

TOWARDS A COMPLEX ANALYSIS OF *WAYIHĪ* + T CONSTRUCTIONS IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

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This study analyses the complex behavioral profile of Biblical Hebrew constructions that are formally characterized by the schematic sequence: *wayhĪ* + temporal expression (T) + a *wayyiqtol* or *qatal* clause within the corpus of Genesis – 2 Chronicles. More specifically, this schema entails the following construction types: 1) *wayhĪ* + T + *wayyiqtol*, 2) *wayhĪ* + T + (1+) X + *qatal*, and 3) *wayhĪ* + T + *qatal*. In analyzing these constructions, this study utilizes a framework known as Construction Grammar, in addition to other complementary frameworks that fall under the more general rubric of Cognitive Linguistics. The constructions are analyzed according to the following parameters: the formal and semantic profile of the temporal adjunct employed; the discourse pragmatic function and distribution in discourse; and the TAM semantics of the *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* verb forms. This empirical analysis reveals that, while sharing a prototypical discourse function, these constructions differ with respect to their distribution in discourse. Moreover, this study shows that the choice to use one construction over another is motivated by the simultaneous interplay of several factors, among which the most relevant are: the morpho-syntactic and semantic properties of the temporal adjuncts; the discourse pragmatic profile of each construction type; the TAM properties of the verb; and the syntactic profile of the *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* clauses. Overall, the behavior of the *wayhĪ* + T constructions epitomizes the complexity of Biblical Hebrew, in particular, the fuzziness of grammatical categories, their multilevel interconnectivity, and dynamics.

Keywords: Semitic languages, Biblical Hebrew, construction grammar, grammaticalization, discourse-pragmatics, semantics

1. Introduction

This paper investigates constructions in which a *wayihî* + *temporal expression* precedes a *wayyiqtol* or *qatal* clause in Biblical Hebrew. More specifically, we aim to provide a grammatical profile of three related but distinct construction types, represented in Figure 1 below, where “T” represents a “temporal adjunct,” and “X” represents a preverbal particle, negator, or constituent.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. <i>wayihî</i> + T + <i>wayyiqtol</i> | (<i>wayihî</i> -1) |
| 2. <i>wayihî</i> + T + (†+) X + <i>qatal</i> | (<i>wayihî</i> -2) |
| 3. <i>wayihî</i> + T + <i>qatal</i> | (<i>wayihî</i> -3) |

Figure 1: *wayihî* + T constructions in BH¹

Each of the schematic formulations in Figure 1 is a linguistic construction, as defined by the Cognitive Linguistic framework known as Construction Grammar. In broad terms, constructions are conventional form-function (or meaning) pairings that occur at varying levels of complexity and abstraction.² Simply put, form and function are inseparable within human linguistic systems. By implication, all linguistic objects (morphological units, words, phrases,

¹ The present study represents a piece of a larger research project in which we thoroughly analyze three additional temporal constructions without *wayihî*, namely T + X + *qatal*; T + *wayyiqtol*; and T + *qatal*. Due to constraints on space, however, here we restrict our focus to the *wayihî* + T constructions referred to in Figure 1. The data related to these three remaining constructions will be introduced only when necessary for the discussion of the *wayihî* + T constructions. Our corpus spans from Genesis to 2 Kings. Additionally, due to a smaller number of cases, the analysis of the *wayihî*-2 and *wayihî*-3 constructions was expanded to 2 Chron such that systemic generalizations could be made. We are fully aware that BH exhibits diachronic and dialectal variations. However, as is customary in various linguistic studies of this language, the Biblical corpus is treated holistically as if BH were a unified system.

² Cf. GOLDBERG, A. *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*; GOLDBERG, A. *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language*; FRIED, M., ÖSTMAN, J. *Construction Grammar: A Thumbnail Sketch*. In FRIED, M., ÖSTMAN, J. *Construction Grammar in a Cross-Language Perspective*, pp. 11–86; HOFFMAN, T., TROUSDALE, G. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar*.

clauses, sentences, etc.) are constructions, and inversely, a language is fundamentally the inventory of its constructions.³

In light of this overarching framework, the complex constructions in Figure 1 are analyzed both in terms of their form and meaning/function. This analysis applies not only to the constructions as a whole, but also to their component parts (i.e. temporal adverbs, verb forms, etc.). Moreover, throughout the study, we draw on a variety of theoretical notions to explain the data. In every case, these notions are consistent with a more general Construction Grammar/Cognitive Linguistic approach to linguistic description.

In particular, we draw on insights from corpus-based empirical research in psycholinguistics and discourse-pragmatics to explain the role of clause-initial temporal adverbs in constructing a coherent mental representation of the discourse.⁴ In addition, the analysis of TAM verbal semantics is developed within a cognitive-grammaticalization model in which the total meaning of a verbal form equals a dynamic, qualitative-quantitative semantic map. That is, the meaning is understood as the form's semantic potential that is composed of a variety of senses with different ranges of prototypicality, and organized along a grammaticalization path, either universal or language-specific.⁵

³ FRIED, M., ÖSTMAN, J. Construction Grammar: A Thumbnail Sketch. In FRIED, M., ÖSTMAN, J. *Construction Grammar in a Cross-Language Perspective*, p. 13. In point of fact, Construction Grammar is shorthand for a variety of frameworks, or constructionist approaches, which more or less share important underlying assumptions that make them antithetical to the assumptions held by mainstream generative grammar. These assumptions include: 1) Constructions are learned, form-function pairings, 2) Grammar is monostratal, devoid of transformational or derivational components (i.e. semantics is directly related to the surface form), 3) Constructions are organized into networks of overlapping patterns related through shared properties, and 4) Despite wide-ranging variability across languages, cross-linguistic generalizations are explained by domain-general cognitive processes or by the functions of the constructions involved. GOLDBERG, A. Constructionist Approaches. In HOFFMAN, T., TROUSDALE, G. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Construction Grammar*, p. 15.

⁴ Cf. BESTGEN, Y., VONK, W. Temporal Adverbials as Segmentation Markers in Discourse Comprehension. In *Journal of Memory and Language*, 2000, Vol. 42, pp. 74–87; ZWAAN, R. A. Processing Narrative Time Shifts. In *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 1996, Vol. 22, pp. 1196–1207; VIRTANEN, T. *Discourse Functions of Adverbial Placement in English*; VIRTANEN, T. Point of Departure: Cognitive Aspects of Sentence-initial Adverbials. In VIRTANEN, T. (ed.). *Approaches to Cognition through Text and Discourse*, pp. 79–80; KINTSCH, W. *Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition*.

⁵ For details consult, *inter alia*, HASPELMATH, M. The Geometry of Grammatical Meaning Semantic Maps and Cross-linguistic Comparison. In THOMASELLO, M. (ed.). *The New Psychology of Language*, pp. 211–242; JANDA, L. Cognitive

We begin our study by analyzing each construction type according to three discrete but nevertheless interdependent parameters: the form and semantics of the temporal adjunct employed; the functional profile and pragmatic distribution of each construction type; and the TAM semantics of the *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* verb forms, respectively (Section 2). After this analysis is presented, we then offer further discussion and explanation in terms of the functional profile of each construction type, as well as the semantic, pragmatic and syntactic motivations constraining the selection of one construction type over another in particular contexts (Section 3). Lastly, we draw main conclusions and design lines of future research (Section 4).

2. The Data: “Behavioral” Profiles of the *WAYHÎ* + T Constructions

The dataset discussed here consists of the following: Constructions reflecting the form *wayhî* + T + *wayyiqtol*, represented in example (1.a) and referred to henceforth as *wayhî-1*, occur 175x in Gen–2 Kings. By contrast, *wayhî-2* constructions reflect the form *wayhî* + T + (ׁ+) X + *qatal*, as in example (1.b) only occur 30x in Gen–2 Chron. (27x in Gen–2 Kings),⁶ while constructions of the form *wayhî* + T + *qatal*, represented in example (1.c) and referred to as *wayhî-3*, occur 48x in Gen–2 Chron (26x in Gen–2 Kings).⁷

Linguistics in the Year 2015. In *Cognitive Semantics*, 2015, Vol. 1, pp. 131–154; DĄBROWSKA, E., DIVJAK, D. (eds.). *Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*; ANDRASON, A. From Vectors to Waves and Streams: An Alternative Approach to Semantic Maps. In *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics*, 2016, Vol. 45, pp. 1–29. For applications of this model to Biblical Hebrew and other languages consult ANDRASON, A. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: una visión dinámica* [The Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Context: A Dynamic Perspective]; ANDRASON, A. *A Complex System of Complex Predicates: Tense, Taxis, Aspect and Mood in Basse Mandinka from a Grammaticalization and Cognitive Perspective*. When applied to verbal system, the model draws from BYBEE, J., PERKINS, R., PAGLIUCA, W. *The Evolution of Grammar*; and BYBEE, J. *Language, Usage and Cognition*.

⁶ Note that in an overwhelming majority of *wayhî-2* (27/30) constructions, a conjunction ׁ precedes the fronted constituent following the temporal adjunct.

⁷ This dataset was constructed by searching the Andersen and Forbes Phrase Marker Analysis within Logos Bible Software, version 7. ANDERSEN F. I., FORBES, A. D. *The Hebrew Bible: Andersen-Forbes Phrase Marker Analysis*.

(1) a. 2 Sam 11:16⁸ (*wayhî-1*)

וַיְהִי בַשָּׁמֹר יוֹאָב אֶל־הַעִיר וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־אֲוִרָהָ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָדַע כִּי אַנְשֵׁי־הַיָּל שָׁם:
As Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant warriors.

b. 2 Kings 2:9⁹ (*wayhî-2*)

... וַיְהִי כְעָבְרָם וְאֵלֶיהֶוּ אָמַר אֶל־אֵלִישָׁע שְׂאֵל מֶה אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְּךָ בְּתָרֵם אֶלְקָה מֵעַמּוּךָ...
When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.”

c. Num 10:11¹⁰ (*wayhî-3*)

וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בַעֲשָׂרִים בַּחֹדֶשׁ נִעְלָה הָעֲנָן מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת:
In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle of the covenant.

⁸ See also: Gen 4:3; 4:8; 8:6; 11:2–3; 12:11–13; 12:14; 19:17; 19:29; 19:34; 20:13; 21:22–23; 22:20–22; 24:22; 24:30; 24:52; 25:11; 26:32; 27:1; 29:10; 29:13; 29:23; 30:25–26; 34:25; 35:17; 35:22; 37:23; 38:1; 38:24; 38:28; 39:11; 39:13–14; 39:19; 40:20; 41:8; 43:2; 48:1; Exod 2:11; 2:23; 6:28–29; 14:24; 16:10; 16:13; 18:13; 19:16; 32:19; 32:30; Num 7:1; 10:35; 11:25; 16:31; 17:7; 17:23; 22:41; 25:19–26:2; Deut 2:16–19; 5:23; 31:24–26; Josh 1:1–2; 3:2; 4:1–3; 4:11–12; 5:8; 6:15; 6:20; 8:14; 8:24; 9:1–2; 9:16; 10:20; 10:24; 11:1–3; 15:18; 24:29; Judg 1:1; 1:14; 2:4; 3:18; 3:27; 6:25–26; 7:9–11; 7:15; 9:42; 11:5; 11:35; 11:39; 13:20; 14:11; 14:15; 14:17; 15:17; 16:4; 21:4; 1 Sam 1:4; 1:20; 4:5; 4:18; 5:9; 5:10; 9:26; 11:11; 14:1; 16:6; 18:6; 20:24; 20:35; 24:2; 24:17; 25:2; 25:37; 25:38; 28:1; 2 Sam 2:1; 4:4; 7:4–8; 8:1; 10:1; 11:1; 11:2; 11:14; 11:16; 12:18; 15:7–8; 16:16; 17:21; 21:18; 1 Kings 2:39; 3:18; 5:21; 6:1; 9:1–2; 11:15; 12:2; 12:20; 13:4; 13:31–32; 14:6–16; 15:21; 16:18; 17:7; 18:4; 18:17; 18:27; 18:29; 18:36; 19:13; 20:12; 20:26; 20:29; 21:15; 21:16; 21:27; 22:2; 22:33; 2 Kings 2:1; 3:5; 4:6; 4:8; 4:11; 4:18; 4:25–26; 5:7; 5:8; 6:20; 6:24; 6:30; 8:3; 8:15; 9:22; 10:7; 10:9; 10:25; 12:11; 19:1; 19:35; 22:11.

⁹ See also: Gen 22:1; 27:30; 38:29; 39:10; Exod 12:29; 13:17; Josh 6:8; 10:11; 23:1–2; 1 Sam 13:10; 18:1; 18:19; 23:6; 30:1; 2 Sam 1:1; 1:2; 3:6–7; 13:36; 17:27–29; 1 Kings 9:10–11; 11:29; 21:1; 22:32; 2:9; 4:40; 12:7; 17:25; Ezek 11:13; 2 Chron 13:15; 18:31.

¹⁰ See also: Gen 8:13; 14:1; 40:1; Exod 12:41; 12:51; 16:22; 16:27; 40:17; Lev 9:1; Num 10:11; Deut 1:3–4; 9:11; Josh 6:16; 1 Sam 18:30; 1 Kings 8:54; 14:25; 15:29; 16:11; 17:17; 2 Kings 18:1; 18:9; 22:3–7; 25:1; 25:5; 25:27; Isa 7:1; 36:1; Jer 28:1–4; 36:1–3; 36:9; 36:16; 52:4; 52:31; Ezek 1:1; 20:1; 26:1–3; 29:17–18; 30:20–21; 31:1–2; 32:1–2; 32:17–18; 33:21; Zech 7:1; Esther 5:2; Neh 1:4; 2 Chron 12:2–3; 24:4; 24:23.

2.1. Parameter 1: Temporal Adjunct

2.1.1. The Form of the Temporal Adjunct

The majority of temporal adjuncts in *wayihî*-1 constructions take the form preposition **כ** + infinitive construct (56/175 | 33%), as in (2.a), **ב** + infinitive construct (21x/175x | 12%), as in (2.b), or a prepositional phrase that expresses a cyclical time of day, month, or year (17x/175x | 10%), as in (2.c).

(2) a. Josh 10:24¹¹

... וַיְהִי כִּהְיוּצִיֵּאֵם אֶת־הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּקְרָא יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר ...
When they brought the kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the Israelites, and said...

b. Gen 35:17¹²

... וַיְהִי בְּהַקְשָׁתָהּ בְּלִדְתָהּ וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמִּילָדָת ...

When she was in her hard labor, the midwife said to her...

c. Gen 41:8¹³

... וַיְהִי בַבֶּקֶר וַתַּפְעֹם רוּחוֹ ...

In the morning, his spirit was troubled...

¹¹ See also: Gen 12:14; 19:17; 24:30; 29:13; 39:13–14; 39:19; Num 11:25; 16:31; Deut 5:23; 31:24–26; Josh 6:20; Josh 8:14; 8:24; 9:1–2; 10:20; 11:1–3; Judg 2:4; 7:15; 11:35; 14:11; 15:17; 1 Sam 4:5; 4:18; 5:10; 9:26; 24:17; 1 Kings 5:21; 9:1–2; 12:2; 12:20; 13:4; 14:6–16; 15:21; 16:18; 18:17; 18:29; 19:13; 20:12; 21:15; 21:16; 21:27; 22:33; 2 Kings 3:5; 4:6; 4:25–26; 5:7; 5:8; 6:20; 6:30; 9:22; 10:7; 10:25; 12:11; 19:1; 22:11.

¹² See also: Gen 4:8; 11:2–3; 19:29; 35:22; 38:28; Num 10:35; 17:7; Josh 15:18; Judg 1:14; 3:27; 13:20; 1 Sam 16:6; 18:6; 25:2; 2 Sam 4:4; 11:16; 1 Kings 11:15; 18:4; 18:36; 2 Kings 2:1.

¹³ See also: Gen 29:23; Exod 14:24; 16:13; Num 22:41; Judg 6:25–26; 7:9–11; 1 Sam 20:24; 20:35; 25:37; 2 Sam 7:4–8; 11:1; 11:14; 1 Kings 18:27; 20:26; 2 Kings 10:9; 19:35. The remaining forms include: **כאשר** + finite verb: Gen 12:11–13; 20:13; 24:22; 24:52; 29:10; 30:25–26; 37:23; 43:2; Exod 16:10; 32:19; Deut 2:16–19; Josh 4:1–3; 4:11–12; 5:8; Judg 3:18; 11:5; 1 Sam 24:2. Temporal adjuncts headed by the preposition **אחרי**: Gen 22:20; 25:11; 48:1; Num 25:19–26:2; Josh 1:1–2; 23:1–2; 24:29; Judg 1:1; 16:4; 1 Sam 5:9; 2 Sam 2:1; 8:1; 10:1; 17:21; 21:18; 1 Kings 13:31–32. Adjuncts headed by the PP **ביום**: Gen 26:32; 34:25; 40:20; Exod. 2:11; 2:23; 6:28–29; 19:16; Num 7:1; Josh 6:15; Judg 14:15; 14:17; 1 Sam 28:1; 2 Sam 12:18; 1 Kings 3:18; 20:29. The PP **ממחרת**: Gen 19:34; Exod 18:13; 32:30; Num 17:23; Judg 9:42; 21:4; 1 Sam 11:11; 2 Kings 8:15. Adjuncts headed by the PP **מקצה**: Gen 4:3; 8:6; Josh 3:2; 9:16; Judg 11:39; 2 Sam 15:7–8; 1 Kings 2:39; 17:7; 2 Kings 8:3. The NP **היום**: 1 Sam 1:4; 14:1; 2 Kings 4:8; Kings 4:11; 4:18. Adjuncts headed by the PP **בעת ההוא**: Gen. 21:22; 38:1. Adjuncts consisting of a PP involving a date formula: 1 Kings 6:1; 22:2. Also see: Gen 27:1; 38:24; 39:11; 1 Sam 25:38.

Similar to *wayhi-1*, the majority of adjuncts in *wayhi-2* constructions also reflect the form preposition **ב** + infinitive construct (11x/30x | 37%), as in (3.a), or preposition **ב** + infinitive construct (6x/30x | 20%), as in (3.b).

(3) a. 1 Kings 22:32¹⁴

וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת שָׂרֵי הָרֶכֶב אֶת-יְהוֹשָׁפָט וְהָמָּה אָמְרוּ

When the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said...

b. 1 Sam 30:1¹⁵

וַיְהִי כִּבְּאֵ דָוִד וְאֹנְשָׁיו צָקְלָג בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַעֲמֻלְקָי פָּשְׁטוּ אֶל-נֶגֶב וְאֶל-צָקְלָג...

When David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negeb and on Ziklag...

In stark contrast to both *wayhi-1* and *wayhi-2*, however, the majority of adjuncts in *wayhi-3* constructions take the form preposition **ב** + date formula (28x/48x | 57%), as in (4), while only six tokens take the form preposition **ב/ב** + infinitive construct (12%).¹⁶

(4) Num 10:11¹⁷

וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיָּת בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בַעֲשָׂרִים בַּחֹדֶשׁ נִעְלָה הָעֶנָן מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת:

In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle of the covenant.

2.1.2. The Semantics of the Temporal Adjunct

In addition to the form of the temporal adjunct, we also examined the semantic profile of the adjunct with respect to two parameters. First, we determined

¹⁴ See also: Gen. 39:10; Exod 13:17; 1 Sam 13:10; 18:1; 2 Sam 13:36; 17:27–29; 2 Kings 2:9; 4:40; Ezek 11:13; 2 Chron 18:31.

¹⁵ See also: Josh 10:11; 1 Sam 23:6; 30:1; 2 Sam 3:6–7; 2 Chron 13:15. The remaining forms include: Adjuncts consisting of a PP involving a date formula: 2 Kings 12:7; 12:7; 17:25; Ezek 1.1. Temporal adjuncts headed by the preposition **אַחֲרַי**: Gen. 22:1; 2 Sam 1:1; 1 Kings 21:1. Adjuncts headed by the PP **בְּעֵת**: 1 Sam 18:19; 1 Kings 11:29. **כְּאֲשֶׁר** + finite verb: Gen 27:30. Also see: Gen. 38:29; Exod 12:29; Josh 23:1–2; 2 Sam 1:2.

¹⁶ See 1 Kings 8:54; 15:29; 16:11; Jer 26.16; Esther 5:2; Neh 1:4.

¹⁷ See also: Gen 8:13; Exod 40:17; Num 10:11; Deut 1:3–4; 1 Kings 14:25; 2 Kings 18:1; 18:9; 22:3–7; 25:1; 25.25; 25:27; Isa 36:1; Jer 28:1–4; 36:1–3; 36:9; 41:1; 52:4; 52:31; Ezek 1.1; 20:1; 26:1–3; 29:17–18; 30:20–21; 31:1–2; 32:1–2; Ezek 32:17–18; 33:21; Zech. 7.1; 2 Chron 12:2–3. The remaining forms include: Adjuncts headed by the PP **בַּיּוֹם**: Gen. 14:1; Exod 16:22; 16:27; Lev 9:1; Isa. 7:1.

whether the temporal adjuncts indicate a position in time, frequency of time, or a duration of time, as illustrated in (5).¹⁸

- (5) a. **At two o'clock**, Mary left for Europe. (temporal position)
b. **For twelve long years**, Mary went to school. (duration)
c. **Three times a day**, Mary practiced. (frequency)¹⁹

The results show that virtually every temporal adjunct in all three construction types expresses a point, or position in time, as opposed to duration or frequency.²⁰ This is significant because, unlike frequency and duration, specifying the temporal position serves to anchor the subsequent events on the narrative time-line, thereby providing a vantage point, or more specifically, the *reference time* for an event (Van der Merwe 1999:96).²¹ In short, the temporal adjunct in each *wayihî* + T construction type functions to specify or update the reference time for the following event or events in the narrative.

Second, we determined whether the temporal adjunct provides a temporal frame for subsequent events that are of a shorter duration than the frame, as in (6.a), or specifies an exact point in time of an event, as in example (6.b).

- (6) a. 1 Sam 28:1

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם...

In those days...

¹⁸ See also See HARKNESS, J. Time Adverbials in English and Reference Time. In SCHOPF, A. (ed.). *Essays on Tensing in English, Vol. 1: Reference Time, Tense and Adverbs*, pp. 71–72; VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J. The Elusive Biblical Hebrew Term וַיְהִי: A Perspective in Terms of its Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in 1 Samuel. In *Hebrew Studies*, 1999, Vol. 40, pp. 83–114.

¹⁹ The relevant temporal expressions are marked by a bold style type.

²⁰ Exceptions include: Gen 39.10 (*wayihî*-2) and 1 Sam 18.30 (*wayihî*-3), both of which express frequency of action.

²¹ Coined by Reichenbach, the concept of “Reference Time” is distinguished from both “Speech Time” (the time of the utterance) and “Event Time” (the time of the event the speaker/writer is describing). REICHENBACH, H. *Elements of Symbolic Logic*. By contrast, reference time is “the time that is being talked about or the temporal standpoint from which the event is considered”. GOLDFAJN, T. *Word Order and Time in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*, p. 46. Note that the reference time and event time may share the same point on the timeline, particularly when simple past tense is used. VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J. The Elusive Biblical Hebrew Term וַיְהִי: A Perspective in Terms of its Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in 1 Samuel. In *Hebrew Studies*, 1999, Vol. 40, p. 95.

b. Num 11:25

וַיְהִי כְנֻחַ עָלֵיהֶם הָרוּחַ...²²

At the moment when the spirit rested upon them...

In each construction type, the majority of adjuncts refer to a stretch of time that provides the temporal frame for events that follow. However, the prevalence of this usage is distinct in the three types. Approximately 60% (105x/175x)²² of *wayhî-1* constructions provide a temporal frame, with 40% (69x/175x)²³ referring to an exact point in time. Similarly, approximately 57% (17x/30x)²⁴ of *wayhî-2* constructions provide a temporal frame, with a remaining 43% (13x/30x)²⁵ specifying an exact point in time. By contrast, in *wayhî-3* constructions, a temporal frame is activated in approximately 88% (42x/48x),²⁶ with only 12% (6x/48x)²⁷ referring to an exact point in time.

²² See: Gen 4:3; 4:8; 8:6; 11:2–3; 12:11–13; 19:29; 19:34; 20:13; 21:22–23; 22:20–22; 25:11; 26:32; 27:1; 29:23; 30:25–26; 34:25; 35:22; 38:1; 38:28; 39:11; 40:20; 41:8; 43:2; 48:1; Exod 2:11; 2:23; 6:28–29; 14:24; 16:10; 16:13; 18:13; 19:16; 32:30; Num 7:1; 10:35; 17:7; 17:23; 22:41; 25:19–26:2; Josh 1:1–2; 3:2; 4:1–3; 4:11–12; 6:15; 9:16; 15:18; 24:29; Judg 1:1; 1:14; 3:18; 3:27; 6:25–26; 7:9–11; 9:42; 11:39; 14:15; 14:17; 16:4; 21:4; 1 Sam 1:4; 1:20; 11:11; 14:1; 16:6; 18:6; 20:24; 20:35; 24:2; 25:37; 25:38; 28:1; 2 Sam 2:1; 7:4–8; 8:1; 10:1; 11:1; 11:2; 11:14; 11:16; 12:18; 15:7–8; 16:16; 17:21; 21:18; 1 Kings 6:1; 11:15; 17:7; 18:4; 18:27; 18:36; 20:26; 20:29; 22:2; 2 Kings 2:1; 4:8; 4:11; 4:18; 6:24; 8:3; 8:15; 10:9; 19:35

²³ See: Gen 12:14; 19:17; 24:22; 24:30; 24:52; 29:10; 29:13; 35:17; 37:23; 38:24; 39:13–14; 39:19; Exod 32:19; Num 11:25; 16:31; Deut 2:16–19; 5:23; 31:24–26; Josh 5:8; 6:20; 8:14; 8:24; 9:1–2; 10:20; 10:24; 11:1–3; Judg 2:4; 7:15; 11:5; 11:35; 13:20; 14:11; 15:17; 1 Sam 4:5; 4:18; 5:9; 5:10; 9:26; 24:17; 2 Sam 4:4; 1 Kings 3:18; 5:21; 9:1–2; 12:2; 12:20; 13:4; 13:31–32; 14:6–16; 15:21; 16:18; 18:17; 18:29; 19:13; 20:12; 21:15; 21:16; 21:27; 22:33; 2 Kings 3:5; 4:6; 4:25–26; 5:7; 5:8; 6:20; 6:30; 9:22; 10:7; 10:25; 12:11; 19:1; 22:11.

²⁴ See: Gen 22:1; 39:10; Exod 12:29; 13:17; Josh 10:11; 23:1–2; 1 Sam 18:19; 23:6; 30:1; 2 Sam 1:1; 1:2; 3:6–7; 1 Kings 9:10–11; 11:29; 21:1; 2 Kings 12:7; 17:25.

²⁵ See: Gen 27:30; 38:29; Josh 6:8; 1 Sam 13:10; 18:1; 2 Sam 13:36; 17:27–29; 1 Kings 22:32; 2 Kings 2:9; 4:40; Ezek 11:13; 2 Chron 13:15; 2 Chron 18:31.

²⁶ Gen 8:13; 14:1; 40:1; Exod 12:41; 12:51; 16:22; 16:27; 40:17; Lev 9:1; Num 10:11; Deut 1:3–4; 9:11; Josh 6:16; 1 Sam 18:30; 1 Kings 14:25; 17:17; 2 Kings 18:1; 18:9; 22:3–7; 25:1; 25:25; 25:27; Isa 7:1; 36:1; Jer 28:1–4; 36:1–3; 36:9; 52:4; 52:31; Ezek 1:1; 20:1; 26:1–3; 29:17–18; 30:20–21; 31:1–2; 32:1–2; 32:17–18; 33:21; Zech 7:1; 2 Chron 12:2–3; 24:4; 24:23.

²⁷ See 1 Kings 8:54; 15:29; 16:11; Jer 36:16; Esther 5:2; Neh 1:4.

2.2. Parameter 2: Discourse Pragmatics

In addition to the temporal adjunct, we also analyzed the pragmatic profile of each construction both in terms of their function and distribution in discourse. That is to say that we carefully considered the points at which these constructions occurred within the narrative plot structure, such as at the introduction or conclusion of a scene or episode, or at thematically salient junctures within a scene or episode, such as the inciting moment, complication, or climax, etc.²⁸

We will discuss their functions in more detail below (cf. Section 3). Nevertheless, it suffices to say here that all three construction types contribute to the structure and organization of a coherent discourse. In particular, *wayhi* + T constructions prototypically function to specify or update the reference time of an event or series of events, while simultaneously introducing the onset of a new development unit within the narrative.²⁹

Furthermore, both *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* constructions are virtually synonymous with respect to their distribution in discourse—an observation supported by the correspondence in the form and meaning of the temporal adjuncts in *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* constructions, respectively (cf. 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 above). Specifically, *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* prototypically occur at lower level thematic junctures within a narrative, often coinciding with the introduction of a new scene within a larger episode, as in (7.a-b), or at thematically salient transition points within a scene, such as the inciting moment/complication (8), turning point or climax (9.a-b), or the conclusion of a scene (10.a-b).

(7) New Scene

a. Gen 8:6 (*wayhî-1*)³⁰

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וַיִּפְתַּח נֹחַ אֶת-חַלּוֹן הַתְּבֵה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

²⁸ SKA, J. L. *Our Fathers Have Told Us: Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, pp. 21–30.

²⁹ Cf. HATAV, G. *The Semantics of Aspect and Modality: Evidence from English and Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 76–83; VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J. The Elusive Biblical Hebrew Term וַיְהִי: A Perspective in Terms of its Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in 1 Samuel. In *Hebrew Studies*, 1999, Vol. 40; VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J., NAUDE, J. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*.

³⁰ See also: Gen 11:2–3; 19:34; 22:20–22; 24:22; 30:25–26; Exod 2:23; 6:28–29; 16:13; 18:13; 19:16; 32:30; Num 17:23; 22:41; Josh 3:2; 4:1–3; 4:11–12; 6:15; 9:16; 11:1–3; 15:18; Judg 1:14; 3:27; 6:25–26; 7:9–11; 9:42; 14:15; 16:4; 21:4; 1 Sam 14:1; 16:6; 18:6; 20:24; 20:35; 24:2; 2 Sam 11:14; 11:16; 16:16; 17:21; 1 Kings 2.39; 9:1–2; 11:15; 12:2; 2 Kings 4:11; 4:18; 10:9.

At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made.

b. 1 Sam 23:6 (*wayhî-2*)³¹

וַיְהִי בְּבֹרֶת אֲבִיחָתָר בְּרֹאֲחִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־דָּוִד קְעִילָה אֶפֶוד יָרַד בְּיָדוֹ:

When Abiathar son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, he came down with an ephod in his hand.

(8) Inciting Moment / Complication

Gen 12:11 (*wayhî-1*)³²

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לְבוֹא מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ הִנֵּה־נָא יִדְעֵתִי כִי אִשָּׁה יִפְתֹּחַ מִרְאָה אֵת:

When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know well that you are a woman beautiful in appearance; [¹² and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife’; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³ Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account.”³³

(9) Turning Point / Climax

a. Num 16:31 (*wayhî-1*)³⁴

וַיְהִי כַּכֹּל אֲשֶׁר לְדַבֵּר אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּבָּקַע הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֵּיהֶם:...

As soon as he finished speaking all these words, the ground under them was split apart. [³² The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, along with their households—everyone who belonged to Korah and all their goods. ³³ So they with all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol; the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.]

³¹ Also see: Gen 22:1; 27:30; Exod 12:29; 13:17; 1 Sam 18:1; 30:1; 2 Sam 1:2; 3:6–7; 17:27–29; 1 Kings 9:10–11; 11:29; 21:1; 2 Kings 2:9; 12:7.

³² Also see: Gen 4:6; 29:23; 41:8; 43:2; 2 Sam 11:2; 1 Kings 18:17; 20:12.

³³ The brackets represent English text provided for context. The Hebrew source text has not been provided in the example.

³⁴ Also see: Gen 4:8; 12:14; 19:17; 24:52; 29:10; 29:13; 34:25; 35:17; 37:23; 38:24; 38:28; 39:11; 39:13–14; 39:19; Exod 14:24; 16:10; 32:19; Num 11:25; 16:31; 17:7; Deut 2:16–19; 5:23; 31:24–26; Josh 6:20; 8:14; 8:24; 9:1–2; 10:24; 11:1–3; Judg. 2:4; 3:18; 7:15; 11:5; 11:35; 13:20; 14:11; 1 Sam 4:5; 4:18; 5:9; 5:10; 11.11 ;24:17; 25:38; 2 Sam 4:4; 12:18; 1 Kings 9:1–2; 13:4; 14:6–16; 16:18; 18:27; 18:29; 18:36; 19:13; 20:29; 21:15; 21:16; 21:27; 22:33; 2 Kings 5:7; 5:8; 6:20; 6:30; 8:3; 9:22; 10:7; 10:25; 19:1; 19:35; 22:11.

b. 2 Chron 13:15 (*wayhi*-2)³⁵

וַיְהִי בְהִרְיֵעַ אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נָגַף אֶת־יִרְבֵּעַם וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי אֲבִיחָה וַיְהוּדָה:
 ...**And when the people of Judah shouted**, God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. [¹⁶ The Israelites fled before Judah, and God gave them into their hands. ¹⁷ Abijah and his army defeated them with great slaughter; five hundred thousand picked men of Israel fell slain.]

(10) Conclusion

a. Gen 25:11 (*wayhi*-1)³⁶

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיְבָרַךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּגוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק עַם־בְּעֹר לְחַי רֹאִי: ס
After the death of Abraham God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.

b. Ezek 11:13 (*wayhi*-2)³⁷

וַיְהִי כִּהִנְבְּאִי וּפְלַטְיָהוּ בֶן־בְּנֵיָה מָת וְאֶפְלַע עַל־פְּנָי וַאֲזַעַק קוֹל־גְּדוֹל וְאָמַר:
 אֵהָה אֲדוֹנָי יְהוִה כָּלָה אֲתָה־עֹשֶׂה אֶת שְׂאֲרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל: פ
While I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I fell down on my face, cried with a loud voice, and said, “Ah Lord God! will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?”

Moreover, in both *wayhi*-1 and *wayhi*-2 constructions a few tokens involve some kind of semantic repetition or redundancy. More specifically, the content of a preceding proposition (typically at least the main verb) is sometimes repeated by the temporal adjunct in the *wayhi* + T construction. The result is a cohesive device referred to in the literature as ‘Tail-Head Linkage’ (=THL), so named because the tail of one clause becomes the head of the next (van Gijn et al. 2014).³⁸ This occurs for example in the *wayhi*-2 construction in Gen. 19.17, represented in (11):

³⁵ Also see: Josh 10:11; 1 Sam 13:10; 2 Kings 4:40.

³⁶ See also: Gen 19:29; Num 11:25; Josh 5:8; 10:20; 24:29; Judg 2:4; 15:17; 1 Sam 9:26; 2 Sam 4:4; 2 Kings 4:6; 10:25

³⁷ See also: Gen 39:10; 1 Sam 18:19; 2 Sam 13:36.

³⁸ Cf. DE VRIES, L. Towards a Typology of Tail-Head Linkage in Papuan Languages. In *Studies in Language*, 2005, Vol. 29, pp. 363–384; DE VRIES, L. Areal pragmatics of New Guinea: Themmatization, distribution and recapitulative linkage in Papuan narratives. In *Journal of Pragmatics*, 2006, Vol. 38, pp. 811–828; HENGEVELD, MACKENZIE, J. L. *Functional Discourse Grammar: A Typologically-Based Theory of Language Structure*; GUILLAUME, A. Subordinate Clauses, Switch-Reference, and Tail-Head Linkage in Cavineña Narratives. In VAN GIJN, R., HAUDE, K., MUYSKEN, P. (eds.). *Subordination in Native South American Languages*, pp. 109–140.

(11) 2 Chron 13:15³⁹

וַיִּרְיֵעוּ אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וַיְהִי בְהִרְיֵעַ אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נָגְף אֶת־יִרְבֹּעָם וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְפָנֵי־אֲבִיחָה וַיְהוּדָה:

Then the people of Judah raised the battle shout. And when the people of Judah shouted, God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

In these cases, the *wayhi* + T construction restates the event time of the previous proposition. This has the pragmatic effect of slowing down the processing of the narrative in order to highlight the importance of what follows. Significantly, virtually every occurrence of THL occurs immediately before the inciting moment or climax of a scene or episode.

Furthermore, only rarely do *wayhi*-1 and *wayhi*-2 occur at larger thematic boundaries, such as the introduction of an episode, as in (12):

(12) Gen 38:1⁴⁰

וַיְהִי בְעֵת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה מֵאֶת אֶחָיו וַיֵּט עַד־אִישׁ עַדְלָמַי וַשְּׁמוֹ הִירָה:

And it happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and settled near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.

In contrast to *wayhi*-1 and *wayhi*-2, however, the vast majority of *wayhi*-3 constructions occur at the onset of larger thematic units, as in (13a.), with only a few tokens occurring at lower level thematic junctures, as in (13b). This distribution is consistent with the findings in 2.1.1, where we observed that the majority of temporal adjuncts in *wayhi*-3 consist of a date formula of some kind.

(13) a. 2 Kings 18:1⁴¹

וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה שְׁלֹשׁ לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־אֵלָה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֶלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּה בֶן־אֲחָז מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה:

In the third year of King Hoshea son of Elah of Israel, Hezekiah son of King Ahaz of Judah began to reign.

³⁹ See also: *wayhi*-1 Gen 12:14; 19:17; 35:17; 39:13–14; 39:19; Num 11:25; 16:31; Deut 2:16–19; Josh 4:1–3; 6:20; 10:24; Judg 11:5; 1 Sam 5:9; 5:10; 24:2; 24:17; 2 Sam 4:4; 1 Kings 21:15; 21:27; 2 Kings 10:7. *wayhi*-2: 1 Sam 13:10; 2 Kings 2:9; 2 Chron 13:15. *wayhi*-3: 1 Sam 18:30; 1 Kings 15:29; 16:11.

⁴⁰ See also: Exod 2:11; Num. 7:1; Josh 1:1–2; Judg. 1:1; 2 Sam 8:1; 11:1; 1 Kings 6:1; 22:2; 2:1; 6:24.

⁴¹ See also: Gen 14:1; 40:1; Exod 40:17; Lev 9:1; Num 10:11; Deut 1:3–4; 1 Kings 8:54; 14:25; 17:17; 2 Kings 18:1; 18:9; 22:3–7; 25:1; 25:25; 25:27; Isa 7:1; 36:1; Jer 28:1–4; 36:1–3; 36:9; 52:4; 52:31; Ezek 1:1; 20:1; 26:1–3; 29:17–18; 30:20–21; 31:1–2; 32:1–2; 32:17–18; 33:21; 7:1; 2 Chron 12:2–3; 24:23.

b. Jer 36:16⁴²

וַיְהִי כִשְׁמָעָם אֶת־כְּלִי־הַדְּבָרִים פָּחְדוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־בָּרוּךְ הַגִּיד
נְגִיד לְמֶלֶךְ אֶת כְּלִי־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:

When they heard all the words, they turned to one another in alarm, and said to Baruch, “We certainly must report all these words to the king.

2.3. Parameter 3: Verbal Semantics (TAM)

Finally, we turn our attention to the tense-aspect semantics of the verb in each construction type. The analysis of the data reveals that the *wayyiqtol* form used in *wayihî*-1 constructions expresses a perfective past value (14.a) in the vast majority of cases (i.e. 169x/175x, which constitutes nearly 96%).⁴³ In the remaining cases, *wayyiqtol* conveys the nuance of durative past (14.b)⁴⁴ and pluperfect (14.c).⁴⁵ In each of the 18 tokens where a static root is employed, *wayyiqtol* introduces dynamic actions (14.d) rather than states. To be precise, the *wayyiqtol* form of static roots is interpreted as a perfective past (16x),⁴⁶ a pluperfect (1x) or a durative past (1x).⁴⁷

⁴² See also: Gen 8:13; 1 Sam 18:30; 1 Kings 15:29; Jer 36:16; Esther 5:2.

⁴³ See also: Gen 4:3; 4:8; 8:6; 11:2–3; 12:11–13; 12:14; 19:17; 19:29; 19:34; 20:13; 21:22–23; 22:20–22; 24:22; 24:30; 24:52; 25:11; 26:32; 27:1; 29:10; 29:13; 29:23; 30:25–26; 34:25; 35:17; 35:22; 37:23; 38:1; 38:24; 38:28; 39:11; 39:13–14; 39:19; 40:20; 41:8; 43:2; 48:1; Exod 2:11; 2:23; 6:28–29; 14:24; 16:10; 16:13; 18:13; 19:16; 32:19; 32:30; Num 7:1; 11:25; 16:31; 17:7; 17:23; 22:41; 25:19–26:2; Deut 2:16–19; 5:23; 31:24–26; Josh 1:1–2; 3:2; 4:1–3; 4:11–12; 6:15; 6:20; 8:14; 8:24; 9:1–2; 9:16; 10:20; 10:24; 11:1–3; 15:18; 24:29; Judg 1:1; 1:14; 2:4; 3:18; 3:27; 6:25–26; 7:9–11; 7:15; 9:42; 11:5; 11:35; 11:39; 13:20; 14:11; 14:15; 14:17; 15:17; 16:4; 21:4; 1 Sam 1:20; 4:5; 4:18; 5:9; 5:10; 9:26; 11:11; 14:1; 16:6; 18:6; 20:24; 20:35; 24:2; 24:17; 25:37; 25:38; 28:1; 2 Sam 2:1; 4:4; 7:4–8; 8:1; 10:1; 11:1; 11:2; 11:14; 11:16; 12:18; 15:7–8; 16:16; 17:21; 21:18; 1 Kings 2:39; 3:18; 5:21; 6:1; 9:1–2; 11:15; 12:2; 12:20; 13:4; 13:31–32; 14:6–16; 15:21; 16:18; 17:7; 18:4; 18:17; 18:27; 18:36; 19:13; 20:12; 20:26; 20:29; 21:15; 21:16; 21:27; 22:2; 22:33; 2 Kings 2:1; 3:5; 4:6; 4:8; 4:11; 4:18; 4:25–26; 5:7; 5:8; 6:20; 6:24; 6:30; 8:3; 8:15; 9:22; 10:7; 10:9; 10:25; 12:11; 19:1; 19:35; 22:11.

⁴⁴ See Num 10:35; Josh 5:8; 1 Sam 1:4; 1 Kings 18:29 (4x | 2%).

⁴⁵ See Exod 2:11 (1x | 1%). However, this example may also be interpreted as a perfective past. The example 1 Sam 25:2 is excluded from the semantic analysis as it is highly problematic.

⁴⁶ See Gen 27:1; 39:19; Exod 2:23; 18:13; 19:16; Josh 24:29; Judg 16:4; 1 Sam 5:9; 20:24; 2 Sam 7:4–8; 10:1; 12:18; 21:18; 1 Kings 5:21; 17:7; 21:15.

⁴⁷ See Exod 2:11 (pluperfect) and Josh 5:8 (durative past).

- (14) a. Gen 4:3⁴⁸

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמַיּוֹם וַיָּבֵא לָדָוּן מִפְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַיהוָה:

At the designated time (at the end of the days) Cain **brought** some of the fruit of the ground for an offering to the Lord.

- b. Josh 5:8

וַיְהִי כֹאשְׁרֵי-תִמּוֹ כָּל-יְהוּדָי לְהַמּוֹל וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַחְתָּם בְּמִתְנָה עַד חַיִּוְתָם:

When all the nation had been circumcised, they **stayed** there in the camp until they had healed.

- c. Exod 2:11

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אָחִיו

In those days, when Moses **had grown up** (or Moses **grew old**), he went out to his people.

- d. Gen 39:19

וַיְהִי כַשְׂמֹעַ אֲדָנָיו אֶת-דִּבְרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה עָשָׂה לִי עַבְדְּךָ וַיִּחַר אָפוֹ:

When his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, saying, “This is the way your servant treated me,” he **became angry**.

With respect to the semantics of the *qatal* form in *wayhi-2* constructions, a majority—approximately 77% (22x/30x)—unambiguously convey the sense of a perfective past (15.a).⁴⁹ In 3 tokens (10%), *qatal* expresses a pluperfect value (15.b),⁵⁰ and in an additional 3 (10%), it conveys a stative past value (15.c).⁵¹ In general, if a stative root is used, a stative reading is more typical than a dynamic one (i.e. 3x/4x).⁵²

- (15) a. Gen 21:11

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַהֲאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת-אַבְרָהָם

After these things, God **tested** Abraham.

- b. 2 Sam 3:6

וַיְהִי כִּבְּאֵר דָּוִד וְאֶנְשָׁיו צָקְלָג בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַעֲמַלְקִי פָשְׁטוּ אֶל-נֶגֶב וְאֶל-צִקְלָג

Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites **had made** a raid on the Negeb and on Ziklag.

⁴⁸ The relevant *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* forms are marked in bold.

⁴⁹ See Gen 22:1; 27:30; 38:29; Exod 12:29; 13:17; Josh 6:8; 10:11; 23:1–2; 1 Sam 13:10; 18:1; 18:19; 23:6; 2 Sam 1:1; 1:2; 13:36; 17:27–29; 1 Kings 9:10–11; 22:32; 2 Kings 2:9; 4:40; Ezek 11:13; 2 Chron 13:15; 18:31.

⁵⁰ See 1 Kings 11:29; 2 Kings 12:7; 1 Sam 30:1. Additionally, in one case (Gen 39:10), two readings are possible: perfective past and durative past.

⁵¹ See 2 Sam 3:6–7; 1 Kings 21:1; 2 Kings 17:25.

⁵² An exception is Ezek 11:13 where the stative root rather functions perfectly.

c. 1 Kings. 21:1

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כָּרַם הָיָה לְנָבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי אֲשֶׁר בְּיִזְרְעֵאל
 After these things, Naboth the Jezreelite **had** a vineyard in Jezreel,
 beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria.

Overall, the TAM profile of the verb employed in *wayhî*-2 constructions differs from the profile exhibited in the *wayhî*-1 type by allowing for stative uses of static roots and a more extensive use of the pluperfect sense.

The TAM properties of *qatal* in *wayhî*-3 constructions are similar to the profile exhibited both by the *wayyiqtol* in *wayhî*-1 and *qatal* in *wayhî*-2. Like *wayyiqtol* in *wayhî*-1, the vast majority—approximately 90% (43x/48x)—of *qatal* forms in *wayhî*-3 express a perfective past value, as in (16.a).⁵³ Moreover, similar to *wayhî*-1, the pluperfect sense is scarce (16.b), and stative roots commonly yield a dynamic interpretation. To be exact, in 11 unambiguous tokens, the stative root *qatal* functions as a perfective past (10x)⁵⁴ (as in 16.c) or pluperfect (1x).⁵⁵ However, like *wayhî*-2, stative past readings of stative roots are also possible (see 16.d) (3x | 6%).⁵⁶

(16) a. Gen 40:1

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה תָּטְאוּ מִשְׁקָה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם וְהַאֲפָה לְאֲדֹנָיָהֶם לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם
 Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker
offended their lord the king of Egypt.

b. Gen 8:13

וַיְהִי בְּאַחַת וּשְׁש־מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה בְּרֵאשׁוֹן בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ חָרְבוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ
 וַיִּסַּר נֹחַ אֶת־מִכְסֵה הַתֵּבָה
 In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the
 month, (when) the waters **had been dried up (were dried up)** from
 the earth, Noah removed the covering of the ark.

⁵³ See Gen 14:1; 40:1; Exod 12:41; 12:51; 16:27; 16:22; Lev 9:1; Deut 9:11; 1 Sam 18:30; 1 Kings 8:54; 15:29; 16:11; Isa 7:1; Esther 5:2; 2; Neh 1:4; Chron 24:23.

⁵⁴ See 2 Kings 18:1; Jer 36:1–3; Ezek 26:1–3; 29:17–18; 30:20–21; 31:1–2; 32:1–2; 32:17–18; Zech 7:1; Neh 1:4.

⁵⁵ Gen 8:13.

⁵⁶ See 1 Kings 17:17; Jer 36:16; 2 Chron 24:4. Note that in these all cases, a perfective past interpretation is also admissible. Additionally, in one case (Josh 6.16), *qatal* communicates the sense of a durative past, although a perfective reading is also possible.

c. 2 Kings 18:1

וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה שְׁלִישׁ לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־אֵלָה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֶלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּה בֶּן־אֲחָז מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה:

In the third year of the reign of Israel's king Hoshea son of Elah, Ahaz's son Hezekiah **became king** over Judah.

d. 1 Kings 17:17

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה חָלָה בְּיַד הָאִשָּׁה בַּעֲלַת הַבַּיִת

After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, **was ill** (became ill).

3. Discussion

3.1. Prototypical Function of the *Wayhî + T* Constructions

With respect to their function in discourse, each construction serves to specify or update the reference time of an event, or series of events in a narrative, as noted above (cf. Section 2.2). What is more, *wayhî + T* constructions typically occur in continuous contexts of narrative progression, marked as such by a chain of past perfective verb forms (e.g., *wayyiqtol, X + qatal*). By placing a temporal adjunct in a clause-initial position, as in *wayhî + T* constructions, this continuity is interrupted, thereby creating a break or discontinuity in the discourse.⁵⁷ This discontinuity, in turn, serves to segment the text into smaller and larger thematic units, helping the reader better processes the discourse and construct a coherent mental representation of the narrative.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Cf. VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J. The Elusive Biblical Hebrew Term וַיְהִי: A Perspective in Terms of its Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in 1 Samuel. In *Hebrew Studies*, 1999, Vol. 40, p. 112. Note, that by contrast, the unmarked position for temporal adjuncts in Hebrew (and many other languages) is at the end of the clause, (cf. 1 Sam. 25.36), where the adjunct specifies the event time of the proposition while maintaining continuity with what precedes. Cf. VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J. The Elusive Biblical Hebrew Term וַיְהִי: A Perspective in Terms of its Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in 1 Samuel. In *Hebrew Studies*, 1999, Vol. 40, p. 96.

⁵⁸ Recently, corpus analysis and experimental research has shown that speakers and writers across languages use clause-initial temporal adverbs (among other devices) as segmentation markers in narrative discourse. Cf. BESTGEN, Y. Segmentation Markers as Trace and Signal of Discourse Structure. In *Journal of Pragmatics*, 1998, Vol. 29, pp. 753–763; BESTGEN, Y., VONK, W. The Role of Temporal Segmentation Markers in Discourse Processing. In *Discourse Processes*, 1995, Vol. 19, pp. 385–406; BESTGEN, Y., VONK, W. Temporal Adverbials as Segmentation Markers in Discourse Comprehension. In *Journal of Memory and Language*, 2000, Vol. 42, pp. 74–87; COSTERMANS, J., BESTGEN, Y. The Role of Temporal Markers in the

Despite the natural discontinuity created by the initial temporal adjunct, the discourse particle *wayhî* functions as a development marker, explicitly signaling the onset of a new thematic unit within the narrative while also maintaining a degree of continuity with what precedes.⁵⁹ In particular, *wayhî* anchors the following temporal adjunct, which is typically unmarked for tense, to the narrative past timeline of the discourse, thereby signaling that the adjunct refers to a time that is posterior to the time of the previous event. As a result, *wayhî* serves as a cohesive tie to events that precede by offsetting the discontinuity created by the change in reference time. This allows for a degree of continuity to be maintained when an author or editor chooses to specify or update the reference time at points of development within a narrative sequence.⁶⁰

The status and function of *wayhî* as a development marker is substantiated by its evolutionary trajectory. In particular, the discourse marker *wayhî* derives from a full-fledged verb form—the 3rd person masculine singular *wayyiqtol* of the root *hāyāh*—which is still widely reflected in the narrative of the Hebrew Bible.⁶¹ The form *wayhî*, like all *wayyiqtol* forms, derives from an analytic expression composed by the conjunction **wa*, the “short” *iqtol* (a successor of

Segmentation of Narrative Discourse. In *CPC: European Bulletin of Cognitive Psychology*, 1991, Vol. 11. pp. 349–370; BESTGEN, Y., COSTERMANS, J. Time, Space, and Action: Exploring the Narrative Structure and its Linguistic Marking. In *Discourse Processes*, 1994, Vol. 17, pp. 421–446; SCHIFFRIN, D. *Discourse Markers*; SEGAL, E. M., DUCHAN, J. F., SCOTT, P. J. The Role of Interclausal Connectives in Narrative Structuring: Evidence from Adults' Interpretations of Simple Stories. In *Discourse Processes*, 1991, Vol. 14, pp. 27–54.

⁵⁹ Cf. LI, T. Va'yehi as a Discourse Marker in Kings. In *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 2006, Vol. 44, pp. 221–239.

⁶⁰ Along these lines, van der Merwe writes, “In a language that has a specific form of the verb (*wayyiqtol*) to advance events on the time line [sic] (in a narrative), whether it is real time or discourse time, *wayhî* ensures that the continuity of a narrative can be maintained when a narrator, author, or editor needs, or deems it necessary, to update or specify the reference time of an event or events for whatever reason.” VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J. The Elusive Biblical Hebrew Term וַיְהִי: A Perspective in Terms of its Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in 1 Samuel. In *Hebrew Studies*, 1999, Vol. 40, pp. 112–113.

⁶¹ According to Harmelink, of the 864 instances of *wayhî* in the Hebrew Bible. *Wayhî* mostly occurs in narrative, with only 6 occurrences in Psalms, while no instances are attested in Amos, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Malachi, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs or Lamentations. HARMELINK, B. *Exploring the Syntactic, Semantic, and Pragmatic Uses of וַיְהִי in Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 137–147.

Proto-Semitic (PS) **yaqtul*), and an additional element that caused the germination of the performative consonant in the verb.⁶²

Accordingly, at the initial stage of its evolution in Biblical Hebrew and Canaanite, the temporal expression *wayhî* + T most likely functioned as a verbal clause with a perfective or non-perfective meaning (durative, iterative, etc.) similar to “it was at/during/when...” or “it happened at/during/when,” respectively, which would be compatible with the reconstructed semantics of the successor of PS *yaqtul*. However, contrary to the other uses of *wayyiqtol*, the *wayyiqtol* of the root *hāyāh* has undergone a gradual grammaticalization process, losing more of its verbal properties until it eventually became reanalyzed as an uninflected discourse marker. As a result, the original independent temporal clause with verbal *wayhî* slowly appeared as a preverbal adjunct construction instead.

The process experienced by the original locution **[wa +A⁶³ + yaqtul]* of the root *hāyāh* and its grammaticalization into an indeclinable discourse marker *wayhî* is common cross-linguistically.

First, inflected verbs, or entire analytical constructions built around such an inflected verb, commonly develop into particles. This may be illustrated by consecutive particles *ya(a)* in Kxoe (from *yàá* ‘come’), *kisha* ‘then’ in Swahili (*i-ki-isha* ‘if it is finished’), or *ti* ‘and’ in Moré (from *ti* ‘go (to)’).⁶⁴ In such cases, analytical inflectional constructions are progressively grammaticalized into non-inflected, possibly synthetic forms. That is, a construction develops holistically as a group of its composite parts causing such parts to lose their original meaning and class properties. At the end, an input complex becomes a single indivisible particle.⁶⁵ Second, a relatively frequent subtype of this grammaticalization scenario concerns forms of the verb ‘be’ as illustrated by an introductory particle *es que* in Spanish and a question particle *est-ce que* in French (both built around the present tense of the verb ‘be’ *ser* and *être*, respectively) or a goal particle *by* in Polish (derived from an optative form of the verb *byti* ‘be’). Being grammaticalized as full-fledged particles, the input verbs have lost their verbal properties. For example, in the above-mentioned

⁶² KIENAST, B. *Historische Semitische Sprachwissenschaft*; ANDRASON, A. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: una visión dinámica* [The Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Context: A Dynamic Perspective].

⁶³ The abbreviation A stands for a particle that caused the doubling of the prefix consonant in *wayyiqtol*. The exact origin of this is still debated in Hebrew and Semitic scholarship.

⁶⁴ HEINE, B., KUTEVA, T. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*, pp. 68–69, 137–138, 156–157.

⁶⁵ HOPPER, P., TRAUGOTT, E. C. *Grammaticalization*.

constructions the reflexes of the verb ‘be’ cannot be inflected. Third, copulative constructions derived from the verb ‘be’ may develop into discourse markers that signal narrative continuity in naturally discontinuous contexts.⁶⁶ An example that corresponds most to *wayihî* in Biblical Hebrew is found in the Mande language of Vai. In Vai, a verbal analytical construction *á mu* ‘it was’ developed into *ámu / ámo* ‘and, then’ and indicates continuity in narrative discourse.⁶⁷ This evolution is a case of “a more [...] process whereby [...] verbs are grammaticalized into markers used to structure narrative discourse”.⁶⁸

However, even though highly advanced, the grammaticalization of an original analytical verbal construction **[wa + A + yihî]* into a synthetic discourse marker *wayihî* is incomplete. First of all, the de-fientivization of *wayihî* in Biblical Hebrew is ongoing, as evidenced by the fact that *wayihî* maintains various verbal properties. For example, its form is identical to the 3rd ms.sg. of the short *yiqtol* found both in *wayyiqtol* and in the “jussive”. Genuine verbal uses of *wayihî* are not only attested but also common. In 458 out of 864 instances (approximately 53%) in the Hebrew Bible, *wayihî* functions as a verb, agreeing with its subject in person, number, and gender.⁶⁹ The morphological relationship of the particle *wayihî* with the root *hāyāh* and its verbal forms is likewise evident.⁷⁰ The marker *wayihî* always occurs clause initially—it may never be preceded by other particles. This property distinguishes it from the remaining particles, which can themselves be headed by other particles (i.e. particles can accumulate), and links it to the *wayyiqtol* gram itself, which typically occupies a clause-initial position.

A second reason that the evolution of *wayihî* into a full discourse marker is incomplete (albeit advanced) concerns the tendency for highly grammaticalized particles to become more facultative in discourse. In other words, the degree to which a particle has become grammaticalized is proportional to its optionality, with highly grammaticalized particles becoming increasingly more discretionary in discourse. And indeed, this is what we observe in BH, where the rare occurrence of T + *wayyiqtol* and T + X + *qatal* (6x and 14x,

⁶⁶ HEINE, B., KUTEVA, T. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*, p. 95.

⁶⁷ Ibid. For other examples from Shona and Kxoe, consult HEINE, B., KUTEVA, T. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*, pp. 95–96.

⁶⁸ HEINE, B., KUTEVA, T. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*, p. 69.

⁶⁹ HARMELINK, B. *Exploring the Syntactic, Semantic, and Pragmatic Uses of יָהָיָה in Biblical Hebrew*, p. 147.

⁷⁰ This may explain various translations of this construction as “it was” or “it came to pass”.

respectively) without an initial *wayhî* may demonstrate that the optionality of the discourse marker *wayhî* has begun, albeit still in an incipient stage.⁷¹

3.2. Motivation for the Sub-types

The selection between *wayhî-1*, *wayhî-2* and *wayhî-3* is motivated by several factors. These include the morpho-syntactic and semantic properties of the temporal adjuncts; the discourse pragmatic profile of each construction type; the TAM properties of the verb; and the syntactic profile of the *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* clauses.

3.2.1. Temporal Adjunct

The properties of the temporal adjunct provide the first motivational constraint for the use of each *wayhî* + T construction, respectively. From a morpho-syntactic perspective, if the temporal adjunct is an infinitive construct (headed by a preposition), *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* are typically used. By contrast, if the adjunct is a date formula headed by a preposition א, *wayhî-3* is preferred.

With respect to the semantics of temporal adjunct, *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* are used with adjuncts that provide the temporal frame for subsequent events, or those that specify the exact point in time for an event. By contrast, *wayhî-3* rarely takes an adjunct that specifies an exact point in time.

3.2.2. Discourse Pragmatics

From a discourse pragmatic perspective, all three construction types function to specify or update the reference time, while simultaneously signaling a development shift in the discourse. The distinction between them, however, concerns the level of discourse at which the development shift occurs. In particular, *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* constructions are prototypically used to mark a development shift at lower level thematic junctures, either at the start of a new

⁷¹ Regarding the development of the narrative *wayhî* in Classical and Late Biblical Hebrew consult ESKHULT, M. Verbal Syntax in Late Biblical Hebrew. In MURAOKA, T., ELWOLDE, J. F. (eds.). *Diggers at the Well. Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls & Ben Sira*, pp. 84–93; ESKHULT, M. Traces of Linguistic Development in Biblical Hebrew. In *Hebrew Studies*, 2005, Vol. 46, pp. 353–370; YOUNG, I., REZETKO, R. *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*; JOOSTEN, J. Diachronic Aspects of Narrative *Wayihi* in Biblical Hebrew. In *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, 2009, Vol. 35(2), pp. 43–61.

scene within a larger episode, or at thematically salient transition points within a scene. Moreover, the type of adjuncts used in each construction also seem to motivate the particular pragmatic function in each case, with framing adjuncts typically marking the start of a new scene, while adjuncts expressing an exact point in time typically signal thematically salient junctures within a scene. Lastly, in some contexts, *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* involve the use of THL, a device used to pragmatically highlight the inciting moment or climactic event that follows.

In contrast to *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2*, *wayhî-3* constructions are prototypically used to mark a development shift at higher level thematic junctures, often at the start of a new episode. This difference in pragmatic distribution also explains why the vast majority of *wayhî-3* constructions entail a date formula, an adjunct which is prototypically used to set the temporal frame for larger thematic units

3.2.3. TAM Semantics

The TAM semantics of the inflected verb serve as an additional motivating constraint for selecting one type of *wayhî* construction over another. Even though *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* are highly similar with respect to the form and meaning of the temporal adjuncts and their respective discourse pragmatic profiles, their use is, to some degree, prompted by the particular temporal-aspectual information conveyed by their respective verb forms. Crucially, only the *qatal* form in *wayhî-2* and *wayhî-3* can convey stative past senses, while the *wayyiqtol* in *wayhî-1* invariably conveys a dynamic sense. Moreover, when a pluperfect sense is to be expressed, the *qatal* form in *wayhî-2* and *wayhî-3* is preferred.

This behavior is fully analogous to the general TAM profile of *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* found in narrative. That is, from a semantic perspective, the two grams are both similar, but nevertheless distinct in narrative passages. The similarity derives from the fact that both grams can express the sense of a perfective past, both being largely compatible with that semantic domain.⁷² However, the two

⁷² This overlap is superficial. Even though *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* both express the sense of a perfective past, they usually do that in different syntactic environments. *Wayyiqtol* typically appears clause initially being in principle incompatible with situations where other elements would precede it, e.g. fronting, negation, subordinate clauses (i.e. after conjunctions and complementizers), and in the company of particles and discourse markers. In all such environments, where the verb does not appear clause initially, *qatal* is regularly employed. For details see ANDRASON, A. The Complexity of Verbal Semantics – An Intricate Relationship between QATAL and WAYYIQTOL. In *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, 2016, Vol. 16(4), pp. 1–96.

grams also differ in that *qatal* can communicate the past stative function in contrast to *wayyiqtol*, which usually fails to do so. Moreover, the *qatal* is typically compatible with the pluperfect value, while this sense is exception for *wayyiqtol*.⁷³ For a comparison, in narrative fragments of the book of Genesis, *wayyiqtol* typically expresses the sense of a perfective past (93.5%). In 6%, it communicates the meaning of a durative past, while in a remaining 0.5%, it is found with a taxis sense of a pluperfect. In equivalent contexts, *qatal* is commonly used to convey perfective past (48.3%), pluperfect (35.9%) and stative past (15.4%) senses.⁷⁴

These differences between *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* stem from the distinct stage of semantic development each verbal gram occupies along the resultative path of grammaticalization. *Wayyiqtol* is an “older” gram located at a more advanced stage on the path, therefore specializing in the sense of (narrative) perfective past. By contrast, *qatal* is a “younger” gram and therefore less advanced, allowing for stative and pluperfect senses, which are taxis equivalents of the present perfect in discourse.⁷⁵

As explained in section 3.1, *wayyiqtol* derives from an analytical expression built around the successor of PS **yaqtul*. This means that even though the exact form of *wayyiqtol* is a Hebrew innovation, the element *yiqtol* (from **yaqtul*) is an “old” verbal gram. It is widely accepted that **yaqtul* had already been grammaticalized as a paradigmatic perfect, perfective and/or past at the Proto-Semitic period. That is, it was entirely fientivized as a full-fledged “tense” before the Semitic languages were fragmented. Therefore, in the earliest attested languages of the Semitic family, such as Akkadian and Amorite, its successors appeared as fully fientive grams, central to the respective verbal systems. In fact, the verbal status of **yaqtul* most likely descends to the Afro-Asiatic

⁷³ ANDRASON, A., VAN DER MERWE, C. H. J. The Semantic Potential of Verbal Conjugations as a Polysemous Set of Senses. In *Hebrew Studies*, 2015, Vol. 56, pp. 71–88; ANDRASON, A. The Complexity of Verbal Semantics – An Intricate Relationship between QATAL and WAYYIQTOL. In *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, 2016, Vol. 16(4), pp. 31, 35, 40.

⁷⁴ ANDRASON, A. The Complexity of Verbal Semantics – An Intricate Relationship between QATAL and WAYYIQTOL. In *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, 2016, Vol. 16(4), pp. 31, 35.

⁷⁵ This contrast in the advancement is also visible in that *qatal* is extensively used as a present perfect in discourse. For details see ANDRASON, A. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: una visión dinámica* [The Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Context: A Dynamic Perspective]; ANDRASON, A. The Complexity of Verbal Semantics – An Intricate Relationship between QATAL and WAYYIQTOL. In *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, 2016, Vol. 16(4), pp. 31–33.

period.⁷⁶ In contrast, *qatal* is a “younger” verbal gram. *Qatal* developed from an analytical locution composed of the element **qatVL-* and a personal pronoun. In Proto-Semitic, the element **qatVL-* was a resultative participle (or a verbal adjective). Most likely it was used in combination with personal pronouns yielding predicative verb-less clauses, instead of constituting a genuine verbal tense. This type of construction is still attested in Akkadian where *parsaku*—the successor of the PS **qatVL-* construction—was used as a semi-nominal (pseudo-verbal), intransitive and/or de-transitive resultative proper and stative verb.⁷⁷ However, already in Akkadian, personal pronouns were regularly agglutinated to the original participle, which demonstrates a more advanced grammaticalization stage. Likewise, certain transitive uses suggest its further progress along the grammaticalization path.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the genuine verbal status of *qatal* was only achieved in classical Semitic languages, such as Biblical Hebrew, Arabic, Ugaritic, or Ge‘ez.⁷⁹

Lastly, it should be noted that the overall frequency of the use of a *wayyiqtol* form (*wayhî-1*) in the *wayhî* + T constructions is far greater than that of the *qatal* form (*wayhî-2* and *wayhî-3*). In the analyzed corpus, *wayyiqtol* is found 178 times, while *qatal* is used only 55 times. That is, the presence of *wayyiqtol* is approximately three times more common than the use of *qatal* in the *wayhî* + T constructions. This is generally consistent with the behavior of *wayyiqtol* and

⁷⁶ KIENAST, B. *Historische Semitische Sprachwissenschaft*; LIPÍŃSKI, E. *Semitic Languages Outline of a Comparative Grammar*; KOUWENBERG, N. J. C. *The Akkadian Verb and Its Semitic Background*, pp. 129–132, 586–587; ANDRASON, A. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: una visión dinámica* [The Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Context: A Dynamic Perspective], pp. 188–191, 196–198, 205–207.

⁷⁷ HUEHNERGARD, J. Stative, Predicative Form, Pseudo-verb. In *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 1987, Vol. 46(3), pp. 215–232; HUEHNERGARD, J. *A Grammar of Akkadian*; KOUWENBERG, N. J. C. *The Akkadian Verb and Its Semitic Background*, pp. 163–173, 189–193; ANDRASON, A. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: una visión dinámica* [The Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Context: A Dynamic Perspective], pp. 120–123, 128–141.

⁷⁸ KIENAST, B. *Historische Semitische Sprachwissenschaft*; LIPÍŃSKI, E. *Semitic Languages Outline of a Comparative Grammar*; HUEHNERGARD, J. *A Grammar of Akkadian*, p. 394; KOUWENBERG, N. J. C. *The Akkadian Verb and Its Semitic Background*, pp. 174–176. ANDRASON, A. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: una visión dinámica* [The Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Context: A Dynamic Perspective], pp. 120–128, 135–141, 149–152, 159–160, 169–171.

⁷⁹ ANDRASON, A. *El sistema verbal hebreo en su contexto semítico: una visión dinámica* [The Hebrew Verbal System in its Semitic Context: A Dynamic Perspective], pp. 159–160, 338–339. See also KOUWENBERG, N. J. C. *The Akkadian Verb and Its Semitic Background*, pp. 181–188.

qatal in narrative, where *wayyiqtol* is significantly more frequent. For instance, in Genesis, *wayyiqtol* is nearly five times more common in narrative than *qatal*.⁸⁰

To conclude, even though the choice between *wayhî-1*, on the one hand, and *wayhî-2* and *wayhî-3*, on the other, may sometimes be motivated by the respective semantics of the *wayyiqtol* or *qatal* verb—e.g. the capacity for *qatal* to convey pluperfect and stative senses—this is the exception rather than the rule. That is, both *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* forms commonly exhibit an equivalent temporal-aspectual sense, viz. perfective past, in all three construction types. Crucially, the use of *qatal* does not invariably move the temporal reference back, as claimed by Harmelink (2011:270) citing Hataav (1997:80). Although in general, *qatal* may express anteriority in the past, this is not a rule. In the case of the *wayhî-2* and *wayhî-3* constructions, such a use is indeed far from prototypical.

3.2.4. Syntax

Finally, syntactic constraints pertaining to both the *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* clauses provide an additional point of motivation for the selection of one construction type over another, particularly with respect to *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2*.

As previously explained, the discourse pragmatic profiles of *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* constructions are virtually synonymous. The primary factor motivating the use of one over the other pertains to the word order of the verbal clause (albeit verbal semantics may also play a role). More specifically, the *wayhî-1* construction is used when the verb stands first in its clause, while *wayhî-2* is employed when the verb is preceded by a constituent (24x), a negative particle (4x), or a discourse particle (2x).⁸¹ This behavior of *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* constructions harmonizes with the distribution of *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* in narrative and reflects the origin of *wayyiqtol*, which derived from an analytical locution where **wa* likely marked the clause boundary.

The similarity of *wayhî-1* and *wayhî-2* constructions is also visible in that both entail a type of \uparrow exhibited in the verbal clause. In *wayhî-1*, \uparrow surfaces as an indissoluble part of the verb (*wayyiqtol*), while in *wayhî-2*, it precedes the fronted constituent (\uparrow -X-*qatal*).⁸²

⁸⁰ The Complexity of Verbal Semantics – An Intricate Relationship between QATAL and WAYYIQTOL. In *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, 2016, Vol. 16(4), pp. 31, 35.

⁸¹ Here we treat the temporal adjunct as, at least originally, belonging to the *wayhî* clause.

⁸² The status of these reflexes of \uparrow are however different. See further below.

All of this means that *wayhi*-1 and *wayhi*-2 may, to a degree, be two variants of the same meta-construction. They were either developed from or reflect a similar template—an analytical locution built of the predecessor of the *wayhi* temporal phrase, and a verbal clause composed of the conjunction **wa* and the main verb.

Wayyiqtol, including the verbal clause in the *wayhi*-1 type, has its origin in the sequence **[wa + A + yaqtul]*. The two morphemes **[wa + A]* that originally preceded the **yaqtul* form were agglutinated into the verb, gradually becoming indissoluble from it. In contrast, the verbal clause in the *wayhi*-2 type derives from **[wa + X + qatal]*. Here, the previously mentioned development into a synthetic form did not take place. The primary reason for this being that, while the morphemes preceding the verb in *wayhi*-1 constructions were constant, *wayhi*-2 constructions allowed for a variable—that is, an optional fronted element.⁸³

Alternatively, the *wa-X-qatal* sequence was generated only after **[wa + A + yaqtul]* developed into the indissoluble gram *wayyiqtol* which originally did not allow a fronted element. In such cases, by analogy to *wayhi*-1, the variant *wayhi*-2 was derived by using the “younger” *qatal* gram which could easily be headed by constituents and/or particles.

4. Conclusion

This study offers a description and explanation of the complex grammatical profiles of three interdependent constructions types, all of which are characterized by an initial *wayhi* + temporal adjunct. The complexity of their respective profiles derives from the fact that each construction is a composite structure comprised of multiple parts that are all motivated in varying degrees by syntactic, semantic and discourse pragmatic constraints. Additionally, the *wayhi* + T constructions are dynamic outcomes of constantly evolving components which transgress rigid categorial boundaries. For example, we have argued that, 1) as part of *wayhi* and *wayyiqtol*, *wa* experiences the evolution from a conjunction into an indissoluble tense-aspect marker; 2) *wayhi* and *wayyiqtol* forms are developing from analytic to synthetic; 3) the *wayhi* verbal form has

⁸³ Indeed, this is consistent with typological grammaticalization patterns in which the development from analytic to synthetic constructions tends to develop faster with consistently linear constructions that can be analyzed as a holistic unit. The constant elements become gradually incorporated as affixes into the hosting element. In contrast, with variably interrupted patterns, this type of grammaticalization is slower or does not take place at all.

reached a late stage in its grammaticalization processes as evinced by its pervasive use as a discourse (development) marker; and 4) the *wayhî* + T constructions are evolving from (dependent) clauses into phrases—i.e. parts of clauses. Although all these processes are highly advanced, it is likely that none are complete.

Given the linguistic complexity of the data presented here, it is our contention that a comprehensive grammatical description of the *wayhî* + T constructions can only be achieved by models that replace neatness, simplicity and stasis with more sophisticated notions of fuzziness, multilevel interconnectivity, and dynamics.⁸⁴ The complexity underlying language also means that any analysis can always be expanded by introducing new parameters and/or by connecting the studied phenomenon to other, perhaps more distant, components of a grammatical system. This is evident in the present study, as we did not, or could not, answer all the questions related to the *wayhî* + T constructions. Most importantly, the present paper did not examine the properties of the three other temporal constructions in Biblical Hebrew (T + X + *qatal*; T + *wayyiqtol*; and T + *qatal*) and their systemic relationship to the *wayhî* + T constructions. An in-depth discussion of these two issues is, in our view, necessary for a more holistic understanding of the *wayhî* + T constructions and their place in BH grammar. It will, therefore, constitute one of the research activities conducted by the authors of this article in the near future.

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⁸⁴ Crucially, even synchronic models must be dynamic if the realistic picture of the BH language is to be provided.

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