

# THE SYSTEM OF THE FINITE VERB IN CLASSICAL BIBLICAL HEBREW<sup>1</sup>

Peter J. Gentry

*University of Toronto*

This article provides a comprehensive description of the verbal system of classical biblical Hebrew, explaining how tense, aspect, and modality are signaled and correlating form and function in a way that accounts adequately and simply for the entire range of usage. A sensitive balance is maintained between synchronic and diachronic analysis. Also considered are communicative constraints, such as discourse grammar, pragmatics, and contextual meanings versus implicature. The base forms are primarily aspectual, with temporal deixis a function of aspectual default and discourse setting. Integrated within the model is a fresh proposal for understanding so-called volitives in classical biblical Hebrew. Normally command forms in Hebrew are considered a unified system of volitives consisting of cohortative, imperative, and jussive. Following up on the work of Niccacci, Revell and more recently Shulman on (so-called) modal forms in Hebrew, it is argued that the volitives should not be viewed as a unified system. Rather, projective modality apart from imperative forms is signaled by position of the verb. This in itself is not new. It is further argued, however, that the *-āh* suffix normally considered to be the marker of the cohortative functions in a manner similar to the Akkadian ventive and has nothing to do with projective modality. The explanatory power of this proposal is such that it can explain the distribution of the *-āh* suffix on all verb forms in the Hebrew Bible as well as forms usually eliminated from discussion as extra-systemic or corruptions in the text. Striking support, moreover, is found in the Amarna Canaanite texts.

## INTRODUCTION

All who read the texts of classical biblical Hebrew<sup>2</sup>—students and scholars alike—continue to be perplexed and troubled by the nature of the Hebrew verbal system. Indeed, Leslie McFall aptly summed things up in the title of his 1982 work: *The Enigma of the Hebrew Verbal System*.<sup>3</sup>

The basic problem is correlating an adequate and simple description of the form and function of the verb together with the realities of all its

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<sup>1</sup> Dedicated in honor of Professor E. J. Revell's sixty-fifth birthday (April 15, 1999). I am indebted to a number of careful readers for their comments and criticisms of this paper whom I gratefully acknowledge: Dr. Stephen Dempster (Atlantic Baptist University); Dr. Stephen Kempf (Quebec City); Mr. Paul McLean and Professors B. Peckham, E. J. Revell, R. F. G. Sweet, and J. W. Wevers (University of Toronto).

<sup>2</sup> Following the definition of D. M. Gropp, classical biblical Hebrew is essentially delimited as the prose of Genesis–Kings ("The Function of the Finite Verb in Classical Biblical Hebrew," *HAR* 13 [1991] 46).

<sup>3</sup> Leslie McFall, *The Enigma of the Hebrew Verbal System* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982).

usage—whether common or marginal. Beginning students are confused; they have entered a strange world. Only one thing seems to be certain: the system is definitely non-Indo-European. Scholars with extensive experience in reading the texts may provide accurate explanations of difficult passages, but once again, combining practice with theory in a consistent manner is elusive. Even in the most recent standard textbook, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* by B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor,<sup>4</sup> where discussions of the uses of the verb are contextually determined, correlation between the described semantics of the verb and the different categories of usage is not always apparent or straightforward.

Recent developments, however, do give hope of overcoming the problem. New approaches and disciplines as well as refinements of the philological tradition, whether applied in combination or separately, continue to advance our understanding of the verbal system of classical biblical Hebrew. The discipline of linguistics offers new approaches, categories, and models. Cross-linguistic studies provide a framework for describing how human languages work. Categories such as tense, aspect, and modality have been clarified and refined as well as the way in which different human languages code these parameters. Discourse grammar has focused on features of the language operating beyond the level of the individual sentence on the discourse as a whole. Pragmatics has delineated ways in which languages encode in their structure the relationship between context and language.<sup>5</sup> A consensus concerning the Hebrew verb is beginning to emerge from applying such tools to classical biblical Hebrew. In addition, similar tools are being applied to cognate languages and as the corpus of inscriptional texts increases, so does the power of comparative linguistic study.

This paper attempts to describe the Hebrew verbal system by (1) giving a linguistic orientation for understanding the verb, (2) interacting with past theories and building on recent studies, (3) correlating form and function in a model which accounts adequately and simply for the range of usage.<sup>6</sup>

At the heart of an adequate description of the Hebrew verb is an adequate correlation of form and function. Several constraints affect such a description.

<sup>4</sup> B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> S. C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> A good hypothesis or model will account for the data, provide a basically simple and coherent overall picture of how the parts relate to the whole, and demonstrate explanatory power in related areas (cf. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992], pp. 99–100).

(1) How does the verbal system signal categories of tense, aspect, and mood or modality? Indeed, does the Hebrew system signal all of them or only a selection? The categories and the linguistic strategies for marking them must be identified.

(2) Both diachronic and synchronic analysis must be carried out and a balance of the proper contribution of each to the description as a whole maintained. Gropp, for example, notes that most twentieth century scholars have a diachronic solution in mind and complains that the synchronic question is inadequately addressed.<sup>7</sup> True enough! Yet an approach which does give proper priority to synchronic analysis must at the same time incorporate the firm results of diachronic study and also be guided by appropriate cross-linguistic parameters in proposing what strategies are employed to signal categories of tense, aspect, and modality. Gropp's own hypothesis that the forms signal relative tense is one where analysis is focused synchronically—although that is, perhaps, a counsel of despair. From a diachronic perspective he points out that while previous proposals frequently assumed just two basic forms—prefix and suffix—recent studies are beginning to distinguish various prefixed paradigms. So, like the description given below, he distinguishes a couple of prefixed paradigms as well as perfect from converted perfect. By contrast, this description, while maintaining the priority of synchronic study, (a) incorporates in a better and fuller way the diachronic evidence Gropp briefly references, (b) is more probable from a cross-linguistic perspective, and (c) includes data he explains away as either extrasystemic or corruptions in the text.

(3) The communicative constraints of discourse grammar and pragmatics must be accounted for properly. Among many important studies in the last twenty years, those of Buth and Dempster, Niccacci and Revell have contributed significantly to the model proposed below. One such communicative constraint is the type of discourse, for example, conversation or historical narrative.<sup>8</sup> A language may maintain an economy of forms by employing one form for different functions in mutually exclusive discourse types. The use of the so-called short prefix for jussive in direct speech or preterite in historical narrative may be an example of economy of this

<sup>7</sup> D. M. Gropp, "Function of the Finite Verb," p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> For the distinction, see A. Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose*, trans. W. G. E. Watson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) and especially his further refinements in A. Niccacci, "On the Hebrew Verbal System," in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. R. D. Bergen (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994).

sort.<sup>9</sup> Another constraint is sequencing.<sup>10</sup> Hebrew employs two devices operating in tandem: (a) the absence or presence of *waw* and (b) the order of constituents in a sentence. The last mentioned linguistic strategy is also linked to another constraint: theme or topicality. Initial position in a sentence may be loosely described as topical. In narrative, it is almost always occupied by the verb, because the sequence of events constitutes the theme. When initial position is occupied by a clause component other than the verb, a change in topic is signaled, but also a discontinuity in the event-line or narrative. Gropp notes the importance of distinguishing general meanings of verb forms from contextual meanings or implicatures.<sup>11</sup> Due account of discourse grammar and pragmatics will provide clear criteria for such distinctions.<sup>12</sup>

#### FORM AND FUNCTION IN A LINGUISTIC MODEL OF THE HEBREW VERBAL SYSTEM

No space can be given here for a detailed history of previous theories. It is sufficient to note that for a long time the system of the verb was understood to signal primarily two categories of tense: past (suffix) and non-past (prefix).<sup>13</sup> This understanding was abandoned for about a century and a half in favor of an aspectual theory also based on two categories: perfective (suffix) and non-perfective (prefix).<sup>14</sup> Both approaches have proponents in recent studies, although a high proportion of them represent a return to a system based primarily on tense.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> To be sure, historical narrative may include direct speech and vice versa.

<sup>10</sup> Sequencing refers both to the continuity of events in a narrative and to the formal relation of propositions in direct speech (see S. G. Dempster, "Linguistic Features of Hebrew Narrative: A Discourse Analysis of Narrative from the Classical Period," [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1985] 32-34).

<sup>11</sup> D. M. Gropp, "Function of the Finite Verb," p. 46. See especially B. Comrie, *Tense* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 18-26.

<sup>12</sup> Gropp lists the forms and their meanings and distinguishes contextual from general meanings (see D. M. Gropp, "Function of the Finite Verb," pp. 57-58). Nonetheless, a model of the verb where the forms signal anteriority or relative tense does not easily explain the contextual meanings or what signals them.

<sup>13</sup> See R. Buth, "The Hebrew Verb in Current Discussions," *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 5 (1992) 92-93 and L. McFall, *Enigma*, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> These categories, however, and the theories which produced the terms perfect and imperfect differ—as DeCaen shows—from the definition of these terms today (for which, see below). See V. DeCaen, "Ewald and Driver on Biblical Hebrew 'Aspect': Anteriority and the Orientalist Framework," *ZAH* 9 (1996) 129-151.

<sup>15</sup> Recent proposals for tense (absolute or relative) include: J. Blau, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Porta Linguarum Orientalium N. S. 12; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb in Standard Biblical Prose," *HUCA* 60 (1989) 1-37, A. F. Rainey, "The Prefix Conjugation Patterns of Early Northwest Semitic" in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in*

The model proposed here is based on the critique made by Huehnergard of the rich contributions of Rainey, but is placed in the discourse framework proposed by Dempster and Buth. Rainey classifies prefixed paradigms according to the modal categories indicative and injunctive as follows:<sup>16</sup>

INDICATIVE		INJUNCTIVE	
Preterite	<i>yaqtul</i> , -û	Jussive	<i>yaqtul</i> , -û
Imperfect	<i>yaqtulu</i> , -ûna	Volitive	<i>yaqtula</i> , -û
Energic	<i>yaqtulunn(n)a</i>	Energic	<i>yaqtulan(n)a</i>

In response, Huehnergard makes the following penetrating remark:

The likely existence of a single form *yaqtul* is of some significance, because if the earlier Semitic situation with regard to the meaning of *yaqtul* still obtained to some degree in Proto-Canaanite, then the splitting of a single morpheme *yaqtul* into two discrete forms, indicative and injunctive, as in Rainey's paradigms, may not reflect the synchronic verbal system accurately, so that the nice symmetry of the paradigms may be illusory.<sup>17</sup>

Later on he follows this up:

In other words, both the zero form *yaqtul* and what we have been calling the imperfect, Central Semitic *yaqtulu*, were probably unmarked for mood: both could occur in both statements and injunctions. What distinguished the two forms, accordingly, was not mood but rather primarily a matter of aspect, and secondarily of tense: *yaqtul* is a perfective or punctual form, temporally a specific past; *yaqtulu* is an imperfective or durative form, temporally a future. The distinction between statements and injunctions, therefore, had to be marked in

*Honor of William L. Moran*, eds. T. Abusch, J. Huehnergard, and P. Steinkeller (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), and D. M. Gropp, "The Function of the Finite Verb in Classical Biblical Hebrew," *HAR* 13 (Scholars Press, 1991) 45-62. M. Eskhult, *Studies in Verbal Aspect and Narrative Technique in Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990) and B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction* argue primarily for an aspect based system. J. Huehnergard, "The Early Hebrew Prefix-Conjugations," *HS* 29 (1988) 19-23, R. Buth, "The Hebrew Verb in Current Discussions," pp. 91-105, and R. S. Hendel, "In the Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System: Situation, Tense, Aspect and Mood," *ZAH* 9 (1996) 152-181, combine aspect and tense in the semantics of the verb.

<sup>16</sup> A. F. Rainey, "The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarna Canaanite," *HS* 27 (1986) 4, and "Prefix Conjugation Patterns of Early Northwest Semitic," 407; cf. A. F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect used by the Scribes from Canaan* (4 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), vol. 2, 221.

<sup>17</sup> J. Huehnergard, "Early Hebrew Prefix-Conjugations," p. 20.

some way other than by the morphology of the verb and probably occurred at the level of the phrase.<sup>18</sup>

Huehnergard's proposal is basically correct, and this model outlines how it is achieved by the congeries of forms and other linguistic strategies which make up the verbal system. Historically, we have essentially three paradigms, short prefix (*yaqtul*),<sup>19</sup> long prefix (*yaqtulu*), and suffix (*qatala*). However, formal distinction between short and long prefix disappeared in most roots and stems when final short vowels were lost. Distinct forms remained only in the following roots and stems:<sup>20</sup>

Long Prefix	Short Prefix	Description
<i>yāqûm</i>	<i>yāqôm</i>	II-w/y 3 m./f.s. and 2 m.s. <i>Qal</i>
<i>yāqîm</i>	<i>yāqēm</i>	II-w/y 3 m./f.s. and 2 m.s. <i>Qal</i> or <i>Hiphil</i>
<i>yibneh</i>	<i>yîben</i>	III-w/y 3 m./f.s. and 2 m.s.
<i>yaqtîl</i>	<i>yaqtêl</i>	3 m./f.s. and 2 m.s. <i>Hiphil</i>
<i>yiqtalēnnû</i>	<i>yiqtalēhû</i>	3 m./f.s. and 2 m.s. + 3 m.s. suffix

The earlier framework was preserved and problems occasioned by loss of final short vowels were offset by reworking the system through sequencing and word order. In narrative a form *wayyiqtol*, produced by the conjunction plus a different vowel, doubling of the prefix consonant, retraction of stress in certain classes of forms, and apocopation in final  $\pi$  roots, preserved the distinction between short prefix and long prefix. Similarly, the conjunction plus *qatal* resulted in a form functionally distinct from *qatal*.<sup>21</sup> Leaving aside for the moment the question of mood,

<sup>18</sup> J. Huehnergard, "Early Hebrew Prefix-Conjugations," p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> Dempster assumes a standard view (see R. Hetzron, "The Evidence for a Perfect \**yáqtul* and jussive \**yaqtûl* in Proto-Semitic," *JSS* 14 [1969] 1-21) in distinguishing short prefix jussive and short prefix preterite on the basis of stress, e.g., *yāqôm* and *yāqom* respectively. Recent studies, however, have demonstrated the development of these patterns of stress to be late and non-original (E. J. Revell, "Stress and the *Waw*-'Consecutive' in Biblical Hebrew," *JAOS* 104 [1984] 437-444 and R. L. Goerwitz, "The Accentuation of the Hebrew Jussive and Preterite," *JAOS* 112 [1992] 198-203).

<sup>20</sup> See A. F. Rainey, "Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation," p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> The converted perfect form apparently arose from use of *wəqatal* in apodoses of conditional sentences—an appropriate syntactic context for a future perfect. Antecedents occur in Ugaritic and in Amarna Canaanite (R. S. Hendel, "Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System," p. 153 n. 5, W. L. Moran, "The Hebrew Language in its Northwest Semitic Background," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 64-65, B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction*, pp. 477, 521-522, and especially M. S. Smith, *The Origins and Development of the*

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modality, and the so-called volitives (cohortative, imperative and jussive), four forms were employed in a pair of two-way oppositions, which mark primarily aspect and secondarily tense in a discourse grammar and pragmatic framework. These oppositions are diagrammed below and followed by a discussion of the system.

		Assertive	
		Perfective ± Past	Imperfective ± Non-Past
Non-Sequential	Affirmative	[x] <i>qatal</i>	[x] <i>yiqtol</i>
	Negative	אֵל + <i>qatal</i>	אֵל + <i>yiqtol</i>
Sequential		<i>wayyiqtol</i>	<i>wəqatal</i>

Sequential and Non-Sequential are categories of discourse grammar and pragmatics described and refined helpfully by Buth.<sup>22</sup> Initial position is topical. In contrast to focus, a device for marking important information in a clause, topic marks the narrator's intended perspective for contextualizing the clause, that is relating it to the discourse. The Sequential forms, *wayyiqtol* and *wəqatal*, are employed to encode continuity or to foreground information in the discourse. By definition, the forms require initial position for the verb; hence the foreground of a narrative is the chain of events. Non-Sequential signals a break in the event-line indicated by both a clause constituent preposed to the verb and a different pair of verbs marking aspect and tense, that is, [x] *qatal* and [x] *yiqtol*.<sup>23</sup> Thus Non-Sequential functions pragmatically to signal background, a category which Buth describes succinctly:

Foreground is a binary notion bundled with background. Background is the material in a narrative that is not foreground. Usually, this means material that is not temporally sequential. Simultaneous material, pluperfect past reference,

*Waw-Consecutive*, (HSS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 8–15. For this view Gropp acknowledges communication (unpublished) from Lambdin (D. M. Gropp, "Function of the Finite Verb," p. 47 n. 6).

<sup>22</sup> Sketched briefly already in R. Buth, "Hebrew Poetic Tenses and the Magnificat," *JSNT* 21 (1984) 67–83 and detailed independently (with some variations) in S. Dempster, "Linguistic Features of Hebrew Narrative."

<sup>23</sup> The symbol [x] stands for a clause component such as Subject, Object, or Modifier occupying the initial position.

negation, stative descriptions, habitual actions, reason and purpose clauses are usually part of the background of a narrative.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, for example, the pluperfect in Hebrew is not indicated by a particular form of the verb which has this tense/aspect as its basic meaning, but is rather a discourse-pragmatic feature of Non-Sequential, which is signaled by form plus clause pattern ([x] *qatal*). The negated forms are included in the Non-Sequential category, since by definition the chain of events is halted by a non-event<sup>25</sup> and the same set of forms are employed for aspect and tense.

### TENSE AND ASPECT

The categories of tense and aspect as applied to the Hebrew verbal system by Buth and others may be refined somewhat. Tense and aspect represent different points of departure in the human description and representation of time in language.

Tense may be defined as the presentation of time as points in a sequence; hence the focus is on notions of precedence and subsequence. Gropp's description is to the point: "'Tense,' as generally understood, is a deictic category."<sup>26</sup> That is, it is an element within the text that points to the speech situation. If the point of reference is the moment of speaking, we have a system of absolute tense; if the point of reference is not identical to the moment of speech, we have a system of relative tense.

Aspect, as Hendel states, is concerned with the differing perceptions of an event, either seen from without as a bounded whole (perfective) or from within as an unbounded process (imperfective).<sup>27</sup> Aspect, then, may be defined as the relationship between an event and the frame within which it is

<sup>24</sup> R. Buth, "Functional Grammar, Hebrew and Aramaic: An Integrated Textlinguistic Approach to Syntax," in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers*, ed. W. R. Bodine (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), p. 88.

<sup>25</sup> T. Givón, *Syntax: A Functional-Typological Introduction*, (Philadelphia: Benjamins Publishing Co., 1984), vol. I, pp. 347–351. This rough sketch can be refined somewhat. First, background information initiated by Non-Sequential forms may be continued by Sequential forms so that there is a sequence of background material (e.g., Josh 10:1–2). Second, relatively infrequently, the normative figure-ground relations are reversed and the affirmative is established as background so that negative propositions become informative and salient (T. Givón, *Syntax*, 351). Dempster does not believe negation breaks the sequence (personal communication); nonetheless, I owe especially the first point to him.

<sup>26</sup> See D. M. Gropp, "Function of the Finite Verb," p. 53 n. 20, B. Comrie, *Tense*, pp. 33–18 and Binnick's critique, (R. Binnick, *Time and the Verb: A Guide to Tense and Aspect* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991], pp. 126–132).

<sup>27</sup> R. S. Hendel, "Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System," p. 164; cf. R. Binnick, *Time and the Verb*, pp. 207–214, 458.

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perceived or viewed. If the event is seen as a whole within the frame of the viewer, then it is perceived globally; conversely if the boundaries of the event (either beginning or end) extend outside of the frame of the viewer, then the event is perceived as an ongoing process.

The fundamental opposition between both pairs (that is *wayyiqtol-wəqatal* and [x] *qatal*–[x] *yiqtol* is one of aspect: perfective versus imperfective respectively. The tense or temporal deixis is secondary, being determined by a combination of aspect and the discourse framework. If the discourse framework is narrative, then the tense is past.

	Past Perfective	Past Imperfective
Non-Sequential	[x] <i>qatal</i>	[x] <i>yiqtol</i>
Sequential	<i>wayyiqtol</i>	<i>wəqatal</i>

Examples<sup>28</sup> of [x] *yiqtol*:

Gen 2:6

וַאֲדַעַלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי־הָאָרֶץ:

Now a subterranean stream *used to come up* from the earth and it would water all the ground.

Num 9:16

כֵּן יִהְיֶה חֲמִיד הָעֲנַן יִכְסֶּנּוּ וּמֵרֵאשִׁית לַיְלָה:

It *would* continually *happen* this way; the cloud *would cover* it [by day] and an appearance of fire at night.

The N-suffix marks יִכְסֶּנּוּ as a long prefix, that is imperfective; non-initial position signals assertive modality.

Judg 11:40

מִיָּמִים יְמִימָה תִּלְכְּנָה בְּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל לַחֲנוּת לַבַּת־יִפְתָּח הַגִּלְעָדִי אַרְבַּעַת יָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה:

Every year, the daughters of Israel *used to go* to mourn the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in the year.

<sup>28</sup> I have defined in the model how the *forms* of the verb *function* in terms of aspect and tense. Examples are given to provide good illustration—but cannot constitute proof—for the model.

Examples of *wəqatal*:

Gen 2:6

ואד יעלה מן-הארץ והשקה את-כל-פני-הארמה:

Now a subterranean stream used to come up from the earth and it *would water* all the ground.

1 Sam 2:22

ועלי זקן מאד ושמע את כל-אשר יעשון בניו לכל-ישראל  
ואת אשר-ישכבון את-הנשים הצבאות פתח אהל מועד:

Now Eli was very old and he *kept hearing* all that his sons were doing to all Israel and that they were having intercourse with the women serving at the door of the tent of meeting.

1 Kgs 18:4

ויהי בהכרית איזבל את נביאי יהוה ויקח עבדיהו מאה נבאים  
ויחביאם חמשים איש במערה וקלפלים לחם ומים:

When Jezebel cut off the prophets of Yahweh, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them, fifty men in a cave, and *was sustaining* them with bread and water.

CONTRAST:

1 Kgs 18:13

הלא-הגד לאדני את אשר-עשיתי בהרג איזבל את נביאי יהוה  
ואחבא מנביאי יהוה מאה איש חמשים חמשים איש במערה וקלפלים לחם ומים:

Was not my lord told what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of Yahweh, that I hid some of the prophets of Yahweh, a hundred men, by groups of fifty in a cave, and *I sustained* them with bread and water.

1 Kgs 18:4 and 18:13 constitute a minimal pair. Obadiah gives a global perspective of his efforts without emphasizing, as does the narrator, their durative nature.

Judg 3:23–24

[23] ויצא אהוד המסדרונה ויסגר דלתות העליה בעדו ונעל:  
[24] והוא יצא ועבדיו באו ויראו והנה דלתות העליה נעלות

And Ehud exited to the porch and he closed the doors of the upper room behind him and *was locking up*. While he went out, [the king's servants] arrived.

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This interpretation of Judg 3:23 (see also 2 Sam 13:18) is bound to be questioned by some. Longacre argues that *wəqatal* may mark climactic or pivotal status here rather than a 'frequentative' meaning.<sup>29</sup> His apparently alternative interpretation does not disprove the present hypothesis, but rather supports it. The approach here can be defended as follows. First, from a synchronic point of view, [x] *yiqtol* and *wəqatal* are in complementary distribution and so must consistently function the same way, *in historical narrative just as in direct speech*. It is standard theory to distinguish a conjunctive *wə + qatal* from *wəqatal*, with the former functioning as [x] *qatal* and the latter as [x] *yiqtol*, but contextually or syntactically no clear or simple set of signals have been identified to prove such a distinction for classical biblical Hebrew.<sup>30</sup> Unless we adopt an approach which bleaches the form of any semantic value,<sup>31</sup> we ought to assume the form has the same basic meaning everywhere. Second, to assert that the form in historical narrative is imperfective and past does not mean that the meaning is always frequentative or progressive. Imperfective aspect may either (a) subsume several types of imperfective aspect<sup>32</sup> or (b) signal a different discourse function as, for example, in Greek.<sup>33</sup> Strong cross-linguistic evidence abounds as well as evidence from within classical biblical Hebrew that the tense-aspect of a verb may code not only lexical-semantic and propositional-semantic features, but also discourse-pragmatic features.<sup>34</sup> If the discourse framework is conversation, the perfective normally defaults for past tense while the imperfective defaults for non-past tense.

	Past Perfective	Non-Past Imperfective
Non-Sequential	[x] <i>qatal</i>	[x] <i>yiqtol</i>
Sequential	<i>wayyiqtol</i>	<i>wəqatal</i>

<sup>29</sup> R. E. Longacre, "Weqatal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Prose," in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. R. D. Bergen (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994), pp. 71–84. A discourse-pragmatic status such as climax or pivot does provide a good explanation of some cases of *wəqatal* such as Judg 16:18.

<sup>30</sup> Peckham distinguishes *wəqatal* in historical narrative as Paratactic, i.e. *waw + Ø + qatal* and *wəqatal* elsewhere as Consecutive, that is, a converted perfect (B. Peckham, "Tense and Mood in Biblical Hebrew," *ZAH* 10 [1997] 139–168). The former are mainly punctual preterites in his view. His explanation of the Tense-Aspect of the Hebrew verb—based on syntax rather than on morphology—fails to account for usage both in terms of propositional-semantic and discourse-pragmatic features (see S. Dempster, "Linguistic Features of Hebrew Narrative," pp. 93–94 and R. E. Longacre, "Weqatal Forms in Biblical Hebrew Prose").

<sup>31</sup> As, for example, in S. Dempster, "Linguistic Features of Hebrew Narrative," pp. 93–94.

<sup>32</sup> B. Comrie, *Aspect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 24–40.

<sup>33</sup> Imperfective and Stative aspects in Greek mark different levels of prominence, see S. E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Biblical Languages: Greek 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), pp. 23, 302–303.

<sup>34</sup> T. Givón, *Syntax*, pp. 269–270.

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Example of Speech Mixing [x] *yiqtol* and *wəqatal*:

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Gen 17:5-8

[5] ולא יקרא עוד את-שמך אברם והיה שמך אברהם כי אבהמון גוים נחתיך:  
 [6] והפרכתי אתך במאד מאד ונתתיד לגוים ומלכים ממך יצאו:  
 [7] והקמתי את-בריתי ביני וביןך ובין זרעך אחריך לדורתם לברית עולם  
 להיות לך לאלהים ולזרעך אחריך:  
 [8] ונתתי לך ולזרעך אחריך את ארץ מגריך את כל-ארץ כנען לאחוזת עולם  
 והייתי להם לאלהים:

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[5]No longer will your name be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I have made you father of a multitude of nations. [6]And I shall make you exceedingly fruitful, and I shall make nations of you and kings will come forth from you. [7]And I shall confirm my covenant between me and you and between your descendants after you throughout their generations for a permanent covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. [8]And I shall give to you and your descendants after you all the land of Canaan for a permanent possession and I shall be their God.

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Here the Non-Sequential forms are [x] *yiqtol* and the Sequential forms are *wəqatal*, all mark non-past tense.<sup>35</sup>

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Since the category of tense is signaled by verb form plus discourse framework, *qatal* occasionally is employed for non-past. The event is future, but the perspective of the speaker requires an emphasis such that the event be presented by perfective or punctual aspect. Two categories may be delineated here: (1) performative, that is, an action achieved or performed by the act of speech or a gesture which is associated with the act of speech, and (2) perfective future.

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*Performative*<sup>36</sup>

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Gen 1:29

ויאמר אלהים הנה נתתי לכם את-כל-עשב זרע זרע אשר על-פני  
 כל-הארץ ואת-כל-העץ אשר-בו פרי-עץ זרע זרע לכם יהיה לאכלה:

...I (hereby) give to you all plants producing seed...to you it will be for food.

37 See a  
Hebrew  
delimits  
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38 S. De  
39 See a

<sup>35</sup> Many languages group the future with imperfective aspect according to the inference: "If an event has not yet occurred, its terminal boundary is not yet specified, even if its initial boundary is already envisioned" (T. Givón, *Syntax*, p. 277).

<sup>36</sup> See P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (Second edition; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1947), §112f, B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction*, p. 488, and R. S. Hendel, "Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System," p. 156.

40 E. J.  
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yiqtol.

Gen 14:22

ויאמר אברם אל-מלך סדם הרימתי ידי אל-יהוה אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ:

Abram said to the King of Sodom, "I (now) raise my hand to Yahweh, El Elyon..."

*Perfective Future*<sup>37</sup>

1 Sam 2:16

...כי עתה תתן ואם לא לקחתי בחזקה:

"No, you must give it now; if not, I will take it by force."

Num 24:17

...דרך כוכב מיעקב וקם שבט מישׂראל...

A star will appear from Jacob and a scepter will arise from Israel.

*Qatal* may also be in initial position in narrative and (less rarely) in conversation. (Shortly, we will note why this restriction of word order cannot be relaxed for [x] *yiqtol*.) The use of *qatal* in initial position in narrative occurs in asyndetic clauses which are epexegetical to the previous sentence or sentence sequence.<sup>38</sup>

1 Kgs 1:1

והמלך דוד זקן בא בימים

Now King David was old. He was advanced in years.<sup>39</sup>

In such sentence types the four-way opposition of verb forms breaks down, and *qatal* is employed as it is in clauses introduced by אשר and כי where *qatal* marks perfective/past and *yiqtol* imperfective/non-past.<sup>40</sup>

This model handles both categories of aspect and tense well. Other models proposed recently in reaction to the past century and a half of as-

<sup>37</sup> See also Gen 17:16, 40:14; 2 Kgs 5:20; Jer 31:5; Zech 8:3. Use continues into Transitional Biblical Hebrew (TBH) and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH). (D. M. Gropp, "Function of the Finite Verb," p. 46 delimits TBH mainly as the prose of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and LBH as Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and the prose of Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, and Job.)

<sup>38</sup> S. Dempster, "Linguistic Features of Hebrew Narrative," p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> See also Josh 13:1.

<sup>40</sup> E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb," p. 20. Admittedly, preterites are also found (extremely rarely) in clauses introduced by אשר. Dempster (private communication) pointed out an example in 2 Kgs 9:15 אשר יקרו (cf. 2 Chr 22:6 אשר הקרו). The H-suffix, however, clearly marks the form in 2 Kgs 9:15 as a short prefix and hence preterite (see below), so no confusion is possible. To disprove the claim that only *qatal* = past and *yiqtol* = non-past are used in אשר clauses, an example must be brought forward involving a neutral *yiqtol*.

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[6] והק  
[7] והק  
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pect based analysis see the forms marking only tense. For example, the approach of Gropp to the problem of the Hebrew verb is developed similarly, yielding the following diagram:

	- Volitive		+ Volitive
	+ x	- x	
- Sequence	Perfect	Imperfect	Direct Volitive
+ Sequence	Narrative	Converted Perfect	Indirect Volitive

He then proceeds to argue that the 'x' parameter is anteriority or relative tense.<sup>41</sup> This approach fails to recognize what Givón calls *portmanteau* morphemes, that is a single morpheme may be a joint marker of both aspect and tense.<sup>42</sup>

Some scholars veer away from arguing that the fundamental semantic value of the form is aspectual, pointing out, for example, that *yiqtol* may mark future acts which are perfective and not imperfective.<sup>43</sup> Many languages, however, by virtue of morphology, group the future with imperfective aspect.<sup>44</sup> This basic classification does not mean that because of *contextual* or *lexical meaning* a *yiqtol* may not be understood as a perfective future. For a speaker to specify perfective future on the basis of *the semantic value of the verb form*, *qatal* must be used.

Finally, Peckham has argued most recently that tense is a function of syntax, not of morphology.<sup>45</sup> This approach, however, bleaches the forms of any semantic value. My model does argue that the verb form grammaticalizes both aspect and tense, although the latter is indicated by a combination of morphology and discourse framework. Thus the verb forms were assigned a tense-aspect value by the native readers/speakers independent of their sequence.

<sup>41</sup> D. M. Gropp, "Function of the Finite Verb," pp. 51-56.

<sup>42</sup> See T. Givón, *Syntax*, p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> See e.g., A. F. Rainey, "Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets," vol. 2, pp. 227-228. Hendel does allow that *yiqtol* may be used for perfective future, but gives no framework to explain this use or clear criterion for recognizing it (R. S. Hendel, "Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System," pp. 167-168).

<sup>44</sup> T. Givón, *Syntax*, p. 277.

<sup>45</sup> B. Peckham, "Tense and Mood in Biblical Hebrew."

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## MODALITY

Some discussions of the verbal system in Hebrew classify usage as either indicative or modal.<sup>46</sup> This terminology is somewhat misleading, since it suggests that the indicative is a non-modal category. The present study considers language as a flexible tool in the mouth of the speaker, by which he or she describes his or her experience of reality or attempts to manipulate reality. Thus, the indicative is not to be crudely equated with the real world or with events in the real world; rather it indicates what the speaker *asserts* to be real or an event in the real world. Broadly speaking, modality may be divided into three categories: (1) assertive, (2) epistemic modality, and (3) deontic modality.<sup>47</sup> Hendel's definitions are useful:

Deontic modality (from Greek *deon*, "that which is binding") involves the speaker's will, as in statements of wish, command, permission, or obligation. These kinds of utterances express the speaker's desire or decision concerning an action. Epistemic modality (from *epistēmē*, "knowledge") involves that speaker's opinion or knowledge about a proposition, as in statements of doubt, belief, or other shades of expectation or opinion. Epistemic utterances relate to the speaker's state of knowledge, rather than to the speaker's will.<sup>48</sup>

Two basic categories are defined for the system of the finite verb in classical biblical Hebrew in the model being proposed: (1) Assertive,<sup>49</sup> and (2) Projective.<sup>50</sup> Assertive forms are employed for both assertive and epistemic modality, the latter use being frequently distinguished from assertion by additional particles, rather than distinct forms. The projective category covers deontic modality.

		Projective	
		Perfective	Imperfective
Non-Sequential	Affirmative	<i>yiqtol</i> (Short) <i>yiqtalēhū</i>	<i>yiqtol</i> (Long) <i>yiqtalennū</i>
	Negative	אֵל + <i>yiqtol</i> -S	אֵל + <i>yiqtol</i> -L
Sequential		<i>wəyiqtol</i> -S	<i>wəyiqtol</i> -L / ( <i>wəqatal</i> )

<sup>46</sup> So E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb."

<sup>47</sup> See T. Givón, *Syntax*, p. 318.

<sup>48</sup> R. S. Hendel, "Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System," p. 169.

<sup>49</sup> The term 'assertive' indicates a modality where one asserts or claims an event to be real. Whether, in fact, the event is real is not at issue. It is asserted to be real by the speaker.

<sup>50</sup> T. Givón, *Syntax*, p. 318 employs the term 'manipulative' instead of 'projective.' This modality involves projecting one's desires, intentions, wishes, or will in some way onto the map of reality.

Since Joüon<sup>51</sup> and Bergsträsser,<sup>52</sup> followed by Lambdin<sup>53</sup> and Waltke and O'Connor,<sup>54</sup> forms commonly called cohortative, imperative and jussive have been considered a single and unified set of projectives labeled volitives. Imperatives are second person volitives, cohortatives are first person volitives, and jussives are third person volitives (also second person, since the imperative cannot be employed with negation, that is in prohibitions [with  $\text{לֹא}$ ] and vetitives [with  $\text{לֹא־}$ ]). The model which is presented here differs significantly from this standard view.

Recent research by Niccacci, independent studies by Revell for Judges-Kings, and a doctoral dissertation by Revell's student Ahouva Shulman all indicate that apart from imperatives, which are distinguished by form, Hebrew marks projective modality for first and third person verbs, that is cohortatives and jussives, by position. Revell lists approximately 40 instances in Judges-Kings where prefix forms in initial position, not marked as cohortative ( $\text{הִ-$  suffix) or jussive (*yiqtol-S*), are semantically projective.<sup>55</sup> Shulman claims that only 61 out of 1515 imperatives, 6 out of 102 3rd person jussives, and 5 out of 197 cohortatives are non-initial.<sup>56</sup>

Consideration of the prehistory of the verb, as researched by scholars such as Moran and Rainey and evaluated by Huehnergard, reveals that there were separate prefixed forms: *yaqtul* was perfective and *yaqtulu* was imperfective. As Huehnergard suggested, projective modality was marked at the level of the phrase; the linguistic strategy employed for this was word order. Thus, for prefix forms, initial position in conversation is projective; non-initial position is assertive.

The most extensive and recent study of so-called modals is that of Ahouva Shulman, in which she examined all modal forms in the Torah and Former Prophets. Shulman claims her study is based on verbs formally marked as modal.<sup>57</sup> Here she includes cohortatives and jussives along with imperatives according to the standard view. Yet, since Shulman was atten-

<sup>51</sup> P. Joüon, *Grammaire*, §114.

<sup>52</sup> G. Bergsträsser, *Hebräische Grammatik*, II, Teil Verbum (Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1929), p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> T. O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), §107.

<sup>54</sup> B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction*, p. 564.

<sup>55</sup> E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb," pp. 7-19.

<sup>56</sup> A. Shulman, "The Use of Modal Verb Forms in Biblical Hebrew Prose," (Ph.D. dissertation; University of Toronto, 1996), pp. 241, 246, 248. This excludes instances of  $\text{לֹא} +$  jussive since  $\text{לֹא}$  clearly marks the form as modal. See below for discussion of non-initial instances.

<sup>57</sup> A. Shulman "Use of Modal Verb Forms," p. 4, that is, in first person forms by the  $\text{הִ-}$  suffix, in second person m.s. and third person m./f. s. forms by the short prefix as in M. Lambert, *Traité de grammaire hébraïque* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1931-38), §733.

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tive to function as well as form, she also studies forms she considers indicative used in contexts which are "modal" (for example, *wəqatal* following imperatives and  $\text{אל}$  + long prefix forms in prohibitions). The basic difference between modals and indicatives in such situations is that imperatives and jussives (that is, short prefix forms) mark modals which are immediate and urgent whereas indicatives like *wəqatal* and long prefix forms mark commands which refer to the distant future and are non-immediate. This indicates that there is a problem with her basic categories, indicative and modal. As a simpler solution, I suggest that apart from the imperative, the Hebrew verb is not morphologically marked for the category of projective modality. Instead, the projective is largely signaled by word order. The difference, then, between short and long prefix forms (where they can be distinguished) is that the former is perfective and the latter imperfective in aspect. Since initial position marks projective modality, tense does not apply. (Similarly in Greek, once outside the indicative mood, forms like the aorist, present and perfect signal only aspect and not tense per se.) When the loss of final short vowels blurred the two prefixed forms in all but a few types of verbs, alternative devices assisted in distinguishing them. For example, different negatives are used:  $\text{לֹא}$  marks a short prefix form (*yiqtol-S*),  $\text{אַל}$  marks a long prefix form (*yiqtol-L*). Or when the verb has pronominal suffixes, *yiqṭəlēhū* marks the short prefix and *yiqṭələnnū* the long.<sup>58</sup>

This analysis is supported by an interesting proposal made by Shulman. At the beginning of her work she distinguishes modal forms from indicative forms. There she states that cohortatives show the  $\text{ן־}$  suffix.<sup>59</sup> Sometimes the imperative also has the  $\text{ן־}$  suffix. Later in her work, she assumes that presence of this suffix on the imperative correlates with a function not present when it is absent. Good proof is then offered to show that the  $\text{ן־}$  suffix indicates an action directed towards the speaker or done for the benefit or in the interest of the speaker.<sup>60</sup> This result suggests that the suffix does not correlate with modality at all, but rather with a completely

<sup>58</sup> M. Lambert, "De l'emploi des suffixes pronominaux avec noun et sans noun au futur et à l'impératif," *REJ* 46 (1903) 178–183 and E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb," pp. 14–16.

<sup>59</sup> Exceptions are duly noted: the  $\text{ן־}$  suffix is not added to any final  $\text{ן}$  nor most final  $\text{א}$  roots (see A. Shulman "Use of Modal Verb Forms," p. 4).

<sup>60</sup> A. Shulman "Use of Modal Verb Forms," pp. 65–84. Fassberg, working independently of Shulman, carefully researched the function of the extended form of the imperative and published results identical to those of Shulman just prior to the completion of her doctoral dissertation: S. Fassberg, *Studies in Biblical Syntax* (Jerusalem, 1994), pp. 32–35.

different sort of function.<sup>61</sup> Such a conclusion is backed up by the fact that it can occur on *wayyiqtol* forms (usually first person).<sup>62</sup> When one also notes that forms must be recognized as cohortative which do not have the  $\pi$ - suffix, the proper conclusion is that deontic modality in first person verbs is a function of position rather than of morphology, just as in the jussive. Outside of the imperative, then, there is no distinct form of the verb which marks it as projective. Projective modality is indicated by initial position.

Further consideration of forms bearing the suffix  $\pi$ - is necessary. The distribution of the suffix may be briefly reviewed. First, almost all first person commands, requests, wishes (known traditionally as cohortatives), whether singular or plural have the suffix. There are, however, clear examples of first person projectives without it.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, the suffix is found infrequently attached to the imperative m.s., a projective distinctly marked by form.<sup>64</sup> Rarely, the suffix is also attached to prefix forms which are not first person.<sup>65</sup> What is disconcerting, however, is that the  $\pi$ - suffix is found (less frequently in classical biblical Hebrew than in late biblical Hebrew<sup>66</sup> but in disturbing numbers nonetheless) attached to *wayyiqtol* forms as well as to short *yiqtol* forms in poetry clearly functioning as preterites.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Possibly a deictic or de-transitive function; see below.

<sup>62</sup> The only instances of *wayyiqtol* forms bearing the  $\pi$ - suffix which are not first person are Ezek 23:16 and 23:20.

<sup>63</sup> E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb," pp. 17-19.

<sup>64</sup> Shulman noted approximately 1515 occurrences of imperative in her corpus of Torah and Former Prophets; 116, that is, less than 8% were affixed forms (A. Shulman "Use of Modal Verb Forms," pp. 66, 241).

<sup>65</sup> Using Hebrew Gramcord, Professor Dale M. Wheeler (Multnomah Bible College) provided results from a search for all prefix forms bearing the  $\pi$ - suffix. The following forms are not first person: Deut 33:16; Isa 5:19 (two occurrences); Ezek 23:16; 23:20, Ps 20:4? and Job 11:17—so W. Gesenius and E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, (Twenty-eighth edition, trans. A. E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), §48d. I am grateful to Professor Wheeler for his excellent help. Possibly Prov 1:20 and 8:30 should be included here as well.

<sup>66</sup> On first person consecutive prefix forms with  $\pi$ - suffix as a characteristic of late biblical Hebrew and Qumran Literature, see E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 44-45 and E. J. Revell, "First Person Imperfect Forms with *Waw* Consecutive," *VT* 88 (1988) 422-423.

<sup>67</sup> The following is a list of 99 instances of all *wayyiqtol* forms in MT bearing the  $\pi$ - suffix. The list in McFall does not match his totals in a number of places (see L. McFall, *Enigma*, pp. 211-214). Even by using Hebrew Gramcord, I am not certain that all instances are included: Gen 32:6; 41:11; 43:21; Num 8:19; Josh 24:8K; Judg 6:9; 6:10; 10:12; 12:3; 12:3; 1 Sam 2:28; 28:15; 2 Sam 4:10; 7:9; 12:8; 12:8; 22:24; Jer 11:18; 32:9; Ezek 3:3; 9:8; 16:11; Zech 11:13; Ps 3:6; 7:5; 69:12; 69:21; 90:10; 119:55; 119:59; 119:106; 119:131; 119:147; 119:158; 119:163?; Job 1:15; 1:16; 1:17; 1:19; 19:20; 29:17; 30:26; Qoh 1:17; Dan 8:13; 8:15; 8:17; 9:3; 9:4; 9:4; 10:16; 10:16; 10:19; 12:8; Ezra 7:28; 8:15; 8:16; 8:17K; 8:23; 8:23; 8:24; 8:25; 8:26; 8:28; 8:31; 9:3; 9:3; 9:5; 9:5; 9:6; Neh 1:4; 2:1; 2:6; 2:9; 2:13; 5:7; 5:7; 5:8; 5:13; 6:3; 6:8; 6:11; 6:12; 7:5; 12:31; 13:7; 13:8; 13:9; 13:9; 13:10; 13:11; 13:11; 13:13; 13:17;

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<sup>69</sup> W. L.

The consensus that the  $\pi$ - suffix is a marker of projective modality, a volitive, identifying especially the cohortative, has been strengthened since 1960 largely by the brilliant research of both W. L. Moran and A. F. Rainey. The Hebrew volitive is correlated with a Canaanite *yaqtula* form which is considered a volitive.<sup>68</sup> It is necessary to evaluate the argument of Moran briefly. He carefully examined 74 instances of *yaqtula* in Byblian Amarna texts. Thirty-six function as volitives, and another thirteen stand in purpose / result clauses following modals. This evidence corresponds so well with Hebrew that he felt sure that *yaqtula* was both the Amarna volitive and the precursor to the  $\pi$ - forms in Hebrew, which could now be clearly identified as volitives. Twenty-five instances, he admitted, could not be explained this way, including ten cases clearly preterite.

One possibility he did consider for the meaning of the  $\pi$ - suffix was the Akkadian ventive:

Now the pattern itself is important, for as such it is without foundation in Akkadian. However, as we have already admitted, most of the occurrences can at first sight be explained as ventives, and it could therefore be argued that the pattern is fortuitous and results from the peculiar circumstances in which these letters with their never ending requests for troops, food, etc. were written.<sup>69</sup>

Moran went on to say that this was not the correct explanation for two reasons. First, based on a scheme of the Amarna verb where *qatala* = perfect, *yaqtul* = jussive and *yaqtulu* = indicative, he showed that *yaqtula* contrasted in minimal pairs with *yaqtulu*: *yaqtula* expresses a wish, *yaqtulu* states a simple fact. Secondly, usage in purpose clauses showed that, if the first verb was indicative, so was the verb in the following purpose clause; whereas if the first verb was volitive, the second was *yaqtula*. This argument appeared watertight for demonstrating that the *-a* suffix was projective and not equivalent to the Akkadian ventive. Moran did not observe, however, that in the cases with *yaqtula* the verb was in initial position, and

13:17; 13:19; 13:21; 13:21; 13:22; 13:30. Final  $\ast$  and final  $\pi$  roots may require separate treatment. The  $\pi$ - suffix attached to final  $\ast$  roots occurs less frequently than in forms from other roots except those with final  $\pi$ . Revell explains that "this is to be expected, since this use of the affix is late...and the differences between the two types of final weak root had been lost by the end of the biblical period" (E. J. Revell, "First Person Imperfect Forms," p. 419). Concerning final  $\pi$  roots, Revell argues that "the use of the long form of the 1st person imperfect with *waw* consecutive in roots III $h$  can reasonably be regarded as representing the same development as does the use of the affixed form in other roots" (E. J. Revell, "First Person Imperfect Forms," p. 423). This last supposition may well be right, but further investigation is necessary to prove it. For prefix forms without *waw* and which are not projective but have the  $\pi$ - suffix, see B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction*, pp. 576-577 (cautiously labeled there Pseudo-Cohortatives).

<sup>68</sup> See especially W. L. Moran, "Early Canaanite *yaqtula*," *Orientalia* N. S. 29 (1960) 1-19.

<sup>69</sup> W. L. Moran, "Early Canaanite *yaqtula*," p. 7.

in the cases with *yaqtulu* the verb was non-initial. Only one instance of *yaqtula* discussed by Moran appears to be non-initial:

*ša-ni-tam yu-wa-ši-ra* LUGAL-ru ANŠE.KUR.RA *a-na*«a-[n]a» ARAD-šu ù *a-na-ša-ra* URU.KI LUGAL,

Moreover, may the king send horse(s) to his servant that I may protect the royal city (EA 117:71–74).<sup>70</sup>

Here the *yaqtula* form *yu-wa-ši-ra* is preceded by *ša-ni-tam*. According to Rainey, however, *ša-ni-tam* is an adverb which stands “outside the normal sentence structure of the text. It forms a sort of heading for any new paragraph or subject.”<sup>71</sup> An example used by both Moran and Rainey to demonstrate the use of *yaqtulu* is EA 104:17–36:

*mi-ia-mi* / DUMU.MEŠ ÌR-A-ši-ir-ta / ÌR UR.GI7 LUGAL/ KURKa-aš-ši ù LUGAL KURMi-ta-ni šu-nu / ù ti-ìl-qú-na / KUR šàr-ri a-na / ša-šu-nu pa-na-nu / ti-ì[1-q]ú[-n]a URU.MEŠ / ha-za-ni-ka ù qa-la-ta / an-nu-ù i-na-na du-bi-r[u] / LÚMAŠKÍM-ka ù la-qú / URU.MEŠ-šu a-na ša-šu-nu a-nu-ma la-qú URUUI-la-sà / šum-ma ki-a-ma qa-la-ta / adi ti-ìl-qú-na / URUŠu-mu-ra ù / >ù< ti-du-ku-na LÚMAŠKÍM / ù ERÍN.MEŠ til!(BI)-la-ti / ša i-na Šu-mu-ra

Who are the sons of ‘Abdi-Ashirta, the slave, the dog? Are they the king of the Cassites and the king of Mitanni that they take the land of the king for themselves? Previously, they were taking over the towns of the city rulers, and you kept silent. Behold, now they have expelled your commissioner and have taken your towns for themselves. Behold, they have taken Ullasa. If you thus remain silent, they will take Šumur in addition and they will kill the commissioner and the auxiliary troops who are in Šumur.<sup>72</sup>

The first instance of *ti-ìl-qú-na* is in initial position because projectives are employed in purpose clauses. The second and third are non-initial because they are assertive; the second indicates imperfective in past time, the third is non-past. The conjunctive *adi* governs both *ti-ìl-qú-na* and *ti-du-ku-na*. The projective, then, was determined in Canaanite as it is in Hebrew by position of the verb.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the fact that a large proportion of Hebrew volitives have the ׀ suffix is only fortuitous.

<sup>70</sup> W. L. Moran, “Early Canaanite *yaqtula*.”

<sup>71</sup> A. F. Rainey, “Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets,” 3:181.

<sup>72</sup> Text and translation from A. F. Rainey, “Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets,” vol. 2, p. 33.

<sup>73</sup> All examples of *yaqtulu* listed by Moran to illustrate the difference in semantic value between it and *yaqtula* were non-initial except one, EA 130:49–50. The text is [i]-na-zi-ru i-na / [b]a-la-ti-ia (J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915), vol. 1, p. 556). According to my proposal, the verb is an imperfective projective: “I will keep protecting it as long as I live!” (see further EA

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After I developed the present proposal and reassessed the arguments for a *yaqtula* form in Canaanite based on evidence from Moran,<sup>74</sup> corroboration came from the analysis offered by Rainey in his recent reference work, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets*.<sup>75</sup> Although he continues to adhere to the conceptual framework entailed by the array of indicative and injunctive paradigms advocated by himself and Moran for some time,<sup>76</sup> he displays data which point in the direction of the model I am advancing here. First, when discussing the Canaanite imperfect to indicate past continuous, Rainey states:

Normally, *pānānu(m)* comes at the head of such clauses of repeated, or continuous action in the past. Nevertheless, other factors, such as the subordination of the clause, may change the order so that *pānānu* may come later in the clause.<sup>77</sup>

As an example of a situation where *pānānu* comes later, Rainey cites a relative clause. What he is saying is that the Canaanite imperfect normally occurs in non-initial position unless in a relative sentence. This is identical to Hebrew, where in clauses introduced by אֲשֶׁר and כִּי normally only *qatal* and *yiqtol* are found, usually in initial position.<sup>78</sup> Elsewhere, the pattern proposed for [x] *qatal-wayyiqtol* and [x] *yiqtol-wəqatal* holds true.

Second, when discussing word order for injunctive discourse, Rainey approves of the work of Gianto:

Gianto (1990:18–19) notes that injunctives, viz. imperatives, jussives and volitives (for this terminology, cf. Rainey 1990b) come at the head of their clauses. This, of course, is diametrically contrary to classic Akkadian practice where a whole series of injunctions in a letter may come at the end of their

119:15–16 *i-na ba-la-ti-ia i-na-zi-ru / àl šarri a-na ša-a-šu* [J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln*, 1:516] for a similar statement using assertive and non-past). I am very grateful to Professor R. F. G. Swete, University of Toronto, for giving help in an area beyond my competence, going over the Amarna texts and patiently answering questions about the Akkadian. Responsibility, however, for any errors belongs clearly to myself. This description of the verb in Amarna is not necessarily the position of Professor Swete.

<sup>74</sup> W. L. Moran, "Early Canaanite *yaqtula*."

<sup>75</sup> A. F. Rainey, "Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets," vol. 2, pp. 254–264 equals, "Is There Really a *yaqtula* Conjugation Pattern in the Canaanite Amarna Tablets?" *JCS* 43–45 (1991–93) 107–118 almost unaltered.

<sup>76</sup> Moran largely subscribes to the model propounded by Rainey. Recently, he wrote "Rainey has shown that regularly the (preformative) verb base, with no additional marker (*u*-durative, *a*-injunctive), no matter what 'tense' (*iparras*, *iptaras*, *iprus*), if a statement of fact, has past-time reference" (*The Amarna Letters*, ed. and trans. by William L. Moran [Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992], p. xxii n. 50).

<sup>77</sup> A. F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets*, vol. 2, p. 233.

<sup>78</sup> Dempster notes (private communication) that in narrative, *qatal* and *yiqtol* are always in initial position following אֲשֶׁר, but for discourse reasons exceptions (10%) occur with כִּי clauses.

respective clauses. Among his examples, Gianto includes (rightly) the secondary injunctives which come in purpose or result clauses.<sup>79</sup>

So projectives are found in initial position.

Third, the arguments of Moran and the evidence for *yaqtula* as a volitive in Canaanite are reviewed thoroughly by Rainey. He concludes by saying,

In spite of Moran's brilliant mustering of the evidence, it is still possible to argue that the *-a* suffix is merely the Akkadian ventive...Are these injunctive forms with *-a(m)* suffix Akkadian ventives recruited to serve as Canaanite *yaqtula*'s? Or were they simply true Akkadian ventives standing in as Canaanite jussives having an additional lexical (not modal) indicator of direction (ventive)? The answer to these questions cannot be given on the basis of the materials at hand. The comparative evidence from Ugaritic, Hebrew and Arabic suggests that the Canaanite scribes had a *yaqtula* in their native repertoire which made them partial to Akkadian ventive.<sup>80</sup>

We need not, however, be reduced to the alternatives presented by Rainey. If we abandon altogether the claim that *yaqtula* is a Canaanite verb form, distinct from the jussive, why not argue instead that the Canaanites had an unstressed *ā* suffix in their native tongue that functioned like the Akkadian ventive and that the scribes represented by the ventive in the Amarna Texts? The answer *can* be given on the basis of the materials we have, if the conceptual framework of the verb is revised and the question of verb position is considered more seriously as the marker of the projective.

Further proof lies in the following consideration. When final short vowels were lost, so was the distinction between *yaqtul* and *yaqtulu*. If the Canaanite form *yaqtula* is like that of *yaqtulu*, then this final short vowel would have been lost as well in the corresponding form in Hebrew. The problem of how a form with a long *a* in Hebrew derives from one with a short *a* in Canaanite has not gone unnoticed. Huehnergard concludes his response to Rainey<sup>81</sup> with a note in parentheses:

For Proto-Hebrew *yaqtulanna*, which admittedly is rare in Amarna Canaanite, see Lambdin 1971, who notes that its continued presence in the early stages of Hebrew would neatly explain both the unusual preservation of the final short *-a*

<sup>79</sup> A. F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets*, vol. 3, p. 272.

<sup>80</sup> A. F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets*, vol. 2, pp. 262–263.

<sup>81</sup> A. F. Rainey, "The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarna Canaanite."

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of early *yaqtula* in the Hebrew cohortative 'ektbā and the uniquely Hebrew particle *nā'*, which often occurs with a *dagesh conjunctivum* after cohortatives, as in 'ektbā nnā'.<sup>82</sup>

If, however, the idea of a *yaqtula* form is given up, no explanation is necessary to derive a long *a* in Hebrew from a short *a* in Canaanite. The development from *yaqtula* to the Hebrew cohortative, like that of *yaqtulu* to *yiqtol*, is based on a false parallel. The origin of the  $\pi_7$  suffix in Hebrew is different from the kind of situation regarding the short *u* suffix on Canaanite *yaqtulu*. However obscure its origin may be,<sup>83</sup> it is a morpheme functioning like the Akkadian ventive. The essential difference, then, between *yaqtula* (that is, *yaqtul* plus a morpheme signaling a function equivalent to that of the ventive in Akkadian) and *yaqtulu* is one of aspect (perfective versus imperfective), not modality (projective versus assertive). Modality is signaled by position.

An excellent explanation from diachronic study, then, supports the model being proposed. As a suffix marking (1) action here as opposed to there, or (2) action directed towards or for the benefit of the subject,<sup>84</sup> one

<sup>82</sup> J. Huehnergard, "Early Hebrew Prefix-Conjugations," p. 23. His proposal is now unlikely in the light of recent research by Revell, who demonstrates that *deḥiq* (or *dagesh forte conjunctivum*) relates primarily to stress position and not to consonantal structure (E. J. Revell, "Deḥiq: Exceptions to the Standard Pattern," in *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies*, 1989, ed. Aron Dotan, (Masoretic Studies 7; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

<sup>83</sup> What is the origin of the  $\pi_7$  suffix on imperatives and prefix forms in Hebrew? Could the  $\pi_7$  suffix be really the same as the unstressed directive *h* suffix on nouns and the adverbial *h* suffix in Ugaritic since the basic function is to mark direction towards someone or something? After completing the present paper for publication I discovered the discussion by S. Fassberg who considers possible origins of the  $\bar{a}$  suffix on the extended form of the imperative somewhat thoroughly. The most plausible proposal is that the  $\bar{a}$  morpheme of the extended form of the imperative in Hebrew (also in Phoenician and Ugaritic?) and the *a(m)* suffix of the ventive in Akkadian are a common inheritance from proto-Semitic even though usage is more restricted in Hebrew. Fassberg struggles, however, to derive the two from a common form since Akkadian research generally considers *m* and not *a* the original form of the ventive *a(m)*. Conventional wisdom in Indo-European philology, however, derives *-α* in Greek from Proto-Indo-European *\*-m̥*; see A. L. Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 284. So why not correlate the  $\bar{a}$  in Hebrew and the *m* of the ventive in Akkadian? I wish to express here special thanks to Tirzah Meacham of the University of Toronto for help to read Fassberg's work, which is in Modern Hebrew (S. Fassberg, *Studies in Biblical Syntax*, pp. 32–35).

<sup>84</sup> Precisely the functions of the Akkadian ventive, see especially W. von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik* (Analecta Orientalia 33; Third edition; Rome, 1995), §82 and J. Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian* (Harvard Semitic Museum Studies 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 133–135 as well as B. Kienast, "Gedanken zur Geschichte der Semitischen 'Tempora'," in *Vom Alten Orient zum Alten Testament: Festschrift für Wolfram Freiherrn von Soden zum 85.*, eds. M. Dietrich and O. Loretz (Kevelaer / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzont Bercker Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), pp. 124–125. The primary function is action directed towards the speaker; a secondary function is action for the benefit or in the interest of the speaker (i.e., dative). The latter may be more common than the former. While Fassberg sees the function of the  $\pi_7$  suffix on the Hebrew imperative equivalent to that of the ventive in Akkadian, he

can easily explain the distribution of the suffix both in Hebrew and in its Canaanite precursor: one would expect a higher coincidence with first person forms and also a higher coincidence with projective forms than with assertive forms. This is precisely the distribution in classical biblical Hebrew.

The so-called indirect volitives are handled in my proposal by the opposing pair *wəyiqtol* (short) for perfective and *wəyiqtol* (long) or *wəqatal* for imperfective.

This conclusion incorporates the firm results of diachronic study very well. The basic difference between the different prefixed paradigms is one of aspect. Both are employed in instructions and prohibitions where the basic difference of perfective versus imperfective is consistently displayed.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE FUNCTION OF PROJECTIVES IN HEBREW**

*Second Person Projectives*

The only projective verbs in classical biblical Hebrew formally marked as such are forms which are exclusively second person and inflected for gender and number. Commonly called imperative, this form is aspectually perfective and normally in initial position. If a second person projective with imperfective aspect is required, a long prefix in initial position is used to mark it. This, indeed, is rare. For a sequence or series of second person projectives, *wə + imperative* is used for perfective aspect, while *wəqatal* is employed for imperfective.

The imperative verb form is not used with negatives. Instead, vetitives are indicated by ל plus short prefix (for perfective aspect) while prohibitions (for imperfective aspect) are signaled by ל plus long prefix. Since distinguishing short and long prefix forms is impossible in most roots (that is, the forms are neutral), it is the negative (אל or לא) which clearly identifies the form as either short or long prefix.

Gen 38:8

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְאוֹנָן בִּן אֵל־אִשְׁתּוֹ אַחִיד וְיִבְּמֵ אֶתְּהָ וְהָקַם זֶרַע לְאַחִיד:

Judah said to Onan, "Have intercourse with your brother's wife, and fulfill a brother-in-law's responsibility to her, and establish offspring for your brother."

does not extend this to the π- suffix on prefix forms in Hebrew or treat the matter in a comprehensive proposal for the Hebrew verbal system as is done here.

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Deut 6:4-5

[4] שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד: [5] וְאַהֲבָתָּ אֶת יְהוָה...

Hear O Israel, Yahweh, our God, Yahweh is one. And you shall love Yahweh...

Judg 9:33

וְהָיָה בַבֶּקֶר כִּזְרוּחַ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ תִּשְׁכְּמוּ וּפִשְׁטוּ עַל-הָעִיר...

In the morning, at the rising of the sun, you must arise early and make a raid on the town.

Gen 22:12

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי-שְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל-הַנְּעָר וְאַל-תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה...

And he said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad and do not do anything to him!"

Gen 18:3

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אֱמִנָּא מִצָּאתַי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ:

And he (Abraham) said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your eyes, do not pass by your servant."

Exod 20:14

לֹא תִנְאָף:

You shall not commit adultery.

### First Person Projectives

First person projectives are indicated by prefix forms in initial position, with or without the ה־ suffix. This suffix is not a modal morpheme and does not mark the form as projective. As one might expect from the nature of experience and everyday human relations, most contexts require only perfective aspect.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, most roots have no means of distinguishing formally short and long prefix forms for first person. Only rarely, then, is it necessary to distinguish long from short prefix forms to mark clearly imperfective aspect. This is accomplished (a) in positive projectives by employing N-suffixes as opposed to H-suffixes, (b) in negative projectives

<sup>85</sup> Qimron concludes from his analysis of consecutive and conjunctive imperfect that the *yiqtol* in *wəyiqtol* forms is almost always short prefix (E. Qimron, "Consecutive and Conjunctive Imperfect: The Form of the Imperfect with Waw in Biblical Hebrew," *JQR* 77 [1986-87] 151).

by using אַל for short prefix and אֵל for long prefix, and (c) in projective sequences by employing *wəqatal* for imperfective aspect. In imperfective aspect, the demarcation of modality is fuzzy, since אֵל plus long prefix may be used for either assertive or projective. In sequences, context is determinative as to which is intended.

2 Sam

2 Sam 18:19

ואחימעץ בן צדוק אמר ארוצה נא ואבשרה אתהמלך...

Now Ahimaaz, son of Zadok, said, "Let me run, please, that I may bring good news to the king."

אַל

1 Sam

2 Sam. 18:23

ויהימה ארוץ ויאמר לו רץ וירץ...

Come what may, I will run. And he said to him, "Run!" And he ran.

CON

The form ארוץ (18:23) has no ה־ suffix and is unaccompanied by נא. The absence of the ה־ suffix suits the statement, "Come what may" and the absence of נא makes the projective stronger (that is, it is not mitigated by politeness).

1 Sam

Gen 37:20

ועתה לכו ונהרגו ונשליכו באחד הבורות...

"Come, let's kill him and cast him into one of the pits..."

No prefix forms exist in Genesis–Kings which have H-suffixes and no *wə* prefixed.

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Gen 19:34

ויהי ממחרת ותאמר הבכירה אל הצעירה הן שכבתי אמש את אבי בשקננו יין גם הלילה...

The day following, the firstborn [girl] said to the younger, "Look, last night I lay with my father. Let's get him drinking tonight too..."

Gen 45:28

ויאמר ישראל רב עוד יוסף בני חי אלקה ואראנו בטרם אמות:

And Israel said, "It is enough, Joseph my son still lives. I shall go that I may see him before I die."

86 Shulh 216–217.  
87 See F Series 1 31.

2 Sam 24:14

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-גָּד צָר־לִי מְאֹד נִפְלְאָה נָא בְיַד-יְהוָה כִּי-רַבִּים  
רַחֲמוֹ [רַחֲמִיּוֹן] וּבְיַד-אָדָם אֶל-אֶפְלָה:

David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but *let me not fall* into the hand of man."

וַיֹּאמֶר plus a first person projective is extremely rare.<sup>86</sup>

1 Sam 15:25

וְעַתָּה שָׂא נָא אֶת-חַטָּאתִי וְשׁוּב עִמִּי וְאֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לַיהוָה:

"Now forgive my sin and return with me, *so that I may worship* Yahweh."

CONTRAST:

1 Sam 15:30

וַיֹּאמֶר חַטָּאתִי עָתָה כְּבֹדֵנִי נָא נֶגַד זִקְנֵי-עַמִּי וּנְגַד יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשׁוּב עִמִּי  
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

He said, "I have sinned. Now honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel and return with me *so that I may worship* Yahweh, your God."

It is difficult to discern any semantic difference between the *wəyiqtol*-L (long prefix) in v. 25 and *wəqatal* in v. 30; the former is projective and imperfective, the latter is assertive and imperfective in sequence with a projective. Note that the future indicative in Greek is essentially a projective encoded formally as an assertive. This illustrates what we also find in classical biblical Hebrew; the assertive future functionally overlaps with the imperfective projective. Reality is a continuum; here the encoding parameters of the language and the usage indicate that the demarcation of assertive future from projective is fuzzy.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Shulman found only one instance in Genesis-Kings (A. Shulman, "Use of Modal Verb Forms," pp. 216-217).

<sup>87</sup> See Bo Johnson, *Hebräisches Perfekt und Imperfekt mit vorangehendem w<sup>e</sup>* (Coniectanea Biblica, OT Series 13; Lund: Liberlaromedie/Gleerup, 1979), p. 59 and E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb," pp. 24, 31.

*Third Person Projectives*

Third person projectives are also marked by initial position, not by a specific form or a modal morpheme attached to the stem of the verb. Where short and long prefix forms can be distinguished, the short prefix forms mark perfective aspect while the long prefix forms mark imperfective aspect. With neutral prefix forms, the use of H-suffixes clearly marks a short prefix.<sup>88</sup> With negatives, the distinction is kept straight by using **אל** only with the short prefix and **לא** with the long prefix. In projective sequences, *wəyiqtol* (short) is employed for perfective aspect and *wəqatal* for imperfective. The latter may also be indicated by *wəyiqtol-L* (long prefix), where the root allows long prefix forms to be clearly distinguished from short.

Judg 7:3

...מי־ירא וחרד ישוב ויצפר מהר הגלעד...

Who is afraid and trembling? *Let him return* and depart from Mount Gilead!

Exod 22:12

אם־טרף יטרף יבֹאֵהוּ עַד הַטְּרֵפָה לֹא יִשְׁלַם:

If it is genuinely torn [by wild animals], *let him bring* it as evidence; what is torn he need not repay.

Josh 1:17

כָּל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֵּן נִשְׁמַע אֵלֶיךָ רַק יְהִיָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עִמָּךְ  
כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם־מֹשֶׁה:

As we obeyed Moses, so we will obey you, only *may Yahweh*, your God, *be* with you as he was with Moses.

2 Kgs 23:18

וַיֹּאמֶר הַנִּיחוּ לוֹ אִישׁ אֶל־יָנֵעַ עֲצַמֹתָיו...

And he said, "Leave him be. *Let no one move* his bones."

Judg 6:30

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֶל־יוֹאֵשׁ הוֹצֵא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ וְיָמָת...

The men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son *so that he may die*..."

<sup>88</sup> No examples of third person prefix forms in first position plus N-suffix occur.

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The explanatory power of the model I am proposing may be seen in the fact that forms considered to be textually corrupt or extrasystemic or marginal in other proposals are easily understood. Gropp, for example, eliminates *wəyiqtol* (long prefix) as extrasystemic and explains a few instances as possibly corrupt texts.<sup>89</sup> One case he treats this way is Gen 22:17:

Gen 22:17

כִּי־בֵרַךְ אֲבִרְכֶךָ וְהִרְבָּה אֲרֵבָה אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכַחֹל  
אֲשֶׁר עַל־שַׁפְתַּי הַיָּם וַיִּרְשׂ זֶרְעֶךָ אֶת שַׁעַר אֹיְבָיו:

For I will bless you fully and greatly increase your descendants as the stars of the sky and as the sand upon the seashore *so that* your descendants *may* possess the gate of their enemies.

This is a clear case of a projective, much like (Greek ἵνα) plus subjunctive in Greek. Conversely, cases exist of short prefix forms which are not projective. Again, the explanatory power of this proposal is evident.

Lev 5:16

וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר חָטָא מִן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ יִשְׁלַם וְאֶת־חַמִּישְׁתּוֹ יוֹסֶף עָלָיו  
וְנָתַן אֹתוֹ לַכֹּהֵן וְהִכְהֵן יִכְפֹּר עָלָיו בְּאֵיל הָאֲשָׁם וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:

And what he wronged of the holy property he will repay, and a fifth *he will add* to it, and he will give it to the priest and the priest will atone for him...and it will be forgiven him.

The form יוֹסֶף is assertive, perfective, and future, not a jussive “expressing notions which are typically associated with indicative forms.”<sup>90</sup>

## PROJECTIVES IN NON-INITIAL POSITION

For first and third person verbs, according to the present proposal, assertive and projective are distinguished not by different forms or added morphemes, but rather by different positioning of the prefix forms. Initial position is marked as projective, while non-initial position is assertive. Essentially the same strategy is used in narrative to mark topicality and distinguish Sequential from Non-Sequential. Occasionally, a clash occurs in conversation between use of initial position for focus and use of initial po-

<sup>89</sup> D. M. Gropp, “Function of the Finite Verb,” p. 48, n. 9.

<sup>90</sup> A. Shulman “Use of Modal Verb Forms,” p. 169.

sition to mark projective modality. According to Shulman, this accounts for most of the cases where a first or third person projective is non-initial. Nonetheless, these instances must be discussed individually.

Shulman claims that six out of 102 third person projectives are non-initial.<sup>91</sup> Three instances involve a participant shift in a sequence of projectives:

Gen 1:22

וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הַיָּם בַּיָּם  
וְהַעֲוֹף יִרְבֵּי בָאָרֶץ:

God blessed them saying, "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, but *let* the birds *multiply* on the earth."

Gen 44:33

וַעֲתָה יִשְׁבְּנָא עַבְדְּךָ חַחַת הַנְּעָר עִבְד לֵאדֹנָי וְהַנְּעָר יָעַל עִם־אֲחָיו:

Now, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, but *let* the lad *return* with his brothers.

2 Sam 14:17

וְהֵאמֵר שְׂפַחְתָּךְ יִהְיֶה־נָא דְבַר־אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמַנּוּחָה כִּי כַמְלֵאךְ  
הָאֱלֹהִים כִּן אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ לְשִׁמְעַת הַטּוֹב וְהִרְעֵ וְיִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהִי עִמָּךְ:

And your servant said, "May the word of my lord, the King, bring rest...and *may* Yahweh your God *be* with you."

יְהִי is in initial position and is consequently projective; this is confirmed by the presence of ׀, which is a particle of petition occurring typically when requests are made in circumstances that require deference or politeness.<sup>92</sup> Thus, even though יְהִי is not in initial position, the sequence makes it clear that it must be projective.

The remaining instances are more problematic.

Gen 30:34

וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן הֵן לִי יְהִי כְדַבְּרְךָ:

And Laban said, "Fine! *Let it be* as you say."

<sup>91</sup> Oral communication from A. Shulman. Not all cases are listed in A. Shulman, "Use of Modal Verb Forms," pp. 246-247.

<sup>92</sup> A. Shulman "Use of Modal Verb Forms," p. 170.

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Muraoka has suggested an Akkadianism, pointing to Laban's Mesopotamian origin, may lie behind the use of לו.<sup>93</sup> Both Revell and Shulman argue that אך and עתה do not alter the fact that the verb is in initial position. Possibly this is true also for לו and for כן in the case which follows.

## 1 Kgs 1:36

ויען בניהו בן־יהוידע את־המלך ויאמר אמן כן יאמר יהוה אלהי אדני המלך:

And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, answered the king and said, "Amen! Thus may Yahweh God of my lord the king *command*."

The same sentence structure also occurs in 1 Kgs 1:37 and Jer 28:6. The last example is normally read as projective, but could conceivably be assertive as well.

## Deut 1:10–11

[10] יהוה אלהיכם הרבה אתכם והנכם היום ככוכבי השמים לרב:  
[11] יהוה אלהי אבותכם יסף עליכם ככם אלף פעמים ויברך אתכם כאשר דבר לכם:

Yahweh, your God, multiplied you...*May* Yahweh, your God, *add* to you as you are a thousand times and may he bless you as he promised you.

The form יסף may be read as assertive and perfective.<sup>94</sup> Thus one could alternatively translate:

Yahweh, your God, multiplied you...Yahweh, your God, *will add* to you as you are a thousand times so that may he bless you as he promised you.

Shulman lists eleven passages where אל + projective is not clause initial.<sup>95</sup> There is greater freedom to employ non-initial position for focus in these instances, since a prefixed form in conversation following אל could hardly be read as anything but a projective.

These cases, then, do not disturb the present proposal. Rarely, in conversation and in a projective series, a projective may be non-initial to mark

<sup>93</sup> T. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem and Leiden: Magnes Press and G. J. Brill, 1985), p. 117.

<sup>94</sup> Similarly, ויחל in 1 Sam 10:8 may be read as a perfective assertive. Contextually, the prophet Samuel is telling Saul what will happen. Cf. E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb," p. 20 and A. Shulman "Use of Modal Verb Forms," p. 247.

<sup>95</sup> Gen. 19:8; 37:27; 45:20; Exod 16:19; 19:24; 34:3; Lev 10:8–9; Judg 13:14; 19:20; 1 Sam 9:20; 2 Kgs 23:18. Cf. A. Shulman "Use of Modal Verb Forms," p. 247 n. 6.

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a participant shift. While non-initial position does break the rule, there is no other possible interpretation for the modality of the verb in question, due either to the context or to the sequence.

In five instances of 197 occurrences of first person projectives in the corpus examined by Shulman, the forms were non-initial.

Gen 22:5

ויאמר אברהם אל-נעריו שכרלכם פה עמדהחמור ואני והנער וְלָכָה עִדְכָה...

Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey, but *I* and the lad *will* go over there."

Exod 32:30

...ועתה אעלה אליהוה אולי אֶכַפֶּרָה בעד חטאתכם:

"And now, I will go up to the LORD, perhaps *I can make atonement* for your sin."

Num 20:19

...רק אינדבר ברגלי אֶעֱבֹרָה:

...only on foot *will I pass through*.

2 Sam 6:22

...והייתי שפל בעיני ועםהאמהות אשר אמרת עמם אֶכְבֶּדָה:

I will be humiliated in my eyes, but before these slave girls you mentioned, *I will be honored*.

2 Sam 18:14

ויאמר יואב לא-כן אחילה לפניך...

And Joab said, "Not thus *will I wait* before you."

Exod 32:30 and 2 Sam 18:14 may possibly be considered clause initial, if the preceding particles are classed as connectors like *waw*.<sup>96</sup> Gen 22:5 is in a projective sequence and involves a participant shift. Num 20:19 and 2 Sam 6:22 may be read as assertives.

<sup>96</sup> See 1 Kgs 1:36 above. Note that *אולי* is always restricted to initial position.

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The proposal handles, then, the possibility of change in focus in projective uses of the verb well. Discourse type, that is, conversation versus narrative, plus a projective sequence permits short prefix forms to be interpreted as projective in cases of Y movement.<sup>97</sup>

In sum, the above model allows readers to process the verb forms in terms of aspect, tense, and modality easily. At the same time, clear guidelines are given to distinguish the semantics of the verb forms from implicature or contextual meaning via discourse grammar and pragmatics.<sup>98</sup> A chart summarizes form and function and the interplay of the various discourse factors.

	Assertive		Projective	
	Tense-Aspect		Aspect	
	Perfective ± Past	Imperfective ± Non-Past	Perfective	Imperfective
Affirmative	[x] <i>qatal</i>	[x] <i>yiqtol</i>	<i>yiqtol</i> (short) <i>yiqtālēhū</i>	<i>yiqtol</i> (long) <i>yiqtālennū</i>
Non-Sequential				
Negative	לֹא + <i>qatal</i>	לֹא + <i>yiqtol</i>	לֹא + <i>yiqtol-S</i>	לֹא + <i>yiqtol-L</i>
Sequential	<i>wayyiqtol</i>	<i>wəqatal</i>	<i>wəyiqtol-S</i>	<i>wəyiqtol-L</i> / ( <i>wəqatal</i> )
	Narrative			
	Conversation			

<sup>97</sup> Y movement involves fronting of the contrasted topic if it is normally in a non-initial position in the clause and is normally restricted to nominal arguments of the clause (T. Givón, *Syntax: A Functional-Typological Introduction*, [Philadelphia: Benjamins Publishing Co., 1990], vol. 2, p. 705).

<sup>98</sup> R. S. Hendel, "Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System," does not formulate how speakers could easily recognize when one of the various categories of aspect or tense is to the fore or not.