense in verb-first clauses preceded by a *waw* is, at least from a synchronic perspective, unsurprising, given the future/past imperfective meaning of the *weqatal* form, which would have been indistinguishable from a past-tense *we+qatal* clause in the 3rd person (where no shift in accent takes place). In other words, in a *waw*+verb clause referring to the perfective past, *we+qatal* was not available, because it was already being used to refer to past imperfect and future. The mystery is: *how did the conversive* weqatal *form develop?* The two most common explanations are (a) the view that the BH *weqatal* form developed from an antecedent *weqatal* form used in the apodosis of the Proto-Semitic conditional clause, as in Ugaritic and El Amarna Canaanite; and (b) the view that the BH *weqatal* developed by analogy with the *wayyiqtol* form; a combination of the two processes is also imaginable (see Smith 1991:1-15 for a concise discussion and bibliography). Joüon-Muraoka (1996:§117b, n. 1) notes that the use of *weqatal* to denote the future was not exclusive to BH. Along with the use in Ugaritic and El Amarna Canaanite already noted, it is attested in Phoenician, Moabite, and Old Aramaic. It is important to note, however, that the extent of its use in BH is unparalleled.

It is also worth noting that a discussion of the *waw*-conversive forms concentrating on their origin, but failing to account for their specific synchronic functions in BH must be viewed as incomplete (Goldfajn 1998:28-30). It is not enough to explain how the conversive forms arose alongside the simple forms. It is necessary to explain why a system with both forms persisted for the hundreds of years that it did (see below).

In the same vein, it may be that the widespread scholarly disdain for the traditional label '*waw*-conversive' (Hebrew וי"ו ההפוך) is unwarranted. While the *waw*+doubled prefix element of the *wayyiqtol* form should not, from an historical perspective, be termed 'conversive' (as the short *yiqtol* form already had a past force, even without the addition of the *waw*), such is not at all clear in regard to the *weqatal* form, where, depending on the source and development of the construction, the *waw* in question may really have been considered by writers/speakers of BH as 'converting' the attached *qatal* form (this is the case if analogy with the *wayyiqtol* form played any role in the origin of the *weqatal* form). Further, regarding the *waw* of the *wayyiqtol* form itself: there is rather a great deal of biblical evidence that can be interpreted to indicate that writers/speakers (eventually) came to view the originally short *yiqtol* form of the *wayyiqtol* and the originally long *yiqtol* form as the same form. This is borne out especially in the *wayyiqtol* forms of those weak (עי"י, לי"א, עי"י, לי"י) and *hif'il* verbs where a difference between the two forms is expected, but does not occur (and the number of occurrences of such forms belies an explanation based on textual corruption). The first person singular and plural forms very frequently utilize the long *yiqtol* forms, but so too do a number of second and third person forms, especially those which are לי"י and לי"א. For example, nearly half of the approximately 100 examples of non-apocopated לי"י *wayyiqtol* forms are second and third person forms (with approximately half of these occurring in the books of Kings, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel). The fact that a portion of these latter have been explained on phonological grounds (occurring before guttural letters) in no way contradicts the hypothesis that for certain writers/speakers the two *yiqtol* forms had merged and that, therefore, the *waw* of the *wayyiqtol*

Much of the remainder of this thesis is devoted to the identification of pragmatic functions associated with non-VSO word order and to the classification and description of the specific meanings and effects of such clauses. It is not enough simply to recognize basic and marked word order; it is incumbent upon the analyst to explain why a given change in word order (and, consequently, verb form) takes place. If the attempt to characterize non-VSO clauses as marked and VSO clauses as unmarked is successful, this in itself will constitute one further argument for VSO as the basic, unmarked word order in BH.

Section 2: Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, and BH

It is necessary at this point to lay out a few of the basic linguistic assumptions underlying the present analysis. The two main purposes of this section are (a) to give a general introduction to *discourse analysis* and *pragmatics* and (b) to justify their application in the linguistic analysis of BH. A preliminary point is in order: BH scholars have long argued on the basis of the principles of discourse analysis and pragmatics without, however, so terming their arguments. The concept of *emphasis*, the relation between *sequentiality* and *causality*, arguments involving the psychology of the speaker, even text-critical and source-critical studies of the Biblical text – such pursuits have all involved forays into the fields that are today known as discourse analysis and pragmatics. It is clear that any valid treatment of BH based explicitly on discourse analysis and pragmatics must also take into account the findings of research performed along more traditional lines.

Discourse Analysis

The eminent linguist Noam Chomsky (1980:225) has written: "Linguistic knowledge, of course, extends beyond the level of the sentence. We know how to construct discourses of various sorts, and there are no doubt principles governing discourse structures."[77] In the present work it is assumed that for all languages there exist grammatical rules not only at the level of word formation (morphology) and clause formation (syntax), but at higher text- or

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form may very well have been thought of as converting the semantics of the form. A similar argument can be made in regard to the use of the long *yiqtol* for the jussive, again especially with ל״י verbs.

[77] However, as Meltzer (1995) and Prince (1998) note, there still remains not a little disagreement over whether discourse analysis is primarily a linguistic or literary (i.e. stylistic) domain of inquiry. Note, however, Heimerdinger's (1999:11) critique of the distinction made between linguistic and stylistic evidence in Longacre's (1989) study of the Joseph cycle:

When one turns from the findings of the literary approach to Longacre's analysis and results, the question which inevitably arises is how it is that none of the devices identified by literary critics are captured by Longacre's text-linguistic analysis….One could surmise that this refusal to examine all aspects of language is a deliberate choice: the 'literary' devices could be regarded as belonging to the domain of stylistics and not linguistics. Such a dichotomy, however, has proven not to be valid. Linguists have found that even everyday stories told in conversation display much of the sophistication attributed to artistic prose and that the so-called 'literary' devices are not merely aesthetic or ornamental but perform very distinctive linguistic or pragmatic functions. The very specificity of literary language is being re-examined….Even if one accepts that literary discourse has specific features, from a discourse point of view, stylistic or rhetorical evidence is no different from any other kind of linguistic evidence.

discourse-levels.[78] The study of such high-level grammatical rules is known variously as *discourse analysis*, *textlinguistics*, *discourse criticism*, and, in Hebrew, as חקר השיח. Some of the most useful, albeit problematic, discourse concepts to be applied to BH are the *gestalt* concepts of *foreground* and *background* (along with the various other terms used by scholars to denote something similar: *online/offline*, *mainline/secondary line*, *et cetera*). Certain conceptual and terminological problems in the application of the *foreground/background* dichotomy to BH are discussed below.

It is also assumed that insights gained from discourse studies on other languages may help to illuminate heretofore obscure phenomena in BH. As Bodine (1987; 1995:10) has noted, there are obvious benefits to broadening the philologically-oriented perspective of traditional Comparative Semitics to include more linguistically-oriented studies of phenomena that occur both in BH and in languages of other language groups.[79] For example, discourse linguists have noted various apparently cross-linguistic tendencies dealing with information packaging and organization which may shed light on certain as yet unexplained phenomena in BH.[80]

Unfortunately, though it is widely recognized that any full analysis of BH syntax must look beyond the level of the individual clause to the level of larger pieces of discourse,[81] for a number of reasons, discourse analytical studies have, as yet, exercised only limited influence on mainstream Biblical scholarship and Semitic studies.[82] One reason for this is the relative infancy of discourse analysis, especially with regard to BH. Another is the seeming inability of discourse analysts to delimit the domain and goals of their studies. In their 1981 introduction to textlinguistics De Beaugrande and Dressler could write: "The picture that emerges from these works is diffuse and diversified, because there was no established methodology that would apply to texts in any way comparable to the unified approaches for conventional linguistic objects like the sentence" (14).[83] Finally, it must be admitted that a

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[78] Robert Bergen (1984:vi) presents this assumption more technically: "Surface-structurally marked macrolinguistic features (that is, grammatico-lexical features above the clause level – including sentences, paragraphs, and higher levels) exist in all languages."

[79] Semitists often lament the lack of linguistic methodology in Semitic Studies. Note the especially severe critique of Schramm (1970:258): After citing the 19th century complaint of William Wright (1890), "Besides the results of Indo-European philology, those as yet attained by Semitic grammarians seem scant and dwarfish….It was reserved for men of our own day to take a decided step in advance. Thanks to the studies of a Gesenius and an Ewald, a Roediger and an Olhausen, a Dillman and a Noeldeke, the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages is at last beginning to assume the proportions of a science…." Schramm adds (260) that "Wright's complaint of ninety years ago still stands, but his hopes for new breakthroughs would be more valid today than in his own time. Until recently, the terms linguist and Semitist were almost mutually exclusive." See also Polotsky's (1964:100) lament: "The greatest calamity that has befallen Hebrew is that in the divorce of Semitic studies from theology, Hebrew was assigned to the latter."

[80] Importantly, Bodine (1987) also notes the potential benefit that linguists can receive from philologists.

[81] Note, for example, Waltke and O'Connor's judgment as to the inadequacy of the conventional division of BH linguistics into the study of sounds (phonetics and phonology), word formation (morphology), and clause formation (syntax): "This tripartite division, though traditional, is not ideal either from a linguist's point of view or a Semitist's….Only study of larger chunks allows us to explain, for example, aspects of time reference and narration or rhetorical functions (e.g. linguistic expressions of subservience or sarcasm)" (1990:49).

[82] Take, for example, the decision of Waltke and O'Connor (1990:53-55) to follow "the more traditional path" in their grammar despite the admission that it is "not ideal" (see previous note).

[83] This is due, at least in part, to the fact that scholars of so many different fields are interested in the results of discourse analytical studies. As Prince (1998:448) notes, "it is hard to imagine a full account of human cognition, development, language, behavior, culture, interaction, creativity, pathology, or simulation that does not attend to discourse." Lowery (1995) touches on various theoretical approaches as they pertain to BH grammar.

few well-known discourse studies of BH, due to their superficial treatment of the data, their cursory use of the wealth of BH studies done along more traditional lines, and their uncritical and often rigid application of certain discourse principles,[84] have earned the entire field something of a tarnished reputation (for an example, see the discussions below on the notions of *foreground* and *background*, *sequentiality*, and their relationship to the *waw*-conversive and simple verb forms in BH).

Still, however, researchers sensitive to issues of discourse continue to make contributions to the study of BH in relation to a variety of domains of inquiry: the BH verbal system, the pragmatics of marked word order, the function of extra-clausal elements (see, e.g., Blau 1977b), the strategies of participant reference, the use of discourse particles (see van der Merwe 1994:23-38), the dating of Biblical texts (Rabin 1982), and even the authentication of purportedly ancient inscriptions (Qimron 1998:182-3).

Pragmatics

It is also taken as an axiom here that any full linguistic description of BH (or any other language, for that matter) must analyze data according to the traditional grammatical categories of *morphology*, *semantics*, and *syntax* coupled with the less traditional category of *pragmatics*. *Morphology* (the study of word formation) and *semantics* (the study of word and clause meaning) have long been part of the study of BH.[85] *Syntax* (the study of clause formation), though not a new field of linguistic study, has, according to several scholars, been relatively neglected in relation to BH.[86] As the most recent grammatical discipline to have its principles applied to BH, *pragmatics* requires at least some explanation. First, while both semantics and pragmatics deal with meaning, according to Leech (1983:6) it is best to view them as separate, but complementary, levels. He usefully compares semantics and pragmatics as follows: if semantics answers questions of the form 'What does X mean?', then pragmatics answers questions of the form 'What did you mean by X?' Pragmatics, then,

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[84] For example, problems with Longacre's notions of foreground and background (see especially his 1989 book on the Joseph cycle) as applied to BH are discussed below. Niccacci's monograph (1990) presents a system which is incapable of distinguishing between the various functional types of fronted elements. More recently, Heimerdinger's study (1999) attempts to account for all fronted elements on the basis of information structure (focus and/or the (re)activation of referents), denying any link whatsoever between the wayyiqtol form and sequentiality.

[85] Though, perhaps due to the religious nature of the Biblical text, semantic analysis of BH has often been performed according to principles that would be unacceptable in the analysis of another language. Note the concise description of the 'state of the art' by Rabin (1970:315): "Although the Biblical corpus would seem to offer to the semanticist a field of work comparable to Latin and Greek, no discipline of Hebrew semantics exists which could be compared with the work done in those languages. One reason is no doubt the overestimation of etymology as a key to meaning, another the pre-occupation with the theological meaning of Hebrew words and tendency to search for 'basic' meanings with religious implications." For detailed critiques and discussions of the application of semantic analysis to BH see Barr (1961) and Silva (1983).

[86] Indicative of the lateness with which scholars began systematic analysis of BH syntax is the fact that Rabin (308-16) treats phonology, morphology, lexicography, semantics, but not syntax in his 1970 essay on current trends in BH linguistics. See also Ullendorff (1970:265), Kutscher (1982:85-6), Bodine (1992), Lowery (1995:105ff), and van der Merwe (1997). Waltke and O'Connor's (1990) *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, while a veritable goldmine of references (with the exception of research written in Hebrew) and examples, does not, even according to the authors' own stated goal – "The aim of this volume is not novelty" (x) – break new ground.

deals with the non-semantic meaning expressed by an utterance.[87] A pragmatic approach to linguistic analysis thus presupposes three types of information communicated by a clause: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. Dik (1980:3) defines each of these as follows:

1.   Syntactic functions specify the perspective from which the "state of affairs" is presented in the linguistic expression.
2.   Semantic functions specify the roles which the referents of the terms involved play within the "state of affairs" designated by the predication in which they occur.
3.   Pragmatic functions specify the informational status of the constituents within the wider communicative setting in which they are used.

The syntactic functions of Subject and Object along with the semantic roles of Agent, Goal, and Recipient, enable the grammatical differentiation of linguistic expressions that express the same predication, such as in this example from Dik (1981:18):

(1)   John (AgSubj) gave the book (GoObj) to Bill (Rec).
(2)   John (AgSubj) gave Bill (RecObj) the book (Go).
(3)   The book (GoSubj) was given to Bill (Rec) by John (Ag).
(4)   Bill (RecSubj) was given the book (Go) by John (Ag).

But a grammatical description limited to the syntax and semantics of an utterance does not necessarily capture all of the information communicated by the utterance. Take for example the isolated sentence:

(5)   John gave this old book to a girl in the library.

The same sentence can be made to express more information without changing its essential structure (boldface type represents sentence stress):

(6)   **John** gave this old book to a girl in the library.
(7)   John gave this old **book** to a girl in the library.
(8)   John gave this old book to a **girl** in the library.
(9)   John gave this old book to a girl in the **library**.

In each of the sentences (6) through (10), the stress on the word in boldface type communicates information that is not communicated in sentence (5). In each case, the information would seem to be contrastive, e.g., **John** *(not Bill) gave this old book to a girl in the library*. Says Dik (1981:127): "Since not all the sentences…are synonymous in the sense of providing precisely the same information to the Addressee, their differences cannot be regarded as a matter of free or stylistic variation." The pattern is describable according to cognitive factors whose influence on the surface-structure of the utterance is predictable. The difference between sentence (5) and sentences (6) though (10) and, in fact, among sentences (6) through (10), properly constitutes an area of linguistic (and not just stylistic) inquiry. However, it is noteworthy that the surface-level marking related to cognitive status is

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[87] Lyons (1981:139-40) characterizes semantics as dealing with lexical, sentence, and grammatical meaning. Pragmatics, on the other hand, he links to utterance meaning. "The meaning of an utterance includes, but is not exhausted by, the meaning of the sentence that is uttered. The rest of the meaning is contributed by a variety of factors that may be referred to, loosely, as contextual….[T]he notion of sentence-meaning is arguably dependent, both logically and methodologically, upon the notion of utterance-meaning, so that one cannot give a full account of sentence-meaning without relating sentences, in principle, to their possible contexts of utterance."

not describable in terms of the grammatical categories of syntax and semantics alone. The need for a pragmatic dimension is clear.

Pragmatics takes into account both the linguistic and extra-linguistic context of an utterance. According to Yule (1985:98) the linguistic context (also called *co-text*) of a word is "the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence." Brown and Yule (1983:46) note, however, that co-text includes much more than the words of the immediate phrase or sentence; all of the previous discourse affects how a given clause will be understood. And clauses whose interpretation is affected by previous discourse are not limited to those with obvious deictic reference to aforementioned elements. Brown and Yule (1983:46) argue that "any sentence other than the first in a fragment of discourse, will have the whole of its interpretation forcibly constrained by the preceding text, not just those phrases which obviously and specifically refer to the preceding text, like the *aforementioned*." Yule (1985:99) exemplifies the importance of co-text with reference to the English homonym *bank*.

> *How do we usually know which meaning is intended in a particular sentence? We usually do so on the basis of linguistic context. If the word* bank *is used in a sentence together with words like* steep *or* overgrown*, we have no problem deciding which type of 'bank' is meant. By the same token, when we hear someone say that he has to "get to the bank to cash a check", we know from the linguistic context which type of bank is intended.*[88]

Pragmatics is also concerned with the use or function of utterances in their extra-linguistic context. The importance of extra-linguistic context in the interpretation of clausal meaning can be illustrated by the following example from Heimerdinger (1999:35-36). The information expressed by the sentence "The light is on in the sitting room" is different depending on who says it, to whom, and in what situation: husband to wife after returning from a restaurant at 11:30 at night (worry), father to son (rebuke or order), Hercule Poirot at the scene of a burglary (explanation). The importance of situational context also helps to explain why the expected response to the question "Do you happen to know the time?" is not the normal *yes* or *no* answer to an interrogative, but the fulfillment of a request.

Finally, in a pragmatic approach to language the communicative process is necessarily viewed as something more than just the encoding of information into lexical symbols and the subsequent decoding of those symbols. Rather, pragmatics recognizes that successful communication requires a substantial reliance on context (both linguistic and extra-linguistic) and inferencing.[89]

Pragmatics and BH Word Order

The need for a pragmatically sensitive approach to the issue of BH word order variation arises, not surprisingly, from the inadequacy of traditional grammatical approaches that limit

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[88] Biblical scholars often make use of co-text to interpret difficult words or homonyms. Take, for example, the case of תְּרֹעֵם in Ps 2.9. Most modern translations interpret this form to mean 'shatter them', from the root רע״ע, but the NIV, in agreement with the LXX and the Vulgate, renders it 'rule over them', reflecting the root רע״י. While the isolated consonantal form is ambiguous, both the vocalization and the linguistic context of the following half-line, כְּכְלִי יוֹצֵר תְּנַפְּצֵם support the former interpretation. See, e.g., Delitzsch (1867:96), Dahood (1965:13), and Craigie (1983:64); cf. Briggs and Briggs (1906:16).

[89] See especially Sperber and Wilson (1995) and, with specific regard to BH, Heimerdinger (1999:37-39).

analysis to morphological, syntactical, and semantic explanations.[90] Consider, for example, the differences between the following (hypothetical) BH sentences.

(1) וַיִּתֵּן יהוה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ לְאַבְרָהָם
(2) וַיהוה נָתַן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ לְאַבְרָהָם
(3) וּלְאַבְרָהָם נָתַן יהוה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ
(4) וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ נָתַן יהוה לְאַבְרָהָם
(5) וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ לְאַבְרָהָם נָתַן יהוה

Each sentence expresses the same basic syntactic and semantic meaning, and yet each can also be used within a specific co-text and/or context to communicate meaning that goes beyond the level of syntax and semantics. First, from the perspective of syntax, there is no difference in the five clauses: each is syndetic (joined to the preceding clause by the conjunction *waw*), each has an overt subject יהוה, each has a past/perfective form of the *qal* verb נָתַן, each has the direct object אֶת-הָאָרֶץ and the indirect object לְאַבְרָהָם. The clauses are, thus, syntactically indistinguishable.[91]

With regard to semantics, the situation is somewhat more complex. First, many scholars would probably argue that the fronted objects in sentences (3) thru (5) (and perhaps the fronted subject in (2)) have been preposed for the sake of emphasis. However, it is noteworthy that emphasis is not a semantic role. This fact alone is sufficient to demonstrate the inadequacy of a purely semantic approach to distinguishing the information communicated by clauses (1) – (5). Second, with specific regard to sentences (1) and (2), it is undoubtedly possible to describe the difference between *wayyiqtol* and *we*+subject+*qatal* in terms of semantics *in some cases*. Specifically, the *wayyiqtol* form is known to be associated with *sequentiality* and the *we*+subject+*qatal* formation with *non-sequentiality*, or, more specifically, *anteriority*, that relationship between actions or events which in English is conveyed by the past-perfect.[92] However, it is essential to understand this relationship between form and meaning as *indirect*. That there exists a meaningful correlation between *wayyiqtol* forms and sequentiality, on the one hand, and between subject+*qatal* forms and the past-perfect, on the other, seems clear. However, the correlation is not one-hundred percent in either relationship. Though the *wayyiqtol* form generally relates sequential events, it does not always do so. Likewise, SV word order does not always express anteriority. Consider, for example, Gen 31.33-34:

31.33-34 (1)וַיָּבֹא לָבָן בְּאֹהֶל יַעֲקֹב וּבְאֹהֶל לֵאָה וּבְאֹהֶל שְׁתֵּי הָאֲמָהֹת (2)וְלֹא מָצָא (3)וַיֵּצֵא מֵאֹהֶל לֵאָה (4)וַיָּבֹא בְּאֹהֶל רָחֵל: (5)וְרָחֵל לָקְחָה אֶת-הַתְּרָפִים (6)וַתְּשִׂמֵם בְּכַר הַגָּמָל (7)וַתֵּשֶׁב עֲלֵיהֶם (8)וַיְמַשֵּׁשׁ לָבָן אֶת-כָּל-הָאֹהֶל (9)וְלֹא מָצָא׃

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[90] For a fuller explanation of why scholars have turned to pragmatic and discourse analytical approaches to solve problems of BH grammar see van der Merwe (1997).

[91] See also Goldfajn (1998:45-6).

[92] The idea that SV word order with the *qatal* form conveys *anteriority* was recognized at least as early as Rashi (1040-1105 CE) on Gen 4.1 (see below). Driver (1892:22) notes that the *qatal* form can have pluperfect meaning and also explicitly connects the pluperfect with *subject+qatal* word order: "The impf. with וּ is, in the first place, certainly not the usual idiom chosen by Hebrew writers for the purpose of expressing a plupf.: their usual habit, when they wish to do this, is to *interpose* the subject between the conjunction and the verb, which then lapses into the *perfect…*" (1892:§76). Likewise, GKC (1910) links both the *qatal* form (§106f) and SV word order (§142a-b) to anteriority. See also Bergsträsser (1918-29:§6d), as cited in Moshavi (2000:29, n. 70). Kutscher (1982:44) writes: "The past perfect, for example, is indicated in the following way by the subject preceding the predicate, e.g., וְרָחֵל לָקְחָה 'and Rachel had taken' (Gen. 31, 34)." See also Williams (1967:§162(3), 572(4)), Zevit (1997).

Wayyiqtol forms (1), (3)-(4), and (8) depict sequential events on the main story-line. The same is true for the לא+*qatal* forms (2) and (9).[93] Even the two *wayyiqtol* clauses (6) and (7) relate sequential events relative to the preceding verb form. That the SV word order with *qatal* in (5) denotes a retreat in story-time is clear from the context. Rachel could not have hid her father's idols after he had already entered her tent to look for them. In this case, then, the difference between VS and SV clauses can accurately be described in semantics terms. However, even here the situation is not as simple as it may at first seem. First of all, in relation to the chronology of the narrative line of events the two *wayyiqtol* forms (6) and (7) have exactly the same past-perfect force as the preceding *qatal* form (in English and several other European languages). They express sequential actions with respect to the subject+*qatal* form in (5), but past-perfect actions with respect to the main story-line. Traditionally, it was argued on this basis that the *wayyiqtol* form *induced* meaning from the preceding (often *qatal*) form. That this view is overly simplistic is clear, however, from the very next clause (8), where a *wayyiqtol* form does *not* induce the past-perfect force of the preceding verbs. Only the change in subject, coupled with the context, allows the reader to understand the *wayyiqtol* form וַיְמַשֵּׁשׁ in (8) as a return to the sequential narrative.

Furthermore, *wayyiqtol* forms are often used to recount events which are in no way sequential. For example, Buth (1995:86) notes the non-sequentiality of the *wayyiqtol* forms in Jon 1.16-2.1:

Jon 1.16-2.1   **וַיִּירְא֧וּ** הָאֲנָשִׁים יִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה אֶת-יְהוָה **וַיִּזְבְּחוּ**-זֶבַח לַיהוָה **וַיִּדְּר֖וּ** נְדָרִים׃ **וַיְמַ֥ן** יְהוָה
דָּג גָּדוֹל לִבְלֹעַ אֶת-יוֹנָה **וַיְהִ֤י** יוֹנָה בִּמְעֵי הַדָּג שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים וּשְׁלֹשָׁה לֵילוֹת׃

Considering what was involved in performing a sacrifice, it is highly unlikely that sailors could have done it on a boat. Says Buth:

> *The sacrifice of the sailors took a bit of time and appears to have followed the calming of the sea. The appointing of the big fish could have take place before or during the time of sacrifice, perhaps during the storm itself. In English we might mark the ambiguous temporal relationship between the sailors' actions and the Lord's appointment with "meanwhile" if we were concerned with temporal precision, i.e., "Meanwhile, the LORD (had) appointed a big fish." The Hebrew storyteller recounts the appointing of the big fish as though it were the next event in the story, but we must not assume that absolute sequentiality was intended.*

In other words, that the author of Jonah conceived of the appointment of the great fish to swallow Jonah as subsequent to the sacrifice and vow-taking of the sailors is almost unthinkable, and this despite the fact that he has chosen to report all the events with the *wayyiqtol* form.

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[93] Incidentally, because the *wayyiqtol* form cannot occur with the negative לא, Longacre (1989:76-7, chart on 81, 82), basing himself on Grimes (1975), argues that negative clauses are, by definition, non-events, which, therefore, cannot be part of the main story-line. As support, he cites Gen 45.1 וְלֹא-יָכֹל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכֹל and 40.23 וְלֹא-זָכַר שַׂר-הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת-יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכָּחֵהוּ, in each of which, הַנִּצָּבִים עָלָיו וַיִּקְרָא הוֹצִיאוּ כָל-אִישׁ מֵעָלָי Longacre argues, the negated action is merely a paraphrase of the action reported in the following *wayyiqtol* form. Longacre is, however, sensitive to the distinction between these "negative antonym paraphrase" clauses and other, more significant negations, which he terms "momentous negations" (see Longacre 1989:81 (chart), n. b and 82). Elsewhere (1994:68), for instance, he explicitly comments: "Certainly in Biblical Hebrew (and possibly in all languages) there are momentous negations which move a story forward. Gen 8.12 is an example of this: וְלֹא-יָסְפָה שׁוּב-אֵלָיו עוֹד…. It could be argued that the failure of the dove to return to Noah is significant in moving the story forward…." The negation וְלֹא מָצָא, used twice in the present passage (Gen 31.33, 34), should also be thought of as reporting significant, story-line events.

Buth (1995:87) notes another, more extreme, example of the mismatch between the *wayyiqtol* form and sequentiality in Jdg 11.1:

Jdg 11.1 וְיִפְתָּח הַגִּלְעָדִי הָיָה גִּבּוֹר חַיִל וְהוּא בֶּן-אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה וַיּוֹלֶד גִּלְעָד אֶת-יִפְתָּח :

Buth argues that the clause וַיּוֹלֶד גִּלְעָד אֶת-יִפְתָּח "is certainly a temporal back-reference since a warrior's birth happens before he becomes a warrior." Clearly, the *wayyiqtol* form cannot be said to 'mark' sequential events.[94]

Moreover, X+*qatal* structures, for their part, do not unambiguously mark non-sequential events. Take, for instance, Jonah 1.1-4:

Jon 1.1-4 [1]וַיְהִי דְּבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יוֹנָה בֶן-אֲמִתַּי לֵאמֹר : קוּם לֵךְ אֶל-נִינְוֵה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרָא עָלֶיהָ כִּי-עָלְתָה רָעָתָם לְפָנָי : [2]וַיָּקָם יוֹנָה לִבְרֹחַ תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה [3]וַיֵּרֶד יָפוֹ [4]וַיִּמְצָא אֳנִיָּה בָּאָה תַרְשִׁישׁ [5]וַיִּתֵּן שְׂכָרָהּ [6]וַיֵּרֶד בָּהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה : [7]**וַיהוָה הֵטִיל** רוּחַ-גְּדוֹלָה אֶל-הַיָּם [8]וַיְהִי סַעַר-גָּדוֹל בַּיָּם [9]**וְהָאֳנִיָּה** חִשְּׁבָה לְהִשָּׁבֵר :

The *wayyiqtol* forms (1)-(6) and (8) all narrate sequential events, but so, too, do the two subject+*qatal* structures in (7) and (10): וַיהוָה הֵטִיל רוּחַ גְּדוֹלָה אֶל הַיָּם and וְהָאֳנִיָּה חִשְּׁבָה לְהִשָּׁבֵר. The SV word order in these two clauses cannot be said to mark anteriority.

So too, the fronted subject in Gen 31.47 has nothing to do with anteriority.

31.47 וַיִּקְרָא-לוֹ לָבָן יְגַר שָׂהֲדוּתָא **וְיַעֲקֹב** קָרָא לוֹ גַּלְעֵד

Finally, Rashi's explanation of וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת-חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ in Gen 4.1, which he explicitly links to word order – "כבר קודם עניין שלמעלה, קודם שחטא ושנטרד מגן עדן, וכן ההריון והלידה; שאם כתב 'וידע האדם', נשמע שאחר שנטרד היו לו בנים" (= "already prior to the above matter, before he had sinned and been expelled from the garden of Eden, and likewise the pregnancy and the birth; for if he had written וידע האדם, it would have sounded as if he had had children after he had been expelled") – is, at the very least, suspect (see below).

There simply is no one-to-one correspondence between form and precise temporal semantic value. Both forms generally mark the past, but the *wayyiqtol* form with its concomitant VS word order cannot be said to unambiguously 'mark' semantically sequential events; likewise, the subject+*qatal* structure does not unambiguously 'mark' the past-perfect tense. Of course, one may be tempted to argue that there is no definite linguistic difference at all between the two forms, that the structures in question simply constitute two ways of conveying the same basic information, and that the choice between verb form and word order is purely stylistic. For example, some scholars appeal to the notion of chiasmus, thereby attempting to account for the interchange of *wayyiqtol* and subject+*qatal* structures on the grounds of aesthetics. While such a view should be entertained as a genuine possibility, surely it must be left as an explanation of last resort and applied only when all other avenues of explanation have been exhausted. The rules of scientific inquiry demand that an objective explanation be sought. It would be bad linguistics to attribute a given phenomenon to the personal stylistic preferences of the BH writers without first having tried all reasonable linguistic explanations of the phenomenon.

In summary, it seems clear that the BH verbal clause expresses more than just syntactic and semantic information, that there exists a further pragmatic level of information as well,

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[94] Note, for example, the following *wayyiqtol* forms from Genesis which do not mark sequential actions with respect to the event reported in the immediately preceding clause(s): וַיְהִי 24.30, וַיִּקַּח 24.61, וַיִּבֶז 25.34, 30.27 וַתָּמָת 35.19, וַיְבָרֲכֵנִי.

and that word-order variation is one of the principle means of communicating this information. Furthermore, because sentences that are indistinguishable in terms of syntax and semantics nevertheless communicate different information, word order variation cannot be attributed *a priori* to style. Driver's words regarding the use of the *weqatal* form are applicable to the difference between VS *wayyiqtol* and *X+qatal* as well: "Now when a writer abandons a construction which he employs in nine cases out of ten in favour of another… it is, at least, reasonable to infer that he means *something* by the change."

Sensitivity to pragmatic considerations can also aid in the identification and categorization of different sorts of *X+verb* constructions. Scholars and linguists dealing with BH have struggled to provide a unified explanation for the great number of SV and XV clauses in the Bible. In this sense, as was noted above, they have long been engaged in discourse analysis and pragmatics, though they may not have labeled their studies such. The connection between *X+qatal* and anteriority has already been mentioned. As was said above, that the *X+qatal* form does not uniformly 'mark' the past-perfect is clear. Hence the need for alternative explanations, perhaps the most popular of which has been emphasis. Thus Driver (1892:§76, n. 1) in regard to the order subject+*qatal*: "It will be understood that the pf. in this position does not always bear a plupf. signification: it is often so placed simply for the purpose of giving emphasis to the subject." In some of the older grammars, the syntactic nature of the clause-initial element did not matter; clause-initial verbs were considered just as 'emphatic' as clause-initial subjects and objects. Such, incidentally, was the explanation for the dominance of VS word order in BH.[95] More in line with the concepts of modern linguistics and language typology, Muraoka (1985:30) rightly abandons the idea that clause-initial verbs receive some sort of 'natural' emphasis:

> *We basically accept the widely held view that the relative order of S and V in the Hebrew verbal clauses is normally V-S. In this arrangement neither S nor V receives special emphasis. …[W]e are not interested in discussing the theory that this order is normal because action is the most important piece of information to be conveyed by this sentence type called verbal clause. In other words, by saying that V-S is the normal word-order we do not mean that it is logically or intrinsically so, but simply statistically.*[96]

That all clause-initial non-verbal elements are in some way emphasized remains, however, a basic principle for many scholars. In his introductory grammar, for example, Kelley (1992:87) gives VS as the "normal" word order in Hebrew verbal clauses, noting that a different word order is used "to emphasize the part of speech that is placed first." The non-VS examples he lists include preverbal subjects, objects, and an adverbial of place. Niccacci (1990:28) also views preverbal elements as bearing 'emphasis.'[97] Ross (2001:§54.2) claims that "Prominence may be given to another part of the sentence if it is placed before the

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[95] See, for example, Davidson (1901:§105), "In the verbal sent. the idea expressed by the verb is the emphatic element, and in ordinary calm discourse the order is - pred., subj.," and GKC (1910:§142, p. 455) "In the verbal-clause proper the principal emphasis rests upon the action which proceeds from (or is experienced by) the subject, and accordingly the verb naturally precedes."

[96] Muraoka quotes Jespersen (1924:147): "But it should always be remembered that word-order in actual language is not exclusively determined by psychological reasons, but is often purely conventional and determined by idiomatic rules peculiar to the language in question and independent of the will of the individual speaker."

[97] "It can accordingly be stated that the typical feature of the CNC [= Compound Noun Clause: AH] is to have the finite verb in second position within the clause. Its function is to emphasize the element 'x' which precedes the finite verb (subject, object or circumstance of the act)." See also Greenberg (1965:§27.5-7).

verb," but also warns that "other reasons for the rearrangement of the word order (such as poetic parallelism and balance) must also be considered."

While classifying preverbal constituents as 'emphasized' may be popular in introductory grammars, many recent scholars have criticized the term as both vague and subjective. Muraoka (1985:i) sees use of the term 'emphasis' as problematic, noting that it is often used "without much thought being given to precisely what is meant by the term, nor, more importantly, to the question why the writer or the speaker possibly felt the need for an emphatic form or construction." Buth (1999:95-6, n. 40) concurs: "One does not need to read much text before discovering that emphasis is a misleading nomenclature for fronted constituents, yet a reader cannot just throw up hands in despair and treat word order functions as unrecoverable." Moshavi (2000:11) observes: "Without a precise definition of the concept of emphasis, it can be hard to tell if the initial element in an inverted clause is really emphasized, or if we perceive the emphasis only because that element is placed first." Bandstra (1991:113) contends that "we need a more refined and linguistically grounded approach in order to give definition to what easily remains just a psychological notion."

Consider the following examples from Jdg 1.1b-2a (see also 20.18) and Gen 4.4b-5a:

Jdg 1.1b-2a וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּיהוה לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָּנוּ אֶל-הַכְּנַעֲנִי
בַּתְּחִלָּה לְהִלָּחֶם בּוֹ ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יהוה **יְהוּדָה** יַעֲלֶה

Gen 4.4b-5a וַיִּשַׁע יהוה אֶל-הֶבֶל וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ ׃ **וְאֶל-קַיִן וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ** לֹא שָׁעָה

It is likely that both the fronted subject יְהוּדָה in Jdg 1.2a and the fronted object וְאֶל-קַיִן וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ in Gen 4.5a should receive some sort of vocal emphasis when read. However, this explains nothing as to the precise function of each fronted element within its specific context and co-text. In other words, while the label 'emphasis' may describe *how* an element ought to be read, it offers no explanation as to *why* it ought to be read that way. Furthermore, the label 'emphasis' is inadequate to capture the difference in function between the two fronted elements. The clause-initial יְהוּדָה in Jdg 1.2a is the answer to a question of identification. It is marked by fronting as the salient or most important information of the clause within this specific context and co-text, i.e. the one piece of information not presupposed by the question. The clause-initial וְאֶל-קַיִן וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ in Gen 4.5a, on the other hand, cannot be characterized as providing the most salient or important information; its contents are presupposed by what comes before (the reader knows that both brothers have brought an offering). In this clause, the most important or salient information is represented not by the fronted element, but by the negation of the verb שָׁעָה, which serves as the point of contrast relative to which the two brothers and their respective offerings are compared. Said in another way, the main point of the entire clause is not Cain and his offering, but how the LORD responded to it. While it is not wrong to argue that both fronted elements are in some sense 'emphatic', in that each can plausibly be read with some form of sentence stress, neither is it very helpful. More precise terminology is needed.

Finally, consider the very first example discussed by Niccacci (1990:23), from Gen 3.13b הַנָּחָשׁ הִשִּׁיאַנִי. Niccacci views the fronted subject here as emphatic, translating with the cleft-sentence "It is the serpent who tricked me." While this reading is possible, it is nevertheless unlikely. Holmstedt (2002:139, n. 19) correctly observes that the salient information in the clause הַנָּחָשׁ הִשִּׁיאַנִי is provided not by the subject, but by the verb. The snake is presupposed; its deception of the woman is not.[98]

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[98] Niccacci is likely (and understandably) influenced by the *focal* word order of the immediately preceding verse, Gen 3.12, where the man projects his guilt on the woman with the words הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הִוא נָתְנָה-לִּי מִן-הָעֵץ וָאֹכֵל. In this clause, the 'resumptive' pronoun הִוא is clearly *focal*. The fronted הַנָּחָשׁ in Gen 3.13, on

Terminology

The terminological situation related to both discourse analysis and pragmatics is plagued by confusion. This confusion frustrates not only those BH scholars who seek to apply discourse and pragmatic concepts to BH, but also the very discourse linguists who promulgate the terminology. Many articles on discourse analysis begin with a complaint of the terminological problem, followed by an apology in which the linguist laments either having to add new terminology or having to redefine existing terminology. The main issue is how best to refer to the different pragmatic roles of an utterance. Different sets of terms have been proposed: *subject-predicate*,[99] *foundation-core* (Malthesius 1948 [1939]:234), *theme-rheme* (Firbas 1964; Halliday 1967), *topic-comment* (Li and Thompson 1976; Comrie 1989:3.3), *given-new* (Halliday 1967), *topic-focus* (Dik 1981:), *presupposition-focus* (Lambrecht 1995; Prince 1998), *et cetera*. Compounding the problem of this profusion in terms is the promiscuousness and inconsistency with which they have been used. Researchers often employ a variety of terms to refer to a single phenomenon, or *vice-versa*, employ a single term to refer to a variety of different phenomena. The problem is due in part to differing linguistic theories, in part to the real complexities of the issues under discussion, and in part to the diverse research goals of the linguists engaged in pragmatic analysis. The problem is so vexing, that Levinson, in his well-known textbook on pragmatics (1983:x), entirely avoids the issue of *topic* and *comment*, arguably one of the most central issues in pragmatics, complaining: "Terminological profusion and confusion, and underlying conceptual vagueness, plague the relevant literature

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the other hand, is more similar in pragmatic function to the extra-clausal constituent הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי in Gen 3.12. The serpent is still to blame, but the salient point of the clause is its deception of the woman. Unfortunately, Holmstedt, for his part, is only partially correct. While he correctly identifies the fronted subject הַנָּחָשׁ in 3.13 as non-focal, because he adopts a basic SV word order for the BH verbal clause, he incorrectly views the word order as pragmatically neutral. According to the theory set forth in the present work (see below) the SV word order here is marked, as is often the case at the onset of direct speech, either to signal the opening of a new discourse unit or to specially mark the topic of discussion.

[99] Garvin (1963:503, n. 11) comments on the conceptual evolution from the 19th-century concepts of "psychological subject" and "psychological predicate" to the 20th-century Prague School terms "theme" and "rheme." Gundel (1977:13) explains how the terms *subject* and *predicate* evolved from essentially pragmatic concepts into surface level syntactic categories:

It has been a fundamental principle of grammar since the time of Plato and Aristotle that sentences are divided into two major categories – a subject and a predicate.

The system of categorical propositions of Aristotelian logic recognized four basic forms of statement making formulae.

A. All x is y
E. No x is y
I. Some x is y
O. Some x is not y

where variables x and y are referred to as terms. Type A also includes singular statements like (1) and type E the negation of such statements.

(1) Socrates is a man

In any given sentence exemplifying one of these formulae the first term is called the subject and the second term the predicate. Thus, it may be said that as originally conceived by the ancient philosophers the terms subject and predicate referred roughly to that part of the sentence which names what the statement is about (the subject) and that part of the sentence which says something about it (the predicate).

These notions, which were first defined on the basis of simple categorical statements like (1), were adopted in traditional grammar and generalized to sentences of more complex form where they became associated with surface grammatical categories and foundations.

to a point where little may be salvageable." Though lack of space precludes an attempt to sort out problems that even a noted textbook avoids, a few words are nevertheless in order.

The Inadequacy of Syntactic Subject and Predicate

A traditional grammatical approach relates to clauses in terms of *subject* and *predicate*, where these terms are generally said to refer to syntactic components. For example, in the isolated sentence *He broke the window*, *He* is the subject, the entity about which an assertion is made, and *broke the window*, comprised of a verb and a direct object, is the predicate, the assertion made about the subject. However, sentences are very seldom uttered in isolation. Consider the same sentence as a reply to the following questions (where italicized letters indicate marked sentence stress).

  (a) What did he do? He broke the window.
  (b) What did he break? He broke *the window*.
  (c) Who broke the window? *He* broke the window.

As was noted long ago, the definition of what a given clause is "about" is often context-dependent.[100] For example, only in the informational proposition represented by the question and response in (a) does the syntactic subject express the entity about which an assertion is made and the syntactic predicate express that assertion.[101] In contrast, the proposition expressed by the question and the response in (b) can be usefully reworded as follows:

  (d) The thing that he broke was *the window*.

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[100] Jespersen (146) could write as early as 1924:

> *Another definition that is frequently given is that the subject is what you talk about, and the predicate is what is said about this subject. This is true about many, perhaps most sentences, though the man in the street would probably be inclined to say that it does not help him very much, for in such a sentence as "John promised Mary a gold ring" he would say that there are four things of which something is said, and which might therefore all of them be said to be "subjects," namely (1) John, (2) a promise, (3) Mary and (4) a ring. This popular definition, according to which subject is identified with subject-matter or topic, is really unsatisfactory….*

It is also clear that identification of the topic or subject-matter of a sentence such as John promised Mary a gold ring is highly dependent on both the preceding and ensuing discourse. For example, reconsider the topic of this sentence given the following potential preceding clauses:

> *(a)The students were all incorrigible romantics. John promised Mary a gold ring.*
> *(b)All the men adored Mary. John promised Mary a gold ring.*
> *(c) There are many ways to seduce a woman. John promised Mary a gold ring.*
> *(d)Men are always offering women useless baubles. John promised Mary a gold ring.*

The respective discourse topics given each of the potential preceding clauses may be construed as: (a) the students, (b) Mary, (c) methods of seduction, and (d) useless baubles.

The ensuing discourse is also important for the identification of discourse topic, because an item can be fronted as topic for a large span of discourse or for one clause only. For example, if the sentence *I like pizza with olives, but anchovies I detest* is followed by the sentence *I also like mushrooms*, the clause *but anchovies I hate* may be said to have a fronted clausal (contrastive) topic, but the overall discourse topic may be something like *pizza toppings that I like*. If, however, the same sentence *I like pizza with olives, but anchovies I detest* is followed by something like *They're too salty* or some other reference to the anchovies, then it is reasonable to argue that *anchovies* has become the discourse topic.

[101] For a discussion on how such questions and answers represent abstract propositions see Lambrecht (1995:209-10).

Rewritten in this way it becomes clear that the entity in response (b) about which an assertion is made is not the syntactic subject *he*, but the heretofore unidentified *thing that he broke*. Moreover, the specific assertion made about that entity in response (b) is limited to the direct object *the window*. In other words, while at the level of the isolated clause the syntactic subject and predicate seem to constitute, respectively, the entity about which an assertion is made and the assertion made about that entity, given the specific context of response (b) (i.e. the question for which it provides the answer), the marked sentence stress indicates that a distinction must be made between the syntactic subject and the *topic* (i.e. the entity about which an assertion is made), on the one hand, and between the syntactic predicate and the *focus* (i.e. the marked assertion made about the topic), on the other.[102] There is thus a need for an analytical approach that takes into account the potential distinction between syntactic subject and predicate, on the one hand, and pragmatic topic and focus, on the other.

Notice that the propositions expressed by the questions and responses in (a) and (c) respectively can also be reworded so as to make the asserted material clear:

(e) The thing that he did was (to) break the window.
(f) The person who broke the window was *he*.

The specific assertion made in (f) provides incontrovertible evidence that the syntactic subject of response (c) above does not coincide with the topic, but with the focus.

The relationship between sentence (a) and (e) is also of interest. In these two clauses, the assertions are equal. This is important, because it shows that in the unmarked clause the syntactic subject normally coincides with the entity about which an assertion is made and the syntactic predicate with the assertion made about that entity.[103] Only in certain specific

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[102] Traditionally, the assertion made about a *topic* has been referred to as the *comment*. For reasons to be explained in the next section, a distinction is made here between a clause's syntactic predicate and its informational assertion only if the latter is marked. The relationship between the terms *predicate*, *comment*, and *focus* is thus as follows: the *predicate* is the syntactic component of a clause made up of the verb and its complements and adjuncts; the *comment* is the informational content of the predicate in the unmarked clause, i.e. where the syntactic predicate is coterminous with the informational assertion; the *focus* is that element, be it the subject, predicate, or only part of the predicate, specially marked as the most important informational element.

[103] On the unmarked nature of *topic-focus* constructions Lambrecht (1995:296) notes: "The status of the predicate as the unmarked focus domain correlates with the status of the topic-comment structure as the unmarked pragmatic articulation." According to Lambrecht (*ibid.*) there are two clause types that constitute exceptions to this norm: *event-reporting* and *presentational* clauses. Neither type of clause can be characterized as having a *topic* about which an assertion is made. The event-reporting clause has no overt *topic*. Rather, the entire clause constitutes an assertion made in relation to a topic not explicitly mentioned in the utterance. This can be illustrated with the following example (adapted from Lambrecht 1995:307-8):

Why didn't she come to work today?
(a) She's ill.
(b) Her husband died.

In response (a) *she* continues as discourse topic and the unmarked focus rests on the predicate. In (b), however, given the minimal context provided by the question, there is no continuation of discourse topic. *Her husband* is brought up 'out of nowhere', as it were. Further, by rewording the proposition expressed by the combination of the question and response in (b) as *She didn't come to work today because her husband died*, it becomes clear that the assertion made in (b) is composed of the entire clause and not merely a part. For this reason, Lambrecht refers to this sort of clause as *sentence-focus*.

In a presentational clause, on the other hand, a *topical* entity is introduced, but no real assertion is made about it. Lambrecht (39) explains: "This construction is called 'presentational' because its communicative function is not to predicate a property of a given entity but to introduce a new entity into discourse." Lambrecht (*ibid.*) also notes that languages typically allow only certain, usually intransitive, verbs, like *be* and *come*, in presentational clauses.

contexts (such as responses (b) and (c) above) is marking (here by means of sentence stress) necessary to indicate that the syntactic subject does not coincide with the topic (i.e., the entity about which the assertion is made) and that the syntactic predicate (or part of it) does not coincide with the focus (i.e., the marked assertion made about the topic). With specific regard to narrative, where topic- and event-continuity are assumed (see below), the implicit question answered by the unmarked clause can be thought of either as *What did he (she, it, they, etc.) do next?* (where topic continuity is assumed; see below) or, more simply, as *What happened next?*

On the basis of these sentences, then, it is clear that the traditional grammatical categories of subject and predicate, with their historic link to the syntactic categories of subjects, verbs, direct objects, and the like, are inadequate for the description of the information structure of certain clauses in context. While it is important to be able to describe the syntactic similarity between responses (a) through (c) – all having the same or similar subjects (*he*) and predicates (*broke the window*) – and, therefore, to preserve the notions of syntactic subject and predicate, it must also be possible to describe the differences between responses (a) through (c), with particular reference to the stressed and non-stressed elements in each clause. The burning question is, however, exactly how best to refer to such elements.

Section 3: The X+verb Structure for Focal Marking

Focus Defined

Traditionally, the concept of *focus* has been given either of two meanings, one broad and one narrow. On the one hand, according to the broad definition, focus refers to the informational assertion made by a clause.[104] According to the narrow definition, on the other hand, focus refers to the part of the clause specially marked as communicating information that is contrastive, contra-expected, or identificational (i.e., 'fill-in', completive) in relation to assumed information. For the purposes of this paper, neither definition is satisfactory; the broad definition is too inclusive, the narrow too restrictive. Here, the term focus is used to refer to a surface-level clausal element (rather than its informational referent) that is specially marked by *X+verb* word order[105] as bearing the most important or salient information in the clause. It is necessary to discuss this definition of focus in contrast to the broad and narrow definitions given above.

The broad definition of focus is too inclusive for two reasons. First, it deals primarily with the cognitive status of the information (i.e. the propositional assertion) of a clause, rather than with the surface-level manifestation of that cognitive status. For the purposes of this paper, focus is discussed only as a surface-level manifestation expressed in the *X+verb*

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[104] E.g., Lambrecht (1995:206): "[I]f we assume – as I do – that focus has to do with the conveying of new information, all sentences must have a focus."

[105] It is recognized, however, that there are other ways to mark elements as focal; for example, by using sentence stress, special particles (e.g., *only*, *even*), and/or a special structure. Many times, more than one strategy is used, as in the English sentence *It's **Rachel** that I love*, where a special structure (known as a cleft-sentence) and sentence stress combine to mark the direct object *Rachel* as salient.

structure. Second, focus, according to the broad definition, includes both marked assertive material (where the syntactic predicate and the informational assertion do not coincide) and unmarked assertive material (where the syntactic predicate carries the informational assertion). For the purposes of the present work focal elements are considered marked *by definition*.[106] In other words, the term focus is employed only to describe surface-level manifestations of cases where the informational assertion of a given utterance is not coterminous with the syntactic predicate (and is expressed as the *X*-element in an *X+verb* structure). In practice, this means that the category of focal elements is limited to syntactic subjects and pieces of the syntactic predicate (be they complements or adjuncts). Seen from the opposite perspective, the term focus is not employed in connection with the unmarked clause, i.e. refers neither to its syntactic predicate nor to the informational content expressed by the predicate, because, as was stated above, in the unmarked verbal clause the syntactic predicate coincides with the informational assertion.[107]

As for the narrow definition of focus given above: it is too restrictive because it links the concept of focus directly to specific types of information, leaving little or no room for the choice of the writer/speaker. It must be emphasized, on the contrary, that the decision of whether or not to mark an item as focal is up to the writer/speaker, though it is important to understand that the 'choices' or 'decisions' involved are routinely made unconsciously, in instinctive agreement with the pragmatic 'rules' of a given language. The information expressed in a focal element may 'fill in', identify, complete, contrast, or express contraexpected information in relation to assumed information. In all of these cases, it therefore adds information that can accurately be described as 'new'. However, the category

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[106] Following Buth (1999:81): "*Focus* refers to a specially signaled constituent for highlighting salient information of a clause." He (*ibid.*, n. 7) explains further: "This relates to the Praguian rheme material in a theme-rheme dichotomy, or to comment material in the topic-comment dichotomy, though Focus is limited to *specially marked* rhemic material. Focus does not equal rheme; Focus usually only marks a part of the rheme."

[107] The definition of focus employed in this paper thus differs from that of Lambrecht (1995:206), who argues that all clauses have a focus. This difference arises first of all from the fact that for Lambrecht *focus* characterizes a specific status of information (which has traditionally been called *rheme* or *comment*), while in the present work *focus* refers only to an optional, surface-level manifestation expressed in the *X+verb* structure. It seems clear both that every clause includes an informational assertion (except for Lambrecht's *presentational clause*; see above) and that in the unmarked clause this informational assertion is coterminous with the syntactic predicate. Consequently, for the purposes of dealing with the functions of the *X+verb* structure it is necessary to differentiate between syntactic predicate and pragmatic assertion only (a) when the two do not coincide and (b) when this lack of coincidence is marked by the fronting of the salient constituent. *Focus* as defined here is thus similar to Lambrecht's *argument focus* (the only difference being that Lambrecht's argument focus is identifiable as focal in terms of sentence stress as well as word order variation, while in this paper, for reasons to be discussed below, *focus* only refers to clausal constituents marked as focal by word order).

The second reason that the definition of focus employed here differs from that of Lambrecht involves that author's specific interest in the relationship between prosodic marking (i.e. accentuation) and the different types of focus structures he discusses. It is clear that in all types of clauses there is some sort of prosodic movement. Even in the unmarked *predicate-focus* structure the predicate is in some sense 'marked' as focal by accentuation. This differs from the situation in BH for at least two reasons. First, the Massoretic accentual system is more indicative of syntactic breaks than of pragmatic stress. See Buth (1999:84, n. 12) and Shimasaki (2002:57-8 and n. 5) for a summary discussion of the relationship between the Massoretic accent system and pragmatic marking and some relevant bibliography. Second, whereas prosodic accentuation, which obtains in every spoken clause, always bears some relationship to the information status of the pragmatic assertion, the correlation between the fronted element of the *X+verb* structure and the informational assertion is far from 100%, simply because most informational assertions coincide with unmarked clausal predicates. Since the present work deals only with the *X+verb* structure, it seems reasonable, again, to limit the definition of focal elements to include only those clausal constituents marked by word order as non-coincidental with the syntactic predicate.

of focal elements must not be limited to constituents that fill in knowledge gaps with new information. A writer/speaker can conceivably choose to mark as especially salient any verbal argument, be it new or presupposed. Such a definition may make focus seem subjective, detached, as it were, from any specific cognitive status of information. However, the reality is that writers/speakers at times choose to mark cognitively presupposed information as especially salient. A linguistic theory should be capable of accounting for this.[108]

It is easiest to show the relationship between *X+verb* word order and focus in cases of BH WH-identification questions, where the missing information requested in the question is often (though not always) fronted in the answer.[109] Consider the following examples from BH. In each example specific information is solicited by a question word (with the question word obligatorily fronted). The most important or salient information in each answer is conveyed by the element which has been pragmatically marked as focal by fronting. Note the variety of the fronted elements: subject, prepositional adverbial of place, purpose, direct object (both the relevant question word and the focused element in each example are in boldface type).

Ref	Text
Gen 20.9	וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ **מֶה**-עָשִׂיתָ לָּנוּ וּמֶה-חָטָאתִי לָךְ כִּי-הֵבֵאתָ עָלַי וְעַל-מַמְלַכְתִּי חֲטָאָה גְדֹלָה **מַעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יֵעָשׂוּ** עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי:
Gen 43.22-23	וְכֶסֶף אַחֵר הוֹרַדְנוּ בְיָדֵנוּ לִשְׁבָּר-אֹכֶל לֹא יָדַעְנוּ **מִי**-שָׂם כַּסְפֵּנוּ בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁלוֹם לָכֶם אַל-תִּירָאוּ **אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבִיכֶם** נָתַן לָכֶם מַטְמוֹן בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵיכֶם כַּסְפְּכֶם בָּא אֵלָי וַיּוֹצֵא אֲלֵהֶם אֶת-שִׁמְעוֹן:
Jos 9.8-9	וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲנַחְנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ **מִי** אַתֶּם **וּמֵאַיִן תָּבֹאוּ**: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו **מֵאֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה מְאֹד** בָּאוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ לְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי-שָׁמַעְנוּ שָׁמְעוֹ וְאֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בְּמִצְרָיִם:
Jdg 6.29	וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ **מִי** עָשָׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּדְרְשׁוּ וַיְבַקְשׁוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ **גִּדְעוֹן בֶּן-יוֹאָשׁ** עָשָׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:
Jdg 15.10	וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ יְהוּדָה **לָמָה** עֲלִיתֶם עָלֵינוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ **לֶאֱסוֹר אֶת-שִׁמְשׁוֹן** עָלִינוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָנוּ:
2Ki 20.14-15 *(bis)*	וַיָּבֹא יְשַׁעְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מָה אָמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה **וּמֵאַיִן** יָבֹאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ **מֵאֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה** בָּאוּ מִבָּבֶל: וַיֹּאמֶר **מָה** רָאוּ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ **אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתִי** רָאוּ לֹא-הָיָה דָבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-הִרְאִיתִם בְּאוֹצְרֹתָי:

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[108] Consider Buth's (1999:81) description of the different sorts of information that can be signaled as salient in a focus construction: "This information may be contrastive. It may be contraexpected, that is, the speaker/writer assumes his or her audience may be expecting something different and so marks it for Focus. It may also be new information that is specially marked to fill in, or to complete, assumed missing information. *It may also be old information that needs special reinforcement, through repetition*" [italics mine: AH]. Similarly, note the definition of focus provided by Shimasaki (2002:42): "Focus is not a *property* or a prominent *piece* of information, such as 'new information,' 'assertion,' or 'comment', which are often equated with focus. To 'focus' is to *mark* an item as a prominent piece of information…." That presupposed, old information can be marked as focal is clear from the following real-life Italian statement recently made by the present writer's wife to their son: *Ti lascio giocare fuori se stai buono buonino. Ma **buono buonino** devi stare* (= I'll let you play outside if you are goody good. But **goody good** you must be). The constituent *buono buonino* (= goody good) had just been mentioned as a precondition for being allowed to stay outside. It therefore constitutes old information. It was nevertheless fronted as focal in the very next clause. A potential BH example of presupposed information that is nevertheless marked as focal comes from Gen 1.27: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ **בְּצֶלֶם** **אֱלֹהִים** בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם. Here, it would appear that the element בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים has been fronted for purposes of saliency even though it has just been mentioned twice in the preceding context (in vv. 26 and 27a). Note the similar wording and word order in Gen 5.1 and 9.6. The focus here reinforces an important point. For a useful introductory discussion of focus see Dooley and Levinsohn (2001:61-7).

[109] As in many other languages, the fronting of question words is virtually required in BH. Cf., however, the word order of the verbless interrogative וְנַחְנוּ מָה in Ex 16.7-8. The position of question words is often explained as being related to focal fronting. However, because interrogatives beginning with a WH-question word can conceivably have another focal constituent, e.g., *What did **you** do?*, it would seem that the focus associated with question-word positioning has been, at least to some extent, grammaticalized.

Most focal frontings do not, however, answer explicit questions. Rather, they provide information specially marked by the writer/speaker as particularly salient given the context. The information expressed in a constituent fronted for focus answers, as it were, the implicit question that the writer/speaker assumes needs to be answered.

Cases of Focus in Genesis

The following lists present examples of cases in Genesis where the *X+verb* structure is used to signal a focal element. Cases are categorized according to the following headings: *Focus for Contrast*, *Focus for Fill-in/Completion/Identification*, *Focus for Contraexpected Information*, and *Focus for General Reinforcement*.[110] It is important to note that while most of the instances are clearly focal and while in most of the cases the type of focus in question can be labeled according to the abovementioned categories, there is room for disagreement. One of the qualities of a valid linguistic theory is that it does not unambiguously assign meanings and functions to ambiguous forms, but rather provides a framework within which intelligent discussion of multiple interpretations of ambiguous data can take place. This is especially important in the case of linguistic analysis of BH, a dead language accessible only through written texts of a later period.

Focus for Contrast

When the *X+verb* structure is employed to express *contrastive focus* (or *single-difference contrast*[111]), the fronted element is marked as the salient point of contrast in relation to other entities of the same set that are involved in the same (or similar) action. The contrast may be between two or more entities. With the addition of the particle רַק or אַךְ the contrast can be made more restrictive. Note that when two (or more) entities are explicitly mentioned in adjoining clauses, normally only the second (and third, *et cetera*) element is (are) fronted for focus.

The *X+verb* structure for contrastive focus must not be confused with the *X+verb* structure for *contrastive topicalization*. In the former, entities of a common set are compared with respect to the same or similar actions, with the entities themselves constituting the salient point of contrast. In the latter, entities of a common set are compared with respect to different or opposite actions, with the action or something related to it the salient point of contrast. Compare the following example of contrastive topicalization from Ruth 1.14b with the instances of contrastive focus from the narrative portions of Genesis below.

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[110] Chafe (1976:33-8) links focus to the concept of *contrastiveness*, because it is always possible to insert a phrase like "and no other" into a clause with a focalized element. For example, the implicit contrast in the answer to the question מִי־שָׂם כַּסְפֵּנוּ בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ in Gen 43.22 can be demonstrated by the insertion of אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְלֹא אַחֵר: וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבִיכֶם **וְלֹא אַחֵר** נָתַן לָכֶם מַטְמוֹן בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵיכֶם. The categories specified in the present work, only one of which is explicitly labeled "Focus for Contrast," in no way contradict Chafe's theory. While all types of focus may logically involve some sort of contrast, the contrast referred to in the category here labeled "Focus for Contrast" is much more specific. In these environments, it is argued, the contrast is made between two (or more) contextually identifiable entities. See Muraoka (1985:54).

[111] See Dooley and Levinsohn (2001:71).

Ruth 1.14b	וַתִּשַּׁק עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ **וְרוּת** דָּבְקָה בָּהּ׃
14.10	וְעֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים בֶּאֱרֹת בֶּאֱרֹת חֵמָר וַיָּנֻסוּ מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה וַיִּפְּלוּ־שָׁמָּה וְהַנִּשְׁאָרִים **הֶרָה** נָסוּ¹¹²׃
27.4	וַיִּרְאוּ אֶחָיו כִּי־**אֹתוֹ** אָהַב אֲבִיהֶם מִכָּל־אֶחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַּבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֹם׃
38.9	וַיֵּדַע אוֹנָן כִּי **לֹּא לוֹ** יִהְיֶה הַזָּרַע וְהָיָה אִם־בָּא אֶל־אֵשֶׁת אָחִיו וְשִׁחֵת אַרְצָה לְבִלְתִּי נְתָן־זֶרַע לְאָחִיו׃
39.22	וַיִּתֵּן שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף אֵת כָּל־הָאֲסִירִם אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׁם **הוּא** הָיָה עֹשֶׂה¹¹³׃
47.26	וַיָּשֶׂם אֹתָהּ יוֹסֵף לְחֹק עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַל־אַדְמַת מִצְרַיִם לְפַרְעֹה לַחֹמֶשׁ **רַק אַדְמַת הַכֹּהֲנִים לְבַדָּם** לֹא הָיְתָה לְפַרְעֹה׃
50.8	וַיַּעַל יוֹסֵף לִקְבֹּר אֶת־אָבִיו וַיַּעֲלוּ אִתּוֹ כָּל־עַבְדֵי פַרְעֹה זִקְנֵי בֵיתוֹ וְכֹל זִקְנֵי אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם׃ וְכֹל בֵּית יוֹסֵף וְאֶחָיו וּבֵית אָבִיו **רַק טַפָּם וְצֹאנָם וּבְקָרָם** עָזְבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן׃

Focus for Identification/Fill-in/Completion

The fronted X constituent of the *X+verb* structure is used to identify, 'fill in', or complete when it answers a question, explicit or implicit.

1.27	וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ **זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה** בָּרָא אֹתָם׃
5.1-2	זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת אָדָם בְּיוֹם בְּרֹא אֱלֹהִים אָדָם **בִּדְמוּת אֱלֹהִים** עָשָׂה אֹתוֹ׃ **זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה** בְּרָאָם וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָם אָדָם בְּיוֹם הִבָּרְאָם׃
8.19	כָּל־הַחַיָּה כָּל־הָרֶמֶשׂ וְכָל־הָעוֹף כֹּל רוֹמֵשׂ עַל הָאָרֶץ **לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתֵיהֶם** יָצְאוּ מִן־הַתֵּבָה׃
31.32	עִם אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֶת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא יִחְיֶה נֶגֶד אַחֵינוּ הַכֶּר־לְךָ מָה עִמָּדִי וְקַח־לָךְ וְלֹא־יָדַע יַעֲקֹב כִּי **רָחֵל** גְּנָבָתַם׃
34.7	וּבְנֵי יַעֲקֹב בָּאוּ מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה כְּשָׁמְעָם וַיִּתְעַצְּבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּחַר לָהֶם מְאֹד כִּי־**נְבָלָה** עָשָׂה בְיִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁכַּב אֶת־בַּת־יַעֲקֹב וְכֵן לֹא יֵעָשֶׂה׃
40.16	וַיַּרְא שַׂר־הָאֹפִים כִּי **טוֹב** פָּתָר וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־יוֹסֵף אַף־אֲנִי בַּחֲלוֹמִי וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה סַלֵּי חֹרִי עַל רֹאשִׁי׃

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¹¹² In this example the subjects are part of the same set, i.e. those fleeing, and the verbs are the same. The focal point of contrast is the destination of flight. It is often the case when two constituents appear before the verb that the second is focal.

¹¹³ The reader may be inclined to wonder about the marked status of the pronoun הוא in this *object+subject+*הָיָה*+participle* construction. That this pronoun does not simply constitute an unmarked part of the syntactic structure is clear (a) from the fact that Joseph is unambiguously presupposed as subject here (i.e. the explicit subject pronoun is not needed for disambiguation of subject) and (b) from examples like 2Ki 17.32-33 וַיִּהְיוּ יְרֵאִים אֶת־יְהֹוָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִקְצוֹתָם כֹּהֲנֵי בָמוֹת וַיִּהְיוּ עֹשִׂים לָהֶם בְּבֵית הַבָּמוֹת׃ אֶת־יְהֹוָה הָיוּ יְרֵאִים וְאֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם הָיוּ עֹבְדִים כְּמִשְׁפַּט הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־הִגְלוּ אֹתָם מִשָּׁם, where it is clear that the structure in question does not require an overt subject. The difference between use of the *yiqtol* and use of the הָיָה+participle construction to indicate past, imperfective (i.e. habitual or durative) action is debatable. Some may be inclined to explain the latter as a Mishnaism in Biblical Hebrew, perhaps even as an indication of a late date of composition. Rendsberg (1990:146), on the other hand, argues that they are functional correspondents of separate dialects: *yiqtol* (literary), הָיָה+participle (vernacular). While dialectal considerations may constitute the motivating factor, it is also possible that the two constructions differ pragmatically. For example, Buth (2003:344) comments on הָיָה נִבָּא in Jer 26.18 as follows: "This begins a speech where הָיָה 'was' is able to mark the past time and the participle נִבָּא 'prophesying' is able to mark the imperfective aspect. If the future [= *yiqtol* form] had been used, יִנָּבֵא 'he will prophesy, he used to prophesy', the past reference would have been less clear."

Focus for Contraexpected Information

A subtype of the *X+verb* structure for contrastive focus, the *X+verb* structure for contraexpected information, contrasts the information expressed in a fronted constituent not with another entity in the text, but with a more general expectation. The particle גַּם (= 'also', 'even') often serves to reinforce the surprise.

7.20	וְהַמַּיִם גָּבְרוּ מְאֹד מְאֹד עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְכֻסּוּ כָּל-הֶהָרִים הַגְּבֹהִים אֲשֶׁר-תַּחַת כָּל-הַשָּׁמָיִם : **חֲמֵשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה אַמָּה מִלְמַעְלָה** גָּבְרוּ הַמָּיִם וַיְכֻסּוּ הֶהָרִים :
43.25	וַיָּכִינוּ אֶת-הַמִּנְחָה עַד-בּוֹא יוֹסֵף בַּצָּהֳרָיִם כִּי שָׁמְעוּ כִּי-**שָׁם** יֹאכְלוּ לָחֶם :
50.23	וַיַּרְא יוֹסֵף לְאֶפְרַיִם בְּנֵי שִׁלֵּשִׁים **גַּם בְּנֵי מָכִיר בֶּן-מְנַשֶּׁה** יֻלְּדוּ עַל-בִּרְכֵּי-יוֹסֵף :

Focus for General Reinforcement

Identification of an *X+verb* structure as generally reinforcing is somewhat subjective. With no objective link to cognitive status, examples must remain tentative and arguable. For some scholars, the lack of an objectively verifiable definition constitutes grounds for exclusion of such examples from consideration. However, many language 'rules' are optional, employed by speakers and writers subjectively. If a full linguistic account of a language must relate to these optional rules – and it is taken as an axiom here that this is, indeed, the case – then it must allow for form-function-meaning relationships that defy unambiguous definition.

1.27	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בִדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ : וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ **בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים** בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם :
17.26	וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת-יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ וְאֵת כָּל-יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל-מִקְנַת כַּסְפּוֹ כָּל-זָכָר בְּאַנְשֵׁי בֵּית אַבְרָהָם וַיָּמָל אֶת-בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתָם בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים : וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן-תִּשְׁעִים וָתֵשַׁע שָׁנָה בְּהִמֹּלוֹ בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתוֹ : וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ בֶּן-שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בְּהִמֹּלוֹ אֵת בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתוֹ : **בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** נִמּוֹל אַבְרָהָם וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ :

The above examples constitute the twenty instances of focal fronting in the narrative portions of the book of Genesis. It should be noted, however, that focal fronting is much more common in direct speech, with approximately 130 instances. Concerns of space preclude a discussion, though it is hoped that a list of suggested focal frontings from the direct speech of Genesis may serve as a springboard for future studies.[114]

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[114] Proposed focal frontings in the direct speech of Genesis: 2.23, 3.14 (*bis*), 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 (*bis*), 4.12, 15, 24, 6.14, 16 (*quat*), 19 (*bis*), 20, 9.5 (*bis*), 6, 13, 25, 12.7, 13.17, 14.23, 15.13, 16, 18, 16.12, 17.5, 6 (rare double fronting with focus first), 12, 16 (rare double fronting with focus first), 20, 18.12, 19.2, 20.5, 6 (*bis*), 9, 21.6, 12, 18, 22.12, 16, 23.9, 11, 24.4, 7, 14 (*ter*), 19, 44, 46 (*bis*), 50, 26.3, 27.33, 37 (*bis*), 39, 40, 29.32 (but see below), 30.8, 16, 31.1, 6, 8 (*bis*), 39 (*bis*), 42 (*bis*), 32.5, 11, 17, 20, 34.10, 15, 22, 35.10, 11 (*bis*), 12, 37.32 (?), 38.22 (note the use of וְגַם here for *even*), 28, 39.19, 40.8, 41.11, 12, 15, 16, 25, 28, 40 (*ter*), 44 (?), 42.9, 12, 15, 19, 29, 33, 36 (*bis*) (?), 37 (*bis*), 43.9 (*bis*), 16, 22, 44.27, 45.5, 8, 46.3, 32, 34, 47.4, 9, 48.5, 6 (*bis*), 19 (*bis*), 20, 17.

Section 4: The X+verb Structure for Non-Focal Marking

The Two Basic Types of Non-Focal *X+verb* Structures
According to what has been said thus far, all focal elements are marked. However, the converse claim, namely that all marked elements are focal, is by no means true.[115] In fact, most fronted elements in the BH of Genesis are not focal. This flies in the face of the theory popular in certain introductory BH grammars, namely that preposed elements are universally 'emphatic'. However, even when the non-focal nature of many fronted elements is admitted, there still remains the further challenge of explaining the meaning and effect of each fronting. This is problematic in BH because the writer/speaker could prepose a constituent both to specially mark the preposed constituent itself and to mark the clause as a whole. Further, within both categories of frontings (i.e. those in which the fronted element itself is marked and those in which the sentence as a whole is marked) there are several different varieties, each with its own specific use. Finally, the various effects and meanings sometimes seem to overlap – even within a single example. A given *X+verb* structure can evidently serve more than one purpose in a given context. This section deals first with non-focal frontings in which the fronted element itself is marked and second with non-focal frontings in which the preposed element marks the entire clause.

The Non-Focal *X+verb* Structure with Marked Fronted Element (*X*-Constituent Marked)
Consider, again, the following two clauses from Gen 4.4b-5a:

4.4b-5a   וַיִּשַׁע יהוה אֶל־הֶבֶל וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ ׃ **וְאֶל־קַיִן וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ** לֹא שָׁעָה

As was already stated, in Gen 4.5a the marked element **וְאֶל־קַיִן וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ** does not coincide with the salient piece of information in the clause. The key informational difference between the clauses in vv. 4b and 5a is communicated by the negative לֹא. Yet, the constituent וְאֶל־קַיִן וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ is indeed in marked position and would likely receive some sort of sentence stress when read by a sensitive reader. How to explain this marking? Linguists have traditionally referred to a non-focal marked element such as this with the term *topic*, with the process of non-focal fronting termed *topicalization*.[116] The reason for this is that speakers of many languages often front verbal arguments they want to mark as the new (or reactivated) subject-matter (or topic) of discussion. Gen 17 contains several examples of this.

17.4   **אֲנִי** הִנֵּה בְרִיתִי אִתָּךְ וְהָיִיתָ לְאַב הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם ׃

17.9   וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם **וְאַתָּה** אֶת־בְּרִיתִי תִשְׁמֹר אַתָּה וְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדֹרֹתָם ׃

17.15   וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם **שָׂרַי אִשְׁתְּךָ** לֹא־תִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ שָׂרָי כִּי שָׂרָה שְׁמָהּ ׃

17.20   **וּלְיִשְׁמָעֵאל** שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ הִנֵּה בֵּרַכְתִּי אֹתוֹ וְהִפְרֵיתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֹתוֹ בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר נְשִׂיאִם יוֹלִיד וּנְתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל ׃

17.21   **וְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי** אָקִים אֶת־יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד לְךָ שָׂרָה לַמּוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בַּשָּׁנָה הָאַחֶרֶת ׃

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[115] Cf. Shimasaki (2002:42, 56), who appears to claim that the clause-initial position in BH is unambiguously marked for focus.

[116] Note, however, that many linguists differentiate between *topic*, i.e. the entity (fronted or not) about which an informational assertion is made, and *topicalization*, i.e. the process whereby a non-topical entity is fronted (as if it were a marked topic). See, e.g., Foley and Van Valin (1985) and Prince (1998).

In all of the above an element is marked by fronting as the new topic of discussion. In two of the cases (vv. 4 and 15), the fronted element is extra-clausal,[117] while in the other three a subject pronoun,[118] an indirect object, and a direct object are fronted as the new (or reactivated) topic of discussion. Note that most modern English translations render the fronted elements in vv. 4, 9, 15, and 20 with a construction such as "and as for…."[119] The Modern Israeli Hebrew equivalent is ...בנוגע ל or ואשר ל.... Some clear examples follow (preceding context included where necessary).

3.16-17	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה עַל־גְּחֹנְךָ תֵלֵךְ וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ : וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב : **אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה** אָמַר הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה עִצְּבוֹנֵךְ וְהֵרֹנֵךְ בְּעֶצֶב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים וְאֶל־אִישֵׁךְ תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל־בָּךְ : **וּלְאָדָם** אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ בְּעִצָּבוֹן תֹּאכֲלֶנָּה כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ :[120]
6.16	צֹהַר תַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה וְאֶל־אַמָּה תְּכַלֶּנָּה מִלְמַעְלָה **וּפֶתַח** הַתֵּבָה בְּצִדָּהּ תָּשִׂים תַּחְתִּיִּם שְׁנִיִּם וּשְׁלִשִׁים תַּעֲשֶׂהָ :
16.15	וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יָדֹעַ תֵּדַע כִּי־גֵר יִהְיֶה זַרְעֲךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וַעֲבָדוּם וְעִנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה : וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָּן אָנֹכִי וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ בִּרְכֻשׁ גָּדוֹל : **וְאַתָּה** תָּבוֹא אֶל־אֲבֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם תִּקָּבֵר בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה :

In all of these cases, an identifiable referent (animate or otherwise) is explicitly marked as the discourse topic.[121] Note that פֶתַח in Gen 6.16 is identifiable not because it has already been mentioned, but because it is a presupposed part of the ark (contrary to the other fronted elements, whose presence, given their focal marking, is evidently not taken for granted).

The construction of Biblical genealogies often takes advantage of this packaging strategy, as has been observed by both Givón (1977) and Bailey (1998:19-21). Givón (1977:202-3) notes Gen 10.21-25:

10.21-25	**וּלְשֵׁם** יֻלַּד גַּם־הוּא ... **וְאַרְפַּכְשַׁד** יָלַד אֶת־שָׁלַח **וְשֶׁלַח** יָלַד אֶת־עֵבֶר : **וּלְעֵבֶר** יֻלַּד שְׁנֵי בָנִים שֵׁם הָאֶחָד פֶּלֶג כִּי בְיָמָיו נִפְלְגָה הָאָרֶץ וְשֵׁם אָחִיו יָקְטָן :

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[117] Khan (1988:78-9) categorizes these two extra-clausal examples under the general heading "Signaling the boundaries of spans of discourse" and under the more specific headings "Span onset" and "Beginning of speech or poem." The constituent וְלִישְׁמָעֵאל in 17.20 may also be best considered extra-clausal. It is unclear whether a hypothetical underlying word order represented by שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ לְיִשְׁמָעֵאל is grammatically acceptable, but see GCK §119u on the ל- with carries the sense of "about, in regards to" and the word order in 1Ki 10.23 and Isa 36.9.

[118] The subject pronoun אַתָּה in Gen 17.9 is theoretically ambiguous with regard to its status as intra-clausal or extra-clausal. If it is considered intra-clausal, then the post-verbal אַתָּה וְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדֹרֹתָם must be considered an extra-clausal *afterthought* or *tail*.

[119] The fronting in v. 21, on the other hand, they correctly render differently. *My covenant* here is fronted not merely as a new (or reactivated) topic of discussion, but as a *contrastive topic* (see below).

[120] Moshavi (2000:22, n. 50) views the two *X+verb* structures as indicative of new paragraphs. This may constitute an example where the *X+verb* construction serves double-duty. That a change in subject matter should coincide with the beginning of a new paragraph or episode seems altogether reasonable. A given *X+verb* structure can serve more than one purpose in a given setting.

[121] The term *discourse topic* is rather slippery. For some, it constitutes the general *theme* of a section, perhaps even the *moral* or *point*, while for others it is the referent about which the writer/speaker makes a series of assertions (see Dooley and Levinsohn 2001:69-70). It is often contrasted with *sentence topic*, the entity marked by the writer/speaker as what the sentence is about, regardless of the surrounding discourse. The problem is that it is very difficult to tell what a sentence is about without its context (see above). With specific regard to BH the marked *sentence topic* often matches the *discourse topic*. But see below for cases where this is not true.

Givón argues:

> The _topic_ is shifted in each line…, but in the first and fourth line the topic is the _dative-benefactive_ of the passive, while in the second and third line it is the grammatical _subject_ of the active (of the same verb). This again underscores the fact that the use of the ANTERIOR aspect[122] (and later the PARTICIPLE) for topic-switching is oriented toward the TOPIC rather than strictly speaking the grammatical subject.

As another example, Bailey (1998:19-20) cites Gen 4.18:

4.18   וַיִּוָּלֵד לַחֲנוֹךְ אֶת-עִירָד **וְעִירָד** יָלַד אֶת-מְחוּיָאֵל **וּמְחִיָּאֵל** יָלַד אֶת-מְתוּשָׁאֵל **וּמְתוּשָׁאֵל** יָלַד-אֶת לָמֶךְ:

He explains:

> What is…interesting about Genesis 4.18 is that, even though the events obviously occur sequentially in real life and we might have expected the wayyiqtol _form to have been used, the narrator has nevertheless chosen to relate the clauses to each other topically, that is by means of clause-initial topics. A genealogy like this is essentially a description of a series of topics (fathers). What is topical is not the sequence but rather fatherhood. Such a genealogy is thus a descriptive discourse, not a story with a plot._

It is also interesting to note that the explanations of both Givón and Bailey relate _X+verb_ word order to a disruption in the expected narrative flow of discourse. In the case of Gen 4.18, Irad's birth is evidently part of the basically sequential narrative framework, while the births of Mehuya'el/Mehiya'el, Metusha'el, and Lemech are presented almost parenthetically. Notice that the sequential narrative proper ends with a _wayyiqtol_ form for which the subject is a prominent referent (Enoch) and begins anew in v. 19 with a _wayyiqtol_ for which the subject is a prominent referent (Lemech).[123]

Note, however, that the mere introduction or reintroduction of a referent into narrative does not require fronting. Likewise, the mere switching within narrative from one syntactic subject to another does not necessitate fronting (cf. Williams 1967:§572[124]). Fronting for a change in discourse topic (i.e. subject matter) is common in direct discourse. However, change of participant in narrative does not normally constitute grounds for

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[122] In labeling the _qatal_ verb form the 'anterior aspect' Givón overemphasizes the relationship between the form and anteriority. It is worth noting that Givón at least realizes the inappropriateness of terming the _qatal_ in Gen 10.21-25 'anterior', as he identifies the passage as one of "the very few where it seems that the PERFECT is used in a non-anterior capacity, i.e., to advance the narrative in the actual order of events (though with the topic switching)" (203).

[123] Further examples of genealogies with _X+verb_ word order in Genesis can be found in: 10.8, 13, 15, 26, 11.12, 14, 27 (x2?), 22.23, 25.3 (_bis_), 19. For a genealogy in narrative style (i.e. that employs the _wayyiqtol_ form) see Gen 5.1-32. The genealogy of Shem in 11.10-26 deserves special mention. The verb forms and word order employed in vv. 10-15 suit the temporal progression and backtracking. For example, in vv. 10-12, אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֹת שֵׁם שֵׁם בֶּן-מְאַת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת-אַרְפַּכְשָׁד שְׁנָתַיִם אַחַר הַמַּבּוּל: וַיְחִי-שֵׁם אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת-אַרְפַּכְשָׁד חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת: וְאַרְפַּכְשַׁד חַי חָמֵשׁ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיּוֹלֶד אֶת-שָׁלַח, the _wayyiqtol_ forms report sequential events, while the fronting of אַרְפַּכְשַׁד in v. 12 signals a retreat in story-time, as is clear from the arithmetic (Shem lived 500 years after the birth of Arpachsad, but Arpachsad fathered Shelakh when the former was just 35). From v. 16 to 26, however, the reporting technique is very different. The _X+qatal_ form is not used at all. Rather the _wayyiqtol_ form is uniformly employed for sequential events as well as events that cannot be sequential (again, according to the arithmetic of the passage). The correlation between verbal form and sequentiality is discussed in detail below. Suffice it to say for the present that this correlation is indirect.

[124] Williams' examples are וּמַלְכִּי-צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם from Gen 14.18 (see below) and וְרִבְקָה אָמְרָה אֶל-יַעֲקֹב בְּנָהּ from Gen 27.6 (explained below as a discontinuity to mark a shift in the spatio-temporal setting).

fronting, even if the participant must be reactivated after a long absence. For example, in Gen 4.25 Adam is reintroduced after an absence of 24 verses, not as the marked subject of a subject+*qatal* structure, but as the unmarked subject of a *wayyiqtol* form. Similarly, in Gen 19.27 Abraham, who has not been mentioned for 27 verses, is reintroduced without being fronted. Participant switching in narrative apparently is accompanied by fronting only if there is a concomitant break in continuity related to sequence (which entails comparison, contrast, or more general parallelization; see below), scene, theme, or literary structure, i.e. if the writer feels that a break in the normal, expected progress of events must be explicitly signaled (cf. Givón 1977:200-211) (see below).

In two related types of topicalization an element that is not the topic of the greater span of discourse is fronted so that a brief assertion can be made about it. The fronted element is thus marked as the temporary discourse topic, as a sort of sentential reference point with special anaphoric relationship to an already active referent. In the first type, an entity, typically an adverbial of time, place, or source, is fronted (here in a כִּי clause) to more specifically delimit the domain in which the following assertion holds true (Chafe 1976:50).[125] Consider the following examples:

2.3	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי **בוֹ** שָׁבַת מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת׃
2.17	וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי **בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ** מוֹת תָּמוּת׃
11.9	עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בָּבֶל כִּי-**שָׁם** בָּלַל יְהֹוָה שְׂפַת כָּל-הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הֱפִיצָם יְהֹוָה עַל פְּנֵי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ׃
21.31	עַל-כֵּן קָרָא לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בְּאֵר שָׁבַע כִּי **שָׁם** נִשְׁבְּעוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם׃
29.2	וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה בְאֵר בַּשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה-שָׁם שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶדְרֵי-צֹאן רֹבְצִים עָלֶיהָ כִּי **מִן-הַבְּאֵר הַהִוא** יַשְׁקוּ הָעֲדָרִים וְהָאֶבֶן גְּדֹלָה עַל-פִּי הַבְּאֵר׃
35.7	וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא לַמָּקוֹם אֵל בֵּית-אֵל כִּי **שָׁם** נִגְלוּ אֵלָיו הָאֱלֹהִים בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אָחִיו׃

In none of the above does the fronted element introduce a new discourse topic within the greater discourse. Neither do the fronted elements constitute the marked salient point of information, i.e. the focus, in their respective clauses. On the level of the overall discourse, a non-topical referent is marked as temporary topic for a brief assertion, where the main informational assertion is carried, in unmarked fashion, by the syntactic predicate.[126] The established discourse topic of the larger span of text then continues in each example. On the level of the individual sentence, the fronted elements in these examples establish secondary centers of attention (the primary center of attention being reserved for the assertion made by the predicate), signposts, as it were, to guide the reader/hearer to correctly link the assertion to the specific temporal, geographical, or relational domain in which it holds true.[127]

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[125] Note that this definition of *topic* is almost identical to Dik's definition of *theme* (see Dik 1981:127-44).

[126] Blau (1977b:6) explains a similar, albeit hypothetical, clause differently. On the basis of Gen 41.17b, בַּחֲלֹמִי הִנְנִי עֹמֵד עַל-שְׂפַת הַיְאֹר, Blau constructs the following clause minus the presentative הִנֵּה :הִנְנִי עֹמֵד עַל- שְׂפַת הַיְאֹר. Regarding this clause, he observes a difference between the syntactic subject and predicate, on the one hand, and what he terms the 'psychological subject' and 'psychological predicate', on the other. The syntactic roles are as follows: בַּחֲלֹמִי sentence adverbial; אֲנִי syntactic subject; עֹמֵד עַל-שְׂפַת הַיְאֹר syntactic predicate. "Psychologically, however, *ba–ḥălōmī* 'in my dream' is the subject, as it is the term known from the context, Pharaoh's dream being the theme of the whole chapter; accordingly, the rest of the sentence, exhibiting novelty, serves as the psychological predicate."

[127] See Foley and Van Valin (1984:124-34) and Prince (1998:458-9) for further discussion and bibliography. It is worth noting here that Buth's term *contextualizing constituent* is an especially apt nomenclature for this sort of fronting (see below). Further frontings of this type occur in Gen 2.10 וּמִשָּׁם, 9.19 וּמֵאֵלֶּה, 10.5 מֵאֵלֶּה, 10.11 מִן-, 10.25 בְיָמָיו, 10.32 וּמֵאֵלֶּה, 15.18 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, 22.14 בְּהַר יהוה, הָאָרֶץ הַהִוא.

The second type, which is very common in BH, is known in the linguistic literature as fronting for *contrastive topicalization* (see, e.g., Chafe 1976:49ff). Consider:

4.2b	וַיְהִי־הֶבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן **וְקַיִן** הָיָה עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה
4.4b-5	וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶל־הֶבֶל וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ ׃ **וְאֶל־קַיִן וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ** לֹא שָׁעָה
6.8	וַיִּנָּחֶם יְהוָה כִּי־עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם בָּאָרֶץ וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֶל־לִבּוֹ ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶמְחֶה אֶת־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָאתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה מֵאָדָם עַד־בְּהֵמָה עַד־רֶמֶשׂ וְעַד־עוֹף הַשָּׁמָיִם כִּי נִחַמְתִּי כִּי עֲשִׂיתִם ׃ **וְנֹחַ** מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה ׃
40.22	וַיָּשֶׁב אֶת־שַׂר הַמַּשְׁקִים עַל־מַשְׁקֵהוּ ... **וְאֵת שַׂר הָאֹפִים** תָּלָה כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּתַר לָהֶם יוֹסֵף ׃
41.13	וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּתַר־לָנוּ כֵּן הָיָה אֹתִי[128] הֵשִׁיב עַל־כַּנִּי **וְאֹתוֹ** תָלָה ׃

Note that in each of the cases, two already active entities belonging to a common set are compared or contrasted, with the predicate in each clause providing the salient point of contrast. Contrastive topicalization thus differs from contrastive focus (see above) in that the former involves a contrast of entities where the salient information is not the topics themselves, but rather the actions, whereas the latter involves a contrast of entities (usually with regard to one event), where the entities themselves constitute the salient point of contrast.[129]

It should be noted, however, that in BH not all examples of what is traditionally termed *contrastive topicalization* are actually used to contrast entities, i.e. to highlight the difference between the entities. The purpose of the structure is often simply more generally to *desequentialize* events that would otherwise seem chronologically sequential (see the discussion on the *X+verb* structure and non-sequentiality below).[130] It is thus clear that the fronting of an element often involves marking of more than just the fronted element itself. In the following cases from narrative, comparison or contrast of the fronted constituents is not the point. Rather, the entire clause is marked in order to generally parallelize referents and events (this general parallelization should not, however, be confused with simultaneity; see below).

1.5a	וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאוֹר יוֹם **וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ** קָרָא לָיְלָה
1.10a	וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבָּשָׁה אֶרֶץ **וּלְמִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם** קָרָא יַמִּים
7.11	בִּשְׁנַת שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה לְחַיֵּי־נֹחַ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי בְּשִׁבְעָה־עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִבְקְעוּ כָּל מַעְיְנֹות־תְּהוֹם רַבָּה **וַאֲרֻבֹּת הַשָּׁמַיִם** נִפְתָּחוּ ׃

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[128] Some may be inclined to explain the fronting of the direct object אֹתִי in terms of *contrastive topicalization*, but there is another, better alternative worthy of consideration. In most examples of contrastive topicalization in BH only the second item is fronted, with the first left to be expressed in verb-first word order. The preservation of verb-first word order is probably due to the desire to maintain *communicative* or *discourse continuity* (on this concept see below). Consequently, where both the first and the second contrastive entities are fronted, it may be desirable to explain the first as a disruption in *communicative* or *discourse continuity* for some purpose other than contrast. In Gen 41.13, the reason would seem to be *restatement* or *detailing*; the cupbearer interrupts the progress of his story to elaborate on the more general statement וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּתַר־לָנוּ כֵּן הָיָה which precedes.

[129] Other examples of contrastive topicalization in Genesis are: (Narrative) וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ 1.5, וּלְמִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם 10, 13.12, וְכָל אַנְשֵׁי בֵיתוֹ יְלִיד בַּיִת וּמִקְנַת כֶּסֶף 17.27, וְאֶת הַצִּפֹּר 15.10, וּבְאַרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה 5, וּשְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה 14.4, וְלוֹט 30.42, וְרָחֵל 29.17, וְאֶת עֹרֹת גְּדָיֵי הָעִזִּים 27.16, וְלִבְנֵי הַפִּילַגְשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לְאַבְרָהָם 25.6, וּלְשָׂרָה 20.16, מֵאֵת בֶּן נֵכָר 12.3, וְאֶת בִּנְיָמִין אֲחִי יוֹסֵף 42.4, וּבְכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם 41.54, וְהוּא 33.3, וְיַעֲקֹב 32.22, וְלָבָן 47, וּבְהֶעָטִיף 31.25, מִכֹּל הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּהוֹרָה 7.2, וְאַתָּה 15, וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ הַגָּן 3.3 (Direct Speech); וּבִנְיָמִן 45.14, וּבַקְטֹן 44.12, וְאֶת בִּנְיָמִן 36, וְאֶת אֲחִיכֶם הַקָּטֹן 42.20, וְאֹתוֹ 41.13, וְהָאָרֶץ 33.14, וַאֲנִי 34.10, וַאֲנִי וְהַנַּעַר 22.5, וְאֹתְךָ 12, וּמְקֻלָּלְךָ וּמֹולַדְתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר 48.6, וְאַרְבַּע הַיָּדֹת 47.24, וְהַנַּעַר 33, וְאַתֶּם 10, וְגַם אֲנַחְנוּ 44.9, וְאֶת הַכֶּסֶף הַמּוּשָׁב בְּפִי אַמְתְּחֹתֵיכֶם 43.12 אֱלֹהִים 50.20, וְזַרְעוֹ 19b, אֲחִיו הַקָּטֹן 19a, הוֹלַדְתְּךָ אַחֲרֵיהֶם.

[130] Muraoka (1985:54) thus speaks of two types of *contrast*: *antithesis*, in which the contrast is clear, and *juxtaposition*, in which the contrast is due more to desequentialization than to comparison.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הָבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבֵנִים וְנִשְׂרְפָה לִשְׂרֵפָה וַתְּהִי לָהֶם הַלְּבֵנָה לְאָבֶן **וְהַחֵמָר** הָיָה לָהֶם לַחֹמֶר׃	11.3
וַיֵּלֶךְ יְהֹוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלָּה לְדַבֵּר אֶל־אַבְרָהָם **וְאַבְרָהָם** שָׁב לִמְקֹמוֹ׃	18.33
וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת וְלָמָּה־זֶּה לִי בְּכֹרָה׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב הִשָּׁבְעָה לִּי כַּיּוֹם וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ וַיִּמְכֹּר אֶת־בְּכֹרָתוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב׃ **וְיַעֲקֹב** נָתַן לְעֵשָׂו לֶחֶם וּנְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים וַיֹּאכַל וַיֵּשְׁתְּ וַיָּקׇם וַיֵּלַךְ וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֹרָה׃	25.34
וַיַּשְׁכֵּם לָבָן בַּבֹּקֶר וַיְנַשֵּׁק לְבָנָיו וְלִבְנוֹתָיו וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶתְהֶם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשׇׁב לָבָן לִמְקֹמוֹ׃ **וְיַעֲקֹב** הָלַךְ לְדַרְכּוֹ וַיִּפְגְּעוּ־בוֹ מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים׃	32.2
וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עֵשָׂו לְדַרְכּוֹ שֵׂעִירָה׃ **וְיַעֲקֹב** נָסַע סֻכֹּתָה וַיִּבֶן לוֹ בָּיִת **וּלְמִקְנֵהוּ** עָשָׂה סֻכֹּת עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם סֻכּוֹת׃	33.17 (bis)
וַתֵּלֶד עָדָה לְעֵשָׂו אֶת־אֱלִיפָז **וּבָשְׂמַת** יָלְדָה אֶת־רְעוּאֵל׃ **וְאׇהֳלִיבָמָה** יָלְדָה אֶת־[יעיש] יְעוּשׁ וְאֶת־יַעְלָם וְאֶת־קֹרַח אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי עֵשָׂו אֲשֶׁר יֻלְּדוּ־לוֹ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן׃	36.4-5
וַיְקַנְאוּ־בוֹ אֶחָיו **וְאָבִיו** שָׁמַר אֶת הַדָּבָר׃	37.11
וַתָּסַר בִּגְדֵי אַלְמְנוּתָהּ מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתְּכַס בַּצָּעִיף וַתִּתְעַלָּף וַתֵּשֶׁב בְּפֶתַח עֵינַיִם אֲשֶׁר עַל דֶּרֶךְ תִּמְנָתָה כִּי רָאֲתָה כִּי־גָדַל שֵׁלָה **וְהִוא** לֹא־נִתְּנָה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה׃	38.14
וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת־שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי־נַשַּׁנִי אֱלֹהִים אֶת־כׇּל־עֲמָלִי וְאֵת כׇּל־בֵּית אָבִי׃ **וְאֵת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי** קָרָא אֶפְרָיִם כִּי־הִפְרַנִי אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרֶץ עׇנְיִי׃	41.52
לְכֻלָּם נָתַן לָאִישׁ חֲלִפוֹת שְׂמָלֹת **וּלְבִנְיָמִן** נָתַן שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת כֶּסֶף וְחָמֵשׁ חֲלִפֹת שְׂמָלֹת׃ **וּלְאָבִיו** שָׁלַח כְּזֹאת עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים נֹשְׂאִים מִטּוּב מִצְרָיִם וְעֶשֶׂר אֲתֹנֹת נֹשְׂאֹת בָּר וָלֶחֶם וּמָזוֹן לְאָבִיו לַדָּרֶךְ׃	45.22-23

Note that the contrasted or paralleled entities can number more than two, as in 36.4-5 (*Ada, Basmat, Oholivama*), and 45.22-23 (*Joseph's brothers, Benjamin, Jacob*) above.

Also note the similar use of the *X+verb* structure to generally 'parallelize' or juxtapose related referents and events in direct speech.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שֶׁרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה **וְעוֹף** יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־פְּנֵי רְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמָיִם׃ [131]	1.20
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים **וְהָעוֹף** יִרֶב בָּאָרֶץ׃	1.22
זֶה עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ רְחֵלֶיךָ וְעִזֶּיךָ [132] לֹא שִׁכֵּלוּ **וְאֵילֵי צֹאנְךָ** לֹא אָכָלְתִּי׃	31.38
וְהִתְחַתְּנוּ אֹתָנוּ בְּנֹתֵיכֶם [133] תִּתְּנוּ־לָנוּ **וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ** תִּקְחוּ לָכֶם׃	34.9
וְנָתַנּוּ אֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ לָכֶם **וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵיכֶם** נִקַּח־לָנוּ וְיָשַׁבְנוּ אִתְּכֶם וְהָיִינוּ לְעַם אֶחָד׃	34.16
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה שְׁלֵמִים הֵם אִתָּנוּ וְיֵשְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ וְיִסְחֲרוּ אֹתָהּ וְהָאָרֶץ הִנֵּה רַחֲבַת־יָדַיִם לִפְנֵיהֶם אֶת־בְּנֹתָם [134] נִקַּח־לָנוּ לְנָשִׁים **וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ** נִתֵּן לָהֶם׃	34.21
כִּי־גֻנֹּב גֻּנַּבְתִּי מֵאֶרֶץ הָעִבְרִים **וְגַם־פֹּה** לֹא־עָשִׂיתִי מְאוּמָה כִּי־שָׂמוּ אֹתִי בַּבּוֹר׃	40.15

Finally, note that the common 'set' to which entities must belong is not necessarily predictable, as in Gen 33.17 above (*Jacob* and *his livestock*, as elements of the set *entities for which Jacob built/made a dwelling/shelter*) and the following.

לָמָּה נָמוּת לְעֵינֶיךָ גַּם־אֲנַחְנוּ גַּם אַדְמָתֵנוּ קְנֵה־אֹתָנוּ וְאֶת־אַדְמָתֵנוּ בַּלָּחֶם וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְאַדְמָתֵנוּ עֲבָדִים לְפַרְעֹה וְתֶן־זֶרַע וְנִחְיֶה וְלֹא נָמוּת **וְהָאֲדָמָה** לֹא תֵשָׁם׃	47.19

Here the elements *we* and *our land* are both part of the set *things that will die*.

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[131] The force of the desequentialization is also applicable to modal verbs.

[132] The first fronted constituent in this verse is likely not for the purpose of contrastive topicalization. Here it seems rather that the fronted רְחֵלֶיךָ וְעִזֶּיךָ marks a general thematic shift in Jacob's discourse (see below).

[133] The fronting of בְּנֹתֵיכֶם here is to mark a discontinuity (see below) for the purpose of detailing what has just been said. Note that the clause בְּנֹתֵיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ־לָנוּ וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ תִּקְחוּ לָכֶם is nothing more than a more detailed restatement of וְהִתְחַתְּנוּ אֹתָנוּ (see below).

[134] בְּנֹתָם is here fronted to mark a discontinuity for the purpose of changing theme (see below).

It is worth mentioning here that this use of discontinuity for purposes of contrast, comparison, or general parallelization is likely the best explanation for the rather unusual *X+qatal* structure in Gen 14.18.

14.18   וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ-סְדֹם לִקְרָאתוֹ אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבוֹ מֵהַכּוֹת אֶת-כְּדָר-לָעֹמֶר וְאֶת-הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ אֶל-עֵמֶק שָׁוֵה הוּא עֵמֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ : **וּמַלְכִּי-צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם** הוֹצִיא לֶחֶם וָיָיִן וְהוּא כֹהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן :

The rather abrupt introduction of Melchizedek here is portrayed as generally parallel to the actions of the king of Sodom in the preceding verse. This reading is supported by the fact that both referents are part of the set *kings (who meet Abraham after the battle)* and by the fact that both are either coming or bringing something out to Abraham (with the actions of both reported in a form of the root יצ״א). Note that this explanation still leaves the passage something of an anomaly, in that Melchizedek was not active or known before this verse (unless, that is, it is simply assumed that readers of the story were already familiar with him).[135]

To summarize, a writer/speaker of BH could front an element in order to mark it as the subject matter for what follows, be it a paragraph or a one-line statement. This happens when a writer/speaker fronts an element to mark it as the new (or reactivated) topic of discourse, when he fronts a non-topical item in the greater span of discourse as the temporary topic for a brief assertion, and when he fronts an already active topic to compare or contrast it with another already active topic or to generally desequentialize events related to two (or more) already active entities that belong to the same set. The comparison, contrast, or parallelization of the entities need not necessarily be done in immediately adjacent clauses.

The construction of many genealogies apparently takes advantage of the *X+qatal* structure. In the cases of both genealogies and contrastive topicalization, the *X+verb* structure also marks the entire clause as off the sequential story-line.

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[135] Heimerdinger (1999:146-7) gives a different, though less satisfying, explanation for this *X+qatal* structure. Basing himself on Lambrecht (1994:39-43, 177-181) (see n. 89 above), he deems this clause to be "presentational." According to Lambrecht's model, presentational clauses fall under the category of *sentence focus*. In this type of clause, no informational assertion is made about the subject (and would-be topic), because, according to Lambrecht's model, introduction of a brand-new referent and comment about that referent should not occur in the same clause. While it would seem that Lambrecht's theory is generally correct, as introduction of new referents normally precedes a report of their actions, the abrupt introduction of Melchizedek is probably best understood as a simple exception to this norm and not as evidence that the *X+qatal* structure can be used specifically to introduce new referents within a continuous narrative. First of all, Lambrecht (*ibid*:39) notes that presentational clauses typically employ only a restricted number of intransitive verbs, such as *be* and *come*. It is worth noting that here in Gen 14.18, the verb employed is the transitive verb לְהוֹצִיא. There exists no special BH nuance to the verb *to bring out* whereby it is especially presentational. Second, whereas no real assertion is made in an actual presentational sentence such as *There's Charlie* or *Here comes the cat*, an assertion certainly is made about Melchizedek in Gen 14.18. Finally, Lambrecht (*ibid*:178) argues merely that presentational clauses are preferred over "syntactically well-formed sentences…in which an inactive topic referent appears directly as the subject NP of the sentence," as in Gen 14.18. Interestingly, this abrupt introduction devoid of detail may have served to fuel later interpretations regarding Melchizedek, such as, for example, the one found in the New Testament at Heb 7.3: "He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest for ever."

Excursus: Focus, Topic, and the Problem of Ambiguous Structures

It is sometimes easier to illustrate the differences between focal and non-focal frontings than it is to explain them. Consider this pair of examples, the first with a fronting for contrastive focus, the second with a fronting for contrastive topicalization:

וַיֹּאמֶר־לוֹ אֱלֹהִים שִׁמְךָ יַעֲקֹב לֹא־יִקָּרֵא שִׁמְךָ עוֹד יַעֲקֹב כִּי אִם־**יִשְׂרָאֵל** יִהְיֶה שְׁמֶךָ וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	Gen 35.10
וַתִּשַּׁק עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ **וְרוּת** דָּבְקָה בָּהּ׃	Ruth 1.14b

There is an important difference between the two *X+verb* structures here, though both clearly express contrast. In Gen 35.10, Jacob's new name, Israel, is fronted to contrast it with his old name, Jacob. Here the fronted element Israel is the salient point of contrast, while the change in verbs (*will be called* vs. *will be*) is insignificant. In Ruth 1.14 there is also a contrast, but, importantly, the focal point of the contrast is the action in each sentence. In other words, the fronting of *Ruth* is to signal contrast between the actions of Ruth and Orpah. To summarize: in a focal fronting, a constituent is fronted as the salient piece of information, while in a topical fronting, a constituent is fronted without becoming the salient piece of information.

Unfortunately, not all frontings are so easy to interpret. Due to the nature of analyzing linguistic phenomena accessible only via written documents, ambiguous structures, that is *X+verb* constructions that have more than one possible interpretation, are inevitable. Even with the most stringent of definitions and the best arguments, analysis must remain, at least to some extent, subjective and uncertain. To illustrate, consider the five cases in Genesis in which the adverb עַתָּה is fronted in a כִּי clause:[136]

וַיֹּאמֶר אַל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנַּעַר וְאַל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי **עַתָּה** יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־יְרֵא אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה וְלֹא חָשַׂכְתָּ אֶת־בִּנְךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי׃	22.12	1
וַיַּעְתֵּק מִשָּׁם וַיַּחְפֹּר בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וְלֹא רָבוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ רְחֹבוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־**עַתָּה** הִרְחִיב יְהוָה לָנוּ וּפָרִינוּ בָאָרֶץ׃	26.22	2
וַתַּהַר לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ רְאוּבֵן כִּי אָמְרָה כִּי־רָאָה יְהוָה בְּעָנְיִי כִּי **עַתָּה** יֶאֱהָבַנִי אִישִׁי׃	29.32	3
לוּלֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וּפַחַד יִצְחָק הָיָה לִי כִּי **עַתָּה** רֵיקָם שִׁלַּחְתָּנִי אֶת־עָנְיִי וְאֶת־יְגִיעַ כַּפַּי רָאָה אֱלֹהִים וַיּוֹכַח אָמֶשׁ׃	31.42	4
כִּי לוּלֵא הִתְמַהְמָהְנוּ כִּי־**עַתָּה** שַׁבְנוּ זֶה פַעֲמָיִם׃	43.10	5

In example (1), עַתָּה 'now' may be plausibly read as either focal or non-focal. The story of the עקדה is introduced in Gen 22.1 as a test of Abraham. According to a simple reading, the test is necessary because God is uncertain of the extent of Abraham's loyalty. In v. 12 Abraham is about to slay Isaac when he is told to stop. Having seen Abraham's willingness, God is now sure of Abraham's devotion. Abraham's success in passing the test thus marks the exact point where God discovers or knows for certain that Abraham is indeed a God-fearer. The word *now* is thus marked as focal: "for *now* I know (= have discovered) that you are a God fearer." Alternatively, however, the word עַתָּה may be seen as a non-focal fronting, with the verb *(I) know* the most salient or important information being contrasted, as it were, with God's previous level of knowledge. If interpreted this way, God's present

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[136] The fact that the adverbial עַתָּה nearly always appears in preverbal position in no way contradicts the assertion that its positioning is pragmatically motivated. It is possible that word-order movement associated with marking has been grammaticalzed to the point that writers/speakers were virtually compelled to put it before the clause.

certainty of Abraham's loyalty is implicitly contrasted with a previous lack of certainty (e.g. "[Prior to this test I *thought* you were a God-fearer, but] now I *know* it").[137]

Example (2) is less ambiguous. Here the main point seems to be the explanation of the place name רְחֹבוֹת. As such, the verb הִרְחִיב is probably best seen as the most salient piece of information. The adverbial עַתָּה is, thus, best seen as a non-focal fronting implicitly comparing *now*, when God has made space, to *before*, when God had not.[138]

Example (3) is more complex and perhaps ambiguous. Is the adverb עַתָּה the salient piece of information or is it the verb יֶאֱהָבַנִי? Does the sentence say "for *now* (as opposed to before) my husband will love me" or "for now my husband will *love* (as opposed to hate) me"? The recognition of pragmatic functions does not clarify every ambiguity. It does, however, provide concepts and terms with which arguments in support of alternative interpretations can be constructed and discussed.

The final two examples are related, in that the wording כִּי עַתָּה is likely formulaic, often coming at the onset of the apodosis of a conditional clause. This seems clear from other examples in the Bible,[139] as well as from the fronted adverb רֵיקָם in Gen 31.42, which is clearly the marked point of saliency in the clause. Though עַתָּה here probably constitutes part of a semi-fixed formula, it is nevertheless worth noting that its use generally conforms to that of the non-focal frontings described and exemplified above. It is fronted to point from the condition expressed in the protasis to the actual 'would-be' effect in the present.

The Non-Focal *X+verb* Structure with Unmarked Fronted Element (Clause Marked)

Though the terms *topic* and *topicalization* may fit the examples of non-focal frontings presented in the preceding section, this terminology is highly problematic for several reasons. First, the term topic is used by scholars for many different things. For some, the term is no more than a synonym for the sentential subject, the entity about which an assertion is made (where the assertion is often referred to as the *comment*). For others, it is the starting-point element of the sentence, no matter what syntactic or informational role that element may have. For still others, it is the overall topic of conversation, text, or discourse, no matter what the subject or predicate of the individual clause might be.[140]

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[137] Either way, the sticky theological question of why an omniscient God would need to test Abraham in the first place, a question which led the writer of Jubilees to vocalize ידעתי as a causative (see Kugel 1998:302 and n. 5), remains unresolved. Clearly, the point of the story is Abraham's faithfulness, not God's characteristic omniscience.

[138] Similarly, the fronted pronoun הוא in Gen 3.20b's כִּי הוא הָיְתָה אֵם כָּל-חָי is likely not focal, given that the most salient information, the explanation of the name חַוָּה, is found in the predicate. The appearance of הוא here may be related (a) to the fact that one is more likely to find overt subjects with third person verbal forms and (b) to the restricted uses of post-verbal pronouns (see Muraoka (1985:62-4)).

[139] See also: Num 22.29, 1Sam 14.30, and Job 8.6 (and possibly Num 22.33). The BH use of *now* as part of the opening formula of a conditional apodosis *may* be comparable to the use of *then* in the same environment in English: "If you hadn't called me, then I would not have known." It is questionable whether the adverbial עַתָּה has any semantic value (see the modern translations). However, it is worth noting that in all the examples except Job 8.6, the content of the particular apodosis in question refers to the present.

[140] Lambrecht (1994:13-15) gives a useful example of how the syntactic subject of a clause may differ from the discourse topic of the context in which the clause is uttered:

At a bus stop, the departure of a crammed bus is delayed because a woman loaded down with shopping bags is boarding very slowly. Turning to the impatient passengers in the bus, the woman utters the following sentence with an apologetic smile: My car broke down.... We can understand the communicative function of the woman's utterance only if we understand its relevance in the situation in the bus. The point of the woman's remark is to explain her behavior in the bus, not to tell her audience about the

Second, while the term topic may accurately describe the role of the fronted constituents in some of the examples above (where they do, indeed, specially mark the entity that is being talked about), there are other types of non-focal frontings for which the term topic is a poor fit. For instance, Buth (1994:217) gives the following example from English:

    (1) In the early evening the wolf howled.

    (2) The wolf howled in the early evening.

He explains:

Pragmatically, 'in the early evening' is marked in example (1), it is not what the event is 'about' but serves to relate the clause to its context. In example (2) the time reference is not marked and is part of the salient information to be communicated…. 'Topic' sounds like what a sentence or paragraph is about. Yet many 'Topics' are not what the sentence is about, they only orient the sentence to the context. Example (1) is 'about' the wolf while 'in the evening' provides a frame of reference for the text.

This point is of the utmost importance for the analysis of fronted elements in BH. For as the reader is no doubt aware, there are many fronted constituents in BH that are neither focal nor topical, i.e. that constitute neither the point of marked saliency in the utterance nor the marked sentential or discourse entity about which an assertion is made.[141] As a further example, consider Gen 1.1:

1.1   בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ׃

The underlying word order is בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ בְּרֵאשִׁית,[142] with the fronted adverbial בְּרֵאשִׁית functioning as neither focus (that there was a beginning to God's creative act can be taken as presupposed information) nor topic (neither the clause nor the overall discourse is 'about' a beginning).

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mechanical state of her car. The state of the car is relevant only inasmuch as it explains the woman's present situation. Even though the car is the subject argument at the conceptual level of the proposition, and even though the noun phrase expressing this argument is the grammatical subject of the sentence (at least in English and Italian), the expression my car does not correspond to a TOPIC at the level of the pragmatically structured proposition. Rather the topic is the speaker: the woman, not the car, is "what the utterance is about."

[141] For an instructive comparison of two basic sorts of non-focal frontings from the perspective English and Chinese, see Chafe (1976:49-51).

[142] The form בְּרֵאשִׁית has been the source of some controversy. Modern translations normally render it as if it were pointed בָּרֵאשִׁית "in the beginning," a form which does not occur in the Bible, but which may be reflected in ancient transliterations, such as the Hexapla of Origin and the Samaritan Pentateuch (see the note in BHS). On the basis of the four occurrences of the form בְּרֵאשִׁית in Jeremiah (26.1, 27.1, 28.1, 49.34) and on general usage of the word רֵאשִׁית, more than one scholar has argued that the form in Gen 1.1 should also be considered a construct form. Gen 1.1-2 would thus constitute a dependent clause, "When God began to create…and when the earth was formless and void…" (see Speiser (1962:12-13) for a summary of the linguistic, cosmological, and theological arguments). However, it is worth noting that the form רֵאשִׁית also occurs as an absolute form (e.g., Lev 2.12, Deut 33.21, Isa 46.10). Also, non-construct terms referring to 'the beginning' occur without the definite article as in מֵרֹאשׁ in Isa 40.21, 41.4, et cetera). Barr (1992:146-7) comments on the possibility of multiple meanings for the verse in question. Buth (personal communication) suggests taking בְּרֵאשִׁית here as an adverbial: "In beginning/as a beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." According to this reading, Gen 1.1 functions as a summary, abstract, or heading for what follows. Gen 1.2 functions as a circumstantial description. Whichever of these two latter readings is preferred it is clear (a) that there is no evidence in Gen 1.1 for the traditional *creatio ex nihilo* argument so often associated with it and (b) that the first event in the story is reported in v. 3's וַיֹּאמֶר.

Similarly, while elements preposed for the purpose of denoting anteriority sometimes also signal a shift in discourse topics, as in Jonah 1.5a,

Jonah 1.5   וַיִּֽירְא֣וּ הַמַּלָּחִ֗ים וַֽיִּזְעֲקוּ֮ אִ֣ישׁ אֶל־אֱלֹהָיו֒ וַיָּטִ֨לוּ אֶת־הַכֵּלִ֜ים אֲשֶׁ֤ר בָּֽאֳנִיָּה֙ אֶל־הַיָּ֔ם לְהָקֵ֖ל
מֵֽעֲלֵיהֶ֑ם **וְיוֹנָ֗ה** יָרַד֙ אֶל־יַרְכְּתֵ֣י הַסְּפִינָ֔ה׃

where the shift in time and scene also involves a shift from the sailors as discourse topic to Jonah as discourse topic, this need not be the case. In Gen 31.19, there is a clear example of temporal back-tracking, but Laban in no way becomes the discourse topic. Besides, as was already stated, the mere switching of subjects within narrative can be done without a fronting.

31.19   וַיִּנְהַ֣ג אֶת־כָּל־מִקְנֵ֗הוּ וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכֻשׁוֹ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר רָכָ֔שׁ מִקְנֵה֙ קִנְיָנ֔וֹ אֲשֶׁ֥ר רָכַ֖שׁ בְּפַדַּ֣ן אֲרָ֑ם לָב֛וֹא
אֶל־יִצְחָ֥ק אָבִ֖יו אַ֥רְצָה כְּנָֽעַן׃ **וְלָבָ֣ן** הָלַ֔ךְ לִגְזֹ֖ז אֶת־צֹאנ֑וֹ וַתִּגְנֹ֣ב רָחֵ֔ל אֶת־הַתְּרָפִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר
לְאָבִֽיהָ׃

It is also interesting to consider, in this light, the aforementioned fronting of הָאָדָם in Gen 4.1. Whether or not this fronting denotes anteriority (see below), Buth (1994:221-2) has correctly observed that the man is certainly not the discourse topic of the ensuing verses. "The fronted Subject … 'Adam' is not mentioned in any of the following clauses, even…when Eve has a second child. 'Adam' is not a 'larger Subject/Topic' for a span of clauses. 'Adam' is marked as a P1 Contextualizing Constituent[143] in spite of the fact that Eve continues on as Subject for the next five clauses."[144]

One final problem with the equation of non-focal fronting and topic concerns the nature of the marking involved. In a true topical fronting, as in a focal fronting, a writer/speaker preposes an element in order to specifically mark that element. However, several linguists, including a few who study BH, have noted that writers/speakers often front elements in order to mark the clause as a whole rather than the fronted constituent.[145]

That non-focal fronted elements are not necessarily topical (i.e. do not necessarily constitute the entity about which an assertion is made) has been noted by several linguists. Beneš (1962:6) termed this type of non-focal, non-topical fronted element *basis*, explaining: "By basis we here understand the sentence opening which, serving as a point of departure for the communication, is directly linked to the context, produces the [communicative] tension (expectation), and points the communication in a previously determined direction."[146] Chafe (1976:50-1), relating to the functional difference between fronted elements in English and Chinese, notes that Chinese "topics" "do not fit precisely the characterization that a topic is 'what the sentence is about'…. Typically, it would seem, the [Chinese] topic [i.e. non-focal fronting] sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds." Foley and Van Valin (1984:124) also distinguish between non-focal elements that are

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[143] Buth's cover term for non-focal fronted elements.

[144] Adam is not mentioned until v. 25.

[145] See Myhill (1995:95ff) and Buth (1994a; 1995:89-90). Buth (1995:89) notes an important genre-based difference. Frontings involving actual topics are common in "expository non-narrative discourse where information is logically structured hierarchically" (as in the examples from Gen 17 above), while frontings in which the fronted element is non-topical and in which the clause as a whole is marked by the fronting are very common in narrative.

[146] As translated by Garvin (1963:508).

fronted as topics and non-focal elements that are fronted as non-topics.[147] Finally, Payne (1995:451), who refers to the entity about which an assertion is made as 'foundation',[148] attacks the problem from the opposite direction, arguing: "But most certainly the foundation for a mental representation need not correspond to the literally initial element in some clause."

In a brief, but insightful article, Levinsohn (1990) recognizes the existence in BH of non-focal fronted elements that do not, however, constitute the entity about which an assertion is made. More importantly, he also proposes a unified theory according to which all non-focal frontings can be related. Unfortunately, Levinsohn's terminology remains somewhat confusing. He begins by calling all non-focal fronted elements *bases*, per Beneš, but later introduces the term *sentence topic* for the entity about which an assertion is made and the term *topicalized element* for the non-focal fronted element about which no assertion is made.[149] More recently, Buth (1994a, 1995) has recognized the distinction in BH between non-focal fronted elements about which an assertion is made and non-focal fronted elements about which no assertion is made (i.e. between fronted elements which themselves bear special marking and fronted elements which mark the clause as a whole), proposing that all non-focal fronted elements be given the general label *contextualizing constituent*.[150] The works of Levinsohn and Buth are foundational for a valid linguistic understanding of the non-focal *X+verb* structure in BH, in that both explain all non-focal frontings in terms of an overarching theory based on *communicative* or *discourse continuity* and *discontinuity* (see the section on the BH verbal system below).[151]

For the purposes of the present work, any fronting in which the preposed constituent is not in focus is, for lack of a more original nomenclature, termed a *non-focal fronting*. A few words of explanation are in order. First, just as *focus* is distinct from *predicate*, so *non-focal fronting* is distinct from *subject*. The syntactic subject may be preposed in BH, but so may any other verbal argument. Non-focal frontings can either mark the fronted element, the clause as a whole, or both. Those types of non-focal frontings in which the fronted element itself is marked have already been discussed above. Before turning to the variety of meanings and effects associated with non-focal frontings in which the entire clause is marked, it is necessary

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[147] Confusingly, however, Foley and Van Valin term the non-focal element fronted for non-topical reasons *topic* and the non-focal element fronted as sentence topic *pivot*.

[148] Citing the words of Gernsbacher (1990), Gernsbacher and Hargreaves (1992), and Creider (1975), Payne (1995:451) explains: "I do not believe it is too far afield to see Gernsbacher's experimentally-validated 'foundation' of a mental representation as roughly what the Functional Sentence Perspective school and Creider himself were getting at in talking about the 'theme' or 'topic' of a discourse section. I suggest that whatever a comprehender takes as the foundation for a mental structure can linguistically be referred to as the **thematic** concept or referent of that structure – this is the concept onto which other information is mapped."

[149] The logic of such terminology lies in the fact that non-focal fronted elements about which the sentence makes no assertion are fronted *as if they were* marked topics (i.e. as if they were sentential elements marked as the entity about which an assertion is made).

[150] Buth had already noted the existence of non-focal frontings that are also non-topical (i.e. that do not constitute the entity about which an assertion is made) in his 1987 doctoral dissertation. There he referred to these frontings as *pseudo-topics*. Buth has since adopted the term *contextualizing constituent*. The advantage of the new terminology lies in the fact that, unlike *topic*, it is both devoid of preconceived meaning and general enough to cover the variety of usages of the *X+verb* structure. Buth (1994a) is acutely aware of the problem of imbuing terms which already have multiple connotations with more nuanced, technical meaning (e.g. *topic*). Unfortunately, however, *contextualizing constituent* has been accepted neither in the general linguistic literature nor in linguistic literature dealing specifically with BH.

[151] See also Myhill (1995:103, 133-4).

to pause for a brief discussion of the BH verbal system in relation to the concepts of *communicative* or *discourse continuity* and *discontinuity*.

The BH Verb System and the Concept of Discourse or Communicative Continuity

How many students of Hebrew have asked about the purpose of having a waw-hahippuk *verb system? The traditional answer, that it is a "nice way to continue marking the tense-aspect of the verb," is intuitively found to be suspect. Why bother having two ways to mark the same tense-aspect? An answer based on historical development is only partially satisfying. Such an answer explains where the forms came from, but it does not explain why the language continued to use both forms and why it continued to do that for over a thousand years.* (Buth 1995:85-6)

Buth's remarks merit some elaboration. First of all, he speaks of BH verbs as marking both tense and aspect. While it is not the purpose of the present work to discuss this issue in any depth, it is worth pausing to summarize briefly the historical progression of the debate regarding the semantic value of the BH verb. Until the 1800s the BH verb forms were generally thought to mark *tense*, the time of an event relative to the time of the utterance made about the event. This was in line with the tense system of Mishnaic Hebrew. During the 1800s, however, the tense theory fell into disfavor among a number of prominent Hebraists. This was due in part to certain uses of the BH verb in poetry (e.g., use of seemingly opposing tenses in parallel poetic hemistiches, use of the so-called 'prophetic perfect', use of the so-called 'precative perfect'), in part to the fact that the *yiqtol* (and *weqatal*) form can designate both past (imperfective) and non-past action (i.e. present gnomic and future), depending on the context, in part to a misunderstanding of the *waw*-conversive forms (whereby, the shortened *yiqtol* of the *wayyiqtol* (and jussive) was understood to be identical to the longer *yiqtol* which appears without the *waw*-conversive), and in part due to studies in cognate languages, where, it was argued, the verb forms do not mark tense. On these grounds, the tense theory was rejected, in favor of a theory based on *aspect* (according to which actions are viewed as complete/whole or incomplete/in-process).

The aspectual theory remains dominant, at least insofar as the terminology used in introductory grammars is concerned. It is also important to note that many scholars who have accepted an aspectual basis to the BH verb system appear to have embraced a very extreme version, whereby the ancient Semites have been thought of as a people who did not perceive reality in spheres of past, present, and future. In other words, not only has it been thought that the BH verb marks aspect fundamentally, but also that the BH verb does not mark tense at all.

However, not every Hebraist adopts such an extreme aspectual theory. According to McFall, (1982:15) Gesenius never abandoned a basic tense theory. Joüon (§111b-c) intentionally mixed tense and aspect in his terminology, an approach that Muraoka did nothing to alter in his revision and translation.[152] Blake (1951:2) emphasized the temporal character of the West Semitic verbal forms. Importantly, several recent scholars have argued for a more balanced view of the BH verb. Blau (1970; 1971; 1976; 1977a),[153] Rainey

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[152] "…[W]e shall use, for want of better terms, the common and disparate terms *perfect* and *future*... Hebrew temporal forms express at the same time tenses and moods of action. As in our languages, they mainly express **tenses**, namely the past, the future, and the present; but they often express them in a less complete way than in our languages because they also express certain moods of action, or **aspects**."

[153] Blau makes valid points with respect to verb meaning in both prose and poetry.

(1988:36; 1990:408-9),[154] and Buth (1986:31-2; 1992:92-6; 2003:337-60),[155] for example, have all raised valid objections to the notion that the BH verbal system is essentially aspectual, arguing convincingly that the system also, even primarily, marks tense.[156]

This re-recognition of tense marking in the BH verb is due at least in part to the realization that argumentation for the tense/aspect/mood signification of the separate verb forms should not be overly dependent on their uses and semantic values in poetry. For, as Ben-Hayim (1977:77, n. 24), Qimron (1981:i), Buth (1986:31-2), Smith (1991:3), and Hatav (2001:67) argue, analysis of verbal semantics should take into account genre differences. Poetic works, where aesthetic concerns often override the norms of grammar, should not serve as the representative base texts for grammatical description in any language.[157] Certain features of BH poetry seem more representative of BH's linguistic ancestor(s) than of BH itself (e.g., use of the shortened *yiqtol* form without the *waw*+doubled prefix for the preterite, e.g., יַצֵּב in Deut 32.8; the well-known lack of the definite article (except where it appears with prepositions, e.g., בַּ instead of בְּ), as in Ugaritic; the remains of case endings (e.g., בְּנוֹ צִפֹּר in Num 23.18); the predominance of asyndetic clauses; *et cetera*).[158] In the present work, the four finite verbal forms are labeled according to their Hebrew pronunciation (e.g., *qatal*, *yiqtol*, *wayyiqtol*, *weqatal*), while their semantic denotation is referred to as tense/aspect, with *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* denoting past/perfective tense/aspect and *yiqtol* and *weqatal* denoting the present-future or past/imperfective tense/aspect.

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154 Rainey (1990:408-409), whose arguments relate to Northwest Semitic languages in general, is adamant:

> *In the present context, it remains to state the obvious fact that the behavior of the suffix verbal forms in the el-ʿAmârnah letters, as in the Hebrew Bible, is in flat contradiction to the prevailing theory that the basic meaning of the Suffix Conjugation is completed action. So we reject outright the use of the term "Perfect" for this conjugation pattern. It is irrelevant, inaccurate, and misleading. Our acceptance of the term "Imperfect" should in no way be construed as acquiescence to the common view that the ancient Semitic verbal systems were based on the expression of "aspect" rather than tense. The ancient Semites knew when to sow their fields and to milk their cows; their own language was quite adequate to explain these things to their sons. The idea that the Semites only viewed verbal action as completed or incomplete is a European conceit. It has no basis in fact.*

155 Buth's arguments have the best linguistic grounding. His discussion of aspect with regard to the BH verbal system shows clearly why a purely aspectual theory is a poor solution to the problem of the BH verb. Buth argues that the BH verb marks tense, aspect, and mood in that order. That is, tense is more basic than aspect, and aspect more basic than mood. At the risk of oversimplifying the issue, the reasons can be summarized as follows. *Qatal* and *wayyiqtol* are mostly past and perfective (Buth explains poetic exceptions as instances where aesthetic concerns win out over grammar). *Yiqtol* and *weqatal* are either future or past-imperfective. When *yiqtol* and *weqatal* are in a past context, the future tense feature is "masked." However, when they are not in a past context, they mark future tense with no reference at all to aspect (cf. Kelley 1992:130; Kelley's examples, all *yiqtol* forms used together with the adverb לְעֹלָם (וְעֵד), are not clearly imperfective in nature; the fact that 'forever' refers to a period of time that never ends does not mean that a speaker cannot envision the act of 'ruling forever' as a whole, perfective event). That both tense and aspect are more basic than mood seems clear from the fact that modal marking in BH is marked (albeit inconsistently) by (a) the short *yiqtol*, (b) the negative אַל, and (c) verb-first word order (with the *yiqtol* form).

156 Smith (1991:1-6) provides a useful overview of the tense-aspect question as it relates specifically to the *waw*-conversive. He divides scholarship on the issue into four chronological phases, in the last of which, notably, the BH verbal forms are treated as indicative primarily of tense. See also the bibliography given in Rabin (1970:311-2, n. 46). Goldfajn (1998:46-52) usefully employs Reichenbach's (1947) theory on *reference time* to deal with several uses of the verb forms that have been considered evidence for BH's basically aspectual nature. Zevit (1998) also accepts a basic tense explanation for the BH verb system.

157 This conviction echos the opinion of Elias Levita (1468-1549), who, according to McFall (1982:10-1), was the first to employ the terminology וייו ההפוך (= *waw*-conversive): "And know that the custom in the writings is to speak a language [peculiar to it, thus] a past action in place of a future one, and a future action in place of a past one. This is [found] for the most part in the prophetic writings, but very seldom in the historical books."

158 See Kutscher (1982:79-80).

Second, Buth argues that any real explanation of the complementary use of the *waw*-conversive and non-*waw*-conversive forms in BH must move beyond an explanation of their history and development to an explanation of their use within the Classical BH system. While the diachronic question is important in its own right, and while the answer to that question may have bearing on how the various verbal forms functioned in BH, the fundamental questions remain synchronic: *What is the relationship between the BH verbal forms? Why did writers of BH continue to employ them? How do the various verb forms function as a system?*[159]

That the conversive forms do not merely induce the tense/aspect of a preceding verb form is clear from examples where they 'continue' from circumstantial, participial, and verbless clauses, and from where they are employed to begin individual stories and even books (see Buth 1992:98-100). Also, while it seems clear that the *waw*-conversive forms were employed in verb-initial sentences, with the non-*waw*-conversive forms relegated to sentences which could not begin with the *waw*-conversive, this is merely a result, not an explanation. The fundamental question is: *how do verb form and word order function together?*

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[159] It is worth noting that Rabin could write as late as 1970:

Biblical Hebrew possesses two sets of two tenses each, 1. wayyiqtol/weqatal mainly in clause-initial position, and 2. qatal/yiqtol in non-initial position, but also initial to speech or paragraph....It is in the matter of the two apparently parallel series with their curious inversion of items that Hebrew is different, though there may be some similarity with Ugaritic. We still lack any synchronic study which would help us to decide whether the choice of series 1 or 2 depends mechanically upon a word order governed by factors that have noting to do with tense meaning, or whether perhaps the tenses of series 2 have a meaning difference which led the Hebrew speaker to adopt a word order in which they, rather than series 1, could be employed in some cases. (313-4)

See also Goldfajn (1998:28-30).

The Concepts of Foreground and Background: Applicational Problems

Potentially useful concepts have come from the field of discourse analysis, where texts are often discussed in terms of the distinction between *foreground* and *background* (or *on-line/off-line*, *main-line/secondary*, *narration/comment*). Hopper sums up the chief properties of foreground and backgrounds as follows (chart adapted from Hopper 1979:216):

FOREGROUND	*BACKGROUND*
• *Chronological sequencing*	• *Simultaneity or chronological overlapping of situation C with event A and/or B*
• *View of events as a whole, whose completion is a necessary prerequisite to a subsequent event*	• *View of a situation or happening whose completion is not a necessary prerequisite to a subsequent happening*
• *Identity of subject within each discrete episode*	• *Frequent changes in subject*
• *Unmarked distribution of focus in clause, with presupposition of subject and assertion in verb and its immediate complements (or other unmarked focus*	• *Marked distribution of focus, e.g., subject focus, instrument focus, focus on sentence adverbial*
• *Human topics*	• *Variety of topics, including natural phenomena*
• *Dynamic, kinetic events*	• *Stasis, descriptive situations*
• *Foregrounding. Event indispensable to narrative*	• *Backgrounding. State or situation necessary for understanding motives, attitudes, etc.*
• *Realis*	• *Irrealis*

He also notes that languages often have specific structures which are employed to signal foreground and background material respectively.

Not surprisingly, however, when it comes to BH, there has been not a little controversy over the application of the concepts of foreground and background to the linguistic data. Here, for the sake of simplicity, the discussion will touch only on BH narrative. Longacre argues that the *wayyiqtol* form constitutes the foregrounding structure in BH narrative, with all other structures (including, but not limited to, the *X+qatal* structure) contributing supportive material. He speaks of the *wayyiqtol* form as expressing "sequential actions in the past" and as "punctiliar" (1992:178). Elsewhere he explains (1989:65): "I have assumed, then, that the storyline or the backbone of a discourse in Biblical Hebrew is conveyed by use of clauses that begin with a *waw*-consecutive verb." Referring to the *wayyiqtol* form as the preterite, Longacre continues (*ibid.*:65): "A chain of (necessarily verb-initial) clauses that contains preterites is the backbone of any Old Testament story; all other clause types contribute various kinds of supportive, descriptive, and depictive materials." Longacre's ideas thus generally reflect the distinction between foreground (or narration) and background (or comment) made by Hopper.

However, Heimerdinger (1999:76) rejects Longacre's equation of *wayyiqtol* and foreground/on-line/mainline. First, he criticizes Longacre for failing to provide an adequate definition of foreground. Heimerdinger then attempts to formulate such a definition himself, basing on Longcacre's works. While the end result may or may not be exactly what Longacre

intended, it at least demonstrates the problem of loose terminology.[160] Longacre (1990:6[161]) argues that "Sentences whose main verbs are storyline should be dominant sentences in the constituent structure of the paragraph and other sentences whose main verbs rank lower should be ancillary."

The problematic rigidity of Longacre's equation of non-sequentiality, on the one hand, with lack of event significance, on the other, is clear from the following example. In Gen 37.11, וַיְקַנְאוּ־בוֹ אֶחָיו וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת־הַדָּבָר, it seems clear that the *X+qatal* structure of the second clause interrupts the temporal progression of the story merely to compare (or mark as parallel) the reactions of Joseph's brothers and father. In other words, temporal continuity is broken in order that the two events can be linked in a non-sequential relationship. However, Longacre (1989:77-8) reads much more into the grammar, arguing: "we see clearly how the narrator uses a perfect to put an action off the storyline when it is not an action of the same rank and importance to the story as the action indicated by a preterite [i.e. *wayyiqtol* form] on the storyline proves to be."[162] That such an interpretation of the grammar is clearly theory-driven and that it forces an unnatural significance into the grammatical structures is clear from a comparison with a similarly structured passage from Ruth 1.14b: וַתִּשַּׁק עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ. Here there is no doubt that Ruth's clinging to No'omi, which is reported in an *X+qatal* structure, is more important for the story-line than Orpah's kissing her, which is reported with the *wayyiqtol*.[163] Obviously, there is no one-to-one correspondence between verbal structure and event significance.

Likewise, Heimerdinger (1999:77) levels the charge that "By associating unilaterally *vayyiqtol* clauses with the two notions of storyline and foreground, Longacre blurs the specificity of storyline." For Heimerdinger, storyline and foreground are separate. Storyline relates to the sequential events of a story, while foreground relates to its most important events and non-events, its point, and meaning.[164] He argues that events recounted using the

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[160] It is worth noting here that Levinsohn (1990:27-8) (followed by Bailey and Levinsohn (1992:200-2)) also understand Longacre's use of *foreground* and *background* in terms of the relative significance of the action reported by the verb.

[161] As cited in Heimerdinger (1999:76).

[162] Longacre (1989:78) goes on to explain:

In the total sweep and development of the story the brothers' jealousy is much more tied into the plot structure than the father's meditating as to what the dream might mean. The story moves along because the brothers are jealous of him and sell him into Egypt regardless of the father's attitude. So, interestingly enough, the verb that refers to the father's attitude is off-the-line and is reported by a preposed noun (which emphasizes the father as opposed to the brothers) and a verb in the perfect.

[163] The same argument holds true for many *X+verb* structures in which an item is fronted in order to break the temporal flow. Cf. e.g. Gen 1.5 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לָיְלָה. The naming of the light is certainly no more important than the naming of the darkness.

[164] See Heimerdinger (1999:75-6):

This exclusive reliance on the vayyiqtol clauses to identify the gist of a story is flawed. By claiming that the meaning, or theme or gist of a story can be extracted from the backbone constructions with verbs in the preterite (vayyiqtol in Old Hebrew), Longacre excludes all other kinds of material which are often essential to the general meaning of a story. Not only does he ignore totally the important role played by dialogues which are so abundant in Old Hebrew stories, but he also reduces a story to its action. However, evaluative elements and comments made by the storyteller may be central to the meaning of a story. Such material is often found in what Longacre would view as background material. Additionally, it is important that the distinction between storyline and theme or gist of a story should be maintained. The tracking of events and the processing of vayyiqtol clauses result at best in a summary of the action of the story but can in no way be taken as providing its meaning, which should at least also include the notion of point of the story.

It is doubtful, however, that the retelling of a story based exclusively on *vayyiqtol* forms would suffice even to summarize its actions. Note that such a strategy would leave out Ruth's clinging to her mother-in-law in Ruth 1.14, an event reported in an *X+qatal* structure.

wayyiqtol form are not unambiguously marked as more important or dominant than other actions or non-actions of a story.

As an example, consider the rather obscure introduction to Abraham's rescue of Lot in Gen 14.

14.1-8 ‏¹וַיְהִי בִּימֵי אַמְרָפֶל מֶלֶךְ־שִׁנְעָר אַרְיוֹךְ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּסָר כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר מֶלֶךְ עֵילָם וְתִדְעָל מֶלֶךְ גּוֹיִם ׃ ²עָשׂוּ מִלְחָמָה אֶת־בֶּרַע מֶלֶךְ סְדֹם וְאֶת־בִּרְשַׁע מֶלֶךְ עֲמֹרָה שִׁנְאָב מֶלֶךְ אַדְמָה וְשֶׁמְאֵבֶר מֶלֶךְ צְבֹיִים [צבוים] וּמֶלֶךְ בֶּלַע הִיא־צֹעַר ׃ ³כָּל־אֵלֶּה חָבְרוּ אֶל־עֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים הוּא יָם הַמֶּלַח ׃ ⁴שְׁתֵּים עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה עָבְדוּ אֶת־כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר וּשְׁלֹשׁ־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה מָרָדוּ ׃ ⁵וּבְאַרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בָּא כְדָרְלָעֹמֶר וְהַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ **וַיַּכּוּ** אֶת־רְפָאִים בְּעַשְׁתְּרֹת קַרְנַיִם וְאֶת־הַזּוּזִים בְּהָם וְאֵת הָאֵימִים בְּשָׁוֵה קִרְיָתָיִם ׃ ⁶וְאֶת־הַחֹרִי בְּהַרְרָם שֵׂעִיר עַד אֵיל פָּארָן אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּדְבָּר ׃ ⁷**וַיָּשֻׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ** אֶל־עֵין מִשְׁפָּט הִוא קָדֵשׁ **וַיַּכּוּ** אֶת־כָּל־שְׂדֵה הָעֲמָלֵקִי וְגַם אֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּחַצְצֹן תָּמָר ׃ ⁸**וַיֵּצֵא** מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם וּמֶלֶךְ עֲמֹרָה וּמֶלֶךְ אַדְמָה וּמֶלֶךְ צְבֹיִים [צבוים] וּמֶלֶךְ בֶּלַע הִוא־צֹעַר וַיַּעַרְכוּ אִתָּם מִלְחָמָה בְּעֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים ׃

The general lack of *wayyiqtol* forms in vv. 1-4 correlates well with Longacre's association of non-*wayyiqtol* forms and off-line material, in that the information here is introductory to the main story. However, against Longacre's theory, it must be noted that the *wayyiqtol* forms in Gen 14.5-7 also report introductory, which is to say background information. Vv. 1-3 constitute a title or abstract for the episode. Vv. 4-7 detail the events that lead up to that abstract. The story proper does not actually begin until v. 8.

Thus, as with the notions of topic and focus, at least part of the controversy regarding foreground and background is terminological in nature. The terms *foreground/on-line/mainline* imply importance (or, according to Longacre, "dominance"), while the terms *background/off-line/secondary* imply less importance or even insignificance, as if the narrative could have been related without the off-line material. Of course, as Heimerdinger makes clear, this is not the case – events reported using the *wayyiqtol* form are not uniformly significant to the unfolding or meaning of a story; conversely, actions and non-actions significant to the development and meaning of a story are often reported in clauses that do not begin with the *wayyiqtol*.[165]

Heimerdinger also takes up the question of the problematic link between the *wayyiqtol* form and chronological progression. The works of several recent scholars (Longacre 1992:178; Hatav 1997; 2001; Goldfajn 1998:71-2; Zevit 1998) basically support the traditional position that the *wayyiqtol* form marks semantically sequential events. Heimerdinger rejects this notion. He lists (1999:3-84) a number of examples in which, indeed, the *wayyiqtol* form cannot be said to mark sequential events. Consider the following examples, in all of which, Heimerdinger argues that the *wayyiqtol* forms in boldface type essentially repeat events which have already been reported and, therefore, cannot be said to move the story forward.

2.1-2 **וַיְכֻלּוּ** הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָם ׃ **וַיְכַל** אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה **וַיִּשְׁבֹּת** בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ׃

7.22-23 כֹּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמַת־רוּחַ חַיִּים בְּאַפָּיו מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר בֶּחָרָבָה מֵתוּ ׃ **וַיִּמַח** אֶת־כָּל־הַיְקוּם אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה מֵאָדָם עַד־בְּהֵמָה עַד־רֶמֶשׂ וְעַד־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם **וַיִּמָּחוּ** מִן־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשָּׁאֶר אַךְ־נֹחַ וַאֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה ׃

Jdg 10.7-8 וַיִּחַר־אַף יְהוָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּמְכְּרֵם בְּיַד־פְּלִשְׁתִּים וּבְיַד בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן ׃ **וַיִּרְעֲצוּ וַיְרֹצְצוּ** אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִיא שְׁמֹנֶה עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה אֶת־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בַּגִּלְעָד ׃

32.8 **וַיִּירָא** יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד **וַיֵּצֶר** לוֹ וַיַּחַץ אֶת־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־אִתּוֹ וְאֶת־הַצֹּאן וְאֶת־הַבָּקָר וְהַגְּמַלִּים לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנוֹת ׃

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[165] It should be noted that other scholars, within both general linguistics and BH studies, have commented on the problematic nature of the *foreground/background* distinction. See Moshavi (2000:23-26) for a brief discussion and bibliography. It is also worth mentioning that Hopper's description of background material is not so rigid as Longacre's application of it to BH. Note, in particular, his characterization: "Backgrounding. State or situation *necessary* for understanding motives, attitudes, etc." [italics mine: AH] (see chart above).

There, thus, exists an impasse: how to account for a verb form that correlates highly, though imperfectly, with real-world actions that are temporally sequential? On the one hand, to define the *wayyiqtol* in terms of semantic sequentiality requires that one ignore a number of examples. On the other hand, given the high correlation between the *wayyiqtol* form and semantically sequential events, it seems unwarranted to deny any connection whatsoever (as, in fact, Heimerdinger does). Likewise, the correlation between the *X+verb* structure and temporal progression is indirect. The *X+verb* structure often marks a break in temporal progression, but not always.

While it is true that the *wayyiqtol* cannot be said actually to mark sequential events (in that a minority of the events depicted with *wayyiqtol* are non-sequential and/or non-punctiliar/incomplete), the *wayyiqtol* nevertheless enjoys a pragmatic relationship, albeit indirect, with sequentiality.[166] Likewise, while the *X+qatal* structure cannot be said exclusively to mark breaks in temporal progression, there certainly exists a link between temporal breaks and the *X+qatal* structure. Like most discourse linguists, Buth (1995) employs the problematic term *foreground* for the narrative portions reported with the *wayyiqtol* form. Importantly, however, he defines it not on the basis of semantics or syntax (he recognizes that the correlation between the *wayyiqtol* form and sequentiality is less than 100% and that *wayyiqtol* forms need not follow dominant *qatal* forms), but on the basis of pragmatics. Here it is worth quoting Buth (*ibid.*:86-7) at length:

> *The foreground of a narrative is usually defined to be the sequential chain of completed events. This is a strictly semantic definition of foreground. However, a problem arises when one tries to match that definition with a particular structure, form, or lexeme of a language.*

> *In Hebrew the obvious candidate for foreground is the* waw-hahippuk *verb. Certainly, most of the sequential, completed events in a narrative are encoded in the* waw-hahippuk *verb forms. But what do we do about the* waw-hahippuk*'s that are not sequential or complete? Studies that relate the* waw-hahippuk *verbs with sequentiality can only give a percentage of clauses that fit the definition…. If foreground is limited to an objective definition in the semantic field of grammar, then one must say that the* waw-hahippuk *is sometimes foreground and sometimes not. It is sometimes sequential and sometimes not….*

> *If we define foreground as a pragmatic function, instead of semantically, we get around the impasse of non-sequential events being encoded with a "sequential-foregrounding" structure. The advantages of this redefinition are that it corresponds with real language data and allows more objective mapping between surface structures and their functions. The disadvantage is that the definition of foreground becomes "subjective" and is not able to be measured by comparison to a referential world. We would not be able to point to an event in a narrative and say categorically, based only on the referential nature of the event itself, that it is or is not a foregrounded event. We must look and see how the author structured and encoded the event and then, after looking at the surface structures of the language, we can say that it is or is not foreground. The advantages of including foreground as a pragmatic function*

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[166] Cf. Hatav (2001:68-9), who, on the basis of a statistical study, argues that the *wayyiqtol* does mark sequentiality. Hatav's statistics, however, are misleading. Out of a total 1951 *wayyiqtol* clauses where sequentiality can be measured, she finds that 1834 (or 94%) of them are sequential. It is important to note, though, that she excludes 494 (or 20% of the original 2445) clauses because "לא היה ניתן לקבוע אם הן רציפות" (= "It was not possible to determine whether they are sequential."). It is thus evident that the *wayyiqtol* is often employed for events which are not clearly sequential. When the 117 cases where, according to Hatav, it is clear that the *wayyiqtol* is used to recount non-sequential events are added to the 494 cases where the *wayyiqtol* is used to report events which are not clearly sequential, it becomes clear that a total of 611 (or 25%) of the 2445 *wayyiqtol* forms studied report events which cannot be considered unambiguously sequential. There is clearly a correlation between the *wayyiqtol* and sequentiality, but it is indirect.

greatly outweigh the disadvantage. In fact, the disadvantage is only an artificial constraint. If languages develop structures that are subjectively used, then we must make room for that in our grammar. Nothing else would be scientific.

In summary, though Buth still employs the problematic term *foreground*, he defines it in such a way as to (a) eliminate the problem of imperfect correlation between the *wayyiqtol* form and complete,[167] sequential actions; and (b) avoid the problem that Heimerdinger sees in Longacre's equation of foreground and important or significant events. While Buth's definitions show the relationship between form and reality to be subjective, in that the speaker chooses (probably unconsciously) what to mark as foreground and background,[168] it permits an objective correlation between syntactic structure and pragmatic function.

Later, in the same article, Buth (*ibid*.:97) links narrative foreground to the broader notion of *discourse continuity* originally developed by Givón. The basic concept is that all texts/discourses exhibit some sort of internal continuity. For if a text did not exhibit such continuity, it would be no more than a random collection of clauses.[169] Givón (1983:7-8) observes that there are "broadly, three major aspects of discourse continuity which are displayed in or mediated through the thematic paragraph, and which in turn receive structural/grammatical/syntactic expression within the clause." The three types of discourse continuity described by Givón are:

      (a) thematic continuity
      (b) action continuity
      (c) topic continuity

In other words, clauses within a given text (narrative or otherwise) are arranged so as to either establish/preserve or break continuity with respect to general theme, actions and events, and/or topics.[170]

Communicative or Discourse Continuity, Word Order, and Verb Form

With the concept of *communicative*[171] or *discourse continuity* in mind, the pragmatic function of the *wayyiqtol* form in narrative becomes clear. As is common knowledge, real-time events take place either sequentially or non-sequentially. The relationship between two non-sequential events can range from total disconnection to complete overlap. However, the reporting of overlapping events is problematic in narrative, because one of the constraints of

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[167] That the *wayyiqtol* form can be used to mark incomplete actions is clear, for example, from the repetition of וַתָּשָׁב in Ruth 1.6 and Ruth 1.22. It is clear that Ruth cannot have completed the act of returning that is narrated in v. 6 if she is still doing it in v. 22 (this example comes from Buth 1986:94).

[168] Cf. Levinsohn (1990:26) who agrees that the writer makes a pragmatic decision, but who views the decision as relating primarily to perception, not to (perhaps unconscious) pragmatic packaging: "The constituent order of Hebrew reflects the relationship which the writer actually perceived" (see below).

[169] From whence arises the problem of trying to determine if and how certain portions of the book of the legal sections of the Torah, the Psalms, and Proverbs are arranged thematically.

[170] See the excellent introduction to issues of thematic continuity in Dooley and Levinsohn (2001:37-42).

[171] Givón does not use the term 'communicative continuity'. It is suggested here as a more transparent alternative to 'discourse continuity'. This continuity is pragmatic, in that the writer/speaker packages a given utterance in a form to achieve a specific communicative function.

communication, be it oral or written, is that events can only be reported one after the other. This is known as the *linearity constraint.* Narratives are usually written in such a way that the events narrated are reported chronologically.[172] In other words, the narrative structure simulates or iconically symbolizes the actual sequence of events. *This is the standard and expected arrangement for narrated events and, as such, also the unmarked arrangement. And it is this fact that explains why there exists a meaningful, though indirect, correlation between the* wayyiqtol *form and sequentiality. It also explains why the* wayyiqtol *form should be defined as the pragmatically unmarked form for narrative.*[173]

To summarize: a given span of text/discourse exhibits pragmatic continuity by definition; in narrative, there quite naturally exists a high correlation between continuity and sequentiality; the *wayyiqtol* form is the form used to signal (i.e. establish and preserve) continuity; it is thus routinely employed to depict sequential actions; as the form associated with standard narrative continuity, it is unmarked in narrative.

From the perspective of continuity, it is also easier to explain why the correlation between the *wayyiqtol* form and sequential actions is less than 100%. While real-life events can happen sequentially, they often overlap. However, events which occur simultaneously in real life cannot be reported simultaneously in narrative.[174] The storyteller must choose between depicting the events with an unmarked structure, as if they were sequential, and depicting them with a marked structure, by which the non-sequentiality of the events is unambiguously communicated. Levinsohn (1990:26) (followed by Bailey and Levinsohn (1992:195-6)) argues that this pragmatic decision is based on the perception of the writer: "discernment of continuity or discontinuity, in any particular instance, is a pragmatic decision of the WRITER. Frequently, two events could in theory be presented as being in a relationship of continuity or of discontinuity. The constituent order of Hebrew reflects the relationship which the writer actually perceived." However, in some cases the decision clearly has less to do with perception than it has to do with simple choice (perhaps unconscious) of expression.[175] For example, consider again the *wayyiqtol* form וַיּוֹלֶד in the third clause of Jdg 11.1.

Jdg 11.1   וְיִפְתָּח הַגִּלְעָדִי הָיָה גִּבּוֹר חַיִל וְהוּא בֶּן-אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה **וַיּוֹלֶד** גִּלְעָד אֶת-יִפְתָּח׃

It would be ridiculous to argue that the writer of Jdg 11.1 actually *perceived* the birth of Jephthah as subsequent to his becoming a warrior.

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[172] The relation between narrated events is actually somewhat more specialized, as Givón (1983:8) explains: "Action continuity pertains primarily to *temporal sequentiality* within thematic paragraph, but also to temporal *adjacency* therein. Most commonly, within a thematic paragraph actions are given primarily in the natural sequential order in which they actually occurred, and most commonly there is small if any temporal gap – or pause – between one action and the next." See Heimerdinger (1999:48-51) for a useful discussion on the temporal dimension of narratives.

[173] It is for this reason that DeCaen's argument that the "*wayyiqtol* is morphologically, syntactically and semantically marked" (see n. 11 above) is irrelevant to the question of basic word order. He fails to take into account the crucial fact that the *wayyiqtol* form is the pragmatically unmarked form in narrative and, as such, indicative of unmarked, which is to say basic, word order.

[174] Except in the rare case of the literary pun. For example, it can theoretically be argued that the clause *She walked into a bar* reports two events at the same time (depending on the meaning of the word *bar*). Practically, however, because the human mind always attempts to disambiguate, the message received at any given time is only one, not two.

[175] See also Moshavi (2000:295): "By including both normal and inverted clauses in the study, we were able to show that the speaker is never obligated to choose inverted word order; in fact, most non-sequential…clauses do *not* have inverted word order."

It is hypothesized here that the concept of communicative or discourse continuity is also applicable to non-narrative discourse, to direct speech, for example, though more research is needed. Here, at least with regard to future (including imperatives and jussives) and past-imperfective events, unmarked continuity is upheld by the *weqatal* verb form, with discontinuity being signaled by, among others, the *X+yiqtol* structure (see below).[176]

If the VS *waw*-conversive forms establish and preserve the expected communicative or discourse continuity inherent in text, then it stands to reason that the XV non-*waw*-conversive forms break or disrupt continuity. And since continuity is inherent to texts, only these continuity-disrupting forms can be said to be pragmatically marked. The broad notion of discontinuity is also especially useful as an explanation general enough to account for the variety of literary effects associated with XV word order. Nearly all non-focal frontings can be explained in terms of meanings and literary effects associated with a single syntactic structure (*X+verb*) that has a single pragmatic function (discontinuity).

The Basic Function(s) of the *X+verb* Structure

Most studies of the *X+verb* structure in BH conceive of the structure in one of two ways. On the one hand, there is the approach that concentrates on explaining the markedness of the fronted element. On the other hand, there is the approach that concentrates on relating the *X+verb* structure to non-sequentiality. Studies that utilize the first approach assume that something inherent in the fronted clausal element itself or in the referent to which it refers has led the writer/speaker to place it before the verb. This is certainly applicable when items are fronted for purposes of focus and topicalization (where the latter refers to the fronting or real topics; see above). However, as has been shown, items can also be fronted in order to mark the entire clause.

Studies employing the second approach are very productive in BH, as the *X+verb* structure often seems to indicate a disruption in the chronological progression of the story. However, it is argued here that just as denoting sequentiality is not the basic function of the *waw*-conversive forms, so too, the denotation of non-sequentiality is not the basic function of the *X+verb* structure.

Both approaches, thus, perceive real uses of the *X+verb* structure, but neither captures its functional basis. The argument made here is that all non-focal functions of the *X+verb* structure should be viewed as effects related to disruptions in the pragmatic concept of *communicative* or *discourse continuity*.

The *X+verb* Structure and Non-Sequentiality

As has already been noted above with regard to Gen 4.1, the notion of anteriority has long been associated with the *X+qatal* structure. As early as Rashi (1040-1105 CE), this word order was seen as evidence of the temporal priority of the action reported by a *qatal* verb

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[176] See Myhill (1995) for one of the few studies that deals with non-narrative texts from the perspective of discourse continuity and discontinuity. Longacre (1989) discusses expository texts, but does not make use of the concepts of *discourse continuity* and *discontinuity*. See also: Niccacci (1990:73-109), Longacre (1992:181-9), and Rosenbaum (1997).

form in relation to the immediately preceding events (usually reported in the *wayyiqtol* form).[177] Traditional examples from Genesis are given here:

20.4   וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אֲבִימֶלֶךְ בַּחֲלוֹם הַלָּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנְּךָ מֵת עַל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-לָקַחְתָּ וְהִוא בְּעֻלַת בָּעַל׃
וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ[178] לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמַר אֲדֹנָי הֲגוֹי גַּם-צַדִּיק תַּהֲרֹג׃

24.62 וַתָּקָם רִבְקָה וְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ וַתִּרְכַּבְנָה עַל-הַגְּמַלִּים וַתֵּלַכְנָה אַחֲרֵי הָאִישׁ וַיִּקַּח הָעֶבֶד אֶת-רִבְקָה וַיֵּלַךְ׃ **וְיִצְחָק** בָּא מִבּוֹא בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאִי וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב׃

31.19 וַיִּנְהַג אֶת-כָּל-מִקְנֵהוּ וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכֻשׁוֹ אֲשֶׁר רָכָשׁ מִקְנֵה קִנְיָנוֹ אֲשֶׁר רָכַשׁ בְּפַדַּן אֲרָם לָבוֹא אֶל-יִצְחָק אָבִיו אַרְצָה כְּנָעַן׃ **וְלָבָן** הָלַךְ לִגְזֹז אֶת-צֹאנוֹ וַתִּגְנֹב רָחֵל אֶת-הַתְּרָפִים אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיהָ׃

31.25 וַיַּשֵּׂג לָבָן אֶת-יַעֲקֹב **וְיַעֲקֹב** תָּקַע אֶת-אָהֳלוֹ בָּהָר וְלָבָן[179] תָּקַע אֶת-אֶחָיו בְּהַר הַגִּלְעָד׃

31.34 וַיָּבֹא לָבָן בְּאֹהֶל יַעֲקֹב וּבְאֹהֶל לֵאָה וּבְאֹהֶל שְׁתֵּי הָאֲמָהֹת וְלֹא מָצָא וַיֵּצֵא מֵאֹהֶל לֵאָה וַיָּבֹא בְּאֹהֶל רָחֵל׃ **וְרָחֵל** לָקְחָה אֶת-הַתְּרָפִים וַתְּשִׂמֵם בְּכַר הַגָּמָל וַתֵּשֶׁב עֲלֵיהֶם וַיְמַשֵּׁשׁ לָבָן אֶת-כָּל-הָאֹהֶל וְלֹא מָצָא׃

34.7   וַיֵּצֵא חֲמוֹר אֲבִי-שְׁכֶם אֶל-יַעֲקֹב לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ׃ **וּבְנֵי יַעֲקֹב** בָּאוּ מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה כְּשָׁמְעָם וַיִּתְעַצְּבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּחַר לָהֶם מְאֹד כִּי-נְבָלָה עָשָׂה בְיִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁכַּב אֶת-בַּת-יַעֲקֹב וְכֵן לֹא יֵעָשֶׂה׃

37.36 **וְהַמְּדָנִים** מָכְרוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל-מִצְרָיִם לְפוֹטִיפַר סְרִיס פַּרְעֹה שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים׃

39.1   **וְיוֹסֵף הוּרַד** מִצְרָיְמָה וַיִּקְנֵהוּ פּוֹטִיפַר סְרִיס פַּרְעֹה שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים אִישׁ מִצְרִי מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִדֻהוּ שָׁמָּה׃

48.10 וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָבִיו בָּנַי הֵם אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן-לִי אֱלֹהִים בָּזֶה וַיֹּאמַר קָחֶם-נָא אֵלַי וַאֲבָרֲכֵם׃ **וְעֵינֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**[180] כָּבְדוּ מִזֹּקֶן לֹא יוּכַל לִרְאוֹת וַיַּגֵּשׁ אֹתָם אֵלָיו וַיִּשַּׁק לָהֶם וַיְחַבֵּק לָהֶם׃

In most of the examples – 20.4, 31.19, 31.25, 31.34, 39.1, and 48.10 – the anteriority of the action expressed by the *X+qatal* structure is logically necessary given the chain of events. For example, in Gen 31.34, Rachel must have hidden the idols before Laban enters the tent to search for them. Such logically necessary anteriority does not, however, hold true for all of the examples. For instance, given the distances involved, Isaac's arrival at Beer Lahai Ro'i need not necessarily have taken place before Rebeccah's departure from Aram in 24.62. Likewise, in 34.7, there is no reason to assume that Jacob's sons must have arrived before Shechem's father Hamor left to speak with Jacob. These last two cases furnish support for a more general understanding of the *X+qatal* structure.

Unfortunately, scholars sometimes rather rigidly assume the anterior value of a given *X+qatal* structure. For example, Ljunberg (2001:349-52) views the fronting in Ruth 1.14 as indicative of anteriority. Consider:

Ruth 1.14b   וַתִּשַּׁק עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ **וְרוּת** דָּבְקָה בָּהּ׃

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[177] Cf. Zevit (1998:7), who, in his remarks on Rashi's interpretation of Gen 4.1, inexplicably states that "Rashi did not provide reasons for his observations." On the contrary, as Moshavi (2000:27-8, n. 66) has observed, Rashi explicitly notes the word order of וְהָאָדָם יָדַע, comparing it with וַיֵּדַע הָאָדָם׃, 'שאם כתב וידע האדם', (= "for if he had written וידע האדם, it would have sounded as if he had 'נשמע שאחר שנטרד היו לו בנים' children after he had been expelled"). While Rashi was likely motivated by more than just the syntax here, he was nevertheless, contrary to the opinion of Zevit, aware of a link between the subject+*qatal* structure and anteriority. It is worth noting that Zevit (*ibid.*:22-32) incorrectly classifies as anterior a number of examples of the *X+qatal* structure that should rather be considered contrastive topicalizations, general parallelizations, or the beginnings of a new sections. His interpretation of such passages as Gen 3.1, 4.2, 4.3-4, 14.17-19, 19.23-24, 26.25-26, 27.5-6, and 31.47 is rigidly theory-driven. This is clear from his comments (24) on וּמֹשֶׁה עָלָה in Ex 19.3: "Moses did not ascend the mountain prior to the arrival of the Israelites at Sinai…The construction creates a split screen image: Moses ascending the mountain as the Israelites set up camp."

[178] Note Driver (1892:§76, n. 2): "In Gen 20,4… וְ could not have been used on account of the negative: but even here it may be noticed that the same *order* of the words is observed."

[179] The two frontings in this verse seem to have two different purposes. The first fronting seems to mark anteriority. "Laban overtook Jacob. Jacob had/was already camped on the mountain." The second fronting, וְלָבָן, is to compare/contrast/parallelize his camping with that of Jacob.

[180] Because of the stative nature of the verb כָּבֵד this clause may also be considered *circumstantial*: "Jacob's eyes were heavy" rather than "Jacob's eyes had become heavy." The functional difference, however, is minimal.

Ljunberg argues that "the translation 'but Ruth had clung to her'…is therefore preferred, to the 'Ruth clung' (NIV) rendering." Ljunberg is correct in noting that the intended effect here is non-sequentiality, in that the writer did not want simply to relate Orpah's kissing and Ruth's clinging in the same way that he would relate the sequential events of the story, as in the hypothetical וַתִּשַּׁק עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ וַתִּדְבַּק בָּהּ רוּת. However, Ljunberg's interpretation of non-sequentiality is simplistic. He evidently views the subject+*qatal* word order as uniformly indicative of anteriority. Of course, such a view is superficial and inaccurate. The point of the fronting here is not to indicate that Ruth had already clung to No'omi when Orpah kissed her. Neither is it to indicate that Ruth's clinging and Orpah's kissing were exactly simultaneous. The point here is simply to contrast Ruth and Orpah with regard to their actions: *kissing* and *clinging*. The subject+*qatal* structure indeed indicates non-sequentiality – not a specific indication of anteriority or simultaneity, but a general departure from the standard, expected,[181] and unmarked sequential relation of events of the narrative for the purpose of contrast. The precise chronological relationship of the events reported is not at issue here. Thus, the concept of non-sequentiality should be understood as being divided into three categories: *anteriority, simultaneity,* and *general parallelization.*[182]

Another version of non-sequentiality is simultaneity. Below are the few examples from Genesis where the *X+qatal* structure may report an action or state that is truly simultaneous with the preceding event or state.

וַיִּפְצַר־בָּם מְאֹד וַיָּסֻרוּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה **וּמַצּוֹת** אָפָה וַיֹּאכֵלוּ:[183]	19.3
עוֹדֶנּוּ מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם **וְרָחֵל** בָּאָה עִם־הַצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיהָ כִּי רֹעָה הִוא:[184]	29.9
וְיַעֲקֹב שָׁמַע כִּי טִמֵּא אֶת־דִּינָה בִתּוֹ **וּבָנָיו** הָיוּ אֶת־מִקְנֵהוּ בַּשָּׂדֶה וְהֶחֱרִשׁ יַעֲקֹב עַד־בֹּאָם:	34.5
הִוא מוּצֵאת **וְהִיא** שָׁלְחָה אֶל־חָמִיהָ לֵאמֹר ...[185]	38.25a

Notice, however, that in two of the cases, the *X+qatal* structure follows a participle, while in another the *qatal* form is the verb הָיָה. It would thus seem, from the albeit meager number of examples from Genesis, that the *X+qatal* structure alone is insufficient to unambiguously signal simultaneity.

It is important to note at this point that the term 'simultaneous' is sometimes employed rather loosely. The claim made here is that the presentation of truly simultaneous events in the Bible with the *X+verb* is rather rare.[186] More often two events are presented as generally parallel, but not necessarily simultaneous. Many times, the parallel events occur in separate

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[181] Watters (2002:350-3), in his grammar on Kham, a Tibeto-Burman language of west-central Nepal, notes the important correlation between foreground forms, sequentiality, and *predictability*, on the one hand, and between background forms, non-sequentiality, and *unexpectedness*, on the other. See below, with reference to *dramatic pause*.

[182] Note that Hopper's comments on background (1979:215) allow for different levels of specificity with regard to non-sequentiality: "This is another typical feature of backgrounding: Because the sequentiality constraint is lifted, backgrounded clauses may be located at any point along the time axis or indeed may not be located on the time axis at all. Consequently, the relationships among backgrounded clauses are often quite loose."

[183] It is with some hesitancy that this *X+qatal* structure is categorized as denoting simultaneity. The desequentialization involved may be more general or the second clause may constitute a more detailed explanation of the first.

[184] Here, also, it is questionable whether the *X+qatal* structure marks simultaneity. A *wayyiqtol* structure following the participial construction עוֹדֶנּוּ מְדַבֵּר עִמָּם would also likely have been understood as communicating simultaneity.

[185] But see below, the section on *dramatic pause*.

[186] It is more common to utilize a participial construction.

places with separate casts of characters. Structures marking discourse discontinuities are often employed to signal changes both in the temporal and spatial setting and in the cast of characters associated with the new scenery. Furthermore, it is often the case that the non-sequentiality in question is very general in nature, nothing more than a removal of an event from the normal temporal progression of the narrative or spoken discourse. Consider, for example, Gen 18.6-7, where the fronted וְאֶל הַבָּקָר signals neither anteriority nor simultaneity.

18.6-7   וַיְמַהֵר אַבְרָהָם הָאֹהֱלָה אֶל־שָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר מַהֲרִי שְׁלֹשׁ סְאִים קֶמַח סֹלֶת לוּשִׁי וַעֲשִׂי עֻגוֹת׃ **וְאֶל־הַבָּקָר** רָץ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח בֶּן־בָּקָר רַךְ וָטוֹב וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַנַּעַר וַיְמַהֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ׃

Here it would seem that the events are indeed reported chronologically. First of all, that the fronted element reports an event simultaneous with the preceding event(s) is impossible, because Abraham cannot have been running to two separate places at the same time. Second, though possible, it seems wholly unnecessary to argue that Abraham's running to the herd occurred prior to his hurrying to Sarah. The events here have been more generally 'desequentialized', in such a way that the events are related one to another in a general non-sequential manner, not as *X and then Y*, but as *X and also Y*. It is likely that the desequentialization here is at least partially intended to slow down the actions of the story in order to express the length of time it took to prepare the meal in question.

Another type of *X+qatal* structure that is often mistakenly characterized as reporting simultaneous events is what has already been related to above as the *X+verb* structure for contrastive topicalization. For example, consider Gen 4.3-5.

4.3-5   וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַיהוָה׃ **וְהֶבֶל הֵבִיא גַם־הוּא** מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ וּמֵחֶלְבֵהֶן וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶל־הֶבֶל וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ׃ **וְאֶל־קַיִן וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ** לֹא שָׁעָה וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו׃

Talmon (1978:11-2) argues that the respective sacrifices of Cain and Abel reported in Gen 4.3-5 are simultaneous: "The Hebrew text puts into relief the synchroneity of the two events, which possibly occurred in different locations, by reporting them in the *yqtl – qtl* pattern." While it is true that the two sacrifices should not be viewed as sequential, they can be identified as basically simultaneous not on the basis of the *X+qatal* structures used, but on the basis of the temporal specification וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים explicitly provided in the verse, without which the temporal relationship between the two events in question would be ambiguous. The *X+qatal* structures interrupt the normal sequential progression of the narrative in order to signal the contrast between two events that are chronologically and thematically related (see the section above on contrastive topicalization).[187]

That semantic sequentiality and non-sequentiality (i.e. anteriority and simultaneity) should not be taken as the basic concepts being communicated, respectively, by the *wayyiqtol* and *X+qatal* structures is also evident from what Muraoka (1985:34) terms use of the *X+qatal* structure for the purpose of "avoidance of the *Waw* cons."[188] Consider, for example, Jdg 9.43-4:

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[187] See also the fronted element וּלְאַבְרָם in Gen 12.16. It is very unlikely that the taking of Sarah in v. 15 is precisely simultaneous with the good treatment Abraham receives in v. 16. The former action certainly happened before the latter, in which case there is temporal progression.

[188] See also GKC (1910:§142b) and Joüon (1923:§118d). It is also worth noting here that there appear to be *X+verb* structures that have little or no relation to the pragmatic aspects of focus or discontinuity. First, there is the common word order *pronominal subject*+ידע (see above). Second, there is the word order *pronominal subject+verb* common in oath taking; see GKC (1910:§135), Joüon-Muraoka (1996:§146a3).

Jdg 9.43-44   וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָעָם וַיֶּחֱצֵם לִשְׁלֹשָׁה רָאשִׁים וַיֶּאֱרֹב בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה הָעָם יֹצֵא מִן־הָעִיר
וַיָּקָם עֲלֵיהֶם וַיַּכֵּם׃   וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ וְהָרָאשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ פָּשְׁטוּ וַיַּעַמְדוּ פֶּתַח שַׁעַר הָעִיר וּשְׁנֵי
הָרָאשִׁים פָּשְׁטוּ עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיַּכּוּם׃

Muraoka argues that v. 44 is nothing more than "an expansion of what has been briefly summed up in the preceding" verse. If this is so, then two things are clear. First, as has already been claimed, non-sequentiality divides into more than just anterior and simultaneous events. The verbal forms וַיַּכֵּם in v. 43 and וַיַּכּוּם in v. 44 cannot be said to report simultaneous events, in that they report the same event, with the former a general summary and the latter a more explicit detailing.[189]

The examples provided above demonstrate that the *X+qatal* structure can be used to express both very specific types of non-sequentiality – anteriority and simultaneity – and also more general types. In these more general temporal interruptions, the chronological progression of a narrative is stopped to signal nothing more than a lack of sequentiality. This lack of sequentiality is then interpretable, based on the context, as contrastive or merely paralleling. Significantly, the *X+verb* construction for contrastive topic takes advantage of this stoppage in chronological progress to contrast, compare, or more generally parallelize the actions of entities that belong to a common set.

The *X+verb* Structure for Pragmatic Discontinuity

The approach which views the fronted element of a non-focal *X+verb* structure as especially worthy of marking can account for topical frontings. The approach which views fronted elements as indicative of breaks in the sequential progress of the events of a story can account for cases where the *X+verb* structure signals anteriority, simultaneity, and more general types of non-sequentiality. Is it possible to unify these seemingly diverse functions of the *X+verb* structure? Further, is it possible to provide a unified theory of function for the *X+verb* structure that accounts for effects that are related neither to markedeness of the fronted element nor to non-sequentiality, such as those described below? The claim made here, in the footsteps of Levinsohn (1990), Bailey and Levinsohn (1992), Myhill (1995), and, in particular, Buth (1994a, 1995),[190] is that the *X+verb* structure has a more general pragmatic function, namely that of signaling discontinuity in discourse. This discontinuity can occur in different *genres* and can be used for diverse literary effects and meanings, including but not limited to marking fronted elements as topics and marking the events of entire clauses as non-sequential.

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[189] Incidentally, this is one of the limitations of Moshavi's (2000) study of the correlation between the *X+qatal* structure and simultaneity. Given her definition of simultaneity (182) it is impossible to distinguish between actual, real-world simultaneity (e.g. הִיא מוּצֵאת וְהִיא שָׁלְחָה אֶל־חָמִיהָ in Gen 38.25, where the *X+qatal* structure וְהִיא שָׁלְחָה (probably) marks one event as contemporaneous with another event which has already been reported) and the mere repetition or rephrasing of a single action (e.g. וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ in Gen 1.27, where the *X+qatal* structure בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא cannot be said to signal real-time simultaneity with the action in the of the previous clause, because the verb in each clause reports the same action). Many of the 88 cases of *X+qatal* clauses that Moshavi characterizes as simultaneous (299-329) are questionable on these grounds.

[190] See especially Buth (1995:89-90, 97-100).

Non-Storyline Information: Circumstantial, Parenthetical, Explanatory, Background, or Summary

Muraoka (1985:33) characterizes the circumstantial clause as follows: "When the flow of a narrative is interrupted to add an explicative, parenthetical clause or a clause which represents an accompanying action, then the ordinary *Waw* cons. construction is abandoned by making the subject precede its verbal predicate."[191] What is noteworthy from the perspective of the present work is the compatibility of Muraoka's words regarding the interruption of narrative flow caused by the *X+qatal* structure and the concept of discontinuity. All of the following constitute circumstantial clauses according to Muraoka's definition.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ : **וְהָאָרֶץ** הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם :	1.2
אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבָּרְאָם בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם : **וְכֹל שִׂיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה** טֶרֶם יִהְיֶה בָאָרֶץ **וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה** טֶרֶם יִצְמָח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אַיִן לַעֲבֹד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה : **וְאֵד** יַעֲלֶה מִן-הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת-כָּל-פְּנֵי-הָאֲדָמָה :[192]	2.5-6
וְנֹחַ בֶּן-שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה **וְהַמַּבּוּל** הָיָה מַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ :[193]	7.6
וַיְהִי לְשִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים **וּמֵי הַמַּבּוּל** הָיוּ עַל-הָאָרֶץ :	7.10
אֵלֶּה תֹלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן-שְׁבַע-עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת-אֶחָיו בַּצֹּאן וְהוּא נַעַר אֶת-בְּנֵי בִלְהָה וְאֶת-בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה נְשֵׁי אָבִיו וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת-דִּבָּתָם רָעָה אֶל-אֲבִיהֶם : **וְיִשְׂרָאֵל** אָהַב אֶת-יוֹסֵף מִכָּל-בָּנָיו כִּי-בֶן-זְקֻנִים הוּא לוֹ וְעָשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פַּסִּים :	37.3
וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אָבִיו בָּנַי הֵם אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן-לִי אֱלֹהִים בָּזֶה וַיֹּאמַר קָחֶם-נָא אֵלַי וַאֲבָרְכֵם : **וְעֵינֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** כָּבְדוּ מִזֹּקֶן לֹא יוּכַל לִרְאוֹת וַיַּגֵּשׁ אֹתָם אֵלָיו וַיִּשַּׁק לָהֶם וַיְחַבֵּק לָהֶם :	48.10

It would also seem that the *X+verb* structure can be used to indicate circumstantial information in direct speech.

וַתִּצְחַק שָׂרָה בְּקִרְבָּהּ לֵאמֹר אַחֲרֵי בְלֹתִי הָיְתָה-לִּי עֶדְנָה **וַאדֹנִי** זָקֵן :[194]	18.12
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהֹוָה אֶל-אַבְרָהָם לָמָּה זֶּה צָחֲקָה שָׂרָה לֵאמֹר הַאַף אֻמְנָם אֵלֵד **וַאֲנִי** זָקַנְתִּי :	18.13
וַנֹּאמֶר אֶל-אֲדֹנִי יֶשׁ-לָנוּ אָב זָקֵן וְיֶלֶד זְקֻנִים קָטָן וְאָחִיו מֵת וַיִּוָּתֵר הוּא לְבַדּוֹ לְאִמּוֹ **וְאָבִיו אֲהֵבוֹ** :	44.20

Similar to the circumstantial or parenthetical use of the *X+verb* structure is its use to indicate a title or abstract of what is to follow.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ :	1.1
וַיְהִי אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה **וְהָאֱלֹהִים** נִסָּה אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּנִי :	22.1

In both of the above clauses an *X+qatal* structure is employed to mark the action as off the narratival event-line. In other words, a discontinuity structure is used to introduce the general theme, while the succeeding *wayyiqtol* clauses provide the specifics.[195]

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[191] See, among others, GKC (1910:§142d, §156a), Ewald (1879:§306c), Müller (1882:§131, §151), Davidson (1901:§137), Blau (1976:§106.1), Lambdin (1971:§132), and Muraoka (1985:33-4).

[192] Note that the *X+yiqtol* structure can also serve to relate circumstantial information.

[193] The constituent מַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ would seem to be in apposition to הַמַּבּוּל as an explanatory gloss. For example, see the translation by Speiser (1962:48): "Noah was in his six hundredth year when the Flood came—waters upon the earth."

[194] The form זָקֵן is, of course, ambiguous. It could be either a participle or a *qatal* form. Here it is taken as a *qatal* form on the basis of זָקַנְתִּי in the following verse. Either way, discontinuity is achieved.

[195] This fact is particularly important for proper understanding and translation of Gen 1.1. The Hebrew here does *not* support the well-known *creatio ex nihilo* tradition. Gen 1.1 gives the general theme of Gen 1.1-2.4.

The discontinuous force of the *X+verb* structure can also serve to indicate that a given clause is a summary of what has been related in the preceding clauses. Consider:

15.18   **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** כָּרַת יְהֹוָה אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּרִית לֵאמֹר לְזַרְעֲךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת מִנְּהַר מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַנָּהָר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר־פְּרָת:[196]

Incidentally, the connection between *X+verb* word order and off-line or background material is also the explanation for constituent order with the word טֶרֶם. In the statistical analysis given in section 1, SV word order outnumbered other word orders with this particle. In Genesis, טֶרֶם is preceded by its subject in four out of four cases.[197] In the Bible as a whole, this is true in seven of eight cases.[198] The reason seems transparent: טֶרֶם-clauses are generally marked as discontinuities because they signal retreats in story-time, background descriptions of events that have yet to take place.[199] The one example in the Bible where the subject comes after טֶרֶם is the second case in 1Sam 3.7. Here, the first טֶרֶם-clause with subject+טֶרֶם+verb word order breaks continuity; there is, consequently, no need for the second טֶרֶם-clause to do so.

Start of New Literary Unit (Episode or Paragraph)

Several scholars argue that the *X+qatal* structure can be used to indicate unit/episode/paragraph borders.[200] It is this effect, contrary to Rashi's claim of anteriority, that Bailey and Levinsohn (1992:196-7) employ to explain the fronting of וְהָאָדָם in Gen 4.1.[201] This seems reasonable, as there is no logical necessity to assume any specific temporal connection between the expulsion from Eden and the sexual encounter of the first couple.[202] Bailey and Levinsohn claim that it is not at all uncommon for new episodes to begin with the fronting of a constituent. As Moshavi (2000:19-23) notes, however, scholars are not necessarily agreed on whether the fronted element must be a subject (according to the examples below, fronted non-subjects may signal the beginning of a new literary unit). Also, Lambdin argues that the *X+qatal* structure can also mark the end of a section. Finally, Moshavi (*ibid.*:22, n. 50) notes the important correlation between the *X+qatal* structure and

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Gen 1.2 tells what the condition of the earth was before the creation. Gen 1.3ff detail the creation process (see above).

[196] Again, however, the explicit marking of a summary statement with the *X+verb* structure is optional. Heimerdinger (1999:91) correctly observes that the *wayyiqtol* clause וַיִּבֶז עֵשָׂו אֶת־הַבְּכֹרָה in Gen 25.34 also expresses an evaluative summary.

[197] Gen 2.5 (*bis*), 24.15, 24.45.

[198] S+טרם+V: Gen 2.5 (*bis*), 24.15, 24.45, Josh 2.8, 1Sam 3.3, 1Sam 3.7a. V+טרם+S: 1Sam 3.7b.

[199] Thus, the difference between טֶרֶם and לא is that the former is more specific than the latter, with the former employed where what will certainly happen has not happened yet and the latter employed where the event may (e.g. Gen 2.5b כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ) or may not happen (e.g. Gen 20.4a וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ). Evidently, subordinate clauses automatically entail a certain level of *communicative* or *discourse discontinuity*, so that a variation in word order is not necessary to indicate anteriority.

[200] Lambdin (1971:§132), Khan (1988:86-8), Levinsohn (1990), Bailey and Levinsohn (1992), Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze (1999:347-8).

[201] See also Moshavi (2000:19).

[202] Theoretically, the event narrated here need not even be the first encounter, but merely the one that led to the first childbirth. But see Zevit (1998:7).

the traditional Jewish system for textual division that divides פרשות into פרשות פתוחות and פרשות סתומות (= open and closed *parashot*). She lists Gen 4.1, 15.1, 21.1, and 39.1 as coinciding with a פרשה at the head of a new episode and Gen 3.16, 17,[203] 10.15, 11.12, 11.14,[204] and 46.28 as places where the *X+qatal* structure coincides with a פרשה at the start of a new paragraph.

The following chart lists cases from Genesis where it is argued that the *X+verb* construction signals a new literary unit (e.g. paragraph or episode). Massoretic indications of פרשה סתומה and פרשה פתוחה have been included where appropriate.

3.1	וַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִתְבֹּשָׁשׁוּ ׃ **וְהַנָּחָשׁ** הָיָה עָרוּם מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי-אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכֹּל עֵץ הַגָּן ׃[205]
4.1	וַיְגָרֶשׁ אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיַּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגַן-עֵדֶן אֶת-הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֵת לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לִשְׁמֹר אֶת-דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים ׃ ס **וְהָאָדָם** יָדַע אֶת-חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת-קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת-יְהוָה ׃
3.16-17	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הַנָּחָשׁ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה עַל-גְּחֹנְךָ תֵלֵךְ וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ ׃ וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב ׃ **אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה** אָמַר הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה עִצְּבוֹנֵךְ וְהֵרֹנֵךְ בְּעֶצֶב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים וְאֶל-אִישֵׁךְ תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל-בָּךְ ׃ **וּלְאָדָם** אָמַר כִּי-שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ בְּעִצָּבוֹן תֹּאכֲלֶנָּה כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ ׃[206]
15.1	בִּלְעָדַי רַק אֲשֶׁר אָכְלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וְחֵלֶק הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָלְכוּ אִתִּי עָנֵר אֶשְׁכֹּל וּמַמְרֵא הֵם יִקְחוּ חֶלְקָם ׃ ס **אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה** הָיָה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם בַּמַּחֲזֶה לֵאמֹר אַל-תִּירָא אַבְרָם אָנֹכִי מָגֵן לָךְ שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד ׃
18.17	וַיָּקֻמוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּשְׁקִפוּ עַל-פְּנֵי סְדֹם וְאַבְרָהָם הֹלֵךְ עִמָּם לְשַׁלְּחָם ׃ **וַיהוָֹה** אָמָר הַמְכַסֶּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה ׃
21.1	כִּי-עָצֹר עָצַר יְהוָה בְּעַד כָּל-רֶחֶם לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל-דְּבַר שָׂרָה אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָהָם ׃ ס **וַיהוָֹה** פָּקַד אֶת-שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמָר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֵּר ׃
24.1	וַיָּקָם הַשָּׂדֶה וְהַמְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ לְאַבְרָהָם לַאֲחֻזַּת-קָבֶר מֵאֵת בְּנֵי-חֵת ׃ ס **וְאַבְרָהָם** זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים וַיהוָה בֵּרַךְ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם בַּכֹּל ׃
26.26	וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וַיֶּט-שָׁם אָהֳלוֹ וַיִּכְרוּ-שָׁם עַבְדֵי-יִצְחָק בְּאֵר ׃ **וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ** הָלַךְ אֵלָיו מִגְּרָר וַאֲחֻזַּת מֵרֵעֵהוּ וּפִיכֹל שַׂר-צְבָאוֹ ׃
39.1	וְאַחַר יָצָא אָחִיו אֲשֶׁר עַל-יָדוֹ הַשָּׁנִי וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ זָרַח ׃ ס **וְיוֹסֵף** הוּרַד מִצְרָיְמָה וַיִּקְנֵהוּ פּוֹטִיפַר סְרִיס פַּרְעֹה שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים אִישׁ מִצְרִי מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִדֻהוּ שָׁמָּה ׃[207]
46.28	וּבְנֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר-יֻלַּד-לוֹ בְמִצְרַיִם נֶפֶשׁ שְׁנָיִם כָּל-הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְבֵית-יַעֲקֹב הַבָּאָה מִצְרַיְמָה שִׁבְעִים ׃ פ **וְאֶת-יְהוּדָה** שָׁלַח לְפָנָיו אֶל-יוֹסֵף לְהוֹרֹת לְפָנָיו גֹּשְׁנָה וַיָּבֹאוּ אַרְצָה גֹּשֶׁן ׃[208]

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[203] Gen 3.16 and 17 are dealt with above in the section on frontings for topic.

[204] Gen 10.15, 11.12, and 11.14 are all parts of genealogies. They are dealt with above in the section on frontings for topic

[205] The fronting of הַנָּחָשׁ in Gen 3.1 is a good example of how the various effects of the *X+qatal* structure complement one another. First, the clause is clearly what scholars have traditionally termed a *circumstantial clause*. It is descriptive, supportive, preliminary to the ensuing action. Second, the clause begins a new literary unit. Note that the syntax (*X+verb* word order), the pragmatics (*discontinuity*), and the semantics (descriptive, 'to be'-clause) make this clause a prototypical episode-initial sentence.

[206] These two *X+qatal* structures are also discussed above as examples of frontings for *topicalization*.

[207] The well-known case of Gen 39.1 is much discussed in the commentaries. What is interesting from the standpoint of composition is that the *X+qatal* discontinuity structure represented by וְיוֹסֵף הוּרַד only makes sense because of the intervening chapter 38 on Judah and Tamar. For without that chapter, there would be no need for the fronting, as chapter 37 already ends with an *X+qatal* structure denoting the anteriority of Joseph's being sold into slavery in Egypt.

Now, several related points are in order with specific regard to direct discourse. As was demonstrated in section 1, VSO word order is statistically dominant not only in syntactic environments where the *waw*-conversive forms are possible, but also in those syntactic environments where the *waw*-conversive forms cannot occur. There are two exceptions to this rule. The first, involving the term טֶרֶם has already been dealt with above. The second, more significant exception involves the onset of direct speech. There seems to be a preference (though not a rule) in BH for direct speech to begin with the *X+verb* structure. Out of the 47 examples of verbal clauses that have explicit subjects and that occur at the beginning of direct speech, a full 33 of them, or more than 70%, exhibit non-verb-initial word order (either SV = 23 or XVS = 10). This, of course, agrees with what has been said above with regard to narrative: *X+verb* word order can be used to mark the beginning of a new discourse.[209]

Intra-Episode Scene Switching

Consider:

24.62	וַתָּ֤קָם רִבְקָה֙ וְנַעֲרֹתֶ֔יהָ וַתִּרְכַּ֙בְנָה֙ עַל-הַגְּמַלִּ֔ים וַתֵּלַ֖כְנָה אַחֲרֵ֣י הָאִ֑ישׁ וַיִּקַּ֥ח הָעֶ֛בֶד אֶת-רִבְקָ֖ה וַיֵּלַ֑ךְ : **וְיִצְחָק֙** בָּ֣א מִבּ֔וֹא בְּאֵ֥ר לַחַ֖י רֹאִ֑י וְה֥וּא יוֹשֵׁ֖ב בְּאֶ֥רֶץ הַנֶּֽגֶב :
34.7	וּבְנֵ֨י יַעֲקֹ֜ב בָּ֤אוּ מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה֙ כְּשָׁמְעָ֔ם וַיִּֽתְעַצְּבוּ֙ הָֽאֲנָשִׁ֔ים וַיִּ֥חַר לָהֶ֖ם מְאֹ֑ד כִּֽי-נְבָלָ֞ה עָשָׂ֣ה בְיִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל לִשְׁכַּב֙ אֶת-בַּֽת-יַעֲקֹ֔ב וְכֵ֖ן לֹ֥א יֵעָשֶֽׂה : וַיֵּצֵ֨א חֲמ֜וֹר אֲבִֽי-שְׁכֶ֧ם אֶֽל-יַעֲקֹ֛ב לְדַבֵּ֖ר אִתּ֑וֹ :

In the discussion above on non-sequentiality, it was argued that the *X+qatal* structures in Gen 24.62 and 34.7 do not mark actions which must logically precede the events reported in the immediately preceding clauses. In these verses, it would seem that the *X+qatal* form is employed to mark a general *meanwhile* or *whereas* in which the emphasis is not on chronological simultaneity or anteriority, but on a change in venue. Levinsohn (1990:24) argues that the *wayyiqtol* form is employed when "the SAME basic storyline is being developed, and no sudden change or discontinuity in the spatio-temporal setting or in the cast of participants is indicated. Rather, modifications are made to the EXISTING scene and cast." Conversely, the *X+qatal* structure signals discontinuity, often so that the writer can make changes in the spatio-temporal setting or in the cast on stage. Consider the following examples:

13.14	וַיִּבְחַר-ל֣וֹ ל֗וֹט אֵ֚ת כָּל-כִּכַּ֣ר הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן וַיִּסַּ֥ע ל֖וֹט מִקֶּ֑דֶם וַיִּפָּ֣רְד֔וּ אִ֖ישׁ מֵעַ֥ל אָחִֽיו : אַבְרָ֖ם יָשַׁ֣ב בְּאֶֽרֶץ-כְּנָ֑עַן וְל֗וֹט יָשַׁב֙ בְּעָרֵ֣י הַכִּכָּ֔ר וַיֶּאֱהַ֖ל עַד-סְדֹֽם : וְאַנְשֵׁ֣י סְדֹ֔ם רָעִ֖ים וְחַטָּאִ֑ים לַיהֹוָ֖ה

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[208] The case of וְאֶת-יְהוּדָה שָׁלַח in Gen 46.28 is particularly interesting, because of the ramifications for both discourse analysis and source criticism. The genealogical portion of vv. 6-27 is generally considered an insertion of P. However, exactly how vv. 1-5 and 28ff connect is disputed. One thing seems clear, whether the fronting represented by וְאֶת-יְהוּדָה שָׁלַח is from the hand of a later editor or original to a source, its placement just after the interruption of the genealogical insertion reveals a sensitivity to the discontinuous force of the structure on the part of the editor (given the absence of an overt subject, it seems more likely that the phrase in question was integral to an original source). In its present position, the structure would seem to begin a new episode. It may also function to express background information. If it is not from the editor's own hand, then the question arises as to its original context and function. According to Speiser's reconstruction (1962:342), v. 28 follows directly after v. 1 (both as J), in which case the structure would seem to denote anteriority. Skinner (1910:490-1), on the other hand, thinks v. 1a and possibly v. 5b the work of J. Conversely, Van Seters (1992:317) considers 46.1aα, 5b, and 28-30 part of the *pre*-Yahwistic Joseph story. In either of the latter cases, וְאֶת-יְהוּדָה שָׁלַח would seem to constitute a contrastive topic for the sake of general desequentialization or parallelization.

[209] This statistical situation is likely also related to the propensity for fronting the topic of discourse at the beginning of a speech (see below).

מְאֹד : **וַיֹּאמֶר** אָמַר אֶל־אַבְרָם אַחֲרֵי הִפָּרֶד־לוֹט מֵעִמּוֹ שָׂא נָא עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵה מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה שָׁם צָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה וָקֵדְמָה וָיָמָּה :

27.6 וְרִבְקָה שֹׁמַעַת בְּדַבֵּר יִצְחָק אֶל־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ עֵשָׂו הַשָּׂדֶה לָצוּד צַיִד לְהָבִיא : **וְרִבְקָה** אָמְרָה אֶל־יַעֲקֹב בְּנָהּ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת־אָבִיךָ מְדַבֵּר אֶל־עֵשָׂו אָחִיךָ לֵאמֹר :

27.30 וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלָּה יִצְחָק לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אַךְ יָצֹא יָצָא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו **וְעֵשָׂו אָחִיו** בָּא מִצֵּידוֹ [210] :

34.5 (*bis*) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁכֶם אֶל־חֲמוֹר אָבִיו לֵאמֹר קַח־לִי אֶת־הַיַּלְדָּה הַזֹּאת לְאִשָּׁה : **וְיַעֲקֹב** שָׁמַע כִּי טִמֵּא אֶת־דִּינָה בִתּוֹ **וּבָנָיו** הָיוּ אֶת־מִקְנֵהוּ בַּשָּׂדֶה וְהֶחֱרִשׁ יַעֲקֹב עַד־בֹּאָם :

35.16 וַיְנַשֵּׁק לְכָל־אֶחָיו וַיֵּבְךְ עֲלֵהֶם וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן דִּבְּרוּ אֶחָיו אִתּוֹ : **וְהַקֹּל** נִשְׁמַע בֵּית פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר בָּאוּ אֲחֵי יוֹסֵף וַיִּיטַב בְּעֵינֵי פַרְעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי עֲבָדָיו :

In all of the examples given here the *X+qatal* structure is used to signal a switch in scene. This switch may or may not be tied to specific sequential order, as in the cases of marking anteriority and simultaneity.

Dramatic Slowing or Dramatic Pause

Some cases of non-focal fronting defy categorization according to the labels presented above. Elements are preposed and discontinuity is achieved, but the literary effects are evidently neither for change in spatio-termporal setting, nor for bringing up a new sentential or discourse topic, nor for comparing, contrasting, or presenting as parallel actions or events relating to two (or more) topics, nor for inserting an explanation or parenthetical point. Why should a writer employ a structure signaling discourse discontinuity when no form of spatio-temporal, topical, or thematic continuity must be interrupted? The answer may lie in the writer's desire to "slow down" the reader at particularly important moments in the discourse. Longacre (1983:25-38) notes several cross-linguistic features associated with narrative peak. One of these involves grammatical "turbulence":

> *Routine features of the event-line may be distorted or phased out at Peak. Thus, the characteristic event-line tense/aspect may be substituted for by another tense/aspect. Alternatively, the characteristic tense/aspect of the main line of a discourse may be extended to unexpected uses at Peak. Particles which elsewhere mark rather faithfully the event-line of a story may suddenly be absent. Routine participant reference may be disturbed.* (Longacre 1983:25)

Similarly, Sperber and Wilson (1986:196) argue that when an apparently inappropriate construction is used, the writer must have expected to achieve some additional contextual effects not obtainable from using the equivalent unmarked construction.

Several scholars have applied these ideas to the BH verb system and, in particular, to the *X+verb* construction. First, Buth (1983:64) mentions what he terms "dramatic pause" as a possible solution to the repetition of subject+*qatal* structures in Est 7.6-10:

Est 7.6-10 וַתֹּאמֶר־אֶסְתֵּר אִישׁ צַר וְאוֹיֵב הָמָן הָרָע הַזֶּה **וְהָמָן** נִבְעַת מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמַּלְכָּה : **וְהַמֶּלֶךְ** קָם [211] בַּחֲמָתוֹ מִמִּשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן אֶל־גִּנַּת הַבִּיתָן **וְהָמָן** עָמַד לְבַקֵּשׁ עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ מֵאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה כִּי רָאָה כִּי־כָלְתָה אֵלָיו הָרָעָה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ : **וְהַמֶּלֶךְ** שָׁב מִגִּנַּת הַבִּיתָן אֶל־בֵּית מִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן וְהָמָן נֹפֵל עַל־הַמִּטָּה אֲשֶׁר אֶסְתֵּר עָלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ הֲגַם לִכְבּוֹשׁ אֶת־הַמַּלְכָּה עִמִּי בַּבָּיִת הַדָּבָר [212] יָצָא מִפִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ **וּפְנֵי** הָמָן חָפוּ : ס וַיֹּאמֶר חַרְבוֹנָה אֶחָד מִן־הַסָּרִיסִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּם הִנֵּה־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הָמָן לְמָרְדֳּכַי אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־טוֹב עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ עֹמֵד בְּבֵית הָמָן גָּבֹהַּ חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ תְּלֻהוּ עָלָיו : וַיִּתְלוּ אֶת־הָמָן עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין לְמָרְדֳּכָי **נַחֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ** שָׁכָכָה :

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[210] This constitutes a change of scene, because Jacob and Esau are in separate locations in the camp. Jacob has just left his father's presence when Esau returns from the field to prepare his game.

Buth (1995:91) explains this piling up of subject+*qatal* discontinuity structures, which are, however, used to recount sequential events, with the following words: "The most credible explanation of this is that the author has pragmatically suspended the marking of foregrounding-continuity in the story in order to hold the audience's attention at a dramatic peak." He also cites two more passages where he argues constituents have been fronted for purposes of dramatic pause: the first is Gen 19.23-5:

19.23-25 הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָצָא עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְלוֹט בָּא צֹעֲרָה ׃ וַיהֹוָה הִמְטִיר עַל־סְדֹם וְעַל־עֲמֹרָה גׇּפְרִית וָאֵשׁ מֵאֵת יְהֹוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמָיִם ׃ וַיַּהֲפֹךְ אֶת־הֶעָרִים הָאֵל וְאֵת כָּל־הַכִּכָּר וְאֵת כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הֶעָרִים וְצֶמַח הָאֲדָמָה ׃

Buth (1994a:226-7) observes:

> *The first three clauses … do not use the verb initial narrative tense structure of Hebrew even though they are all sequential in the narrative about Lot and Sodom. The pragmatic Contextualization [i.e. X+qatal] structures, implying non-sequentiality, tell the audience that a 'pause' in the development of the story is taking place. But the semantics of the events make it clear that positive temporal progression is taking place. This mismatch of form and function becomes reasonable when we consider that this point in the story may have been a dramatic climax for the author. That can explain the triple use of Contextualization [i.e. X+qatal] structures here. To use a metaphor from cinema, this is a 'slow motion' technique for dramatic effect.*

The second example of dramatic pause that Buth notes is in Gen 44.3:

44.3-4 הַבֹּקֶר אוֹר וְהָאֲנָשִׁים שֻׁלְּחוּ הֵמָּה וַחֲמֹרֵיהֶם ׃ הֵם יָצְאוּ אֶת־הָעִיר לֹא הִרְחִיקוּ וְיוֹסֵף אָמַר לַאֲשֶׁר עַל־בֵּיתוֹ קוּם רְדֹף...

Buth (1995:93) comments:

> *The chain of "backgrounded" clauses prolongs the setting for an unusual length. More importantly, there are three sequential events, including the speech frame: "Joseph said." Again, we need to invoke a dramatic pause intended by the author. This passages is different from Esther [6:6-10], though, because the events do not describe the climax or peak events themselves. They open the scene and set the stage for the dramatic confrontation at the height of the Joseph story, where Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. This is another example where the grammar is directly affected, inverted as it were, by very high level considerations of literary structure…. In order to mark a special point of tension in the story, the author of Genesis marks the clauses as "background-discontinuity" by using subjects as contextualizing constituents.*[213]

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[211] Two of the *qatal* forms in this passage (קָם in v. 7 and שָׁב in v. 8) are morphologically indistinguishable from their respective participial forms, with another *qatal* form (נִבְעַת in v. 6) distinguishable only in terms of its vocalization (*patach* for the *qatal* form rather than *qamatz* for the participial form). Buth (1995:92) comments: "[S]everal of the verbs are ambiguous morphologically as to whether they are participles or suffix verbs. It would be interesting to see whether or not the ratio of ambiguous forms to unambiguous forms turns up significantly more often in background clauses than in foreground clauses. Morphologies and word-formation in languages sometimes mirror such functional compatibility."

[212] Regarding the asyndetic *subject+qatal* structure of הַדָּבָר יָצָא, Buth (1995:92) notes: "When one of the clauses was used circumstantially, 'and' was not used so as not to mimic the chain of dramatic pause 'backgrounds.'"

[213] Buth notes elsewhere (2003:75, n. 16) that in the following clause from Jonah 1.4 the *X+qatal* structure also serves to signal *dramatic pause*: וְהָאֳנִיָּה חִשְּׁבָה לְהִשָּׁבֵר.

Interestingly, Levinsohn (1990:28) (followed by Bailey and Levinsohn (1992:202-4)) propose a very similar effect of the *X+qatal* structure to deal with some of the very same passages.[214] Levinsohn states: "When topicalization [i.e. non-focal fronting] is found in an apparently inappropriate context (viz. in the absence of a discontinuity), the purpose will be to achieve additional effects. In the case of Hebrew, I argue that the intended effect of such 'redundant' topicalization is highlighting." Bailey and Levinsohn (1992) see the final (*we*)+*X+qatal* form in the Genesis passages cited by Buth (19.23-5; 44.3-4) and in the following two passages as "clearly highlighted, foreground information":

15.17-18   וַיְהִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בָּאָה וַעֲלָטָה הָיָה וְהִנֵּה תַנּוּר עָשָׁן וְלַפִּיד אֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָבַר בֵּין הַגְּזָרִים הָאֵלֶּה׃ **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** כָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת-אַבְרָם בְּרִית לֵאמֹר ...

38.24-25   וַיְהִי כְּמִשְׁלֹשׁ חֳדָשִׁים וַיֻּגַּד לִיהוּדָה לֵאמֹר זָנְתָה תָּמָר כַּלָּתֶךָ וְגַם הִנֵּה הָרָה לִזְנוּנִים וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה הוֹצִיאוּהָ וְתִשָּׂרֵף׃ הִוא מוּצֵאת **וְהִיא** שָׁלְחָה אֶל-חָמִיהָ לֵאמֹר ...

Levinsohn (1990:29-30) also notes the fronting of הַדֶּלֶת in Gen 19.6 as a fronting where no discontinuity need be signaled and where the motivation for such "redundant" fronting "appears again to be that of highlighting the event which immediately follows."

19.6   וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵהֶם לוֹט הַפֶּתְחָה **וְהַדֶּלֶת** סָגַר אַחֲרָיו׃

Whether dramatic pause is the only explanation available for each of these *X+verb* structures is debatable. For example, the *X+verb* structure represented by בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרַת in Gen 15.18 may signal a discontinuity for the purpose of inserting an explanatory summary statement, while it has been claimed that וְהִיא שָׁלְחָה in Gen 38.25 is marked as discontinuous for purposes of simultaneity.[215] Similarly, while the fronting of וְהַדֶּלֶת in Gen 19.6 may highlight what comes next, a very similar fronting occurs only four verses later in Gen 19.10.

19.10   וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶת-יָדָם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת-לוֹט אֲלֵיהֶם הַבָּיְתָה **וְאֶת-הַדֶּלֶת** סָגָרוּ׃ **וְאֶת-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת** הִכּוּ בַּסַּנְוֵרִים מִקָּטֹן וְעַד-גָּדוֹל וַיִּלְאוּ לִמְצֹא הַפָּתַח׃

Does this fronting also signal highlighting? And what of the fronted וְאֶת-הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת in the very next verse?

Notwithstanding such doubts, the theory whereby "turbulent grammar" is associated with narrative peaks appears to enjoy cross-linguistic support.[216] Furthermore, the

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[214] Levinsohn (1990) and Bailey and Levinsohn (1992) evidently reached their conclusion independently of Buth (1987), as he is not cited in their bibliographies.

[215] Buth (personal communication) notes, however, that in Gen 38.25, the *X+qatal* verb form was not necessary to mark simultaneity, as the synchronicity coincidence of Tamar's being taken out and her sending is established by the use of a participle for the former action. Even with a *wayyiqtol* form, simultaneity would have been achieved: הִוא מוּצֵאת וַתִּשְׁלַח (תָּמָר) (see, e.g., 1Ki 13.25 וַיִּרְאוּ עֹבְרִים אֲנָשִׁים וְהִנֵּה). Since the *X+qatal* structure is superfluous for the marking of simultaneity, it may very well mark a dramatic slowing or pause.

[216] For example, Watters (2002:350-3) argues that one of the major functions of the unmarked narrative verb form in Kham is to mark temporal progression. The marked, nominalized form, on the other hand, signals various types of background material. However, he also notes what he terms "nominalizations on the time-line" (353):

> [A] major problem lies in the unexpected occurrence of the marked nominalized form in contexts where it would not be predicted by the notions of backgrounding or stage-setting. Specifically, the nominalized form occurs also (under certain conditions) with events which are clearly "on the time-line" – not backgrounded material, but part of the narrative backbone. What then is the communicative function of the form in these contexts; and can that function be shown to have coherence with the other functions marked by the same form? My working hypothesis will be that the condition under which the nominalized form is triggered when it is on the time-line is one of unpredictability, and that, indeed, unpredictability does have coherence with the notion of discontinuity. What is continuous is predictable, and what is not predictable has that characteristic only because it is in some way discontinuous with the preceding context.

grammatical "turbulence" represented by the use of otherwise inexplicable *X+qatal* structures in certain BH passages is difficult to explain in terms of temporal, spatial, topical, or thematic discontinuity. The designation of these passages as narrative peaks must always, of course, remain subjective. Nevertheless, the concept of dramatic slowing or dramatic pause, with its potential link to discourse discontinuity, certainly merits further study, both as regards language in general and BH more specifically.

Discontinuities and Direct Speech: Change in tack/start of new theme

Statistically speaking, one is much more apt to find non-VSO word order in direct speech than in narrative. There appear to be two reasons for this, one applicable to the use of non-VSO word order at the onset of direct speech, the other to use of non-VSO word order in continuation of direct speech. First of all, there exists a marked dominance of non-VSO word order at the beginning of direct speech (i.e. after a form of the verb אָמַר or other speech verbs). Note the statistical situation:

VS	SV	XV(S)
16[217]	22[218]	28[219]

Only 16 times does VS word order occur at the onset of direct speech, while SV or XV word order occurs some 50 times (22 SV + 28 XV). This is likely motivated by two factors: (a) the propensity for fronting the topic of conversation at the beginning of discourse and (b) the fact that new discourse units often begin with *X+verb* structures.[220] In this regard, it is interesting to note that eight of the 16 VS clauses that occur at the onset of direct speech in Genesis do not, in fact, begin new discourse units. The cases of VS word order in Gen 30.6, 11, 18, 20, and 23 occur in one-line name explanations; the basic discourse, however, continues. The VS word order in 27.35 comes as part of a two-line reply in the middle of discourse – again, topic continuity is maintained. Finally, the VS word order in each of 31.1 and 38.24 conveys reported speech – no new discourse is begun. It is also worth noting that the SV word order in five of the 23 SV clauses exhibit subject pronouns. Two of these (30.29 and 44.27) occur with the *qatal* form of the verb יָדַע (see above) and three (21.24, 38.17, 47.30) as part of an oath.[221] Regarding the 28 XV cases, in 22 the fronted element appears to be focal.[222]

   And as for the continuation of direct speech: Longacre (1995:333) is probably correct when he states that "the exigencies of repartee presumably make for departures from the standard word order at many places." Spontaneity, cognitive constraints involving limitations of memory, interruptions or even the mere possibility of being interrupted, and other

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[217] Gen 27.35, 30.6, 11, 18, 20, 23, 31.1, 38.24, 39.17, 42.28, 30, 43.3, 7, 45.9, 16, 50.25.

[218] Gen 3.13, 5.29, 14.23, 17.9, 19.9, 31, 21.24, 22.8, 24.40, 26.11, 30.29, 37.20, 38.17, 28, 44.27, 46.31, 47.1, 47.5, 30, 48.3, 50.5, 16.

[219] Gen 2.16, 3.2, 10, 12.7, 15.18, 17.17, 18.12, 21.6, 22.14, 16, 24.7, 19, 50, 29.34, 35, 30.8, 16, 31.8 (*bis*), 32.5, 20, 39.19, 40.8, 41.15, 42.36, 37, 46.34, 47.4, 48.20.

[220] But see Qimron's (1998) argument regarding the backgrounded nature of non-VS word order at the onset of direct speech.

[221] See Muraoka (1985:54).

[222] 12.7, 15.8, 18.12, 21.6, 24.7, 19, 50, 29.34 (?), 35 (?), 30.8, 16, 31.8 (*bis*), 32.5, 20, 40.8 (?), 15 (?), 42.36, 37, 46.34, 47.4, 48.20.

external factors likely all make direct speech – be it conversation or monologue – much more likely to exhibit the sort of discontinuities expressed by the *X+verb* structure than narrative.[223] Khan (1988:82) notes "change in theme" as one of the functions associated with extra-clausal elements. Something similar may be happening with *X+verb* structures in the middle of direct speech, though it may be better to describe this effect more generally. In direct speech, as in narrative, the *X+verb* structure often seems to mark something less than a formal unit break. At times, it would appear that the discontinuity function of the *X+verb* structure is employed simply to mark a 'thematic pause', 'shift', or 'change in tack' in a person's speech, even when there is no external interruption.[224] This pause can be used to explain, detail, or restate what has just been said. It can also be used to separate between various types of discourse (for example, it is often used to redirect discourse after a rhetorical question, exclamation, or introduction). In essence, the discontinuity marks the beginning of a new discourse. While the hypothesis remains somewhat tentative, and while analysis and categorization of each example is difficult, the *X+verb* structure in each of the following examples appear to convey a sort of discontinuity related to rhetorical concerns. In some of the examples, note that the discontinuity involved is both confirmed and reinforced by the absence of a conjunctive *waw*.[225]

Restatement/Explanation/Detailing

וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ **הוּא** יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב:	3.15
וַאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא אֶת-הַמַּבּוּל מַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחֵת כָּל-בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמָיִם **כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-בָּאָרֶץ** יִגְוָע:	6.17
וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרָה צְחֹק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים **כָּל-הַשֹּׁמֵעַ** יִצְחַק-לִי:	21.6
שְׁמָעֵנוּ אֲדֹנִי נְשִׂיא אֱלֹהִים אַתָּה בְּתוֹכֵנוּ בְּמִבְחַר קְבָרֵינוּ קְבֹר אֶת-מֵתֶךָ **אִישׁ מִמֶּנּוּ**[226] אֶת-קִבְרוֹ לֹא-יִכְלֶה מִמְּךָ מִקְּבֹר מֵתֶךָ:	23.6
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לָהּ שְׁנֵי גִיים [גוֹיִם] בְּבִטְנֵךְ **וּשְׁנֵי לְאֻמִּים מִמֵּעַיִךְ** יִפָּרֵדוּ **וּלְאֹם מִלְאֹם** יֶאֱמָץ **וְרַב** יַעֲבֹד צָעִיר:	25.23
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲכִי קָרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעְקְבֵנִי זֶה פַעֲמַיִם **אֶת-בְּכֹרָתִי** לָקָח וְהִנֵּה עַתָּה לָקַח בִּרְכָתִי וַיֹּאמַר הֲלֹא-אָצַלְתָּ לִּי בְּרָכָה:	27.36
וַיְדַבֵּר שַׂר הַמַּשְׁקִים אֶת-פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר אֶת-חֲטָאַי אֲנִי מַזְכִּיר הַיּוֹם: **פַּרְעֹה** קָצַף עַל-עֲבָדָיו וַיִּתֵּן אֹתִי בְּמִשְׁמַר בֵּית שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים אֹתִי וְאֵת שַׂר הָאֹפִים:	41.10
וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר פָּתַר-לָנוּ כֵּן הָיָה **אֹתִי** הֵשִׁיב עַל כַּנִּי וְאֹתוֹ תָלָה:	41.13
וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁלוֹם לָכֶם אַל-תִּירָאוּ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבִיכֶם נָתַן לָכֶם מַטְמוֹן בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵיכֶם **כַּסְפְּכֶם** בָּא אֵלָי וַיּוֹצֵא אֲלֵהֶם אֶת-שִׁמְעוֹן:	43.23
וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם-עַתָּה כְדִבְרֵיכֶם כֶּן-הוּא **אֲשֶׁר יִמָּצֵא אִתּוֹ** יִהְיֶה-לִּי עָבֶד וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ נְקִיִּם:	44.10
וְעַתָּה שְׁנֵי-בָנֶיךָ הַנּוֹלָדִים לְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד-בֹּאִי אֵלֶיךָ מִצְרַיְמָה לִי-הֵם **אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה** כִּרְאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ-לִי:	48.5

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[223] Hence, the inherent weakness in Holmstedt's dependence on direct speech as the best environment to study basic word order.

[224] Compare the following remark from Lambdin (1971:§81) on subject pronouns: "They may be used in a variety of disjunctive ways and may stand before the verb in a verbal sentence to give emphasis to the subject. This emphasis need not be strong; it may be merely that the discourse has had a shift in subject, which would not entail any special emphasis in the English translation."

[225] Other potential examples beyond those presented here include Gen 31.5, 32.13, and 50.21.

[226] Muraoka (1985:34-5) discusses the rather frequent unemphasized fronting of the word אִישׁ, without, however, providing an explanation. A cursory examination of the cases where אִישׁ is fronted as the subject of a finite verb reveals that it generally behaves no differently from other non-focal fronted noun phrases.

Redirection of Discourse for Change in Theme (often after Rhetorical Question, Exclamation, Introduction, or Command)

וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם חֲמָסִי עָלֶיךָ **אָנֹכִי** נָתַתִּי שִׁפְחָתִי בְּחֵיקֶךָ וַתֵּרֶא כִּי הָרָתָה וָאֵקַל בְּעֵינֶיהָ יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ׃	16.5
וְיהוָה אָמָר הַמְכַסֶּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה׃ **וְאַבְרָהָם** הָיוֹ יִהְיֶה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם וְנִבְרְכוּ בוֹ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ׃	18.18
וַיֹּאמֶר בּוֹא בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה לָמָּה תַעֲמֹד בַּחוּץ **וְאָנֹכִי** פִּנִּיתִי הַבַּיִת וּמָקוֹם לַגְּמַלִּים׃	24.31
וַיֹּאמַר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי׃ **וַיהוָה** בֵּרַךְ אֶת־אֲדֹנִי מְאֹד וַיִּגְדָּל וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ צֹאן וּבָקָר וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב וַעֲבָדִם וּשְׁפָחֹת וּגְמַלִּים וַחֲמֹרִים׃	24.35
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַל־תְּאַחֲרוּ אֹתִי **וַיהוָה** הִצְלִיחַ דַּרְכִּי שַׁלְּחוּנִי וְאֵלְכָה לַאדֹנִי׃	24.56
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יִצְחָק מַדּוּעַ בָּאתֶם אֵלָי **וְאַתֶּם** שְׂנֵאתֶם אֹתִי וַתְּשַׁלְּחוּנִי מֵאִתְּכֶם׃	26.27
קוּם לֵךְ פַּדֶּנָה אֲרָם בֵּיתָה בְתוּאֵל אֲבִי אִמֶּךָ וְקַח־לְךָ מִשָּׁם אִשָּׁה מִבְּנוֹת לָבָן אֲחִי אִמֶּךָ׃ **וְאֵל שַׁדַּי** יְבָרֵךְ אֹתְךָ וְיַפְרְךָ וְיַרְבֶּךָ וְהָיִיתָ לִקְהַל עַמִּים׃	28.3
יֶשׁ־לְאֵל יָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם רָע **וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבִיכֶם אֶמֶשׁ**[227] אָמַר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ מִדַּבֵּר עִם־יַעֲקֹב מִטּוֹב עַד־רָע׃	31.29
זֶה עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ **רְחֵלֶיךָ וְעִזֶּיךָ** לֹא שִׁכֵּלוּ וְאֵילֵי צֹאנְךָ לֹא אָכָלְתִּי׃	31.38
וְהִתְחַתְּנוּ אֹתָנוּ **בְּנֹתֵיכֶם** תִּתְּנוּ־לָנוּ וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ תִּקְחוּ לָכֶם׃	34.9
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה שְׁלֵמִים הֵם אִתָּנוּ וְיֵשְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ וְיִסְחֲרוּ אֹתָהּ וְהָאָרֶץ הִנֵּה רַחֲבַת־יָדַיִם לִפְנֵיהֶם אֶת־**בְּנֹתָם** נִקַּח־לָנוּ לְנָשִׁים וְאֶת־בְּנֹתֵינוּ נִתֵּן לָהֶם׃	34.21
וְאֶת־אֲחִיכֶם קָחוּ וְקוּמוּ שׁוּבוּ אֶל־הָאִישׁ׃ **וְאֵל שַׁדַּי** יִתֵּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים לִפְנֵי הָאִישׁ וְשִׁלַּח לָכֶם אֶת־אֲחִיכֶם אַחֵר וְאֶת־בִּנְיָמִין וַאֲנִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכֹלְתִּי שָׁכָלְתִּי׃	43.14
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה מַה־נֹּאמַר לַאדֹנִי מַה־נְּדַבֵּר וּמַה־נִּצְטַדָּק **הָאֱלֹהִים** מָצָא אֶת־עֲוֺן עֲבָדֶיךָ הִנֶּנּוּ עֲבָדִים לַאדֹנִי גַּם־אֲנַחְנוּ גַּם אֲשֶׁר־נִמְצָא הַגָּבִיעַ בְּיָדוֹ׃	44.16
וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנִי יְדַבֶּר־נָא עַבְדְּךָ דָבָר בְּאָזְנֵי אֲדֹנִי וְאַל־יִחַר אַפְּךָ בְּעַבְדֶּךָ כִּי כָמוֹךָ כְּפַרְעֹה׃ **אֲדֹנִי** שָׁאַל אֶת־עֲבָדָיו לֵאמֹר הֲיֵשׁ־לָכֶם אָב אוֹ־אָח׃	44.19
וּקְחוּ אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶת־בָּתֵּיכֶם וּבֹאוּ אֵלָי וְאֶתְּנָה לָכֶם אֶת־טוּב אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאִכְלוּ אֶת־חֵלֶב הָאָרֶץ׃ **וְאַתָּה** צֻוֵּיתָה זֹאת עֲשׂוּ קְחוּ־לָכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עֲגָלוֹת לְטַפְּכֶם וְלִנְשֵׁיכֶם וּנְשָׂאתֶם אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם וּבָאתֶם׃	45.19
וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי מֵת וְהָיָה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּכֶם וְהֵשִׁיב אֶתְכֶם אֶל־אֶרֶץ אֲבֹתֵיכֶם׃ **וַאֲנִי** נָתַתִּי לְךָ שְׁכֶם אַחַד עַל־אַחֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר לָקַחְתִּי מִיַּד הָאֱמֹרִי בְּחַרְבִּי וּבְקַשְׁתִּי׃	48.22
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף אַל־תִּירָאוּ כִּי הֲתַחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנִי׃ **וְאַתֶּם** חֲשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה אֱלֹהִים חֲשָׁבָהּ לְטֹבָה לְמַעַן עֲשֹׂה כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַחֲיֹת עַם־רָב׃	50.20
וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֶחָיו אָנֹכִי מֵת **וֵאלֹהִים** פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם וְהֶעֱלָה אֶתְכֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב׃ וַיַּשְׁבַּע יוֹסֵף אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהַעֲלִתֶם אֶת־עַצְמֹתַי מִזֶּה׃	50.24

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[227] There are two separate fronted elements here: the subject אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִיכֶם and the adverbial of time אֶמֶשׁ. Normally when two items are fronted, the second is focal. This case constitutes an exception.

The *X+verb* Structure and Pragmatic Discontinuity

The various literary effects of the non-focal *X+verb* structure surveyed above include the marking of various types of topical elements (discourse topic, temporary sentential topic, contrastive topic), specific types of non-sequentiality (anteriority and simultaneity), general non-sequentiality (desequentialization of otherwise sequential actions, contrastive topicalization), non-story-line information, intra-episode scene shifting, new literary units (episode or paragraph), dramatic pause, and general redirections in direct speech.

Several summary points are in order. First of all, as was noted by Lambdin (1971:§132), the various effects of the *X+verb* structure often overlap.[228] An *X+qatal* structure may mark a unit border, an off-line descriptive lead-in, and an anterior event at the same time (e.g. Gen 39.1 וְיוֹסֵף הוּרַד). It is often unnecessary, nay, counterproductive to define the effects of a given structure too strictly.

Second, all of the various functions of the non-focal *X+verb* structure discussed here are explicable in terms of the overarching concept of pragmatic continuity. The function of the *X+verb* structure is to signal pragmatic discontinuity.[229] However, that discontinuity can be employed to achieve various literary effects. Elements that are fronted as topics disrupt the unmarked flow of discourse in order to mark a change in subject matter, to reorient attention in order to delimit the domain in which a given assertion holds true, or to compare previously activated topics. Elements that are fronted for the purpose of breaking chronological sequence take advantage of the cross-linguistic link between pragmatic continuity and temporal sequence. Effects related to neither of these two principles (e.g., marking of off-line material (parenthesis, abstract/title/heading, summary), of new literary units, and of dramatic slowing or pause) can be explained only as deriving directly from breaks in the standard, expected, and unmarked communicative or discourse continuity which makes a text a text.

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[228] "Semantic distinctions among disjunctive clauses are difficult to define because of overlapping."

[229] Others have used similar terminology: Lambdin (1971:162-5) terms all *we+non-verb* clauses *disjunctive*. Levinsohn (1990) and Bailey and Levinsohn (1992) describe the *X+qatal* structure in terms of discontinuity. Myhill (1995:133) explains:

A number of verb-initial functions are related to the concept of continuity. In narratives about the past, this involves the idea that the unmarked expectation is that each clause will advance the reference time by reporting the next thing which happened in the story; when this expectation is met, the unmarked verb-initial order is used, while when the temporal sequencing pattern is broken, non-verb-initial order is used. In discussions about the future, we can suggest that the unmarked expectation is there will be general cooperation; cooperative future events are associated with verb-initial word order, while non-cooperative future events are associated with non-verb-initial order.

In an article in which he attempts to explain the BH verbal forms on the basis of pragmatics, Baayan (1995) speaks of temporal and locational *linkage*. He describes the pragmatic function of the *qatal* form in narrative as follows: "By means of the *qatal* form, the speaker tells the hearer that the event or state denoted by the verb cannot be tightly linked to the hearer's discourse representation, given the speaker's assessment of their common ground" (246). The pragmatic function of the *wayyiqtol* form he describes in these terms: "The *wayyiqtol* is the narrative tense of the language. It allows the hearer to relax into a less demanding communicative speech mode, its disfocal value signaling that the hearer's immediate communicative reaction is not called for" (256). He also notes that 'loose linkage' is not the same as background (272). See also van Wolde (1997:39) and Watters (2002:350-3). Interestingly, Smith (1991:14, n. 3) comments on the functional contrast between BH converted and unconverted forms in light of the apparent functional contrast between Ugaritic prefix forms and the Ugaritic *qatala*, arguing that the latter "signals a disjunction in the narrative." Smith goes on to cite examples (see also the bibliography he gives) where the Ugaritic *qatala* form signals the beginning of a new literary section, a switch in scene, background information, a narrative highpoint, and the closure of a section. Smith deals only with the verb forms and not with related order of other clausal constituents.

Also, no study of the pragmatics of the *X+verb* structure in BH can ignore the relationship between word order phenomena and the BH verb forms. That relationship can be schematicized as follows (adapted from Buth 1992:104 and Buth 1995:99):

	Past – Perfective – Realis	Non-Past/Future – Imperfective – Irrealis
Pragmatic Continuity	*wayyiqtol*	*weqatal*
Pragmatic Discontinuity	*(we)X + qatal*	*(we)X + yiqtol*

The functions associated with the *X+verb* structures for focal and non-focal marking explain why BH users maintained a system with two semantically and syntactically equivalent verbal forms for each tense/aspect dimension.

Finally, it should be re-emphasized that the (probably unconscious) authorial choice of whether a given event is reported by a continuity structure (i.e., a *waw*-conversive form) or by a discontinuity structure (e.g., an *X+verb* structure) is closely related to, but not determined by, actual sequence of real-world events. A writer could choose what to mark explicitly and what to leave unmarked.

Section 5: Conclusion

In Section 1 arguments in support of a basic, which is to say neutral, VSO word order for BH were adduced. These arguments were based on the overall frequency of the relevant word orders (both including and excluding the *waw*-conversive forms), on their frequency in clauses with particles that prevent the use of the *waw*-conversive forms, on the markedness of fronted subjects in sentences with such particles, and on descriptive simplicity. The markedness of the focal and non-focal fronted elements listed in Sections 3 and 4 lend support to the view that the BH of Genesis indeed exhibits a basic VSO word order.

Section 2 included a brief introduction to discourse analysis and pragmatics. The need for an approach to BH sensitive to discourse analytical and pragmatic principles is evident in light of the fact that the informational differences between clauses distinguished only by word order is often predictable, yet inexplicable in terms of syntax and semantics. Discourse analytical and pragmatic principles also aid in the differentiation among the various functions, meanings, and effects of fronted elements.

In Sections 3 and 4, two distinct types of *X+verb* structures were discussed. Section 3 dealt with the *X+verb* structure in which the fronted *X* constituent is marked for *focus*. *Focus* was defined as the surface-level constituent marked (in this study, by fronting) as containing the most important or salient piece of information in the given context. Focal types were further divided into those identifying/filling-in/completing, contrasting, providing contraexpected information, and generally reinforcing.

Section 4 dealt with non-focal *X+verb* structures. These were sub-divided into those where the fronted element is itself marked and those in which the fronted element marks the entire clause. Part of the discussion was devoted to the BH verbal system, to the concept of *communicative* or *discourse continuity* (and *discontinuity*), and to the link between *continuity* and *sequentiality* (and between *discontinuity* and *non-sequentiality*). It was noted that certain effects of the *X+verb* structure derive from the link between *discontinuity* and *non-sequentiality* – where the *non-sequentiality* in question can express either a specific or general chronological relationship between events – while others appear to derive directly from *discontinuity*.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

Several types of clauses were excluded from the present study: interrogative clauses, imperative clauses, nominal/participial (verbless) clauses, conditional clauses (except for those with כִּי עַתָּה in the apodosis), and clauses with pre-clausal elements. Any full account of the pragmatics of word order in BH should deal with these types of clauses. As was stated in the introduction, the exclusion of these clause types was due to limitations of space. It is predicted that the approach presented herein would, with minor modification, account for word order variation in those clause types as well. Also, the present study did not examine at all the issue of neutral and marked word order after the verb (other than noting the post-verbal "slot" for highly presupposed information). Further, no differentiation was made among the various types of non-subject fronted elements; complements and adjuncts were rather indiscriminately lumped together. Moreover, with specific regard to fronted subject pronouns, only tentative proposals could be made. This was due, at least in part, to the necessity of ignoring almost completely the issue of *participant reference*. Additionally, little attention was paid to the pragmatic functions of special particles (e.g., רַק, גַּם, אַךְ, *et cetera*). Furthermore, as was stated in the introduction, Genesis includes much narrative and direct speech, but little in the way of legal, hortatory, wisdom, and prophetic texts. Also, the single large section of poetry in Genesis was intentionally excluded from the analysis. A fuller examination of word order should endeavor to uncover pragmatic principles of variation in constituent order in these *genres* as well. Finally, due to concerns of space, relatively little could be said about the possible import the linguistic observations made here might have for exegesis and translation. In this sense, the present study may be subject to the charge leveled by Heimerdinger (1999:13) against "many of the modern linguistic analyses of Old Hebrew texts," namely that "Overall, these studies might be characterized as abundant in formal analyses but somewhat skimpy on meaning." If such a description accurately characterizes the present study, then it can only be hoped that it may at least serve as part of a more solid foundation for future studies which will provide more immediately meaningful insights.[230]

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[230] Then again, however, the purpose of a linguistic analysis, as opposed to a literary or textual study, is to describe language. Whether discourse analysis should be a primarily linguistic or literary domain of inquiry must remain the topic of another study.

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MONDOFOTO

Leggere e scrivere in Eritrea

foto di Maria Pennacchio
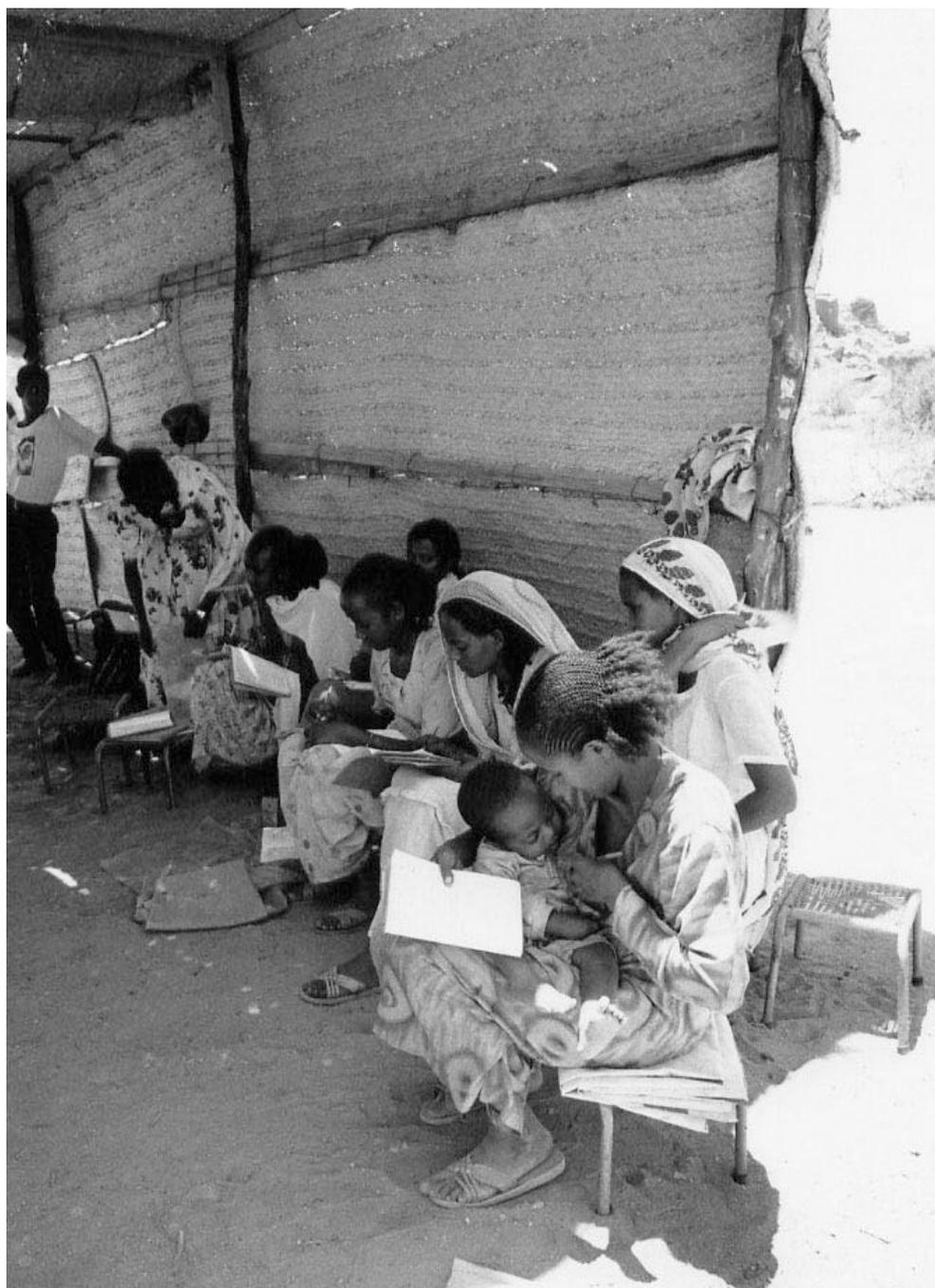
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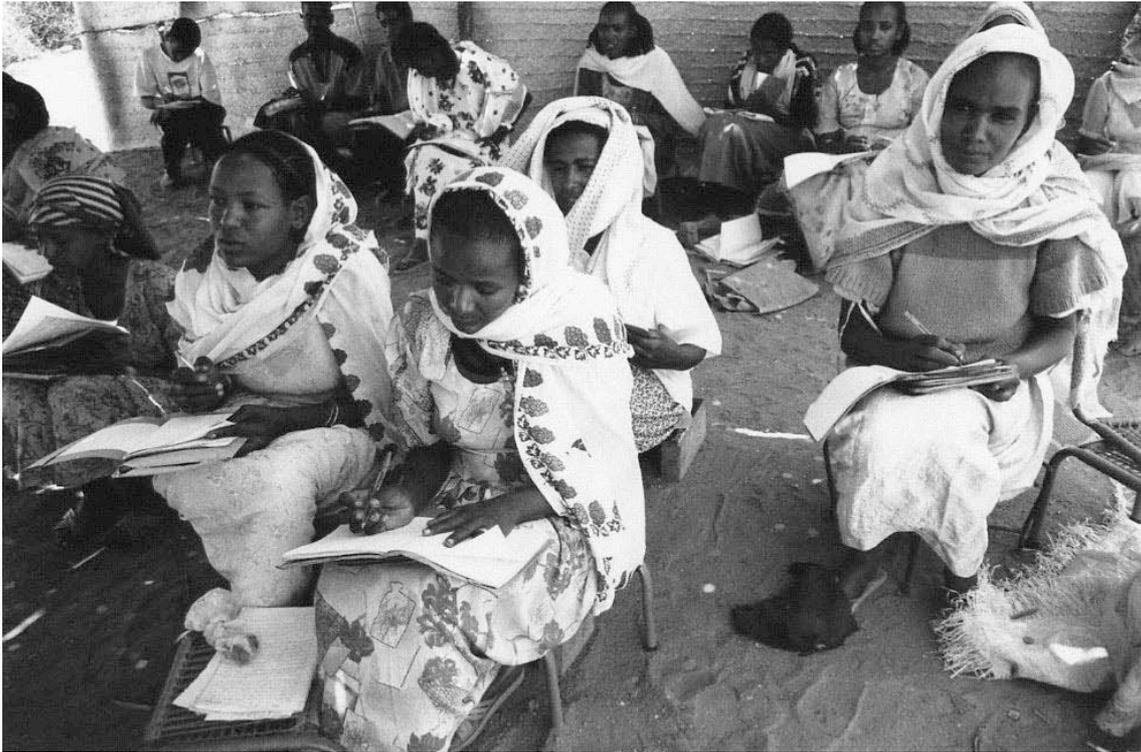
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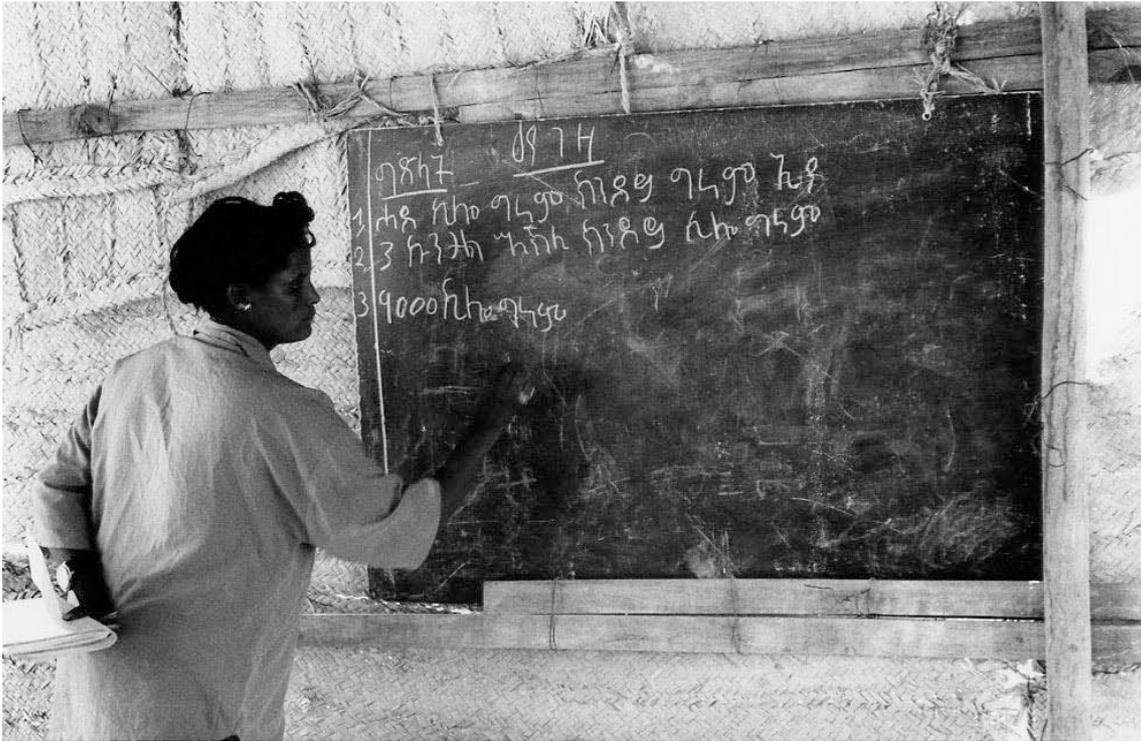
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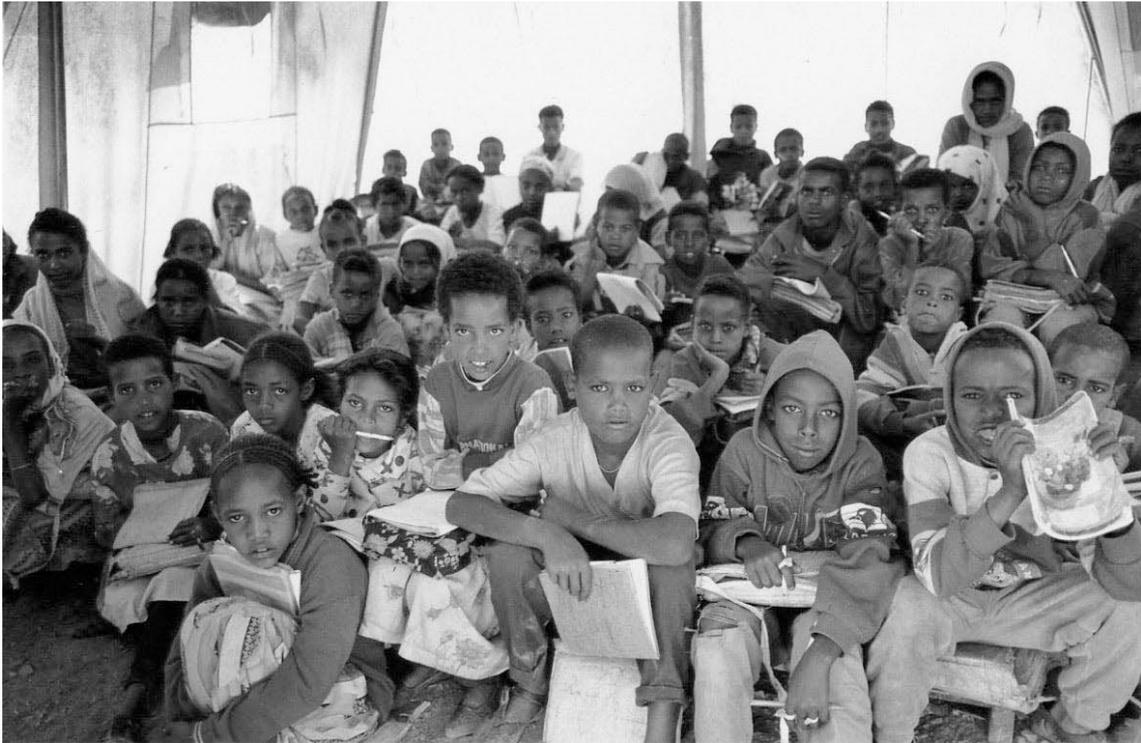
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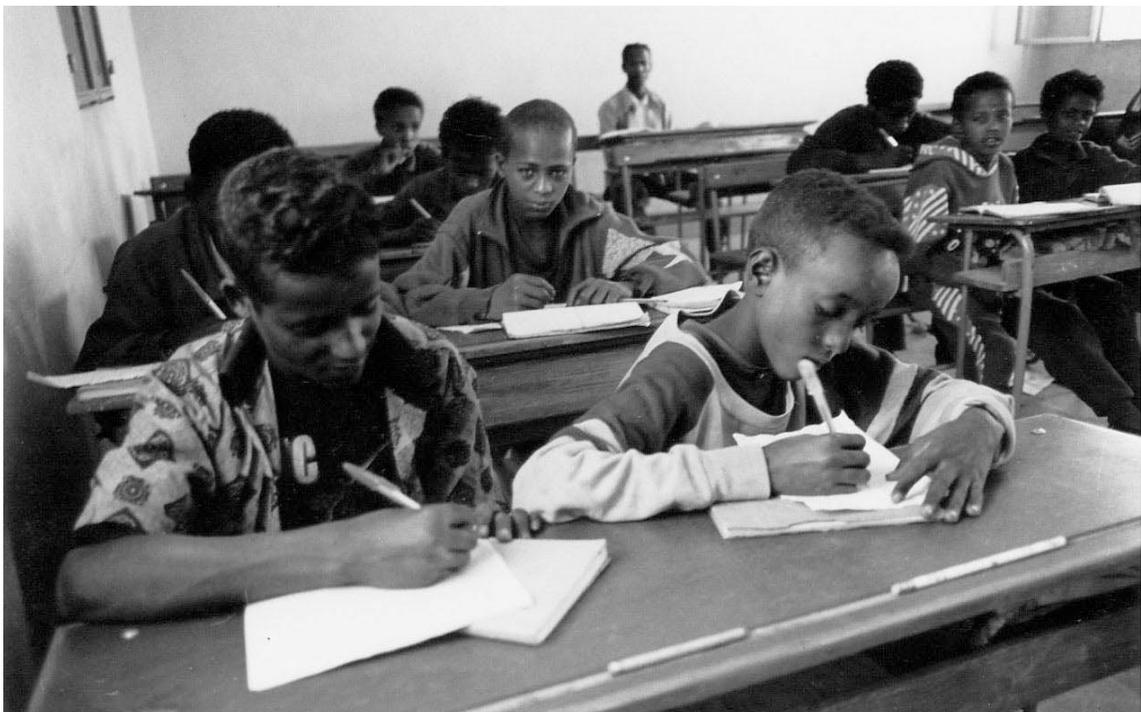
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IN ALTRE LINGUE

Racconto kurdo

A cura di Marco Librè

Questo racconto viene riportato in una versione tramandata dalla cultura popolare kurda del Caucaso. Il testo è in lingua Kurmanji, nella variante Bâyazidi che, a differenza delle altre lingue kurde, adotta l'alfabeto cirillico ed è diffusa principalmente in Armenia e Georgia.

Кöр'е бехирәт

Мәрьвәки кал бьбу,
иди хәбат пе нәдьбу,
нә сах бу, нә жи мьри.
Р'ожәке жи бука wи, же ащьз бу,
дьбежә мере хwә:
«Әм wәстийанә иди жь баве тә,
әw кал буйә, нә дьмьрә нә жи сах ә.
Wәрә, wи бькә сәпәтәки
у бьбә дайнә ль сәре ч'ийаки
кö гöр бьхwьн!».
Әwи жи гьрт баве хwә, кьрә сәпәтәке
у бьр дани сәре ч'ийаки
кö гöр бьхwьн.
Wәхта кöр' әw дани ә'рде
у зьвьр'и hәр'ә мал, кале готе:
«Лаwо, тә әз анимә,
әw шьхöле тә йә,
ле сәпәта хwә hьлдә бьбә мал,
we лазьми тә бе».
«Баво, - гот, - сәпәте чь лазьми мьн бе?».
Гот: «Кöр'е тә жи we тә бинә вьра, wәхта тö кал би!».

Il figlio senza zelo

C'era un uomo anziano,
non era più in grado di lavorare,
ed era moribondo[1].
Un giorno sua nuora[2], stanca[3] di lui,
disse al proprio marito:
«Noi siamo ormai stanchi di tuo padre,
è diventato vecchio, è moribondo[1].
Dai, mettilo in una cesta[4]
e portalo su una montagna
che se lo mangino i lupi!».
Così lui prese suo padre, lo mise in una cesta[4]
e lo portò su una montagna
per farlo mangiare dai lupi.
Quando il figlio lo appoggiò per terra
e si voltò per tornare a casa, il vecchio *(gli)* disse:
«Figlio caro[5], tu mi hai portato qui,
questi sono fatti tuoi,
ma prendi la tua cesta[4] e riportala a casa,
ne avrai bisogno».
«Padre - disse *(chiese il figlio)* - a che mi servirà la cesta[4]?»
Disse *(rispose il padre)*: «Anche tuo figlio ti porterà qui, quando tu sarai vecchio!».

Note sul testo:

[1] Letteralmente "non era vivo, neanche morto".

[2] Originale "бук" (*bûk*). Il termine può essere tradotto "nuora" o semplicemente "sposa". Nella cultura kurda del Caucaso i vari nuclei della famiglia patriarcale vivono quasi sempre uniti sotto lo stesso tetto. Col matrimonio la *bûk* lascia la propria famiglia d'origine ed entra a far parte della famiglia patriarcale dello sposo. La *bûk* va ad occupare il gradino più basso all'interno della famiglia, a lei spettano le attività più umili e faticose che comprendono le faccende di casa e la cura degli animali. Anche quando viene aiutata in questi compiti dalle "қизед мале" (*qîẑêd malê*) figlie della casa, cioè le eventuali sorelle non ancora sposate di suo marito, mantiene una posizione inferiore rispetto a queste ultime. La *bûk* può parlare liberamente solo col proprio marito. Quando si rivolge ad un altro famigliare, cosa che deve comunque evitare il più possibile, deve farlo bisbigliando e mostrando particolare riverenza. Non può parlare in presenza del suocero o di estranei alla famiglia.

[3] Letteralmente "sazia di lui"

[4] Originale "сәпәт" (*sepet*). Il termine indica una cesta di grandi dimensioni, fatta di rami intrecciati, che spesso viene caricata sulle spalle e usata per trasportare fieno o paglia.

[5] Originale "лаво" (*lao*). Termine in forma vocativa con cui ci si rivolge ad una persona più giovane, generalmente il proprio figlio, che esprime nello stesso tempo famigliarità ed affetto.

RECENSIONI
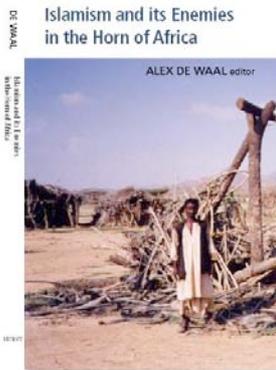
ALEX DE WAAL (ed.), *Islamism and its enemies in the Horn of Africa*. London: Hurst, 2004. 279 pp. £ 16.95 (paperback). ISBN 1-85065-731-9

Dopo l'undici settembre gli Stati Uniti si sono lanciati in una lotta senza quartiere contro il "terrorismo". La prima vittima è stata l'Afghanistan dei talebani, un obiettivo in un certo senso inevitabile viste le strette relazioni fra il regime e al Qaida. E' poi seguito un periodo interlocutorio in cui gli Stati Uniti hanno vagliato la possibilità di intervenire in una serie di paesi considerati come potenziali pericoli per la sicurezza nazionale, sono così stati fatti i nomi di Iraq, Iran, Corea del Nord, Sudan, Somalia e Yemen. Mentre sappiamo come sono andate le cose, è interessante notare come tre dei sei potenziali obiettivi appartenessero al bacino del Mar Rosso. E' questo il punto di partenza dello stimolante volume che segnalo in questa breve comunicazione e che offre una delle analisi più interessanti attualmente disponibili sull'islamismo radicale nel Nord-Est Africa. Un'area considerata da molti analisti come uno dei laboratori più importanti per l'islamismo radicale, e che ha storicamente goduto di un rapporto privilegiato con l'Egitto ritenuto, a ragione, un incubatore della teoria e della pratica dell'islamismo radicale.

Questo è il quadro di riferimento geografico e tematico del volume collettaneo curato da Alex de Waal che, oltre a firmare l'introduzione, ha contribuito anche a quattro dei sei saggi.

I primi due capitoli della raccolta offrono una prima introduzione al quadro di riferimento ideologico di quel particolare tipo di islamismo che ha le proprie origini nel movimento dei Fratelli Musulmani e che ha sempre avuto al suo interno una frangia propensa al jihad violento. Pur essendo influenzata dai grandi pensatori modernisti (Jamal al Din al Afgani, Mohamed Abduh e Sayyid Qutb) questo orientamento è stato definito come neo-fondamentalista, e il suo elemento caratterizzante non è tanto l'avversione per l'occidente, quanto piuttosto quello che viene definito come il suo profondo "anti-intelluttualismo". All'interno di questa corrente la riflessione autonoma è guardata con sospetto, mentre ad essere incoraggiata è l'adesione acritica alle indicazioni fornite dalla sua leadership. Ostili ad ogni elaborata costruzione teorica e convinti che l'Islam sia estremamente semplice e diretto, i principali rappresentanti del neo-fondamentalismo (Yusuf al Qaradawi, Mohamed Salim al'Awwa) non hanno esitato a fare ricorso alla violenza ogniqualvolta il confronto ha rischiato di evidenziare i limiti delle loro posizioni. Secondo De Waal la debolezza dell'approccio neo-fondamentalista si manifesta non tanto nella lotta per la presa del potere, quanto piuttosto una volta che il potere è stato conquistato e che il movimento si trova a dover amministrare direttamente lo stato. Il neo-fondamentalismo non riesce cioè a gestire con successo il passaggio dal micro livello d'azione, dove ottiene i risultati migliori, al livello macro, rappresentato dalla gestione della nazione. L'esempio sudanese esemplifica perfettamente questa difficoltà: nel 1989 il Sudan era l'unico paese arabo con un governo guidato da militari vicini alle posizioni del National Islamic Front (NIF). Nel 2001 il "grande progetto islamista" per l'area era completamente fallito, non tanto grazie ai suoi oppositori ma perché il progetto non era sostanzialmente realizzabile. Invece di contribuire

alla stabilità e alla ricchezza del paese e dell'area le teorizzazioni di Hasan al Turabi hanno ottenuto l'esatto contrario, facendo sprofondare il paese nell'isolamento e nella povertà. Se il neo-fondamentalismo è stato capace di fornire una serie di servizi alle fasce sociali più povere, il grande progetto di creare un ordine alternativo è tuttavia chiaramente fallito.

In questo senso Alex de Waal parla di fallimento del progetto dell'Islam politico e riallaccia le sue conclusioni ad una più vasta riflessione sul fallimento dell'Islam radicale, che ha in J. Kepel e O. Roy i riferimenti più conosciuti.

L'analisi del fallimento dell'esperimento sudanese è centrale negli equilibri di questo volume e rappresenta l'asse intorno a cui ruotano tutti gli altri capitoli.

Nel terzo contributo Alex de Waal e A.H. Abdel Salam presentano appunto il caso sudanese, partendo da un'analisi del pensiero e dell'azione di quello che viene ritenuto, forse a ragione, uno dei più grandi pensatori del mondo arabo contemporaneo, Hassan al Turabi. Come mai, si domandano De Waal e Abdel Salam, uno dei pensatori più originali e sensibili attualmente in circolazione teorizza posizioni molto innovative ma poi, una volta al potere, non riesce a dare un'applicazione pratica a questo sistema?

La risposta al quesito non è particolarmente semplice e richiede considerazioni più ampie. In primo luogo il Sudan come paese è forse una delle realtà meno adatte ad essere trasformata in un sistema retto in base ai principi dell'islamismo radicale. A questa svolta si oppone la sua composizione multietnica e multireligiosa e le sue consolidate tradizioni democratiche. La conquista del potere è allora avvenuta grazie all'esercito, alle debolezze della classe media sudanese e capitalizzando il vuoto che si è prodotto a seguito della crisi degli ideali socialisti e laici. Ma questo non deve fare dimenticare come Turabi abbia sempre stentato a creare intorno al suo programma un movimento realmente popolare. Secondo l'autore le ardite ed affascinanti teorizzazioni di Turabi non hanno retto la prova della realtà, mentre una sostanziale ambiguità resta in merito all'uso della violenza politica che, senza essere stata teorizzata apertamente, è sempre stata praticata dai sostenitori del NIF.

Per anni l'analisi occidentale delle dinamiche interne della scena politica sudanese hanno risentito di una evidente semplificazione, specialmente quando si dipingeva il potere come saldamente nelle mani di Turabi e si riduceva Omar al Bashir ad una sorta di temporanea comparsa. Alla fine del 1999 questa analisi ha rivelato tutta la sua fallacità e l'allontanamento dal potere di Turabi senza generare grossi contraccolpi ha sorpreso gli analisti e li ha obbligati a rivedere le loro letture. Alex de Waal è fra i primi a presentare un quadro molto più convincente ed articolato della scena sudanese, capace di tenere in considerazione le varie componenti del regime al potere e dimostrando come frizioni e divergenze interne non sono mai mancate. Il risultato di questo sforzo è una descrizione molto più credibile dei meccanismi di potere in Sudan e della loro gestione. Questa lettura consente di presentare l'allontanamento di Turabi non come una variabile difficilmente comprensibile di un regime schizofrenico, ma come la logica conseguenza del fallimento di un progetto estremamente ambizioso ma anche sostanzialmente irreale.

Tra gli elementi che hanno contribuito al fallimento di Turabi c'è sicuramente stata una politica estera sconsiderata. Le indubbie qualità di Turabi come politico e come pensatore lo hanno spinto ad elaborare un progetto rivolto non solo al suo paese d'origine ma anche all'intero mondo musulmano. A farne le spese sono stati i paesi vicini che per tutta la prima metà degli anni novanta hanno dovuto fare i conti con una costante pressione proveniente da Khartum mirante a creare un nuovo assetto regionale.

Ovviamente il Sudan, nell'economia del volume, rappresenta il caso più interessante perché dal 1989 l'islamismo radicale è riuscito a monopolizzare e gestire il potere politico. Ma

questo non toglie che anche in altre regioni del Corno siano state attive forze che si ispiravano più o meno agli stessi principi. Roland Marchal analizza ad esempio il ruolo dei movimenti islamici nel conflitto somalo, dove il vuoto di potere provocato dalla scomparsa dello stato ha offerto degli spazi notevoli all'azione di formazioni politiche di ispirazione islamica.

All'efficace esposizione di M. A. Muhammed Salih si deve invece l'analisi del ruolo giocato dal alcune ONG islamiche nella diffusione del pensiero neo-fondamentalista. Sudan e Somalia negli anni '90 sono stati al centro delle attività di una fitta rete di ONG islamiche. Il tipo di iniziative promosse e la filosofia del loro approccio ha però contribuito in molti casi ad aumentare la conflittualità locale piuttosto che a ridurla, e non è quindi sbagliato affermare che molte di queste ONG rischiano seriamente di trasformarsi in un fantomatico braccio umanitario della militanza islamica.

I precedenti cinque saggi vengono nuovamente inseriti nel contesto regionale grazie al sesto capitolo che affronta il tema delle politiche di destabilizzazione nel Corno nel periodo 1989-2001. Questo contributo, firmato ancora una volta da Alex De Waal, delinea una spaccato estremamente interessante della dimensione regionale del progetto islamista. All'autore va riconosciuto il merito di avere efficacemente ricostruito le complesse trame della politica estera di Sudan, Egitto, Etiopia e USA e del rapporto fra queste politiche e i gruppi armati che operano sul territorio. Si tratta di un capitolo fondamentale per chiunque si interessi dell'attualità di quest'area e che presenta una massa di preziosissime informazioni altrimenti non disponibili. Il capitolo evidenzia inoltre come in poco più di dieci anni si sia assistito al fallimento incrociato dell'islamismo militante e del rivoluzionarismo di sinistra, due ideologie che, secondo l'autore, hanno più di un aspetto in comune.
Il volume si chiude con una riflessione sugli effetti della politica USA nell'area dopo l'11 settembre. Per l'autore ciò che è sorprendente è la mancanza di ogni tipo di reazione alla "guerra al terrorismo" di Washington. Nell'area non si sono registrate azioni contro la presenza USA, in Egitto non si è assistito a nessuna insurrezione popolare e gli Usa non hanno attaccato la Somalia. Il Sudan ha anzi inaugurato una graduale politica di collaborazione con gli USA. E' quindi chiaro che al momento attuale l'Africa è ancora marginale nella lotta fra gli USA e "il terrorismo".

In conclusione questo è un volume che si consiglia caldamente a tutti coloro interessati alla situazione politica nel Corno d'Africa. Si tratta di un'opera coraggiosa, che si confronta con il non facile obiettivo di fornire l'analisi di un'attualità molto sfuggente e difficile da decifrare. Di fronte ad un tema come questo vi era il rischio di una più che naturale deriva cronachistica, magari camuffando la cronaca per analisi. Ma questo lavoro, grazie anche alla competenza dei suoi autori e all'intelligenza con cui è stato progettato, evita brillantemente un simile rischio.

(Massimo Zaccaria, Università di Pavia)
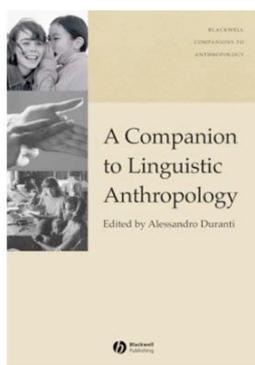
ALESSANDRO DURANTI (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA, USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004. xx, 625 pp., bibliogr. £ 85 (cloth). ISBN 0-631-22352-5

Linguistics and anthropology have long constituted more or less separate domains of study with the occasional overlap. However, the social sciences are increasingly recognising the intimate link between linguistic forms and the cultural practices that they both represent and constitute – something linguistic anthropologists have done for many years. Duranti provides us with a collection of essays giving a comprehensive overview of the key concepts, models and approaches in linguistic anthropology

The book covers a wide range of cultural and social issues relating to language and communication. Some of the topics listed are: agency, bilingualism, narrative, poetry, music, sign languages, literacy, socialization, gender, speech-making, speech-community, conflict, religion, identity, cognition, pidgins and creole languages, register, and oratory." Although linguistic in nature the book is helpful for both linguists and anthropologists to see each other's points of contact. Some, like Alessandro Duranti in his chapter on *"Agency"* draw on a number of traditions such as sociology, anthropology, linguistics and philosophy. The appeal of this shows the relevance of a single topic across traditions, in turn, giving greater depth of insight.

In *"Speech Community"* by Marcyliena Morgan, Morgan attempts to demonstrate "ways in which speech community represents the location of a group in society and its relationship to power". Again in *"Language and Identity"* Bucholtz and K.Hall also address power relations that help shape identity. Borrowing the linguistic concept of "markedness" in which some social categories gain a special default status constituting the norm against which all other categories are "marked". Being unmarked demonstrates dominance with other social groups identity marked by how they relate to those in power. Susan Phillips in *"Language and Social Inequality"* then demonstrates how intra-language codes are used to promote social inequality. Some expressions of language are more highly valued than others resulting in some people being valued more than others. She uses examples from bureaucratic roles, gender identity, economic position, and colonial role.

Another piece worthy of note is Kulick and Schieffelin's *"Language Socialization.* They point out the significant role of language in the socialisation process. Much of the earlier work done on language acquisition assumed that language acquisition was universal in all aspects. Unsurprisingly this came about by studying North American and European children in their language acquisition. It took anthropological studies of non-Western children to discover that various aspects of language acquisition assumed to be universal were in fact variable. Some of the assumed prerequisites to language acquisition were "simplified registers", "extensive repetition", and "paraphrase".

Scholars studying child socialisation, most notably Margaret Mead, assumed language was irrelevant or played a neutral role in the socialisation of children. It was thought that culture was passed on to children – as if children were empty vessels being filled with

culture. Mead was interested in demonstrating that enculturation processes were different in different cultures but was not interested in why they were different. Kulick and Schieffelin believe this was because language was not considered to play a role in the enculturation process itself. Indeed, the role of language in child socialisation is still often absent from studies. However, children are socialised through language and are also socialised in the use of language. Thus, according to Kulick and Schieffelin, "language is not just one dimension of the socialization process; it is the most central and crucial dimension of that process." That fact alone points out why this book is crucial to any comprehensive understanding of either language or culture.

" *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology"* is an excellent resource for any individual or department. Rather than acting as a methodological tool for research, this book provides a theoretical framework for introducing current issues within Linguistic Anthropology. It includes essays from many notable scholars and gives a comprehensive bibliography to the literature of linguistic anthropology. It is a robust 625 pages with 22 Topics covered in four sections.

 Part I, *"Speech Communities, Contact, and Variation"*: "Speech Community", "Registers of Language", "Language Contact and Contact Languages", Codeswitching", "Diversity, Hierarchy, and Modernity in Pacific Island Communities", "The Value of Linguistic Diversity: Viewing Other Worlds through North American Indian Languages", "Variation in Sign Languages". **Part II, *"The Performing of Language"*:** "Conversation as a Cultural Activity", "Gesture", "Participation", "Literacy Practices across the Learning Contexts", "Narrative Lessons", "Poetry", "Vocal Anthropology: From the Music of Language to the Language of Song". **Part III,** *"Achieving Subjectivities and Intersubjectivities through Language"*: "Language Socialization", "Language and Identity", "Misunderstanding", "Language and Madness", "Language and Religion". **Part IV, *"The Power of Language"*:** "Agency in Language", "Language and Social Inequality", "Language Ideologies".

(Leon Beachy, SIL International)
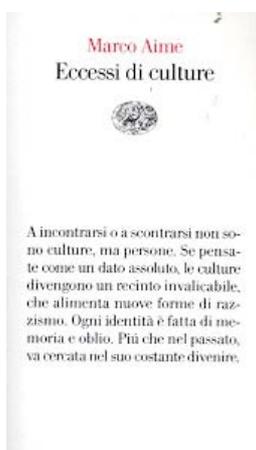
MARCO AIME, *Eccessi di culture.* Einaudi, 2004. 136 pp. € 7.00. ISBN 88-06-16916-5

Due sono le direttrici di fondo, quasi due assi cartesiani, a cui fa ricorso Marco Aime, docente di Antropologia culturale presso l'Università di Genova, per affrontare un tema di scottante attualità come l'incontro-scontro tra culture diverse: il rischio connesso all'uso di ogni forma di categoria, in cui le singole specificità del reale si snaturano come in qualunque processo di astrazione, e l'amara consapevolezza che questo scollamento dalla realtà si presta alle peggiori manipolazioni politiche.

Già nella premessa affiora molto esplicitamente il timore che un

approccio troppo accademico possa far perdere di vista la concretezza - spesso drammatica - con cui all'interno di una società multietnica e multiculturale le incomprensioni reciproche si traducono in tensioni sociali reali e pericolose. Aime si preoccupa, allora, di dichiarare immediatamente la sua costante attenzione per le problematiche concrete, per le situazioni fotografate dalla cronaca quotidiana o raccolte attraverso le testimonianze degli operatori sociali: «Le analisi di questi fenomeni, per quanto valide, tendono a fondarsi su categorie antropologiche, sociologiche, storiche che, seppure efficaci a definire modelli "buoni da pensare", non sempre aiutano alla comprensione del quotidiano – talvolta perché rimangono confinate nelle accademie in cui sono nate, in altri casi perché troppo astratte, lontane dalle percezioni quotidiane della maggior parte della gente». Anche i versi di Pessoa citati in apertura suggeriscono esplicitamente questa ansia di non trascendere l'evidenza del dato fisico in nome di un modello interpretativo che – proprio perché interpretazione – non è già più il fatto in sé ma piuttosto una sua precisa e confutabile elaborazione culturale, e quindi di nuovo soggetta a generare incomprensioni nonostante fosse stata pensata proprio per risolverle: «*Vidi [...] che un insieme reale e vero è una malattia delle nostre idee. / La Natura è parti senza un tutto*». Il paradosso della cultura che tradisce la realtà fenomenica nel momento in cui la coglie è d'altronde un po' il convitato di pietra di tutto il libro.

Con una generosa immersione nella quotidianità delle tensioni quasi inter-tribali che inaspettatamente segnano l'inizio di questo nuovo millennio, tassello dopo tassello Aime insinua abilmente l'idea che la costruzione di un *tutto*, di una identità collettiva, di una coscienza nazionale, di una omogenea e definita area culturale, sia in fondo un'operazione che trova la sua principale ragione di successo nel desiderio di acquisizione e controllo del potere da parte di una élite culturale. Muovendo spesso dalla cronaca giornalistica che più si presta alle manipolazioni simboliche (la rimozione del crocifisso nelle aule scolastiche, le incontinenze verbali della Lega Lombarda), Aime intreccia problematicamente vissuto reale e riflessione antropologica, cronaca e canzone d'autore, esternazioni politiche e narrazione letteraria, in uno sforzo costante e profondo di decostruzione di quegli "eccessi di culture" che, imposti dall'alto, costringono in una dimensione conflittuale il terreno straordinariamente fertile dello scambio di ogni esperienza umana e imprigionano nelle maglie delle asserzioni categoriche il sostrato comune e comunicabile che accompagna l'avventura intellettuale ed esistenziale di qualunque uomo a qualunque latitudine.

L'idea stessa di scambio presuppone la diversità, e a dispetto di questa semplice evidenza molti sono gli equivoci che Aime affronta e in cui invita a non cadere, non ultimo quello della figura del mediatore culturale, involontario sigillo di una diversità che non riesce ad essere affrontata su un piano di scambio paritetico e necessita di essere decrittata da personale specializzato e secondo le regole del sistema "nostro". In ogni pagina l'attenzione rimane focalizzata sulla trasposizione dall'ambito teorico a quello pratico e viceversa, passaggio cruciale per qualunque forma di costruzione e analisi sociale: la sottolineatura ossessiva di alcune abitudini di vita contingenti che diventa mito fondante, un insieme di visioni comuni che si trasforma in un sistema culturale chiuso ed escludente oppure, al contrario, una visione astratta dei diritti dell'uomo che fatica a trovare realizzazione concreta all'interno della realtà politico-amministrativa di un comune o di una regione, sono il terreno d'indagine su cui Aime si difende da pericolose approssimazioni, cercando di ricondurre ogni fenomeno sociale sul doppio binario della ragione storica e del fondamento culturale.

Che ogni forma di cultura sia di per sé stessa scambio, e quindi già *intercultura*, è per Aime un dato acquisito e simpaticamente documentato nella prima parte del libro, ma il fatto è che proprio l'elaborazione di un sistema organico di scambi reciproci si presta, appena raggiunto un suo minimo ambito di sviluppo e diffusione, al gioco politico della marcatura di confini invalicabili. L'impossibilità di comunicare con chi «pratica un'identità diversa», insomma, non ha alcun aggancio con una reale natura delle cose ma è una pura costruzione ideologica che risponde agli equilibri di potere del momento. Ad Aime pare necessario, allora, che la speculazione accademica sincera, anziché offrire ulteriore solidità alle barriere erette per ragioni che con la cultura hanno poco a che vedere, trovi il coraggio di rompere con la tradizione accumulata e di demolire le categorie «non negoziabili» che svuotano il senso stesso dell'agire culturale. Occorre avventurarsi in quella «terra di nessuno» dove lo scambio è reale e il progresso autentico: «Tra un'idea di uguaglianza astratta e l'erezione di barriere culturali che si presumono insormontabili non c'è il nulla: c'è quella vasta striscia di terra di nessuno che, proprio perché è "di nessuno", consente il dialogo fra gli individui».

(Mauro Mainoli, Ethnorêma)