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# History of the Ancient and Modern Hebrew Language

By David Steinberg

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## 1. Survey of the [Semitic Languages](#) (See for details [Sáenz-Badillos](#) chapt. 1)

The Semitic family<sup>1</sup> consists of a group of about 70 distinct language forms closely related to each other and more distantly related to the rest of the [AfroAsiatic group which includes Ancient Egyptian, Berber and the Cushitic languages](#)<sup>2</sup>. The Semitic languages, as far back as can be traced (2nd and, in some cases, 3rd millennium BCE), have occupied part of present day Iraq and all of present day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Arabian peninsula.

### Maps of the Ancient Near

East [http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl\\_maps\\_asia\\_neareast.htm](http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_maps_asia_neareast.htm)

A good, simple outline of the relations of the Semitic languages to each other is at

<http://phoenicia.org/semlang.html>

Since the Semitic languages are clearly closely related<sup>3</sup>, it is a reasonable and long-held assumption that they are all derived from an original undifferentiated, though rather variable language called [Proto-Semitic](#). Although no records of Proto-Semitic exist, through the comparative study of the various languages it is possible to deduce, in outline, Proto-Semitic's phonology, much of its vocabulary and its grammar including some of its probable syntax. In general, it can be said that each Semitic language preserved some Proto-Semitic features whereas while diverging from Proto-Semitic in other features. For instance, [Akkadian, the language of the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians](#)<sup>4</sup> in present day Iraq, has alone preserved the Proto-Semitic verbal system while its sound system, influenced by the non-Semitic [Sumerian language](#), was greatly simplified. Classical Arabic<sup>5</sup> has most faithfully preserved the [Proto-Semitic system of case endings of nouns and adjectives](#)<sup>6</sup> and mood endings of the verb and the Proto-Semitic sound system<sup>7</sup> though in its syntax and use of tenses it is more removed from Proto-Semitic than is Biblical Hebrew.

It is probable that Proto-Semitic was spoken over most of the territory earlier mentioned until 3500-3000 BCE. At about that time Akkadian split off. This language, which was spoken until the first century BCE, has left written records from about 2600 BCE.

### Box 1 - What is a Semitic [√Root](#)?

In any discussion of Semitic languages frequent mention will be made of "roots". The term refers to three, less often two<sup>8</sup>, and occasionally four consonants that form the basis of Semitic verbs and most nouns when combined with patterns of vowels and sometimes consonants. These patterns are referred to as [stems](#), themes, stirpes or in Hebrew [binyanim](#). Roots are also the basis of most nouns.

E.g. From the root  $\sqrt{\text{ŠBR}}$  ( $\text{š} = sh$ ) we get in [\[TH\]](#) –

[šɔ: 'vɛ:r] – he broke

[šɔ: 'vɛ:rti:] – I broke

[šib 'bɛ:r] - he smashed

[šub'be:r]– it was smashed

[šə 'vo:r] - breaking

[miš 'bo:r] – breaking waves

The non-Akkadian<sup>9</sup> part of the Semitic family, called West Semitic, divided prior to 2000 BCE into South Semitic, whose major descendants are [Arabic](#) and the [Semitic languages of Ethiopia](#)<sup>10</sup>, and [Northwest Semitic](#) which includes [Aramaic](#)<sup>11</sup> and the [Canaanite languages](#) of which [Biblical Hebrew](#) was one. Shortly after this split, the initial /w/ sound in Northwest Semitic became /y/<sup>12</sup>. Thus we have the equivalence such as the root √**whb** in Arabic corresponds to √**yhb** יהב in Hebrew and Aramaic. Thus also, the word for child in Arabic is /walad/ while in Pre-Exilic biblical Hebrew ([EBHP](#)) Hebrew it was \*/'yald/ ילד <yld> now pronounced [**yɛ**lɛd].

Probably even as late as 2000 BCE one can picture a [dialect continuum](#) where, from the desert fringes of Iraq through south-eastern [Anatolia](#), [Syria](#), [Lebanon](#), [Israel](#), [Jordan](#) and the [Arabian Peninsula](#) a traveler could have passed from tribe to tribe and village to village noticing only very slight and gradual [dialectical](#) changes as he progressed. Although people at the opposite extremes of this language area might have been unable to understand each other, at no point would a language frontier like those, say, between French and German occur. This situation is quite similar to that pertaining to the various [dialects of spoken Arabic](#) over the same area (and beyond in North Africa), today<sup>13</sup>. It is from this period i.e. the third millennium BCE, that we receive our first records of the Semitic languages. These records comprehend 3 languages:

[Akkadian \(East Semitic\)](#) – both in Akkadian texts and Akkadian words preserved in Sumerian texts;

[Eblaite](#) (intermediate between [East Semitic](#) and [West Semitic](#)) – preserved in Early Bronze Age (2500 BCE) tablets amounting to about 3000 tablets in all;

[Amorite](#)<sup>14</sup> – this West-Semitic language is preserved mainly in proper names in Sumerian and Akkadian texts. Fortunately, as Semitic names are frequently short sentences – e.g. Hebrew 'eli'yah = 'my God is YH' – the language can be partly reconstructed even from such meager data.

The situation outlined ended with the rise of political-cultural centers in the [Northwest Semitic](#) areas. By about 1000 BCE, the dialect of Damascus had established itself as normative [Aramaic](#) and started a spread, helped by its use as a [lingua franca](#), which would enable it, by 100 BCE to completely replace Akkadian in the North-East and, by 200 CE to displace Hebrew in the south.

## ***2. History of Hebrew from its Pre-history<sup>15</sup> to the Present*** (See for details [Sáenz-Badillos](#))

While Damascus Aramaic was becoming a standard language in Syria and upper Mesopotamia, the situation in what is now Lebanon, Jordan and Israel remained one of a series of dialects none of which was able, through conquest or prestige, to become a linguistic standard.

We have only [fragments of most of the various Canaanite dialects](#), of the period 1000-500 BCE. However, it would seem that they were mutually intelligible<sup>16</sup>. Two dialects, from opposite ends of the Canaanite spectrum, have left literary remains. In the extreme north, on the Lebanese coast, was [Phoenician](#)<sup>17</sup> and its North African Carthaginian offshoot [Punic](#), have left inscriptions<sup>18</sup> dating from 10<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE and 9<sup>th</sup> C BCE to 2<sup>nd</sup> CE respectively. This tended to be a rapidly developing language very open to foreign influences as we would expect for a language of a sea-faring people. In the extreme South we have the literary dialect of [Jerusalem](#) i.e. [CBH](#).

Before we leave the other languages, we could point out **one of the many benefits to the understanding of Hebrew gained through the comparative study of Semitic languages**. As I said before, the Semitic languages are closely related. For example “A survey of the first 100 Phoenician words in the dictionary shows that 82 percent have the same meaning in Hebrew. Between [Ugaritic](#)<sup>19</sup> and Hebrew the figure is about 79 percent.” Thus it not infrequently occurs that a root or word may be common in say Aramaic, while it may occur only once or twice in Hebrew. A knowledge of Aramaic **may** then lead to an understanding of the Hebrew word. Thus the root √yhb occurs only in the imperative of the basic stem of the verb (*qal* or *pa'al*) sometimes in the same context as the normal Hebrew root √ntn meaning “to give”. In Aramaic, the root {YHB} is routinely used meaning “to give” and it is clear that the meaning in Hebrew is the same.

[Table - Proto-Semitic Phonemes \(Consonants\) Exhibiting Sound Shifts in Hebrew and Their Equivalents in Aramaic and Classical Arabic](#)

[Table - Biblical Hebrew Phonemes \(Consonants\) of Multiple Origin and their Equivalents in Proto-Semitic, Classical Arabic, Aramaic and Ugaritic](#)

You may be familiar with Psalm 137:5

אם אשכח ירושלם תשכח ימיני

The King James Bible translates this as “If I forget thee O Jerusalem let my right hand forget *her cunning*.” The last two words are printed in italics. In the King James Bible this indicates that the words are **not** found in the Hebrew. We can see the problem of the early translators. What they read was “If I forget thee Jerusalem let my right hand forget”. Clearly this is problematic. Hence they added their guess of what it might forget – i.e. its cunning. The problem is that the same root שכח is used twice in the same stem in the same verse. This root, in this stem, is the normal way to say “forget” in Hebrew. There are 6 possible Proto-Semitic origins of the Hebrew root שכח.

1. *š-k-ḥ*
2. *š-k-ḥ*
3. *th-k-ḥ*
4. *th-k-ḥ*
5. *causative š+k-ḥ*
6. *causative š+k-ḥ*

Ugaritic has a root *th-k-ḥ* = shrivel which fills the bill (see Barr p. 336 Select Bibliography below and GRAY, JOHN, *THE LEGACY OF CANAAN: THE RAS SHAMRA TEXTS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT*, SECOND, REVISED EDITION, E. J. BRILL, LEIDEN 1965 pp 283-4)

Thus, the New Revised Standard Version translates our verse as –

“If I forget you O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither”

It makes sense!

We can explain the course of event as follows:

1. Around 2000 BCE Proto-Hebrew had two distinct roots: (1)  $\theta$ -k- $\underline{h}$  or  $\theta$ -k- $\underline{h}$  depending on its proto-Semitic origin meaning “shrivel”; and, (2) š-k-ḥ “forget”;
2. Prior to 1000 BCE all instances of the [fricative](#) /θ/ in Hebrew [shifted](#) to /š/ =sh /ʃ/<sup>20</sup> hence the roots became indistinguishable leading to the abandonment of כחש “shrivel” except in the conservative poetic dialect in situations where it was not likely to be confused and could be used for a pleasing poetic effect such as in our verse;
3. In time the meaning of כחש “shrivel” was completely lost due to its rare use, destruction of scribal schools etc...

It should be noted that comparative philology is difficult to use credibly and can easily be abused. See [Barr](#).

## 2.1 Pre-Exilic Hebrew ([PreExH](#)) (See also [Sáenz-Badillos](#) *chapt. 3-5*)

### a) Varieties of Pre-Exilic Hebrew

See - [Diglossia and Dialect in PExH: What Do We Mean by Judahite and Israelian Hebrew?](#)

- **Proto-Hebrew (PH)**. The [Canaanite dialects](#) (c.1200-1000 B.C.E.) that would develop into Hebrew with the loss of the case endings. For details see [BHA phase 2](#). Sources - see [Harris 1939](#), [Hendel-Lambdin-Huehnergard](#), [Sáenz-Badillos](#).
- **Pre-exilic Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH)**. The literary dialect of Jerusalem c.950-586 B.C.E ([First Temple Period](#)). This is the only widely attested form of Judahite Hebrew. It developed out of PH. See: [Establishment of Jerusalem Written and Spoken Dialects](#) (c. 1000-c. 900 BCE).
- **Israelian Hebrew** - This is a catchall term for all the dialects spoken in the villages and towns of the [Kingdom of Israel](#) c. 1000 BCE until at least the seventh century BCE. We have very little evidence of [Israelian Hebrew](#). The use of this term does not imply that these dialects had more in common with each other than many of them had to some of the dialects spoken in the Kingdom of Judah and hence classed under the rubric Judahite Hebrew.
- **Judahite Hebrew (BHA phase 3)**. This is a catchall term for all the dialects spoken in the villages and towns of the [Kingdom of Judah](#) during the [First Temple Period](#). Use of the term Judahite Hebrew does not imply that these presumably variable dialects had more in common with each other than many of them had to some of the dialects spoken in the Kingdom of Israel and hence classed under the rubric Israelian Hebrew.

As stated earlier, Biblical Hebrew (see [Steiner](#) and [Encyclopedia Judaica](#)) is the literary form of the very conservative dialect of Jerusalem. [CBH](#) crystallized in Jerusalem about 900 BCE and showed little change until the Babylonian Exile in the 6th century BCE. From then on, Post-Classical Biblical Hebrew ([PCBH](#)) became more and more an archaic literary vehicle radically different from the (presumed) spoken Hebrew<sup>21</sup>. As a literary dialect it was used until the fall of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

Biblical Hebrew can be divided into a number of [registers](#) including:

- [Poetic Biblical Hebrew](#) - This is divided into an archaizing poetic form ([ABH](#)) and a standard poetic form (e.g. [Job](#), [Psalms](#)). The archaizing poetic form used a special vocabulary and the poetry written in it is highly stylized. The date of origin of the earliest poems is in dispute. They may date from as early as the eleventh century BCE or as late as the ninth. The latest poems in the Hebrew Bible may date from about 450 BCE.
- [Prophetic Hebrew](#)<sup>22</sup> - This is a semi-poetic form of rhythmic speech used in e.g. Isaiah which may be compared to blank verse<sup>23</sup>. The use of verb forms in prophetic poetry and in [the minor poems scattered through the Hebrew Bible](#) is more similar to their use in BH prose than to [their use in psalmic poetry](#); and,
- [Prose Biblical Hebrew](#)<sup>24</sup>

It is clear that [PCBH](#) developed in the exilic and post-exilic period. However, there is actually no reason to believe that [CBH](#) did not continue to be used in some circles well after 500 BCE alongside PCBH.<sup>25</sup>

#### *b) Social Base of Pre-Exilic Hebrew*

- The similarity of Biblical poetry to [Ugaritic poetry](#) clearly indicates continuity in the literary tradition between pre-Israelite Canaan and biblical poetry. The Canaanite glosses in the [El-Amarna Letters](#) (See for details [Sáenz-Badillos](#) pp. 33-34) and Phoenician inscriptions are compelling evidence of the origin of Biblical Hebrew out of the [Canaanite](#) linguistic matrix. However, the development of Biblical Hebrew out of this matrix had a context:
- [Continuance of the Canaanite Israelite Literary Tradition](#). This tradition was likely oral in its early phases and mixed oral and written through much of its history. In this connection it may be interesting to quote Dever<sup>26</sup>



One of the revisionists' principal objections to Israel's having been a centralized state in the 10th century is that writing would have been a bureaucratic necessity, but we have little if any 10th-century evidence. I have mentioned that the few early Hebrew texts that we do happen to have, however, include an *abcedary*, or list of the letters of the alphabet (ʿizbet Šarṭah; 12th-11th century), and a poem giving the agricultural seasons (Gezer, 10th century). Both are almost certainly schoolboys' practice texts. Students and others were now learning to write, adapting the Old Canaanite alphabet and script as Hebrew developed into a national language and instrument of cultural expression. We may assume that writing, and even what we may call "functional" literacy, was reasonably widespread by the 10th century, and certainly by the 9th century when even the revisionists must concede that an Israelite state did exist"<sup>27</sup>

➤ **Transition from [Iron I](#) to Iron II** - "The considerable archaeological evidence that I have summarized here regarding centralized planning and administration reflects what is regarded in the literature as the principal trait of state-level organization.... I would stress ... that the city defenses and all the rest are part of a dramatic, large-scale process of organization and centralization that utterly transformed the landscape of most of Palestine in the period from the early 10th to early 9th century. It is such shifts in settlement type and distributions together with marked demographic changes that signal most clearly a new archaeological and thus new cultural phase, in this case the transition from Iron I to Iron II."<sup>28</sup>

➤ **Dialects** - We do not have any information on the dialects of the Shephelah<sup>29</sup>. The only direct information that we have on the Samaritan dialect(s) is derived from the Samaria Ostraca. As summarized by Gibson<sup>30</sup> -

"In the sphere of language, the ostraca tell us little of the northern dialect beyond the likelihood that the process of [diphthongal reduction](#) had gone further in Israelite than in Judean Hebrew; thus יַ = [yēn], passim, as against יַיַ = [yayn] in the biblical orthography...."

See - [Dialect, Koine and Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew](#) and the table - [Some Political, Social and Linguistic Developments in the Pre-Exilic Period c. 1000-586 BCE](#).

➤ **[The Separation of Israel and Judah](#)** – This would have reduced the wealth of the government in Jerusalem and lessened its need for scribal services and also led to an exodus of Samaritan, Galilean and Gileadite nobles or officials that had established themselves in the capital. Among other impacts, this would have diminished the influence in Jerusalem of Israelite dialects from Samaria, Galilee and Gilead all of which were now included in the kingdom of Israel.

- ***Samaritan Refugees Inundate Judah and Jerusalem*** - A huge demographic change occurred with the Assyrian destruction of the Kingdom of Israel (722 BCE) which led to a massive transfer of population from Samaria into the towns and countryside of Judah. Much of the archeological evidence of this change has been gathered by Broshi and Finkelstein<sup>31</sup> and is neatly summarized by Finkelstein and Silberman<sup>32</sup>. As pointed out by these authors<sup>33</sup> -

“The royal citadel of Jerusalem was transformed in a single generation from the seat of a rather insignificant local dynasty into the political and religious nerve center of a regional power—both because of dramatic internal developments and because thousands of refugees from the conquered kingdom of Israel fled to the south.

Here archaeology has been invaluable in charting the pace and scale of Jerusalem's sudden expansion. As first suggested by Israeli archaeologist Magen Broshi, excavations conducted there in recent decades have shown that **suddenly, at the end of the eighth century BCE, Jerusalem underwent an unprecedented population explosion**, with its residential areas expanding from its former narrow ridge—the city of David—to cover the entire western hill .... A formidable defensive wall was constructed to include the new suburbs. In a matter of a few decades—surely within a single generation—Jerusalem was transformed from a modest highland town of about ten or twelve acres to a huge urban area of 150 acres of closely packed houses, workshops, and public buildings. **In demographic terms, the city's population may have increased as much as fifteen times, from about one thousand to fifteen thousand inhabitants.**

A similar picture of tremendous population growth emerges from the archaeological surveys in Jerusalem's agricultural hinterland. Not only were many farmsteads built at this time in the immediate environs of the city, but in the districts south of the capital, the formerly relatively empty countryside was flooded with new farming settlements, both large and small. Sleepy old villages grew in size and became, for the first time, real towns. In the [Shephelah](#) too, the great leap forward came in the eighth century, with a dramatic growth in the number and size of sites.... Likewise, the [Beersheba](#) Valley in the far south witnessed the establishment of a number of new towns in the late eighth century. All in all, the expansion was astounding; by the late eighth century there were about three hundred settlements of all sizes in Judah, from the metropolis of Jerusalem to small farmsteads, where one there were only a few villages and modest towns. **The population, which had long hovered at a few tens of thousands, now grew to around 120,000.**

...(W)ith the influx of refugees from the north after the fall of Samaria, the reorganization of the countryside under Hezekiah, and **the second torrent of refugees from the desolation of the Shephelah by [Sennacherib](#)**, many of the traditional clan attachments to particular territories had been forever destroyed.

”

It is likely that the flood of Samaritan refugees brought with them Northern (Samaritan and, to a lesser extent Galilean and Gileadite) traditions such as the hero-stories included in the [Book of Judges](#), and traditions relating to the Northern Israelite heroes – [Jacob](#), [Joseph](#), [Joshua](#), [Elijah](#) and [Elisha](#). They may also have brought documents reflecting the [E tradition](#) and the core of [Deuteronomy](#)

Regarding the linguistic impact of the Samaritan refugees see [Development of Proto-Mishnaic Hebrew](#) (c. 586 BCE-c. 70 BC).

### c) [Time, Aspect and Volition in Biblical Hebrew](#)

See [Background on Biblical Hebrew Prefix Conjugation](#); [Background on Biblical Hebrew Suffix Conjugation \(traditional "perfect"\)](#)

**Proto-Semitic Tense System** – basically as in Akkadian see *Encyclopedia Judaica* article *Hebrew Language* vol. 16 col. 1566-1568

**Biblical Prose** - The exact range of meanings of the Biblical Hebrew SC and PC verbal forms has long been subject to debate. As put by Greenstein<sup>34</sup> -

The language of the Hebrew Bible constitutes in the Masoretic Text a self-contained system. Put differently, the Masoretic shaping of the biblical text levels all phenomena within it into one language.... No area of BH grammar has so little succumbed to satisfactory analysis as that of the diverse forms and functions of the verb. No analysis has come close to encompassing the gamut of large and minute phenomena that inhabit this most mystifying domain.

Among the most perennially perplexing topics concerning the BH verb is the fact that different forms of the verb serve similar functions and that diverse functions may be fulfilled by one and the same form.... How is it that the prefixed form of the BH verb expresses the present-future here and the past there? Why does biblical verse ... use either a prefixed or suffixed form of the verb to represent the narrated past? Rainey's answer<sup>35</sup>... is that early Canaanite possessed two sets of prefixed verb forms, both defined by their mood: the "indicative" *yaqtulu* and the "injunctive" *yaqtul*. The "indicative" *yaqtulu*, however, had a preterite to represent the narrated past, the shorter form *yaqtul*. Accordingly, early Canaanite spawned two potentially confusing overlaps. **With respect to form, the *yaqtul* pattern could homonymously represent either a jussive or a past tense. One could only interpret the verb's semantic reference on the basis of context. With regard to function, the narrated past could be expressed by either the suffix form of the verb, *\*qatala*, or by the preterite form of the *yaqtulu* indicative, *yaqtul*.**

Useful descriptions of the complex biblical Hebrew verbal system are found in: [Joüon-Muraoka 1991](#) Part Two chapter II; Waltke-O'Connor chapters 30-34; and, [Naude-Kroeze- Merwe](#) chapter 4. As presented by [Naude-Kroeze- Merwe](#) (p. 144) -

It is not clear whether in BH it is time that assumes aspect, or [aspect that assumes time](#).... **BH speakers and narrators had a choice of describing either the aspect or the time of an action.** They apparently also had a choice with respect to the perspective from which they described an action. This could be done **from the perspective of the narrator or the narrator could present the action from the perspective of his characters.** In the latter case it is sometimes difficult to translate the ...(SC) with the past tense and the imperfect with the present or future tense

### Box 2 - *Joüon-Muraoka* on Time, Aspect and Volition in BH

“... to express (without Waw) the present, Hebrew has three forms available: qatal for state and instantaneous action, yiqtol for repeated or durative action, qotel for durative or (secondarily) repeated action.

The value of each verbal form (qatal, yiqtol, qotel) is multiple and relative. In each of the two verb categories (active verbs and stative verbs), and, what is more, in each particular verb, the value of a verbal form is brought out by its contrast with the other two forms. In Hebrew, as in any other language, verbal forms "limit each other reciprocally" <sup>36</sup>. Thus in order to be fully aware of the value of a qatal in a given context, we must ask ourselves what a yiqtol or a qotel would mean.

**The system of Hebrew temporal forms, simplistic and even primitive in certain features, is in other respects complex and subtle. If Hebrew neglects the expression of some modalities which our languages habitually express, it expresses, on the other hand, nuances which we usually neglect.**

By way of conclusion some deficiencies of the Hebrew temporal forms will now be noted:

1) They express both [time](#) and [aspect](#), but only imperfectly. Thus, in the yiqtol used for a future action the aspect of the action is not shown. There is no single form for each of the three temporal spheres. Thus the forms express time not as perfectly as our languages do. After an initial form which situates the action in a temporal sphere, there is fairly often a certain freedom as to what form must be taken by the following verb, which sometimes seems to be used in an atemporal way and to take the value of the preceding form.

2) The nuance of succession and the volitive cannot be expressed at the same time. Thus it is not possible to render the following literally: "I want to go and I (then) want to glean"; either the

Box 2 - *Joüon-Muraoka* on Time, Aspect and Volition in BH

expression of succession or that of will must be sacrificed, to give either: "I want to go and to glean" (Ru 2.2) or "I want to go and (then) I shall glean" (cf. Ru 2.7).

3) When a second action is negative, neither succession nor purpose-consecution can be expressed, seeing that the negation is usually אלו (for purpose sometimes לאו; cf. § 116 j).

4) Volitive forms with ו are ambiguous. The waw may be purely juxtaposing (direct volitive) or modal (indirect volitive: purpose/consecution).

5) Finally, morphological deficiency must be mentioned. In many cases the form is ambiguous. Thus וְלָקַח can be used as **cohortative** as well as indicative, וְלָקַחְתָּ, וְלָקַחְתְּ as jussive as well as indicative. And likewise the forms with suffixes. Finally, the form marked specifically as cohortative (§ 114 b, n.) and jussive (§ 114 g, n.) is sometimes non-existent."<sup>37</sup>

The situation is further complicated in that:

- [The active participle, when used as a verb, can cover the range of meanings of the PC imperfect](#) and thus, depending on circumstances, can be used in relation to the past, present or future<sup>38</sup>;
- The SC can indicate actions, facts or events which are not time-bound<sup>39</sup>; and,
- The infinitive absolute, infinitive construct and nominal clauses<sup>40</sup> can be used to substitute for any verbal forms referring to the past, present or future.

Table 1

What Time does the Biblical Hebrew Participle Refer to When Used Verbally?

<i>Time Reference</i>	<i>Language Type</i>	<i>Percentage of Occurrences</i>
Concurrent time	<a href="#">CBH</a>	11.6%
	<a href="#">PCBH</a>	25.9%
Preceding time	CBH	58.9%
	PCBH	27.3%
Subsequent time	CBH	10%
	PCBH	2%
General time	CBH	36.4%
	PCBH	62.9%

## In BH prose:

- **Actions in the past that are seen as completed** are normally expressed, depending on context, by either SC (SC<sub>past</sub>) שָׁמַר (<šmr> (EBHP) \*/ša'mar/, (TH) /šâ'mar/ (TH+) \*[š:ç:'mæ:r]) or PC preterite (PC<sub>pret</sub>). The preterite, in prose, is usually prefixed by ׀ (PC<sub>pretWC</sub>), taking the form וישמר (<(w)yšmr> (EBHP) \*/(way)'yišmur/; (TH) /(way)yiš'mor/ (TH+) \*[(wey)yiš'mo:r]).
- **Actions in the future** are occasionally expressed using SC (SC<sub>prof</sub>) שָׁמַר (<šmr> (EBHP) \*/ša'mar/, (TH+) /šâ'mar/) if they are seen as certain to happen, as good as completed<sup>41</sup>;
- **Actions in the present and future and ongoing actions in the past**<sup>42</sup> are normally expressed, depending on context<sup>43</sup>, by either PC (PC<sub>imp\_prfut</sub>; PC<sub>imp\_pdur</sub>) imperfect יִשְׁמַר (EBHP) \*/yiš'mur/ or the *waw conversive* form of the SC (SC<sub>wc</sub>) וְשָׁמַר (<wšmr> (EBHP) \*/waša'mar/, (TH) /wəšâ'mar/ (TH+) \*[wəš:ç:'mæ:r]).
- **States in the present** are seen as being complete so the SC forms are used for the past and present e.g. יָדַעְתִּי in the Bible means "I know or knew" depending on context. Similarly כָּטוֹנָתִי means "I am or was small". The PC<sub>imp</sub> is used for the future.

Nb. [Disappearance of Formal Distinctions between PC Imperfect \(PC<sub>imp</sub>\) and Jussive \(PC<sub>jus</sub>\) in Strong Verb Except for Hiphil](#)

### Box 3

#### What is the “*waw conversive*”?

The “*waw conversive*” (Hebrew ׀ והיפוך) is a defining feature of Biblical Hebrew. Superficially it appears that a prefix ׀ (and doubling of the following prefix) added to the preterite (PC<sub>pret</sub>)-jussive (PC<sub>jus</sub>) (יקטל and where it exists, the shorter form of the imperfect<sup>44</sup> e.g. יִבַּר/יִבֵּן) converts the meaning of the verb into that of the perfect (SC<sub>past</sub> קטל) while adding ׀ (and sometimes accompanied by a shift of stress) to the perfect, converts the meaning of the verb into that of the imperfect. verbal major is also known as the “*waw consecutive*” since it is normally used in sequential narrative.

### Box 4

#### The Origin of the “*waw conversive*”

Most scholars would agree regarding the Biblical Hebrew "*waw conversive*" that:

- a) the [PC](#) *waw conversive* is a remnant of an Akkadian-like [preterite](#);
- b) the [SC](#) *waw conversive* was a later analogical formation.<sup>45</sup>

However, there is a wide range of views on the details<sup>46</sup>. [Smith 1991](#) reviews many of these. In addition, those of Hezron<sup>47</sup> and Blau<sup>48</sup> should be noted.

## Biblical Poetry

As correctly stated by [Niccacci 2006](#):

- "... it was and still is a fairly **common opinion among scholars**, although not always openly declared, **that the verbal forms in poetry**, more than in prose, **can be taken to mean everything the interpreter thinks appropriate** according to his understanding and context.... **(In reality) the functions of verbal forms in (BH) poetry are basically the same as in (BH) prose**, more precisely in direct speech." (p. 247)
- "The main difference is that **direct speech**, as prose in general, **consists of pieces of information conveyed in a sequence**, while **poetry communicates segments of information in parallelism**. The result is linear vs. segmental communication. As a consequence, **poetry is able to switch from one temporal axis to another** even more freely than direct speech. This results in a greater variety of, and more abrupt transition from, one verbal form to another." (p. 248)

In addition to its segmental nature, the system of parallelism which pervades and largely defines BH poetics draws heavily on the ability of the language to allow the use of synonyms, near synonyms and, at times, on the availability of multiple verb forms for identical, similar or related meanings.

Table 2

Time/Tense in Biblical Poetry<sup>49</sup>

<i>Temporal Axis</i>	<i>Reconstructed /EBHP/</i>	<i>Comments</i> <i>(See above and Comments on Verbal Forms in Psalms.)</i>
<u><i>Perfective Past</i></u>	<u><i>SC<sub>past</sub></i></u> - *qa'tal	Meanings of <i>SC</i> and <i>PC<sub>pret_sim</sub></i> / <i>PC<sub>pretWC</sub></i> are usually identical.
	<u><i>PC<sub>pret_sim</sub></i></u> - *yiq'tul or	
	<u><i>PC<sub>pretWC</sub></i></u> *way'yiq'tul	
<i>Durative Past</i>	<u><i>PC<sub>imp_pdur</sub></i></u> - *yiq'tul	<u>See above.</u> E.gs. Dt 32:16-17a.; Ju 5:29.
<i>Present</i>	Non-verbal sentence with/without participle	E.gs.Gen 49:3, 5, 12, 14, 21; Nu 23:22; Nu 24:16; Dt 32:4-9, 28, 31-34; Dt 33:13-16b, 20, 25, 26; Ps 48:2-3; 127:3-4; 128:3; 145:13
	<i>SC</i> of <u>stative quasi-stative</u> verb and <i>PC<sub>imp</sub></i> of action verb sometimes combined clearly indicating that reference is to present.	See Table B - <u>Present Tense Indicated by the use of the <i>SC</i> of a Stative or Quasi-stative Verb and the <i>PC<sub>imp</sub></i> of an Action Verb in the Same Verse</u>
<i>Present/Future</i>	<u><i>PC<sub>imp_prfut</sub></i></u> - *yiq'tul	Usual form.
	<u><i>SC<sub>wc</sub></i></u>	Occasionally used probably for literary effect. Nb. although <i>SC<sub>wc</sub></i> is usually identical. in meaning to the <i>PC<sub>imp</sub></i> , it sometimes has a jussive sense.
<i>Future Volitive</i>	<u><i>PC<sub>jus</sub></i></u> - *yiq'tul <u><i>PC<sub>coh</sub></i></u> - *iq'tula(:); *niq'tula(:) <i>Imperative</i> - */q'tul/ or */qu'tul/	Jussive can be, and frequently is, used as substitute for the imperative. E.g. Ps. 10:15, 17:8, 43:1, 51:14; 54:3.

Until late in the reading tradition of BH, in most cases, the *PC<sub>jus</sub>*, *PC<sub>pret\_sim</sub>* and *PC<sub>pretWC</sub>* were distinguished from the *PC<sub>imp</sub>* by the position of the word stress. The disappearance of this distinction has created doubt regarding the time (future/present/past durative vs. perfective aspect of the past tense) in many lines of biblical poetry.

See *Observations on Some Aspects of the Use of Tenses in Psalms*

Table A - Tense Implications of *SC* and *PC* in the Same Verse



Table B - [Present Tense Indicated by the use of the SC of a Stative or Quasi-stative Verb and the PC<sub>imp</sub> of an Action Verb in the Same Verse](#)

Table C - [PC<sub>pret\\_sim</sub> and PC<sub>pretWC</sub> in the Same Verse Referring to the Past](#)

Table D - [PC<sub>pret\\_sim</sub> and SC in the Same Verse Referring to the Past](#)

Table E - [PC<sub>pretWC</sub> and SC in the Same Verse Referring to the Past](#)

Table F - [PC<sub>pret\\_sim</sub> without PC<sub>pretWC</sub> or SC in the Same Verse Referring to the Past](#)

Table G - [PC<sub>pretWC</sub> Should be Revocalized as PC<sub>imp</sub>](#)

Table H - [Substitutes for PC<sub>imp</sub>](#)

[PC<sub>pret\\_sim</sub> in Prophetic Poetry](#)

#### ***d) Changes Pending in Biblical Hebrew (BH)***

All synchronic views of a language (descriptions of the language at a single point in time), when viewed diachronically (i.e. within the context of the language's growth in time), are snapshots of changes completed, in mid-stride or incipient. However, in some periods these changes are more far-reaching than in others. The Hebrew language was at such a period in the years of pre-exilic Biblical Hebrew (c. 900-600 BCE). We do not know how Biblical Hebrew would have developed had the Kingdom of Judah not been destroyed by the Babylonians. In actuality the next stage of Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, developed in circumstances of great pressure from Aramaic and Greek which influenced it pervasively.

Major changes pending were:

##### **i. Tenses**

Kutscher (1976 p. 41) wrote "The tense system of the verb in Biblical Hebrew is more complicated than in any other Semitic dialect." In fact the "consecutive tenses" (see [Box 2 - What is the "waw conversive"?](#) and [Box 3 - The Origin of the "waw conversive"](#)) were the dying remnants of an Akkadian-like tense system about to give way to some sort of simplified verbal system. Use of the consecutive tenses required that verbs precede subject and object in utterances. Thus the disappearance of the consecutive tenses opened up the possibility of other sentence orders.

Similarly the [modal imperfects](#) ([jussive](#), [cohortative](#)), [increasingly became indistinguishable from the normal imperfect](#), also were anachronisms waiting to be replaced by clearer and more consistent indications of volition etc..

## ii. Place of Stress

With the loss of the final short vowels, Hebrew (and Aramaic) was left with a mixed system of ultimate and penultimate syllabic stress which only made sense in the context of its structure before the loss of the final short vowels<sup>50</sup>. Although languages such as Spanish and Italian have more complex stress patterns, it is likely that the pattern would again become more uniform. Two obvious possibilities present themselves:

- **Scenario (a) - Stress could become uniformly penultimate, as it was before the loss of case endings etc., or uniformly ultimate; or,**
- **Scenario (b) - Stress could revert to being mechanically fixed by vowel or consonant length as in most varieties of Arabic.**

In BH both vowel length and place of stress were phonemic though neither carried a heavy load. Scenario (a) maintains the irrelevance of vowel and consonant length to the placement of stress keeping the road open to the disappearance of phonemic vowel and consonant length. Scenario (b) would reestablish the centrality of vowel and consonant length thus reestablishing paradigmatic resistance to long vowel and consonant reduction.

## iii. Place of Stress Replacing Vowel and Consonant Length as Phonemic

Consonant and vowel quality had always been most important in establishing phonemic distinctions. In Biblical Hebrew both place of stress and consonant and vowel quantity was phonemic. However, there was a tendency, due to sound shifts, for vowel length distinctions to be replaced by quality distinctions (see *Vowel and Consonant Length*). Looking back and ahead, we can picture the developments as follows:

- a) C. 2000 BCE phonemic distinction /a:/ā/; /i:/ī/; /u:/ū/ were fully operative;
- b) C. 1400 BCE ā>ō leaving i:ī; u:ū still phonemic;
- c) After C. 700-500 BCE development of allophones of short vowels meant that most of the Biblical Hebrew vowel minimal pairs were no longer valid in the tradition of the Tiberian Masoretes. However, we should note that distinct long and short vowels

and consonants, though no longer phonemic probably did still exist in Tiberian Hebrew;

In Israeli Hebrew distinct long and short vowels do not exist (see [Vowel System - Modern Israeli Hebrew](#)).

#### iv. Long Unstressed Vowel Followed by Short Stressed Vowel

Perhaps in forms such as [/EBHP/](#)<sup>+</sup> /qō'te:l/ (*qa/a.p.*) and [/EBHP/](#)<sup>+</sup> /cō'la:m/ 'eternity' there might have been a tendency to lengthen the stressed vowel and shorten the historically long unstressed vowel.

#### 2.2 Post-Exilic Hebrew ([PostExH](#)) - Written/Oral [Diglossia](#)

##### Box 5

#### Some Factors in the Rise of Post-Exilic Hebrew ([PostExH](#))

"The notion that spoken dialects provided the catalyst for the changes in late biblical Hebrew is consistent with what has been previously stated about linguistic change. Saussure, for example, noted that language change always has its locus at the point of interaction of the speaker with his speech community.<sup>51</sup>

The clearest impetus for the linguistic change of late biblical Hebrew is the backdrop of the Babylonian exile. During the exile, no doubt, the language changed more rapidly. Blount and Sanches have noted that external factors such as invasions, conquests, contact, migrations, institutional changes, restructuring, and social movements produce language change.<sup>52</sup> It is striking that the nation of Judah was subject to every one of these experiences in connection with the Babylonian exile.

Also with the return of the exiles from Babylonia, a new Aramaic-speaking element was introduced. Imperial Aramaic became an administrative language and was surely learned by the local upper classes. In historical terms, then, the borderline between these two successive stages of biblical Hebrew is clearly and conveniently demarcated by the Babylonian exile of the early sixth century BCE—the decisive turning point in the whole of Israelite history. It was then that late biblical Hebrew came into being. Thus in the fifth-sixth century BCE a deep wedge was inserted in the Hebrew language, which divided the language as it divided the history of the people of Israel—in two.<sup>53</sup>

Quoted from [Rooker](#) p. 143.

a. [Development of Proto-Mishnaic Hebrew \(c. 586 BCE-c. 70 BC\)](#).

b. *The Impact of Aramaic*

Hebrew and Aramaic developed out of local varieties of [Proto-Northwest Semitic](#). They diverged for about 1000 years - from the time of the Canaanite shift until the exile in the early 7th century BCE - and converged from the early 7th century BCE until the extinction of [MH](#) as a spoken language in the mid second century CE when its population base was destroyed with [the suppression of the Bar Kochba rebellion](#). Their convergence during this latter period was due to the overwhelming influence of Western Aramaic on MH. The greatest expert on Jewish Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew of the mid-twentieth century, E. Y. Kutscher wrote<sup>54</sup> -

"There is room for investigation as to whether MH was a Hebrew-Aramaic mixed language. The question may be posed owing to the fact that Aramaic had a pervading influence in all spheres of the language, including inflection, which is generally considered to be impenetrable to foreign influence."

Though pre-exilic Judean Hebrew was to some extent influenced by occasional waves of linguistic innovations, originating in other closely related Canaanite languages (See the table [Linguistic Influences on the Regions of Judah and Israel](#), and [Harris 1939](#) and [1941](#)), only in border areas of Gilead and eastern and northern Galilee was Hebrew exposed to a non-Canaanite language viz. Aramaic. An example, in the northern and very early [Song of Deborah](#), is the verb יִתְּנוּ "let them recount" using the Aramaic version of the root תנה in place of the Hebrew שנה. Until the late eighth century BCE it would be true to say that there was no significant portion of the Judean population who were bilingual and Jerusalemites could probably pass their lives without ever having to speak or understand a foreign tongue.

This began to change with the fall of Samaria in **the late 8th century BCE** as [Judah](#) became integrated into the wide-ranging [Assyrian](#) trading system<sup>55</sup>. The [lingua franca](#) of Assyrian rule and international trade at the time was Aramaic. **From this period on it is unlikely that there was ever a period when Hebrew speaking international traders, high-level government officials or government scribes would have been ignorant of Aramaic.**

**Starting in the early sixth century BCE all Hebrew speakers would have been [exposed to Aramaic](#). Indeed, from early in the 6th century B.C.E. until the extinction of Hebrew as a spoken language in the 2nd century C.E. Hebrew was under continuous pressure from**

**Aramaic, a language as closely related to Hebrew as Spanish is to Italian.** In addition, from the late fourth century Greek was widely spoken in Palestine. Although Greek directly influenced Hebrew, its greatest influence was from its massive impact on Aramaic which then passed these innovations on to Hebrew. **Aramaic was the language of their non-Jewish neighbors (except for some Hellenized Syrians), the normal spoken language of the Jews of Babylonia, the Galilee and of many Jews in Judea. Aramaic was a language spoken in Jerusalem from the late 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. and may have been its majority tongue.** Many Hebrew speaking Jews in Judea would have had various levels of competence in Aramaic as a second language. **Since at least the mid-second century C.E. the transmitters of the reading/pronunciation traditions for both Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew were speakers of Aramaic.** By the time of the [Masoretes](#), Hebrew had not been a spoken language for 700 years and the tradition(s) of Hebrew pronunciation had been subject to overwhelming Aramaic linguistic pressure for over a millennium and a half. The linguistic pressure from Aramaic not only increased the impetus for change but determined its nature.

## Box 6

Influence of Aramaic on Post-Exilic Hebrew ([PostExH](#))

... Aramaic had a far-reaching impact and left its mark on all facets of the language, namely, orthography, phonetics and phonology, morphology including inflection, syntax, and vocabulary. **There is room for investigation as to whether** Mishnaic Hebrew **was a Hebrew-Aramaic mixed language**. This question may be posed owing to the fact that A had a pervading influence in all spheres of the language, including inflection, which is generally considered to be impenetrable to foreign influence....

*Orthography.* All of the peculiarities mentioned above as being in MH are found, more or less, in the Palestinian Aramaic dialects as well, especially Galilean and Christian-Palestinian Aramaic, and even in the eastern dialects.

*Phonetics and Phonology.* The fact that the consonantal phonemes (according to biblical Aramaic also the vocalic phonemes) are from a synchronic point of view identical in both languages—a phenomenon without parallel often even in different dialects of the same language—is noteworthy.... Common to H and Aramaic are: the double realization כפ"ת כפ"ת (b g d k p t); the weakening of the gutturals to a greater or lesser extent in most of the Aramaic dialects; and common assimilation and dissimilation phenomena (with regard to ח ..., especially in Galilean Aramaic).

*Inflection.* The independent personal pronoun אַתָּה ("you" masc.) and the possessive pronouns אֲנִי, אֲנִי, אֲנִי ... are clear indications of Aramaic influence. With regard to the verb, the influence was weaker.... The loss of the *puccal* is paralleled in Aramaic, whereas the *hopcal* still exists as opposed to the Aramaic dialects where it disappeared .... Aramaic influence was less felt in the noun patterns.

*Tenses and Syntax.* The tense system completely parallels that of Galilean Aramaic and is close to that of Christian-Palestinian and Samaritan Aramaic. It is also similar to that of Eastern Aramaic. The assumption that the whole tense system is influenced by Aramaic seems to be inescapable.... Even though there still is no real comprehensive study on the syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew and the Western Aramaic dialects, there seems to be a far-reaching parallelism between them.

*Vocabulary.* It is clear that Aramaic influence is considerable in this category.... Even in the numerals there are Aramaic elements, e.g., שֵׁשֶׁת ("a sixth") and תֵּשְׁבַע ("an eighth"). As is well known also the numerals are most resistant to penetration of foreign elements....

There are also many calques, such as, אָסַף = סָגַר ("he closed"). Similarly the fact that in MH כּוֹס ("goblet") is masculine and חֵדֶשׁ ("field") is feminine goes back to Aramaic influence.

Quoted from Kutcher 1971 col. 1605-6

c. [Mishnaic, Middle or Rabbinic Hebrew](#) (MH - see for details [Sáenz-Badillos](#) chapt. 6. For the relation between BH and MH see [Young, Rezetko, Ehrensverd 2008](#) chapt. 9.)

With the destruction of the [First Temple](#) (587 BCE) the [scribal schools](#) and royal patronage of writers ended, Jerusalem was depopulated, the country was ruined and much of the population was exiled to Babylonia where the common language was Aramaic. Later, a small number of Babylonian Jews, probably mainly either Aramaic speaking or Hebrew-Aramaic bilingual, returned to Judah where they provided the leadership, under Persian imperial patronage, for a slow restoration of Jerusalem and a much reduced Judah known as the province of Yahud.

When written<sup>56</sup> sources again give us a look in, the linguistic situation of the country was<sup>57</sup>:

- Greek was widely spoken in ([see map of Hellenistic and Herodian Cities](#)):
  - Coastal plain;
  - [Decapolis](#) (Jordan Valley north of [Perea](#), the main Jewish area in Trans-Jordan);
  - Greek cities within Jewish areas in Galilee;
  - Greek cities within [Samaritan](#) populated areas of central and northern Samaria;
  - Greek cities within [Idumean](#) areas in the northern Negev i.e. what was formerly the southern section of the territory of the tribe of Judah.
  
- **Aramaic was the majority language of the country.** Probably it was the only language, other than Greek, spoken throughout the country except for some areas of Judea between Lod and Jericho. It seems to have been the language of the upper classes in Jerusalem; and,
- A [Proto-Mishnaic or Proto-Rabbinic Hebrew](#) (PMH) was probably spoken, along with Aramaic in some areas of Judea between [Lod and Jericho](#); and,
- **Late Biblical Hebrew which was a literary language**, along side Greek and Aramaic for the Jewish population. There were no speakers of this artificial tongue. This is not dissimilar to the situation of [Modern Literary Arabic](#) today or Church Latin in the middle ages.

PMH was undoubtedly the descendent of a [koine](#) spoken Hebrew developed when speakers of different Hebrew dialects were thrown together by the events surrounding the Babylonian conquest. Quantitatively the large majority of these Hebrew speaking Judeans lived outside Jerusalem and many would have had [roots in southern Samaria](#). This koine underwent major changes due to three causes:

- **natural developments internal to the language** (see [Segal](#), [Kutscher 1982](#), [Bendavid](#));
- **[the profound influence of spoken Aramaic](#)** in vocabulary, semantics and grammar including inflection; and
- **the lesser influence of Greek, and perhaps after the [conversion of the Idumeans](#), the Edomite language.**

Due to the influence of Aramaic, the following changes occurred -

➤ **Tenses**

[As noted above](#), the Hebrew tense system was clearly headed for a rationalization. We do not know how the system would have developed in the absence of **overwhelming Aramaic pressure**. Perhaps, instead of being reduced to the modal form we see in Mishnaic Hebrew, the prefix-form (imperfect) might have developed into something like the modern spoken Arabic imperfect in which prefixes separate the present, future, imperfect and modal forms with clarity<sup>58</sup>. However, the Aramaic verbal system drastically changed, perhaps under Greek influence, and the Mishnaic Hebrew verbal system changed in close parallel due to Aramaic influence<sup>59</sup>.

➤ **Word order**

[As mentioned above](#), the demise of the consecutive tenses freed Hebrew from the necessity of starting most narrative clauses with a verb. This could have resulted in any number of new patterns such as a predominant subject-verb-object order such as is found in Israeli Hebrew and most modern spoken Arabic dialects. Due to the influence of Aramaic speech habits, Mishnaic Hebrew developed a sentence syntax mirroring that of Western Aramaic which, among other things, frequently began utterances with the verb.



➤ **Stress**

[As noted above](#), with the loss of the final short vowels, Hebrew and Aramaic were left with mixed systems of ultimate and penultimate syllabic stress which were likely to become more uniform in time. Under the sustained influence of Western Aramaic, Mishnaic Hebrew became predominantly penultimately stressed<sup>60</sup>. **In the absence of Aramaic influence, a shift to a general ultimate stress, or a stress pattern similar to Classical Arabic, might have been other possible outcomes.**

Scholars have, at times, claimed that Hebrew was completely replaced by Aramaic during this period. However, [Segal](#), [Greenfield](#) and [Levine](#) have demonstrated that this was not the case. Modern linguistic study, research on contemporary sources, the Bar Kochba letters in a popular spoken Hebrew all show that Hebrew was a spoken language of southern Palestine until at least 135 CE when, in the wake of the [Bar Kochba rebellion](#), the Romans evicted or killed the Jewish population in the areas in which Hebrew was still spoken. At that point, Aramaic and Greek became virtually the only spoken languages of the whole of what is now Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel. An early form of Arabic was already spoken on the desert fringes of this area.

The Roman suppression of the first Jewish revolt against Rome (67-70 CE), including the destruction of Jerusalem led to a social-cultural-religious collapse. This included the disappearance of the priestly aristocracy and [Jewish groups](#) such as the [Sadducees](#) and [Essenes](#). The earliest Rabbinic literature dates from the period 70-200 CE and it is written in the spoken Hebrew of the time, often called, after the [most famous literary product](#) of the time, Mishnaic Hebrew.

I will say a few words about Mishnaic Hebrew.

In 1st century BCE-first century CE Judea many native Hebrew speakers would have been able to speak, or at least understand, Aramaic. It must be remembered, that Aramaic and Hebrew are about as different as Spanish and Italian.

As I mentioned, Mishnaic Hebrew is very different from Biblical Hebrew - certainly more different than present day English is from the language of Shakespeare though less different than that of our language from that of Chaucer.

## Mishnaic Hebrew differed from Biblical Hebrew in:

- **stress** - predominantly penultimate<sup>61</sup>;
- **syntax and the use of tenses** – both greatly simplified and restructured on the model of contemporary Western Aramaic. Particularly noteworthy is the expression of modality. [As noted above](#), the **modal** imperfects ([jussive](#) (PC<sub>jus</sub>), [cohortative](#) (PC<sub>coh</sub>)), were increasingly indistinguishable from the normal (indicative) imperfect. In Mishnaic Hebrew this problem was solved by using the active participle (קוֹטֵל) as the present/future tense, in place of the biblical (indicative) imperfect, while the prefix conjugation ("imperfect") served in the words of [Pérez](#) (p. 124; see also p. 108) - ... the imperfect can be used for expressing the future. Through it, an action that has not yet taken place can be represented or a series of future events narrated.... In the main, or independent, clause, the imperfect almost inevitably has a modal aspect, cohortative (expressing volition), optative (expressing a wish), jussive (expressing a command), for example:
  - ... If he is God, let him come and destroy ( יבוא וימחה )
  - ...What can I do ( מה אעשה )?
  - ... If they are three, he says, Let us bless (גברך)
  - ... Who could wipe the dust ( מי יגלה ) ...
- **the use of שׁל 'of' to replace the construct in many uses** - this was probably influenced by the simiular construction. As Kapeliuk<sup>62</sup> wrote -
  - ... replacing the possessive construction of the construct state by an analytic construction, often including the same particle which is used in creating relative clauses. It is not impossible that the difficulty inherent in deriving the correct forms of the construct state from the basic form of the noun, especially in languages with such unstable vocalism as Syriac or Hebrew.

The difficulty that Kapeliuk hinted at really only arose in the post-exilic period as shown (using [TH as a proxy](#) for earlier, but unrecorded forms of Hebrew) in the following table.

Table 3

Deriving the Construct State from the Absolute State  
More Complex in TH than in EBHP

<i>English</i>	<i>*/EBHP/+63</i> (c. 850-550 BCE)	<i>TH</i> <i>/TH/+ *[TH]</i> (c. 850 CE)
'word'	/da <b>ba</b> :r/	/dɔ <b>ḅ</b> ar/ [dɔ: <b>v</b> ɔ:r]
'word of' (construct)	/d <b>a</b> .bar/	/dɛ <b>ḅ</b> ar/ [dɛ, <b>v</b> ɛ:r]
'words'	/d <b>a</b> ba' <b>r</b> im/	/dɛ <b>ḅ</b> ɔ' <b>r</b> im/ [dɛvɔ: <b>r</b> i:m]
'words of' (construct)	/d <b>a</b> ba <sub>1</sub> .ray/	/d <b>i</b> b <sub>1</sub> .rɛ/ [div <sub>1</sub> ,rɛ:]
'righteousness'	/ʃ <b>a</b> da' <b>q</b> â/	/ʃɛ <b>ḅ</b> ɔ' <b>q</b> ɔ/ [ʃɛ <b>ḅ</b> ɔ: <b>q</b> ɔ:]
righteousness of' (construct)	/ʃ <b>a</b> da <sub>1</sub> .qat/	/ʃ <b>i</b> d <sub>1</sub> .qat/ [ʃi <b>ḅ</b> ɔ' <b>q</b> ɔ:]
'acts of righteousness'	/ʃ <b>a</b> da' <b>q</b> ôṭ/	/ʃɛ <b>ḅ</b> ɔ' <b>q</b> oṭ/ [ʃɛ <b>ḅ</b> ɔ: <b>q</b> o:θ]
'acts of righteousness of' (construct)	/ʃ <b>a</b> da <sub>1</sub> .qôṭ/	/ʃ <b>i</b> d <sub>1</sub> .qoṭ/ [ʃi <b>ḅ</b> ɔ, <b>q</b> o:θ]

- *morphology* – standard verbal nouns as well as Aramaic noun forms;
- *pronunciation* - on the model of contemporary Western Aramaic; and,
- *vocabulary* – probably preserves many words for work-a-day objects and activities that were never mentioned in the Bible due to the subjects discussed in the Bible or, more

accurately, not discussed. Examples might include *keveš* (preserves); *gaḥar* (jetty) and *zol* (cheapness). It also includes a vast number of Aramaic and Greek words.

Mishnaic Hebrew does not seem to have been used for poetry, prophecy or high prose. However, what it lacked in grandeur, grace and dignity it made up in precision.

*See -*

[Changes in Pronunciation Between the First Temple Period, Tiberian Biblical Vocalization and Modern Hebrew most of which Alter the Syllabic Structure](#)

[Consonants that Were Distinct and Phonemic in the First Temple Period that Have Merged in Modern Pronunciation](#)

[Consonants that Exist in Modern Pronunciation but were absent in Hebrew of the First Temple Period](#)

[Linguistic Changes Affecting the Pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew 2000 B.C.E. - 850 C.E. According to Various Scholars](#)

[Some Political, Social and Linguistic Developments in the Pre-Exilic Period c. 1000-586 BCE](#)

### [2.3 Changes in the Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew Between the Early 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE and that Recorded in the Tiberian Masoretic Tradition \(c. 850 CE\)](#)

### [2.4 Medieval Hebrew - Between the Mishnah and the Revival of Hebrew in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century \(See for details Sáenz-Badillos chapt. 7\)](#)

All forms of Hebrew used in this period consisted, in varying portions, of 4 elements:

- Biblical Hebrew
- Mishnaic Hebrew
- The writer's native language
- Literary models that the writer was imitating consciously or unconsciously

### [2.5 Modern \(Israeli\) Hebrew \(IH\)<sup>64</sup>](#)

#### *(a) Foundation Process*

Modern Israeli Hebrew (see [Berman](#)), generally called either Modern Hebrew or Israeli Hebrew, started life, in the late 19th century, in the same way as all forms of Hebrew since the mid-first century CE i.e. a combination of Tiberian pointed Biblical Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, the

influence of the native languages of the speakers and, for the written form, their literary models. This last element was of the least importance in fashioning the language. In the case of Israeli Hebrew, “the influence of the native languages of the speakers” translated into a profound impact on IH (see below), of the sentence structure and semantics of Yiddish, Russian and German in that order of importance.

Another way of looking at the process is in terms of a [pidginization](#) - [creolization](#) - [decreolization](#) process. I.e. -

1. The first generation of Hebrew speakers, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, spoke a pidgin combining:
  - [relexified](#) Yiddish<sup>65</sup> with the resulting Hebrew vocabulary mostly conforming to the semantics of the Yiddish words [calqued](#); and,
  - elements of literary Hebrew pronounced within the phonetic limitations of Yiddish.
2. The first generation of [native](#) speakers spoke a Hebrew [creole](#). However, they are educated in earlier forms of literary Hebrew which results in some [decreolization](#).<sup>66</sup>

## Box 7

### Koineization, Creole and Decreolization in the Formation of IH

The modern (Hebrew) language is a "revived" classical language which now performs all the functions of a community vernacular. Contact was ENTIRELY between L2 (second language Hebrew) speakers, yet developments followed a pattern familiar from koineization (indeed [Blanc 1968](#):238, in his account of the development of Israeli Hebrew, refers to the language as a "koine,"...). As pointed out by [Glinert \(1989...\)](#), there has been considerable reduction in the phonological inventory, as compared to the liturgical language. Like many other Semitic languages, Biblical Hebrew distinguished the pharyngeal consonants /ħ/ and /ʕ/ and the velar /x/. Neither /ħ/ nor /ʕ/ was acquired by the majority of the (adult) Ashkenazi immigrants, whose first languages were European. Instead, they merged /ħ/ with /x/, a phone widely found in European languages, and deleted /ʕ/ altogether.... The Sephardic Jews, who had an Arabic substrate, used the pharyngeals in their Hebrew vernacular. In the majority, high-status vernacular, the pharyngeals have been leveled out, despite being widely regarded as correct.

Unlike Glinert, [Ravid 1995](#) investigates some of the processes behind these changes. Her study of language acquisition in Hebrew is extremely revealing in that it examines the role of children in the establishment of new spoken norms. She claims that **Modern Hebrew is morphologically more opaque (irregular) than its antecedents because of the "phonological erosion" which followed its being "revived as a spoken medium using a new phonological system only loosely related to that of Classical Hebrew, with entire phonological classes being obliterated"** (1995:133). Thus she finds, among child learners, the development of non-standard reanalyses of morphological classes which are promoted by the principles of **"Transparency, Simplicity, and Consistency,"** but are constrained by literacy and the "literate propensity towards marked structures" (1995:162). In the immediate post-1945 period, adult L2 (second language) Hebrew speakers transmitted the language to children, who nativized the input (doubtless according to a route similar to that suggested by Ravid). Significantly ... this stabilization is evidently still not complete, even though the majority of Israeli children now have native Hebrew-speaking parents.

Quoted from [Kerswill and Williams 2000](#) pp. 70-71

We can tackle our discussion of Israeli Hebrew under three heads:

- § Morphology and Syntax
- § Phonology i.e. sound system
- § Semantics i.e. the range of meanings and associations of words

*The relative importance of Biblical Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, the influence of the native languages of the speakers differs in each of these issues.*

*(b) Morphology and Syntax*

The word grammar comprehends both morphology (i.e. study and description of word formation (as inflection, derivation, and compounding) in language) and syntax i.e. the way in which linguistic elements (as words) are put together to form constituents (as phrases or clauses).

*The morphology of Israeli Hebrew has been little influenced by the native languages of its early speakers<sup>67</sup>. One can generalize and say that:*

- in the morphology i.e. the forms of verbs and nouns Biblical Hebrew predominates (see [Tene](#));
- in the radical simplification of grammar and a concomitant movement to becoming a more analytical language Israeli Hebrew follows Mishnaic Hebrew;
- In the [use of tenses](#) and the development of rigid rules of [subordination in sentence structure](#) the influence of [Standard Average European](#)<sup>68</sup> (see [Rosen](#)) was predominant<sup>69</sup>. Of interest is the development of new modal forms by prefixing *שָׁעַלְשָׁעַלְשָׁעַל* (ש) (or *bo* - בוא with the first person )- to the *prefix conjugation*<sup>70</sup>. Egs. (from [Gilnert](#) § 28.3, 28.6) -

\* *emphatic imperative* - שלא תשכח 'Don't you forget!'

\* *jussive* - שיזכרו 'He should remember / let him remember'; שהם יזכרו 'They'd better remember'

\* *cohortative* with prefix ש - שניתי לך 'Let me give you'; שזכרו את זה 'Let's bear it in mind'

\* *cohortative* with prefix בוא - בוא אתן לך 'Let me give you'; בוא נחשוב רגע 'Let me think for a moment'

Modern Hebrew has regularized the use of inherited forms in a way that makes it extremely easy to create new lexemes as loan-translations from European languages. These include:

- Relational Adjectives (Arabic term *nisba*, also written *nisbe(h)*) i.e. any word, native or foreign, can be changed into an adjective by adding the vowel *ī* represented by the letter *yod*<sup>\*</sup>;

- perfect participles, really adjectives, are regularly formed out of any active verbal stem i.e.: *qal - pa'ul; piel - mefu'al; hiphil - mu'fal*;
- verbal action nouns are regularly formed out of any verbal stem i.e.: *qal - pe'ila; piel - pi'ul; hiphil-haphala; niphil - hipa'lut; hitpa'el - hitpa'alut*
- any word can be changed into an abstract noun by adding the suffix ות (*út*);
- many foreign words can be changed into Hebrew verbs in the piel – pual - hitpa'el stems or analytically through the use of the verb עשה *'asa* (to make or do). An analytical causative has formed using the verb גרם *garam* (see [Berman.](#));
- wide use is made of a range of methods to allow adjectives and nouns to be used adverbially;
- also widely created are western type compound adjectives (see [Table 6 - Western-type Compound Nouns and Adjectives in Israeli Hebrew and Arabic \(MSA\)](#)<sup>1</sup>);
- nouns formed from the contraction of two words e.g. *kolnoa* = "cinema" (*kol*=voice, *noa*=movement).
- **Use of inherited forms to form neologisms**

(For a native speaker coining a new word) The semantic factors determining pattern choice are varied. Speakers tend to look for the most prominent and the most-readily-available pattern they observe in the recent everyday lexicon. A derivation pattern may be used widely enough to function as the default pattern for some category, but even then is still associated with some broad semantic (or at least syntactic) feature. Generally, the broader the semantic category, the more likely is the default pattern to be selected: *pual* for passive verbs, *hitpa'el* for all other non-agentive verbs, *pi'el* for agentive ones; + *i* for attributive adjectives, *meCuCaC* for verb related ones; *CiCuC* for verb-related abstract nominalizations, + *ut* for other nominalizations; + *on* for diminutives, + *an* for agentives/instrumentals, + *iya* for locatives. There are other patterns, ranked below the default ones on the productivity scale, but nevertheless significantly productive: + *ay*/+ *a'i* for agents and agent attributes, *CaCiC* for + *able*-type adjectives, etc. Beyond these primary choices, a number of general semantic factors may also play a role, resulting in additional adjustments and shifts. Such modifications usually do not upset the basic semantic classification, at least not at the highest level. Maintaining a degree of transparency for the base within the neologism is one such factor. It is often manifest in preservation of the original



consonant clustering of the base. The prominence of a pattern in the new lexicon is determined not only by size, but also by semantic saliency and coherence, as well as by pattern transparency. Often, pattern transparency is enhanced by transparent suffixation. If it is evident that additional suffixation would be semantically redundant, the most economical representation (i.e. minimal suffixation) is chosen. Minor shifts between partially-similar patterns may also be caused by semantic considerations, such as preference for the semantically more salient (or more transparent) pattern, or for the pattern which speakers regard as semantically unmarked. Frequency of commonly used alternates".

([Bolozky](#) p. 193)

### (c) Phonology

*The founding speakers of Israeli Hebrew were native speakers of [Yiddish a language](#)<sup>72</sup>:*

- which [lacks the distinction, maintained in German, between long and short vowels](#)<sup>73</sup>,
- in which [gemination](#) is not phonemic,
- in which the only glottal phoneme is [h],
- which (like German but unlike English) had undergone the shift [/w/ > /v/](#)
- which lacks the Semitic "emphatic" consonants.

If the founding speakers had been native [Arabic](#), [Australian English](#) or [German](#) speakers the distinction between long and short vowels might have been revived in Hebrew. If they had been Arabic speakers gemination and the Semitic system of gutturals (particularly  $\text{c}$  [/ʕ/](#),  $\text{g}$  [/ɣ/](#),  $\text{h}$  [/ħ/](#), and final  $\text{h}$  [/h/](#)), "emphatic" consonants ([/t̤/](#), [/s̤/](#), [/q/](#)) and  $\text{w}$  = [/w/](#) might have been restored. As it was, the resulting phonological system of Israeli Hebrew can be described as partly desemitized ([Tene](#)).

The combination, in order of importance, of the:

- disappearance of both phonemic and phonetic vowel and consonant length (gemination);
- reduction of [the original typical Semitic 3 way opposition in Biblical Hebrew \(voiced, voiceless, emphatic\) to 2 way \(voiced, voiceless\) in Israeli Hebrew](#) ;

- loss of gutturals except for the occasional /h/<sup>74</sup>;
- commencement of syllables with vowels; and
- formation of consonantal clusters at the beginning of words

will probably have far-ranging effects on the structure. We should note, however, that except for the loss of the emphatics, all of these phenomena are paralleled by developments in earlier stages of Hebrew or in other Semitic languages<sup>75</sup>.

Some examples of the nature of these changes –

- [Excursus 1 - Phonemic Structure of Hebrew](#) shows examples of the impacts of loss of gemination and of gutturals;
- the quiescing of consonantal value of the letter *yod* before /i/ at the beginning of a word results in syllables beginning with vowels – a rather unsemiotic phenomenon e.g. *ישׁמר* pronounced as [iš'mor] (TH /yiš'mor/ [yiš'mo:r]); *ישראל* pronounced as [is.ra.'el] (TH /yiś.râ.'el/ [yisrɔ:'e:l])<sup>76</sup>;

As an aside, I would suggest that care should be taken to read Biblical Hebrew poetry as Biblical Hebrew, not as if it were a Modern Hebrew text.

#### ***(d) Semantics***

**It is in semantics that Israeli Hebrew can be said to break radically with the past and semantically and hence culturally become a European language.** (See [Rosen](#), [Tene](#) and [Izre'el](#))

The process worked as follows. When reviving Hebrew, the revivers asked the “fatal question” i.e. “what is the Hebrew word for X” with X being a Yiddish, Russian or German (and more recently English) word. He would:

a) select a Hebrew word (verb, adjective, noun etc.) with a historical semantic range that overlapped the particular meaning of the foreign word he was trying to translate. Then, the Hebrew word would come to mirror the semantic range of word X. I.e. it would take the range of meanings of X and lose all of its original meanings not included in the semantic range of X. This is a development with huge cultural implications. For example -

The biblical Hebrew *taḥana* (Israeli Hebrew *takhana*) was originally a fairly rare word, from a root meaning “bending down” used meaning a stop for camping. It was used for describing the Israelites camping places in the wilderness. The root being similar in meaning to *se stationer* in French, *takhana* was chosen as the Hebrew [calque](#) (a compound, derivative, or phrase that is introduced into a language through translation of the constituents of a term in another language (as superman from German Übermensch) of the word “station”. It is now used to translate any English use of station without any connection, any longer, with the root meaning. In fact, since “station” is not used in European languages to denote a camping place, it can no longer be used in its original meaning! Arabic used a more “authentic” approach i.e. the Arabic word for bus stop is related to the word “to stop”; for police station Arabic uses a word meaning center of diffusion. What this means is that Hebrew has accepted an idiosyncratic development of this vocabulary item which stems from internal developments in another, historically unrelated, language.

Similar developments have taken place for [sherut](#) to translate all senses of service and [tenu'a \(Biblical Hebrew tenu'a\) for all senses of “eg. English\) “movement”](#) e.g. scout movement!

b) use one of the other approaches described by [Tene](#). For Israeli slang [see](#).

**One important impact of the Europeanization of Hebrew semantics was to move Hebrew from an "objective" language emphasizing what is being described in a narrative, and its state of completeness, to a "subjective" language more concerned with the place, and to a certain extent, time of the narrator (see [Rosén](#)).**

The net result is that while the grammar and vocabulary of Israeli Hebrew are overwhelmingly Hebrew, the range of meanings and associations of the words are overwhelmingly European. [This](#) combined with the differing [implications of the tenses in Biblical, Mishnaic and Israeli Hebrew](#) makes Israelis, unless specially trained, poor choices for teaching Biblical Hebrew. [Zuckermann](#) (pp. 64-65) wrote -

Frequently, new research emerges allegedly demonstrating how “bad” Israelis are at reading comprehension *vis-à-vis* pupils in other countries. I would like to explore whether these examinations test reading comprehension in (Old) Hebrew rather than in Israeli Hebrew. The

Mutual Intelligibility Assumption posits that Israel's main language is Hebrew because Israelis can understand Hebrew. Edward Ullendorff ... has claimed that the biblical Isaiah could have understood Israeli Hebrew. I am not convinced that this would have been the case. The reason Israelis can be expected to understand the Book of Isaiah - albeit still with difficulty - is surely because they study the Old Testament at school for eleven years, rather than because it is familiar to them from their daily conversation. Furthermore, **Israelis read the Bible as if it were Israeli Hebrew and often therefore misunderstand it**<sup>77</sup>. When an Israeli reads “*yéled sha'ashu'ím*” in Jeremiah 31: 19 (King James 20), she or he does not understand it as “pleasant child” but rather as “playboy.” “*Bá'u baním 'ad mashbé*” in Isaiah 37: 3 is interpreted by Israelis as “children arrived at a crisis” rather than as “children arrived at the mouth of the womb, to be born.” “*Kol ha'anashím hayyod'ím ki meqatrtót neshehém le'elohím 'aḥerím*” in Jeremiah 44: 15 is understood by many Israelis as “all the men who know that their wives *are complaining* to other gods” rather than “all the men who knew that their wives *had burned incense* unto other gods.” Most importantly, the available examples are far from being only lexical (as in the above *faux amis*): **Israelis are often incapable of recognizing moods, aspects and tenses in the Bible**. Ask an Israeli what “*avaním shaaqú máyim*” (Job 14: 19) means and she or he will most likely tell you that the stones eroded the water. On second thought, she or he would guess that semantically this is impossible and that it must be the water which eroded the stones. Yet such an object-verb-subject (of a transitive verb) constituent order is impossible in Israeli Hebrew. “*Nappíla goralót wened'á*” (Jonah 1: 7) is thought to be rhetorical future rather than cohortative. By and large, Israelis are the worst students in *advanced* studies of the Bible.... Yet, Israeli children are told that the Hebrew Bible was written in their mother tongue.

An additional complication for Israelis learning or teaching Biblical or Mishnaic Hebrew is caused by the fact that it is quite frequent for Biblical Hebrew prose to use one noun or verb for an object or action, while Biblical Hebrew poetry may have one or more synonyms for the prose word while Mishnaic Hebrew might use a different word, which might well be one of the thousands borrowed from Greek and Aramaic, or use the biblical word in a different sense. [Bendavid](#) has published a whole glossary for words in Biblical Hebrew automatically replaced by different words in Mishnaic Hebrew.

## 2.6 Major Changes Between [Ancient Hebrew](#) and Israeli Hebrew

Were the Prophet Jeremiah to visit the Old City of Jerusalem today what would he notice linguistically? Firstly he would not be able to read a word on the Hebrew-Arabic-English signs. His own [paleo-hebrew](#) script would be no where to be found. He may

have been familiar with the [Aramaic script](#) of his day but it was so different from the modern script that it might as well have been written in Greek.

He would have probably found that the sound system of [Palestinian Arabic](#) may well have been familiar with its **long and short vowels and consonants, 3-way consonantal opposition and full range of gutturals, and wide use of the prefix conjugation for the present and future** all of which are lacking in [IH](#). However, even so he would be hard pressed to understand more than the odd word of Palestinian Arabic. Also familiar to him would be the widespread suffixing of pronominal endings to nouns in contrast to the ubiquitous use of analytic genitive constructions in spoken IH.

Turning to IH, once his ear was trained, he would be able to understand most of the grammatical forms and many of the words. However, the meaning and associations of the words and forms would be full of faux-amis<sup>78</sup>. In addition the "feel" of the language would strike him as strange. His own [BH](#) had been a language dominated by verbs and nouns that was sparing in the use of adjectives<sup>79</sup>. In contrast IH would seem to him smothered under adjectives, adverbials and compound neologisms such as ramzor or kolnoa.

## 2.7 Israeli Hebrew and Modern Arabic <sup>80</sup> – a Few Differences and Many Parallels

There are at least four major differences between the situation of Modern Arabic and Israeli Hebrew:

- a) All the major varieties of Modern Arabic are spoken and written by populations who have been speaking Arabic for centuries whereas Israeli Hebrew was revived by people [thinking and speaking modern European languages](#).
- b) Israeli Hebrew is a uniform language though there are, as in other modern languages, differences in levels and between the written and spoken varieties. However, there is no parallel in Israeli Hebrew to the profound problems caused by Arabic diglossia <sup>81</sup> i.e. using MSA for writing and formal speech and the numerous Arabic "dialects" for normal conversation. To clarify, [Modern Arabic](#) exists in many forms which can be subdivided as follows:

**Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)** – this is the written language throughout the Arab world. MSA is closely based on Classical Arabic (CA) in grammar and phonology but highly Europeanized in semantics and sentence structure. MSA is used orally, in a simplified form, for formal speeches, broadcasts etc. but is not the normal spoken language of any population, educated or uneducated, anywhere.

**Varieties of spoken Arabic** which, in some cases, may be mutually unintelligible. The grammar and vocabulary of the varieties of spoken Arabic is as different from MSA as that of the Romance languages from Latin. However, as is the case with the Romance languages, the varieties of spoken Arabic developed in parallel ways. Egyptian Arabic is understood across the Arab world due to the predominance of Egyptian media.

- c) The Israeli population is overwhelmingly literate and largely bilingual often with English as the second language whereas the Arabic speaking population includes a large illiterate element.
- d) The Israeli population lives in a highly modernized/Westernized social-cultural-economic context whereas many Arabic speakers live in traditional social-cultural contexts where traditional, religious based, value systems and norms are dominant.

**In spite of these differences in context, four major factors have combined to create an amazing degree of parallelism in the modern developments in the two languages:**

- a) They started out as closely related languages as similar as, say, French and Italian;
- b) In the Middle Ages Arabic developed the capacity to deal with the abstractions of Greek philosophy, science, medicine and mathematics as texts in these subjects were translated either directly from Greek to Arabic or via Syriac. Many of these texts were then translated in a somewhat Arabized Hebrew to be accessible to European Jewry. This language of translation narrowed the distance between the two languages. Some of its fundamental features remain vibrant in Israeli Hebrew, such as the wide use of nisba, and calques of many verbal nouns (in Hebrew with the suffix תּוּ ) and such coinages as:

- אֲיִכוּת = “abstract quality” from Hebrew אֵיךְ = “how?”; [calqued](#) from Arabic *kayfiyya* from *kayf* = “how.”
- כְּמוֹת = “quantity” from Hebrew כַּמָּה = “how much?” similarly calqued from Arabic *kamiyya*.

c) They have both been influenced in modern period by modern cultural concepts and their linguistic vehicle [Standard Average European](#). However, in the case of Arabic this influence came from the outside (translations, learning European languages, modern education) whereas [in Hebrew it initially come from the culture and linguistic habits of the revivers of Hebrew](#), i.e. the first generations of speakers and later from the outside as in Arabic and,

d) They, of course, shared the normal linguistic processes of change common to all languages.

These four major factors have combined to create an amazing degree of similarity in the direction and nature of change. This is particularly extraordinary in that Israeli Hebrew and modern spoken and written Arabic developed in virtually total isolation from each other. In almost every case change has been accomplished by the widespread application of language resources historically present in the languages but systematically extended in order to [calque](#) Standard Average European modes of expression. Among these parallels are:

- i. [Westernization of sentence structure](#)<sup>82</sup>
- ii. Analytical formation that together with [nisba](#) replaces the construct case in many situations. In [IH](#) (and ) the particle is לְשֵׁי *šēl* (לְשֵׁי = 'my'). = 'of', in spoken Arabic (*bita:<sup>c</sup>* (*bita:<sup>c</sup>ti* = “my”), *ma:l* etc.)<sup>83</sup>.
- iii. Wide use of [nisba](#) adjective formation partly replacing construct formations. Similarly suffixes are routinely used to form abstract nouns (Hebrew תּוֹ *ut*; Arabic *iyya*<sup>84</sup>). Arabic uses the suffix *an* to form adverbs<sup>85</sup> with Hebrew using a wide range of means<sup>86</sup> to the same end. Each language uses [vacant stems](#) to develop new nuances from existing roots and use the *piel* stem (*form II* in Arabic) to form denominative (often quadriliteral) verbs.

- iv. [nouns formed from the contraction of two words](#) e.g. *kol'noa* = "cinema" (*kol* 'voice', *noa* 'movement') often with contraction e.g. *ramzor* 'traffic light' from *remez* 'signal' + *or* 'light' (Arabic term *naht* النحت).
- v. [Use of inherited forms for neologisms](#) (Arabic *ishtiqa:q*).
  - 1. Purist, rarely successful, attempts to form neologisms out of obsolete roots (Arabic *istinba:t*).
- vi. Wide use of [calques](#), [semantic loans](#) and lexical borrowing (Arabic *ta'ri:b*).
- vii. Use of standard words in construct to [calque](#) western expressions e.g. Arabic *cilm*<sup>87</sup> and Hebrew *torat* תורת to calque 'study of', 'science of', the suffix 'ology' etc.
- viii. In some formal styles both languages use [verbal action nouns](#) to partially replace verbs.<sup>88</sup>
- ix. Both languages tend to use internal agent passives<sup>89</sup> to literally translate English news reports in journalistic style. On the spoken level IH and at least some dialects of spoken Arabic use plural verb forms as the equivalent of 'one' in British English, 'on' in French or 'Mann' in German. E.g. IH *bonim kan* 'they are building here' = 'here is being built'; LA passive *yuqa:!* 'it is said', as opposed to the Iraqi spoken Arabic using the 3rd person plural *ygu:lu:n* 'they say'<sup>90</sup>;
- x. The speakers of both languages tend to reject neologisms that are semantically opaque i.e. where the meaning of the formation or root is not familiar from ordinary usage.
- xi. Western-type compound nouns and adjectives<sup>91</sup>.

Table 4 - Western-type Compound Nouns and Adjectives in [IH](#) and [MSA](#)

Meaning	Israeli Hebrew <sup>92</sup>		Arabic (MSA) <sup>93</sup>	
	Compound Adjective (occasionally noun) Prefix <sup>94</sup>	Example	Compound Noun-Adjective Prefix	Example
<i>Pan. All-</i>	<i>klal</i> - כלל	<i>klal-europi</i> , <i>kol-europi</i>		



Table 4 - Western-type Compound Nouns and Adjectives in **IH** and **MSA**

Meaning	Israeli Hebrew <sup>92</sup>		Arabic (MSA) <sup>93</sup>	
	Compound Adjective (occasionally noun) Prefix <sup>94</sup>	Example	Compound Noun-Adjective Prefix	Example
	Congnate to <i>kol</i> - כל- "all" <i>Kol</i> - כל-	"pan-European" <i>klal-olami</i> - כלל-עולמי "world-wide" ( <i>olami</i> - עולם "world")		
<i>Super-</i>	<i>al</i> - על <i>al</i> - על = "upon"	<i>al-koli</i> "supersonic" ( <i>kol</i> - קול "sound")	<i>faw-</i> <i>fawqa</i>	<i>fawbašariyy</i> "superhuman"
<i>sub-</i>	<i>tat</i> - תת- contracted from <i>takhat</i> - תחת "under"	<i>tat-makle'a</i> - תת-מקלע "sub-machinegun" ( <i>makle'a</i> - מקלע "machinegun")	<i>taḥ</i> from <i>taḥta</i>	<i>taḥjildiyy</i> "subcutaneous"
		<i>tat-karka'i</i> - תת-קרקעי "subterranean" ( <i>karka</i> - קרקע "ground, soil")	<i>du:</i> from <i>du:na</i>	<i>du:šamsiyy</i> " subsolar" ( <i>šams</i> "sun")
<i>Pre-</i>	<i>kdam</i> - קדם contracted from <i>kedem</i> "fore"	<i>kdam-tsva'i</i> - קדם-צבאי = "pre-army" ( <i>tsava</i> - צבא "army")	<i>qab-</i> from <i>qabla</i>	<i>qabmada:riyy</i> "preorbital"
	<i>trom</i> - טרום contracted from <i>terem</i> טרם "before"	<i>trom-histori-</i> טרום-היסטורי "prehistoric"		
<i>Post-</i>	<i>batar</i> - בתר from Aramaic <i>batar</i> "in the place of", "after"	<i>batar-mikra'i</i> - בתר-מקראי "post- Biblical" ( <i>mikra</i> - מקרא "scripture")	<i>gib-</i> from <i>gibba</i>	<i>gibḥarbiyy</i> "postwar" <i>ḥarb</i> "war"
			<i>xal</i>	<i>xal'anfiyy</i>

Table 4 - Western-type Compound Nouns and Adjectives in [IH](#) and [MSA](#)

Meaning	Israeli Hebrew <sup>92</sup>		Arabic (MSA) <sup>93</sup>	
	Compound Adjective (occasionally noun) Prefix <sup>94</sup>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Compound Noun-Adjective Prefix</i>	<i>Example</i>
			from <i>xalfa</i>	"postnasal" <i>anf</i> "nose"
<i>Inter-</i>	<i>beyn</i> - בין <i>beyn</i> = "between"	<i>beyn-kokhavi</i> - בין-כוכבי = "interstellar" ( <i>kokhav</i> - כוכב = "star")	<i>bay</i> contracted from <i>bayna</i> "between"	<i>baykawabiyy</i> "interplanetary" <i>kawkab</i> "planet"
<i>Extra-</i>	<i>khutz</i> - חוץ <i>khutz</i> "outside"	<i>khutz-rakhmi</i> - חוץ-רחמי "extrauterine" ( <i>rekhem</i> - רחם "womb")	<i>kha:</i> from <i>kha:rja</i>	<i>khamadrasyy</i> "extrascholarly"
<i>Intra-</i>	<i>pnim</i> - פנים <i>pnim</i> "inside of"	<i>pnim-yabashti</i> - פנים-יבשתי "inland" ( <i>yabeshet</i> - יבשת "dry land")		
	<i>tokh</i> - תוך <i>tokh</i> "midst of"	<i>tokh-vridi</i> - תוך-וריד "intravenous" ( <i>varid</i> - וריד = "vein")	<i>dim</i> contracted from <i>dimna</i>	<i>dimnafsiyy</i> "intrapsychic" <i>nafsiyy</i> "psychic"
<i>Circum-</i>			<i>haw</i> contracted from <i>hawla</i>	<i>hawšamsiyy</i> "circumsolar" <i>šams</i> "sun"
<i>Pro-/anti-</i>	<i>pro-/anti-</i>	<i>pro-/anti-milkhamti</i> - פרו-מלחמתי אנטי-מלחמתי "pro-/anti- war" ( <i>milkhama</i> - מלחמה = "		

Table 4 - Western-type Compound Nouns and Adjectives in [IH](#) and [MSA](#)

Meaning	Israeli Hebrew <sup>92</sup>		Arabic (MSA) <sup>93</sup>	
	Compound Adjective (occasionally noun) Prefix <sup>94</sup>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Compound Noun-Adjective Prefix</i>	<i>Example</i>
		war")		
<i>Multi-, poly-</i>	<i>rav</i> - רב <i>rav</i> "many"	<i>rav</i> --רב־לשוני "multilingual" ( <i>lašon</i> = "language")	<i>taʿaddudi:ya</i> <i>taʿaddud</i> "multiplicity"	<i>taʿaddudi:ya</i> <i>siya:siyy</i> <sup>95</sup> = "political pluralism" <i>siya:sa</i> = "politics"
<i>Uni-, mono-</i>	<i>khad</i> - חד from Aramaic <i>ḥad</i> = "one"	<i>khad-ṭsdadi</i> חד־צדדי "one-sided", "unilateral" ( <i>ṭsad</i> - צד = "side")		
<i>Bi-</i>	<i>du</i> - דו from Greek or Latin	<i>du-lšoni</i> - דו־לשוני "bilingual" ( <i>lašon</i> - לשון "language")		
<i>Tri-</i>	<i>ṭlat</i> - תלת from Aramaic <i>ṭlat</i> = "3"	<i>ṭlat-šnati</i> - תלת־שנתי = "triennial" ( <i>šana</i> - שנה = "year")		
<i>Quadra-</i>			'arba <sup>c</sup> - 'arba <sup>c</sup> "four"	'arbayad" quadrumane" <i>yad</i> "hand"
<b>Negation</b>				
<i>Un-</i>	<i>bilti</i> - בלתי = "un-". Negates an adjective	<i>bil.ti-khu.'ki</i> - בלתי־חקי = "	<i>la:</i> -	<i>la:'na:niyyah</i> =

Table 4 - Western-type Compound Nouns and Adjectives in [IH](#) and [MSA](#)

Meaning	Israeli Hebrew <sup>92</sup>		Arabic (MSA) <sup>93</sup>	
	Compound Adjective (occasionally noun) Prefix <sup>94</sup>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Compound Noun-Adjective Prefix</i>	<i>Example</i>
	particularly a nisba adjective	illegal” (khu.'ki - חקִי = “legal”)	<i>la:</i> is negative particle	“unselfishness” <i>'na:niyyah</i> “selfishness” <i>la:jana: hiyy</i> “apteral ”
“In-“, “non- “, etc.	<i>ī</i> - אי = “in-“, “non-“, etc. Negates a noun.	<i>ī-di.'yuk</i> - אי־דיוק = “inaccuracy” (di.'yuk - דיוק = “accuracy” )		
	<i>al</i> - אל <i>al</i> “don’t”, “not”	<i>al-'khut</i> - אל־חוט = “ wireless” noun <i>al-khu.'ti</i> - אל־חוטי = “ wireless” adjective ( <i>'khut</i> - חוט = “thread”)		

xii. Analytical formation for “less” (Hebrew פחות *pakhot*; Arabic e.g.

*'aqall*) and “more” (Hebrew יותר *yoter*, Arabic e.g. *'akthar*) for comparatives.

xiii. An analytical causative has formed in both languages. In Hebrew it uses using the verb גרם *garam*<sup>96</sup>

xiv. The usage of the independent subject pronoun has increased in both languages<sup>97</sup>

xv. Movement to a tense system from a predominantly aspect system<sup>98</sup>.

xvi. Movement from a predominantly VSO to predominantly SVO word order.

Table 5

Israeli Hebrew and MSA Common Noun Patterns

Meaning	Israeli Hebrew <sup>99</sup>		Arabic (MSA) <sup>100</sup>	
	<i>Noun Pattern</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Noun Pattern</i>	<i>Example</i>
Instrument	(among others) <i>maʕel</i> <i>maʕela</i>	<i>mag.ʕet</i> "iron (for clothes)"	<i>miʕal</i> <i>miʕa:l</i> <i>miʕalah</i>	<i>mibrad</i> "file"
Diseases	<i>paʕelet</i>	<i>da.ʕe.ket</i> "infalammation"	<i>fuʕa:l</i>	<i>suʕa:l</i> "cough"
Physical Defects	<i>piʕel</i>	<i>i.ʕe.ret</i> "blind"	<i>faʕal</i>	<i>xaras</i> "dumbness"

### 3. Select Bibliography

(Full Bibliography)

(see also, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/ot-bibliography.html>, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language))

1. *A History of the Hebrew Language* by A.Sáenz-Badillos, Cambridge 1993. (This is very highly recommended). Extensive, nearly exhaustive, bibliography.
2. "Hebrew Language" *Encyclopedia Judaica* 16, Jerusalem 1971, 1560-1662 (Ch. Brovender: Pre-Biblical; Y. Blau: Biblical; E.Y. Kutscher: The Dead Sea Scrolls; E.Y. Kutscher: Mishnaic; E. Goldenberg: Medieval; E. Eitan: Modern Period)
3. *A History of the Hebrew Language* by Eduard Y. Kutscher; edited by Raphael Kutscher Published by The Magnes Press, 1982
4. *A Short History of the Hebrew Language* by Chaim Rabin, Jewish Agency, 1973.
5. *In the Beginning: A Short History of the Hebrew Language* by Joel M Hoffman, New York University Press 2004 (Interesting, but rather idiosyncratic see review in *Jerusalem Post* Oct. 24, 2004)
6. *Words and their History* by E. Y. Kutscher – – *Ariel* vol. 25 (1969) pp. 64-74

7. *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew* (in Hebrew) by Abba Bendavid, Dvir 1967 (2 volumes)
8. *The Languages of Palestine, 200 B.C.E.-200 C.E.* by Jonas C. Greenfield in *Al Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology*, ed. Shalom M. Paul et. al.
9. *Languages of Jerusalem* in Levine, Lee I. *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity : Conflict or Confluence?*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1998. Paul, Michael E. Stone, and Avital Pinnick. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001.

## II Biblical Hebrew

### 1. Grammar

#### Modern Biblical Hebrew Grammarians since 1960

Since the 1920s the historical-comparative method has been superseded by a structuralist approach. According to this approach language is a structural system. It is the relationship between its various components at a particular period in history—the so-called synchronic level—that must be studied separately from the historical development of the language the so-called diachronic level. Although the structuralist approach to the description of language revolutionized linguistics and led to a host of new theories on language, it did not have an immediate influence on BH grammar. Works such as those by Francis Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (1974), and Wolfgang Richter, *Grundlagen einer althebräischen Grammatik* (1978-1980), only relatively recently paved the way in this regard.

The recent grammar by Bruce Waltke and Murphy O'Connor, [\*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax\*](#) (1990), describes a large variety of BH syntactic constructions. They use not only broad structural principles for this purpose, but also draw on the more traditional descriptions of BH. In the process of doing so, this work also provides a useful taxonomy of BH constructions, as well as a sound view of current BH grammatical research.

[Joüon-Muraoka 1991](#) is a revision of a grammar published in 1923 by Paul Joüon. It is cast in the form of a traditional grammar and explains some BH syntactic instructions psychologically. However, Muraoka specifically tempts to incorporate the insights of grammarians who had published their research results in Modern Hebrew. Some of the categories that he uses, as well as some of the arguments he presents in his grammar, dictate that aspects of the structuralist approach have been adopted in Joüon–Muraoka.

**The works of Waltke and O'Connor and of Joüon–Muraoka are regarded as the standard reference works** for the 1990s. This reference grammar draws on both these studies. It must be borne in mind, however, that neither of these grammars utilizes the insights of one of the major trends in structuralist linguistics, the so-called generative approach. Furthermore, both grammars deal with the sentence as the largest unit of linguistic description. This implies a narrow view of the knowledge of a language. Since the 1980s the following have also been regarded as part of the knowledge of a language: the way in which sentences are used to create texts (text linguistic conventions), the conventions relating to the ways people use utterances to execute matters (pragmatic conventions) and the conventions that determine which linguistic constructions are adopted by which role-playing members of a particular society and when they are adopted (sociolinguistic conventions), the conventions relating to the way people use utterances to execute matters (pragmatic conventions) and conventions that determine *which* linguistic conventions are adopted by *which* role-playing members of a particular society and *when* they are adopted (sociolinguistic conventions).

Quoted from [Naude-Kroeze- Merwe](#) pp. 20-21

**E-Book - *History of the Ancient and Modern Hebrew Language* by David Steinberg**

*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* by William Gesenius, Emil Kautzsch (Editor) – thorough reference grammar. Not a text book. Free online at <http://www.biblecentre.net/ot/ges/gr/hegr-Index.html> .

[\*A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar\*](#) by Jackie A. Naude, Jan H. Kroeze, Christo H. Van Der Merwe (Compiler); 1999.

***A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew: Vol 1: Part One: Orthography and Phonetics; Part Two: Morphology. Vol II; Part Three: Syntax*** by Paul Jouon, T. Muraoka; Paperback

*N.b. – I have found this grammar to be of great use and fully recommend it.*

*A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* by J Blau, Porta Linguarum Orientalium 1976 (Second amended edition. The body of the text is identical to the 1976 edition but a number of updating comments are added as pp. 211-220. Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993 ISBN 3-447-03362-2) This is a basic text book **containing a great deal of historical information**. The author is a distinguished Hebraist and Arabist.

*Biblical Hebrew for Students of Modern Israeli Hebrew* by Brettler, Marc Zvi, Yale Language Series, 2004 see [review](#)

*Ancient Hebrew* by R. C. Steiner in *The Semitic Languages* ed. R. Hetzron, Routledge, London 1997

[\*Biblical Hebrew Poetry - Reconstructing the Original Oral, Aural and Visual Experience\*](#)

*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* by B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, Eisenbrauns 1990

*Hebrew Syntax An Outline* by R. J. Williams, University of Toronto Press 1967;

## **2. Dictionaries (Do NOT use a Modern Hebrew/Israeli Hebrew dictionary for Biblical Hebrew)**

[\*Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament\*](#) (universally called “BDB”) by William Gesenius, Edward Robinson (Translator), Francis Brown (Editor), S. R. Driver (Editor), Charles A. Briggs (Editor) – very good, not user friendly, represents the state of Hebrew lexicography at the end of the 19th century, affordable and free online at <http://www.biblecentre.net/ot/bdb/main.htm>;

*The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament* by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner ; subsequently revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm ; with assistance from Benedikt Hartmann ... [et al.]. Leiden ; New



York : E.J. Brill, 1994 -This is in the tradition of BDB but brings it up to date integrating twentieth century research in Mishnaic Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic and even Eblaite etc. I find it more user-friendly. It will certainly succeed BDB, together with the following dictionary, among scholars who can afford them. It is available in electronic form e.g. <http://www.gramcord.org/mac/kb.htm> <http://www.logos.com/products/product.asp?item=1676> and <http://www.bibleworks.com/>.

*The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* / David J.A. Clines, editor, Sheffield Academic Press, 1993 – four volumes so far going up to letter Lamed – claims to be the first Biblical Hebrew based on linguistic theory not on philology (it omits information on other Semitic languages). It includes all known Hebrew up to 200 CE i.e. the Bible, Ben Sira, non-Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls and inscriptions. The non-Biblical material is equivalent to 15 percent of the Biblical. It treats all of this linguistic corpus synchronically i.e. a corpus covering c. 1200 years as if it were uniform linguistically! It is user-friendly, impressive and expensive. <http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/A-C/biblst/DJACcurrres/Postmodern2/Dictionary.html>

*Theological dictionary of the Old Testament* / ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren ; translator, John T. Willis, Publisher W. B. Eerdmans, 1974 – this 12 volume+ series is an in-depth resource of the large selection of words covered ) – highly recommended

**3. Text Books** – there are many with varying approaches. The student should look for one that deals seriously with syntax. One that I could recommend is *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* by Thomas Oden Lambdin

### III Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls

*Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* by E Qimron, Harvard Semitic Studies 29, Scholars Press 1986.

*The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll* by E. Y. Kutscher, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, No 6., Brill Leiden, 1974.

## IV Mishnaic or Rabbinic Hebrew

1. **Reference Grammar** - *Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* by M. H. Segal, Oxford 1958, Paperback 1980

2. **Dictionary** - *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* by Marcus Jastrow.

3. **Text Books** – Very few. The only one I know of is *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew* by M. Pérez Fernández, (translated by J. Elwolde), Leiden 1997. Paperback 1999. It is pretty thorough and well organized and has a major bibliography.

A good approach to learning Mishnaic Hebrew would be to sequentially:

a. Go through Segal (above); and

b. then with Segal and Jastrow as constant companions to -

- Read *Pirke Avot* which is found in prayer books and in many independent translations.
- Get a Hebrew copy, and English translation, of *Sefer Ha-aggadah (The Book of Legends Sefer Ha-Aggadah: Legends from the Talmud and Midrash)* by Hayyim Nahman Bialik (Editor), et al) and to use the English translation as a study aid
- study selected Mishnah texts in a bilingual edition such as *Mishnayoth Translated and annotated by Rabbi Philip Blackman*  
[http://www.judaicapress.com/blackman\\_mishnayoth.asp](http://www.judaicapress.com/blackman_mishnayoth.asp)

## V Israeli Hebrew (see also [A Basic Bibliography for the Study of Modern Hebrew](#))

### 1. Grammar

***The Grammar of Modern Hebrew by Lewis Glinert*** – Cambridge University Press (n.b. the bibliography) 1989 – **this is only serious Israeli Hebrew reference grammar in either English or Hebrew that I have seen.** It is good but very expensive. It is in university libraries and can be borrowed through inter-library loans.

The same author's ***Modern Hebrew: An Essential Grammar*** is a small reference work for reference by students in the first 2-3 years of serious study of Israeli Hebrew.

***Modern Hebrew Structure*** by Ruth A. Berman, Tel Aviv Universities Publishing 1978

*Modern Hebrew* by Ruth A. Berman in *The Semitic Languages* ed. R. Hetzron, Routledge, London 1997

Contemporary Hebrew by H. B. Rosén, 1977, *The Hague: Mouton*

## 2. Textbooks – There are many bad textbooks. One pretty good one is *Textbook of Israeli Hebrew* by Haiim B. Rosén University of Chicago Press 1962

### 3. On the Nature and Development of Modern Hebrew:

- i. [Israeli Hebrew by David Tene](#) – Ariel vol. 25 pp. 48-63 (particularly pp. 51-63)
- ii. [Israel Language Policy and Linguistics by Haiim B Rosén](#) – Ariel vol. 25 pp. 92-110
- iii. *The Languages of Israel: Policy, Ideology, and Practice* (Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 17) by Bernard Spolsky, Elana Goldberg Shohamy, Multilingual Matters 1999
- iv. *Contemporary Hebrew* by Haiim B. Rosén, Mouton, 1977.
- v. "Israeli Hebrew Phonology" by Samuel Bolozy in *Phonologies of Asia and Africa* vol. 1 edited by Alan S. Kaye, technical advisor, Peter T. Daniels, Winona Lake, Ind., Eisenbrauns, 1997. pp. 287-311.
- vi. "Israeli Hebrew Morphology" by Samuel Bolozy in *Morphologies of Asia and Africa* vol. 1 edited by Alan S. Kaye, Winona Lake, Ind., Eisenbrauns, 2007, pp. 283-308.
- vii. ["The Emergence of Spoken Israeli Hebrew"](#) by Shlomo Izre'el
- viii. "A New Vision for 'Israeli Hebrew': Theoretical and Practical Implications of Analysing Israel's Main Language as a Semi-Engineered Semito-European Hybrid Language" by Zuckermann, Ghil'ad (2006), *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5 (1), pp. 57-71.
- ix. [Grammatical Blending: Creative and Schematic Aspects](#) by Nili Mandelbli. Contents: *A Grammatical Blending Account of Hebrew Binyanim; Blending analysis of the Hebrew causitive stem Hif'il; Blending analysis of the Hebrew transitive binyanim; Blending analysis of the Hebrew transitive binyanim; Summary of Results; Bibliography*
- x. *Words and stones: the politics of language and identity in Israel* by Daniel Lefkowitz. Publisher New York, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- xi. TE'UDA XVIII - [SPEAKING HEBREW: Studies in the Spoken Language and in Linguistic Variation in Israel](#) Editor SHLOMO IZRE'EL With the Assistance of MARGALIT MENDELSON - ABSTRACTS

- xii. *The World Dictionary of Hebrew Slang* by Dahn Ben-Amotz and Netiva Ben-Yehuda, Lewin-Epstein 1972
- xiii. *Comprehensive Slang Dictionary (Hebrew-Hebrew)* (Hebrew Edition), Ruvik Rosenthal, Keter Publishing, 2007. ISBN-10: 9650714014; ISBN-13: 978-9650714017
- xiv. [Hebrew Slang and Foreign Loan Words by Raphael Sappan – – Ariel vol. 25 \(1969\) pp. 75-80](#)
- xv. *Word Formation in Modern Hebrew* (Hebrew), Nir, Raphael, Open University, 1993
- xvi. *Language Contact and Lexical Enrichment in Israeli Hebrew* (Palgrave Studies in Language History and Language Change) by Ghil'ad Zuckermann (Hardcover, 2004.
- xvii. *Measuring Productivity in Word Formation: The Case of Israeli Hebrew*, Bolozky, Shmuel, Brill 1999
- xviii. *Lexical Decomposition and Lexical Unity in the Expression of Derived Verbal Categories in Modern Hebrew*, R A Berman, Afroasiatic Linguistics, 1979
- xix. "Imperative and Jussive Formations in Contemporary Hebrew" by Aaron Bar-Adon, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1966), pp. 410- 413.

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<sup>1</sup> See sect 1.1 in [Lipinski 1997](#).

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed description see pp. 21-89 in [Lipinski 1997](#).

<sup>3</sup> See *Genetic Subgrouping of the Semitic Languages* by Alice Faber in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting that some aspects of [Akkadian](#) are very similar to Modern Hebrew e.g. the denominal affirmatives (*ut* to form abstracts; *an* to form adjectives from nouns; *i* to form adjectives from a noun, pronoun or proper name; and, the forming of the Akkadian desiderative using a prefix *i* is similar to the Modern Hebrew use of *u* before the imperfect eg. שישלם (*sheyeshalem*) = let him pay! see *Akkadian* by G. Buccellati in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>5</sup> See *Classical Arabic* by W. Fischer in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>6</sup> Semitic adjectives are a subset of nouns see sect 34.1 in [Lipinski 1997](#)

<sup>7</sup> sect. 21.26 in [Lipinski 1997](#)

<sup>8</sup> Note that a number of tri-literal Hebrew roots were clearly of bi-literal origin. E.g.

1. From the biliteral root PR = "split, separate, divide" we get PRD, PRH, PRZ, PRK, PRM, PRS, PR', PRŞ, PRR, PRQ, PRSH, PRT, PRR, PWR all of which are variations on those basic meaning.

2. The causative prefixes *š* and *s* and nominal prefix *t* are used to form new roots e.g.

- $\sqrt{srb}$  to refuse from  $\sqrt{ryb}$  to contend

- √šḥrr to free from √ḥr
- √šqš to detest or make detestable from √qwš to loathe √š<sup>c</sup>bd to enslave from √<sup>c</sup>bd to serve
- √ṭhl to begin from √ḥll with the same meaning.

<sup>9</sup> See *Akkadian* by G. Buccellati in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>10</sup> See various papers in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>11</sup> See *Aramaic* by S. A. Kaufman in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>12</sup> See sect 11.13 in [Lipinski 1997](#).

<sup>13</sup> The following is adapted from *Interdialectal lexical compatibility in Arabic: an analytical study of the lexical relationships among the major Syro-Lebanese varieties* by F. J. Cadora, (Brill, Leiden, 1979) pp. 32-33. One measure of linguistic closeness is that of interdialectal lexical compatibility expressed as percentages of non-contrastive relationships (100% = identity; > 70% separate languages). E.g. using the Arabic of Tyre (Lebanon) as the basis of comparison, we get the following percentages of non-contrastive relationships: Cairo 86.5; Baghdad 84.9; Jidda 80.0; Casablanca 68.0. Thus, using this measure, all of these varieties of Eastern Arabic can be described as dialects of the same language whereas the Arabic of Casablanca could be described as a separate, those closely related language.

<sup>14</sup> See *Amorite and Eblaite* by C. H. Gordon in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>15</sup> Pre-history a term often used to describe the period before written records.

<sup>16</sup> See the chapter *The Dialectal Continuum* in [Garr](#) p. 229 ff.

<sup>17</sup> For further information see *Phoenician and the Eastern Canaanite Languages* by S Segert in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>18</sup> Epigraph = inscription = "a sequence of words or letters written, printed, or engraved on a surface".

<sup>19</sup> See *Ugaritic* by D. Pardee in [Hetzron 1997](#).

<sup>20</sup> See [Harris 1939](#) pp. 40-41.

<sup>21</sup> For the relation between BH and QH see [Young, Rezetko, Ehrensverd 2008](#) chapt. 10.

<sup>22</sup> [Robertson 1972](#) distinguishes between "psalmodic" and "prophetic" poetic gendres.

<sup>23</sup> The following is quoted from Wikipedia -

Can the prophetic books be considered as poetry? Setting aside the many modern exegetes of the Old Testament who have gone so far as to discuss the meters and verse of the several prophets, it may be noted here merely that Sievers says (l.c. p. 374) that the prophecies, aside from a few exceptions to be mentioned, are *eo ipso* poetic, i.e., in verse. But the fact must be noted, which no one has so far brought forward, namely, that every single utterance of Balaam is called a sentence ("mashal"; Numbers 23:7, 23:18, 24:3, 24:15, 24:20, 24:23), while in the prophetic books this term is not applied to the prophecies. There "mashal" is used only in the Book of Ezekiel, and in an entirely different sense, namely, that of

figurative speech or allegory (Ezekiel 17:2, 21:5, 24:3). This fact seems to show that in earlier times prophecies were uttered more often in shorter sentences, while subsequently, in keeping with the development of Hebrew literature, they were uttered more in detail, and the sentence was naturally amplified into the discourse. This view is supported by Isaiah 1, the first prophecy being as follows: "Banim giddalti we-romamti," etc. There is here certainly such a symmetry in the single sentences that the rhythm which has been designated above as the poetic rhythm must be ascribed to them. But in the same chapter there occur also sentences like the following: "Arzekém shemamáh 'arekém serufot-ésh; admatekém le-negdekém zarím okelím otáh" (verse 7), or this, "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" (verse 12). In the last pair of lines even the translation sufficiently shows that each line does not contain three stresses merely, as does each line of the words of God (verses 2b, 3a, b).

Although the prophets of Israel inserted poems in their prophecies, or adopted occasionally the rhythm of the dirge, which was well known to their readers, their utterances, aside from the exceptions to be noted, were in the freer rhythm of prose. This view is confirmed by a sentence of [Jerome](#) that deserves attention. He says in his preface to his translation of Isaiah: "Let no one think that the prophets among the Hebrews were bound by meter similar to that of the Psalms."

<sup>24</sup> We could also note that the Wisdom Books, such as Proverbs, are written with a special vocabulary where ordinary words may have special meanings.

<sup>25</sup> See [Young 2004](#) p. 276 ff..

<sup>26</sup> *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?* by W. G. Dever p. 203. Eerdmans, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> See Aaron Demsky and Moshe Kochavi, *BAR* 4/3 (1978): 23-30; Daniel Sivan, "The Gezer Calendar and Northwest Semitic Linguistics," *IEJ* 48 (1998): 101-05 and literature cited there. For an excellent argument for widespread literacy in early Israel, see Alan R. Millard, "The Question of Israelite Literacy," *BR* 3/3 (1987): 22-31; "The Knowledge of Writing in Iron Age Palestine," *TynBul* 46 (1995): 207-17 and literature cited there. See also Ian M. Young, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence, Parts I-II," *VT* 48 (1998): 239-53, 408-22. In addition, see the fundamental study of Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?* by W. G. Dever p. 137.

<sup>29</sup> See [Gibson 1971](#) p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> See [Gibson 1971](#) pp. 7-8.

<sup>31</sup> The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II by M. Broshi and I. Finkelstein, *BASOR* 28:47-60 and Estimating the Population of Ancient Jerusalem by M. Broshi *BAR* IV no. 2 June 1978.

<sup>32</sup> *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* by Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, Free Press, 2001 pp. 223, 243, 273. See also [van der Toorn 2009](#) p. 167.

“ Had Israel survived, we might have received a parallel, competing, and very different history. But with the Assyrian destruction of Samaria and the dismantling of its institutions of royal power, any such competing histories were silenced. Though prophets and priests from the north very likely joined the flow of refugees to find shelter in the cities and towns of Judah, biblical history would henceforth be written by the winners—or at least the survivors—and it would be fashioned exclusively according to the late Judahite Deuteronomistic beliefs....

Through most of the two hundred years of the era of the divided monarchy, Judah remained in the shadows. Its limited economic potential, its relative geographical isolation, and the tradition-bound conservatism of its clans made it far less attractive for imperial exploitation by the Assyrians than the larger, richer kingdom of Israel. But with the rise of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BCE) and Ahaz's decision to become his vassal, Judah entered a game with enormous stakes. After 720, with the conquest of Samaria and the fall of Israel, Judah was surrounded by Assyrian provinces and Assyrian vassals. And that new situation would have implications for the future almost too vast to contemplate. The royal citadel of Jerusalem was transformed in a single generation from the seat of a rather insignificant local dynasty into the political and religious nerve center of a regional power—both because of dramatic internal developments and because thousands of refugees from the conquered kingdom of Israel fled to the south.

Here archaeology has been invaluable in charting the pace and scale of Jerusalem's sudden expansion. As first suggested by Israeli archaeologist Magen Broshi, excavations conducted there in recent decades have shown that **suddenly, at the end of the eighth century BCE, Jerusalem underwent an unprecedented population explosion**, with its residential areas expanding from its former narrow ridge—the city of David—to cover the entire western hill .... A formidable defensive wall was constructed to include the new suburbs. In a matter of a few decades—surely within a single generation—Jerusalem was transformed from a modest highland town of about ten or twelve acres to a huge urban area of 150 acres of closely packed houses, workshops, and public buildings. **In demographic terms, the city's population may have increased as much as fifteen times, from about one thousand to fifteen thousand inhabitants.**

A similar picture of tremendous population growth emerges from the archaeological surveys in Jerusalem's agricultural hinterland. Not only were many farmsteads built at this time in the immediate environs of the city, but in the districts south of the capital, the formerly relatively empty countryside was flooded with new farming settlements, both large and small. Sleepy old villages grew in size and became, for the first time, real towns. In the [Shephelah](#) too, the great leap forward came in the eighth century, with a dramatic growth in the number and size of sites.... Likewise, the [Beersheba](#) Valley in the far south witnessed the establishment of a number of new towns in the late eighth century. All in all, the expansion was astounding; by the late eighth century there were about three hundred settlements of all sizes in Judah, from the metropolis of Jerusalem to small farmsteads, where one there were only a few villages and modest towns. The population, which had long hovered at a few tens of thousands, now grew to around 120,000.

In the wake of Assyria's campaigns in the north, Judah experienced not only sudden demographic growth but also real social evolution. In a word, it became a full-fledged state. Starting in the late eighth century, the archaeological indications of mature state formation appear in the southern kingdom: monumental inscriptions, seals and seal impressions, and ostraca for royal administration; the sporadic use of ashlar masonry and stone capitals in public buildings; the mass production of pottery vessels and other crafts in central workshops, and their distribution throughout the countryside. No less important was the appearance of middle-sized towns serving as regional capitals and the development of large-scale industries of oil and wine pressing, which shifted from local, private production to state industry.

The evidence of new burial customs—mainly but not exclusively in Jerusalem—suggests that a national elite emerged at this time. In the eighth century some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem began to cut elaborate Tombs in the rock of the ridges surrounding the city. ....

**...(W)ith the influx of refugees from the north after the fall of Samaria, the reorganization of the countryside under Hezekiah, and the second torrent of refugees from the desolation of the Shephelah by Sennacherib, many of the traditional clan attachments to particular territories had been forever destroyed. In the countryside, economies of scale—needed to produce the enormous quantities of olives for pressing and grain for distribution—benefited those who could organize the machinery of trade and agricultural production far more than those who labored in the fields. To whatever extent the surviving clans could claim an unbroken chain of inheritance on their fields, villages, and hilltops, the effects of war, population change, and intensified royal economic planning may have encouraged many to dream of a past golden age—real or imagined—when their ancestors were settled securely in well-defined territories and enjoyed the divine promise of eternal peace and prosperity on their land."**

<sup>33</sup> In [a more recent paper](#) the authors wrote -

This article deals with the momentous events that took place in Judah in the short period of time between 732 (and mainly 722) and 701 BCE. A torrent of refugees from the North, mostly from the areas bordering on Judah, dramatically changed the demographic structure in the Southern Kingdom. The population seems to have at least doubled and included significant north Israelite communities.

... during the Lachish III phase in the history of Judah, the socio-economic character of the Southern Kingdom was utterly revolutionized. Jerusalem grew to be the largest city in the entire country, covering an area of c. 60 hectares ... with an estimated population of up to 10–12,000 inhabitants.

... To sum-up, in a very short period in the second half of the eighth century BCE Judah developed into a highly bureaucratic state with a rapidly developing economy.... A key phenomenon—which cannot be explained against the background of economic prosperity alone—is the sudden growth of the population of Jerusalem in particular and Judah in general in the late eighth century.... in a few decades in the late eighth century Jerusalem grew in size from c. 6 to c. 60 hectares and in population from around 1000 inhabitants to over 10,000 (estimated according to 200 inhabitants per hectare). The population of the Judahite countryside also grew dramatically.... All in all, the assumption that in the late eighth century, in



a matter of a few decades, the population of Judah doubled would be a modest—and probably underestimated—evaluation.

This dramatic increase in the population of Judah ... cannot be explained as the result of natural demographic growth or of a gradual and peaceful migration into Judah from neighboring areas.... The only reasonable way to explain this sudden and unprecedented demographic growth is as a result of a flow of refugees from the North into Judah following the conquest of Israel by Assyria.... No less important, the population dramatically changed from 'purely' Judahite to a mix of Judahites and ex-Israelites, who had apparently fled from the direct Assyrian control that was now imposed on the territories of the conquered Kingdom of Israel. Indeed, in light of the extent of the population growth in this short period, an assumption that up to half of the Judahite population in the late eighth/early seventh century BCE was of North Israelite origin cannot be too far from reality. Likewise in Jerusalem a substantial proportion of the population—though not necessarily the ruling groups—may well have been ex-Israelite.... (From archaeological evidence) it is clear that southern Samaria suffered a major, long-term demographic blow in the wake of the conquest of the Northern Kingdom.

In short, it is reasonable to suggest that many (though certainly not all) of the North Israelite refugees who settled in Judah after 722 BCE came from southern Samaria. These people must have come to Judah with their own local traditions. Most significantly, the Bethel sanctuary must have played an important role in their cult practices, and the memories and myths of the Saulide dynasty—which originated in this area—could have played an essential role in their understanding of their history and identity.

The presence of substantial numbers of northern immigrants in Judah—and the new demographic situation it created—must have presented a challenge to the southern leadership and created an urgent need to unite the two segments of the new Judahite society—Judahites and Israelites—into a single national entity. In other words, there must have been a necessity to re-format Judah into a new nation. And the main problems that needed to be addressed were ideological: particularly the different—not to say alien and hostile—cult and royal traditions of the northerners who came to settle in Judah.

<sup>34</sup> [Greenstein 1988](#) p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> [Rainey 1985](#).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. F. de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris, 1916), p. 168.

<sup>37</sup> From [Joüon-Muraoka 1991](#).

<sup>38</sup> In Mishnaic Hebrew, the active participle takes over the non-modal functions of the PC.

<sup>39</sup> See [van der Merwe et al.](#) §19.2.3.

<sup>40</sup> See [Andersen 1970](#) and [Hoftijzer73](#).

<sup>41</sup> See [Joüon-Muraoka 1991](#) §112g.

<sup>42</sup> A good example of the past durative is Exodus 19:19

וַיְהִי קוֹל הַשּׁוֹפָר הוֹלֵךְ וְחֹזֵק מֵאֵד מִשֶׁה יִדְבֹר וְהָאֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְקוֹל.

The NRSV translates this as

As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses **would speak** and God **would answer** him in thunder.

However, a more literal translation would be -

As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses **was speaking** and God **was answering** him in/through thunder.

<sup>43</sup> Nb. PC, not prefixed by *waw* at the head of a sentence is almost invariably jussive, not imperfect (see [Niccacci 2006](#) pp. 251-252).

<sup>44</sup> "From a diachronic perspective .... At least as far as Biblical Hebrew is concerned, we need to distinguish three distinct kinds of imperfect forms: 1. Free-standing \*yaqtul, a punctiliar-preterite found chiefly in poetic texts, 2. *waw*-yaqtul, the unique form of the \*yaqtul preterite which is not confined to poetic passages, and 3. \*yaqtulu (with or without a simple *waw*), the so-called "long imperfect", which can have a durative, iterative, habitual, or frequentative meaning when used in the past tense, or even a punctiliar-preterital meaning when used with temporal adverbials such as *'āz* or *ferem*."

From The *waw* Consecutive in Old Aramaic? A Rejoinder to Victor Sasson by T. Muraoka; M. Rogland, *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 48, Fasc. 1. (Jan., 1998), pp. 99-104.

<sup>45</sup> See [Blau 2010](#) §3.5.12.2.13.

<sup>46</sup> Complete agreement has not been reached, and perhaps never will be achieved in a field where there are gaps in our knowledge and in which conjectural emendation theories usually contain a conjectural element. Nevertheless, some views command wide acceptance.

... Among them is the view that a form of the prefix conjugation was used at an early stage of development to narrate events in past time, and that it underlies both the preterite in Accadian and phenomena in West Semitic languages, including the *waw* consecutive with the imperfect and also certain other examples of the imperfect, especially in poetry, in Hebrew. The term "preterite" is often used of the relevant uses of the imperfect in Hebrew.

From Further Comments on the Use of Tenses in the Aramaic Inscription from Tel Dan by J. A. Emerton in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 47, Fasc. 4. (Oct., 1997), pp. 435-436.

<sup>47</sup> Following is from [Hetzron 1969](#) -

**The *waw* conversive before prefix-forms, namely. *waC-*, has nothing to do with the conjunction *\*wa-* "and" .** First of all, it is not legitimate to represent the forms with *waw* conversive as essentially non-initial and depending on a preceding verb. They occur in speech-initial positions quite often. The form is not a consecutive one with no tense-implication, like the *ka-* forms in Swahili or the converbs in Ethiopian. It does have a tense-connotation, that of perfect. It is the normal expression of the sentence-initial perfect,

while the suffix-perfect *qātal* is, with very few exceptions, reserved to non-initial positions. Furthermore, the conjunction \**wa-* "and", if not reduced to \**wə-* as it normally is, becomes \**wā-* in Hebrew, e.g. *yōmām wā-laylā* "day and night:", and never *waC-* like the waw of the "converted" prefix-forms. In my opinion, the best theory about the origin of the waw conversive is still that of J. D. Michaelis, long forgotten by Semitists. Michaelis thought (in 1745) that ***waC-* had come from the verbal form \**hawaya* "it was", first reduced, like all the suffix-perfect sg. 3 m. forms, to \**haway* and, as a prefix, to a monosyllabic form \**way-* > *waC-***. The independent use of the same verbal form underwent other changes and became *hāyā*. It is possible that, **when the prefix-perfect began to decline and to yield to the suffix-perfect**, in the still remaining expressive use of the former, which in most verb-classes had also become homonymous with the jussive, **there was a need to reinforce the past-tense meaning:- and this was done by adding a past-tense copula of the formation \**hawaya***

Two related points -

a) In Modern Hebrew we have a similar case. Classical Hebrew *yākōl* is both a present "he can" and a past "he could". In order to avoid ambiguity, Modern Hebrew uses *yaxol* as "he can" and the corresponding past is augmented by the past-tense copula: *haya yaxol* "he could". The analogy is so strong that although there is no ambiguity in the feminine singular: *yəxola* "she can" and *yaxla* "she could", the compound forms are gaining ground: *hayta yəxola* "she could", and so on in other persons.

b) Perhaps an analogy is the Arabic usage of *KIW* (= Hebrew HWY/HYH) as an auxiliary verb. The following is quoted from [Hetzron](#) sect 38.19-38.20

38.19. While the "classical" verbal system of the Semitic languages is based on aspect, modern speech tends to found the verb inflection on the notion of time and to express it by means of "tenses". If we now turn to the tense formations which have been developed in some modern Semitic languages to express time relations in imitation of the western Indo-European tense scheme, we can see that these compound tenses are partly based on old formations which were used in the past to express particular aspects or situations and not time relations.

38.20. The pluperfect "he had written", etc., can be expressed in modern Arabic by using the perfect *kān*, "he was", with the perfect of another verb, e.g. *kān katab*, "he had written". This tense is related to Classical Arabic *kāna qad* or *qad kāna* followed by the perfect of another verb; e.g. *qad kāna ra'ā minka mitla mā ra'aynā*, "he had already seen through you, just as we have seen". As a matter of fact, *kāna* is a stative expressing a situation existing at the moment when "we saw" it and it does not shift the tense of the clause automatically to the pluperfect; thus: "he was already seeing through you, just as we saw". A similar analysis explains the modern use of the perfect *kān* ... with the imperfect of another verb to express the European imperfect or past continuous "he was writing", *kān yaktub* (cf. §58.5). This compound tense goes back to Classical *kāna yaf'alu* which denotes a stable situation consisting in doing something; e.g. *kāna n-nabī yu ya'ūdu l-marīḍa*, "the prophet used to visit sick people". The duration in the past (past continuous)

can be expressed also by the perfect of *kān* with the active participle, e.g. *kān kātib*, "he was writing" (§42.24). By using the imperfect *yəkūn* with the perfect of another verb, modern Arabic can express the future perfect "he will have written", *yəkūn (qad) katab*. This construction is used in Classical Arabic to signify a situation resulting from an action which will be accomplished in the future: e.g. *fa- nakūnu qad 'aḥadnā 'iwaḍan*, "then we shall already be in the situation of having taken an equivalent". The future sense can be expressed also by the participle *rāyih*, "going", with the imperfect; e.g. *ana rāyih asma'*, "I am going to hear".

<sup>48</sup> In Blau's view the *conversive and coordinative waw* were historically identical. The differences in vocalization, and the [gemination](#) of the prefix in the *conversive* form of the [PC](#) are accounted for by the history of changes due to stress. [Blau 2010](#) §3.5.12.2, 4.7.

<sup>49</sup> A more sophisticated presentation is made by see [Niccacci 2006](#) whose summary table (p. 248) is below -

Temporal Axis	Main Level of Communication (Foreground)	Secondary Level of Communication (Background)
Past	(X-) → continuation wayyiqtol (coordination, main level) cf. Deut 1:6 ff.; 5:2 ff.	→ x- qatal, non-verbal sentence, x-yiqtol, w <sup>e</sup> qatal (background)
Present	Non-verbal sentence with/without participle - cf. Gen 42:10-11	→ Non-verbal sentence with/without participle
Future Indicative	Non-verbal sentence (esp. with participle) → continuation w <sup>e</sup> qatal cf. Exod 7:17-18; 7:27-29 <i>or</i> Initial x-yiqtol → continuation w <sup>e</sup> qatal (in a chain)	→ x-yiqtol (background)
Future volative	Imperative → w <sup>e</sup> yiqtol (foreground) - cf. Num 6:24-26 <i>or</i> x-yiqtol cohortative/jussive → w <sup>e</sup> yiqtol (= foreground)	→ x-imperative (background) → x-yiqtol (background)
	<i>Note:</i> Imperative → w <sup>e</sup> yiqtol = purpose ('in order to') Imperative → w <sup>e</sup> qatal = consequence ('thus, therefore') cf. Exod 25:2 → 8	

<sup>50</sup> See [Kutscher 1979](#) pp. 40-41; 334-339. and the following from [Blau \(1978\)](#) p. 92.

[It is] ... a rather confused picture: it is almost impossible to predict word stress according to syllable structure. Yet it is possible, as if by magic, to introduce order into this apparent chaos. Through *one single assumption* it is possible to explain the stress of the great majority of Hebrew words. Therefore this assumption has to be regarded as the most powerful explanation of the interdependence of stress and syllable structure, a veritable pivot on which everything hinges. Let us add to the Hebrew words the final short vowels which, according to comparative grammar, were lost in Hebrew, and then, without changing the traditional place of stress, *the great majority of words exhibit stress on penult*. Those which are today stressed on the ultima have, as a rule, lost final short vowels, the addition of which makes them stressed on the penultima. And those which are today stressed on the penult, have, as a rule, preserved their final syllable.

<sup>51</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959) 98. Yet this should be qualified by David Talshir's recent study where he demonstrated that two-thirds of the innovations of late biblical Hebrew are not found in Tannaitic literature. He also observed that 52.7% of the vocabulary of late biblical Hebrew occurs neither in Aramaic nor Rabbinic Hebrew ("The Autonomic Status of Late Biblical Hebrew," Abba Bendavid Jubilee Volume [Jerusalem: The Institute for the Study of Judaism, 1987] 161-72 [in Hebrew]).

<sup>52</sup> Ben G. Blount and Mary Sanches, *Sociocultural Dimensions of Language Change* (New York: Academic Press, 1977) 4. See also M. L. Samuels, *Linguistic Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 154.

<sup>53</sup> Hurvitz, "The Language and Date of Psalm 151 from Qumran," *Eretz Israel* 8 (1967) 83 [in Hebrew].

<sup>54</sup> [Kutscher 1971a](#) col. 1605.

<sup>55</sup> *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* p. 246.

<sup>56</sup> Literacy in Ancient Israel must have been very low in the early Pre-exilic period possibly rising to roughly 10 percent (the level in Ancient Greece) at the end of the First Temple period and on into the Second Temple period. The culture was clearly oral supplemented by written documents prepared by highly trained scribes. (See [van der Toorn 2009](#) pp. 10 ff..)

<sup>57</sup> The situation was somewhat different as regards the languages of government and administrative records which may be described as -

During the Second Temple period there were two major administrative centers relating to Judea - the Temple administration and the center of political power. (To a much lesser extent, municipal authorities, particularly the [Gerusia \(council of elders\) of Jerusalem](#) would have kept records which may have been in a mixture of Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew - probably in that order of importance.)

About the language(s) of Temple administration we have virtually no evidence. However, it is possible to surmise that administrative documents would have been kept in their best Biblical Hebrew and/or perhaps a dialect similar to Qumran Hebrew and/or in an Aramaic perhaps similar to Qumran Aramaic. The little evidence at hand

suggests that Aramaic was the normal spoken language in the Temple as it was in Jerusalem generally in the period.

Regarding the center of political power the situation is clearer i.e. -

Persian period - late sixth to late fourth centuries BCE. Administrative language Imperial Aramaic.

Hellenistic period - late fourth to mid-second centuries BCE. Administrative language Greek.

Hasmonean period - mid-second century to late first century BCE (see below)

Herodian period - late first century CE. Administrative language(s) probably Aramaic and Greek.

Roman period - early first second century BCE until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

Administrative language Greek.

Of the Hasmonean court and administration we know very little. It is clear that at court and in administrative offices Greek and Aramaic would be heard and used for many documents. However, it is conceivable that, for nationalist reasons, the court may have promoted the use of Hebrew as a written language and possible for the conduct of court business (cf. "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage", by William M. Schniedewind, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 118, No. 2. (Summer, 1999), pp. 235-252.) If this was the case, it would be likely that different forms of Hebrew would have been used in writing and speaking. It may well have been the case that something like Qumran Hebrew may have been used for writing while the spoken Hebrew may have been closer to a form of Proto-Mishnaic Hebrew. Note the following from [Schwartz 1995](#) -

The Hasmoneans were the family who led the revolt against the Seleucids starting in 167 B.C.E., ruled in Palestine 152-37 B.C.E., and revived autonomous coinage in the 120s or 110s B.C.E., about one hundred and fifty years after it had been abolished. As I suggested above, the revolt which was the dynasty's *raison d'être* had tended to magnify the symbolic centrality of the Law and the temple; this was perhaps accompanied by the first explicit and unambiguous uses of Hebrew as a national symbol at least, such a use of the language was retrospectively attributed to the rebels. The quasi-official chronicle of the revolt and the rise of the Hasmonean family, 1 Maccabees, was composed in archaizing Hebrew; the author of 2 Maccabees (an account of the revolt composed in Greek and unconnected with 1 Maccabees) emphasized, with an uncertain degree of accuracy, that revolutionaries and martyrs of the persecution used Hebrew in some circumstances. The attribution of symbolic importance to Hebrew whether by the rebels themselves or by their successors may help explain why the earliest Hasmonean coins, minted under John Hyrcanus I (reigned 134-104 B.C.E.), bore legends exclusively in the Hebrew language and in the presumably increasingly incomprehensible Palaeo-Hebrew script....

<sup>58</sup> However there are still parallels with Arabic. The following is quoted from [Morag 1989](#) (pp. 103 -104) -

"Some Classical Arabic dialects ... distinguish between two categories of imperfect, one possessing a *b*-prefortative (*byuktub*), the other lacking this preformative (*yuktub*).... (l)n the Syro-Israeli area, the category

possessing the *b* serves as an indicative while the other category, the *b*-less one, serves as a subjunctive (and possesses additional functions, modal and others).

This distinction between the historical imperfect (*yuktub*), which is used for the *non-indicative* moods, and an imperfect possessing an affirmative, which functions as an indicative, is to a certain extent paralleled in Mishnaic Hebrew. In this layer of Hebrew, *yif'al* is generally non-indicative, while the indicative is expressed by having certain morphemes, such as *ʿatīd*, precede the imperfect (or the infinitive)."

<sup>59</sup> However once again there are parallels with Arabic. The following is quoted from "[Parallel Developments in Mishnaic Hebrew, Colloquial Arabic, and Other Varieties of Spoken Semitic](#)," (pp. 1271 -1272) -

"(M)ost would concur that the so-called tenses in BH and classical Arabic are not tenses at all, for different temporal concepts converge in both the perfect and the imperfect. But if we turn to the spoken dialects, then the term tenses is perfectly descriptive. In [MH](#), the perfect is used solely for the past and the participle expresses the present and future (the imperfect is reserved for modal usages) ([Sharvit 1980](#)). In [colloquial Arabic](#), there is also "a clear tendency to assign tenses according to the division of time." ...; the perfect is reserved for the past and the imperfect is used for the present and future"

<sup>60</sup> See [Kutscher 1979](#) pp. 40-41; 334-339 and [Sáenz-Badillos](#) under "accent" p. 357

<sup>61</sup> See [Kutscher 1979](#) pp. 40-41; 334-339; [Morag 1988](#) p. 156.

<sup>62</sup> see [Kapeliuk 1989](#) pp. 306-307.

<sup>63</sup> See [Phones and Phonemes](#).

<sup>64</sup> See [Sáenz-Badillos](#) chapt. 8

<sup>65</sup> Paul Wexler goes way over the top, in my estimation, in his thesis that Yiddish is West Sorbian in Germanic garb, Israeli Hebrew is Yiddish in Semitic garb and hence the title of his book - [The Schizoid Nature of Modern Hebrew: A Slavic Language in Search of a Semitic past](#).

<sup>66</sup> Note the interesting statement made by [Haiim B Rosén in Israel Language Policy and Linguistics \(Ariel vol. 25 p. 109\)](#)

"Although there is no published material on this aspect I wish to impart some results achieved from a contrastive observation of "Early Israeli Hebrew" (the written language of the twenties and thirties) compared to usages of our own generation. The contrast is striking; quotations taken from the early layer have either to be "translated" or reinterpreted, lest the immediate impression they create be one of ridiculous language. But a distinct direction can be observed in this development; while early revived Hebrew is full of anachronisms, reminiscences from classical sources, words that have become obsolete by now, it is astonishing how much closer present-day Hebrew is, in morphology and syntactic constructions, to what is apparent to the linguist in the structure of Classical Hebrew.

While it is impossible here to substantiate this statement, I wish to offer an explanation. When Hebrew became "more living," it became less foreign. Becoming less foreign means absorbing more and more of

the linguistic items that constitute the formal system of Hebrew, so that a linguistic system can be created that is, in fact, largely a reconstitution of a considerable portion of the classical system .... Features of modern standard language that can be considered the result of re-classicization of Hebrew (e.g. case government, stabilization of syntactical interrelation between verbal stems, forgoing revival of the distinctions between various types of noun linking, restriction of adjectives in favour of noun constructions, semantic shadings, particularly in the domain of verbs) were hardly ever taught by normative grammar, since these very notions are largely the result of modern synchronic descriptive Hebrew linguistics.”

<sup>67</sup> See sect 24.1, 24.9, 24.9, 24.10, 41.4 in [Lipinski 1997](#).

<sup>68</sup> Gloss *Standard Average European* - A famous linguist remarked that, when compared with other languages of the world, European languages are all extremely similar and he referred to them as a group as "Standard Average European" (SAE). Whorf's postulation of Standard Average European as a single normative set of language cryptotypes\* associatable with a particular unified mindset.) is predominant.

\*cryptotype. [theoretical] Whorf's term for a covert grammatical category. For instance, the process types, material, mental, verbal, and relational, are largely cryptotypes in English. It has been taken over in systemic work (e.g., Halliday, 1983). Cryptotypes affect the organization of the grammatical system; that is, the grammatical system 'reacts' to their presence and we can identify cryptotypes by reference to such reactances.

<sup>69</sup> In Israeli Hebrew, unlike Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew, the normal sentence order is subject-verb-object. This parallels developments in Arabic dialects See sect 7.45 in [Lipinski 1997](#)

"Both Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic exhibit a stronger trend than their classical predecessors for long and intricate sentences. Rosen deals with the use of periods in Modern Hebrew (i.e. with long sentences the parts of which are combined by dint of subordinative conjunctions and which tend to contain parallel clauses and phrases) and he contends that Modern Hebrew, in its excessive use of periods, has not preserved its Semitic character. I have some misgivings about identifying simple sentence structure with Semitic character and about regarding intricate sentence structure as non-Semitic. Is one justified to consider mediaeval scientific Arabic style to be non-Semitic only because it teems with complicated sentences?!... It seems that the same phenomenon in Modern Standard Arabic has not only to be attributed to mediaeval heritage, but also to the impact of Standard Average European.... The Arabic sentences quoted are by no means less complicated than those adduced by Rosen for Hebrew and considered to exhibit non-Semitic character:

(1) *ha-t-taphqid hu l'-targem b'-middat ha-efsharut et ha-t-t'Hushot, et ha-n-nisyonot, ha-Huqqim shel ha-hakkara ha-c-al-sikhliit, li-sphato shel ha-s-sekhel, l'ma'an tihyena yoter muvanot, o, l'-mitz'ar, paHot lo-muvanot la-s-sekhel* "the task is, as far as possible, to translate the feelings, the attempts, the rules of super-rational perception, into the language of reason, to make them more intelligible, or, at least, less unintelligible to reason;

(2) *im qara ba-y-yamim ha-aHaronim ubha koHah shel ha-m-m'dina ha-addira me-c-ebher la-y-yamrnim nissa l'-ha-camidenu al kakh, she-en anu zakka'im li-hyot ha-m-merkaz li-tphutzot yisra'el ba-q-qola, hare limed otanu b'lo*



*yod'im pereq °al Hashibhut ha-Hayyim ha-ruHaniyyim b'-yisrael* "if in the last days it happened that the representative of the mighty country beyond the ocean tried to teach us that we are not entitled to be the centre of the scatterings of Israel in the diaspora, so, unconsciously, he taught us a lesson on the importance of the spiritual life in Israel" It cannot be denied that not only Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic but even Middle Standard Arabic, representing scientific style, has been influenced by European linguistic usage, viz. by Greek, which often penetrated Arabic. via Syriac. Yet periods occur in genuine classical Arabic as well, and it is not an exaggeration to claim that one of the most characteristic traits of JaHiZ's style, one of the most important representatives of classical style at the beginning of the Abbasid period, is the extensive use of the periods....

To sum up: not a few of the so-called European traits of Modern Hebrew occur in Modern Standard Arabic as well, and the use of periods is even characteristic of Middle Arabic scientific literature and of *belles lettres* .... One will not, on principle, oppose to considering Modern Hebrew a European tongue (although I have some misgivings as to posing questions whether or not a certain language may still be regarded as a Semitic tongue). It has to be done on the base of linguistic analysis, rather than from inference from the personal background of the speakers. Moreover, the same principles have to be applied to other languages that exhibit similar phenomena. And if the question is posed whether Modern Hebrew is a Semitic or a European tongue, first one must define Semitic languages and European ones and then apply the definitions to both Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic with the help of statistical analysis, though I am not very optimistic as to the results of this procedure.

I have the impression that Modern Hebrew uses loan words and loan blends more extensively than does Modern Standard Arabic, and loan words even in Hebrew to be on the decrease, further that loan words are not exceptional in Modern Standard Arabic either. There is disagreement as to the excessive use of loan words in Arabic and Hebrew and some writers go as far as to consider them dangerous to the substance of language. As a matter of fact it is not single words that change the character of a language but rather the inner structure, and in this respect Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic are rather alike.

To sum up the contents of this chapter: it was through the influence of Standard Average European that the syntax and especially phraseology in both Modern Standard Arabic and Modern Hebrew underwent far-reaching changes. These features, as well as the use of periods (although they are well attested in earlier stages of Arabic as well), make Hebrew and Arabic similar to European languages. Both Hebrew and Arabic exhibit the tendency of becoming a part of the European language bundle. In spelling and morphology both Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic have preserved their ancient character; in other linguistic fields, however they exhibit new layers in the development of their respective languages...."

From *The Renaissance of Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic: Parallels and Differences in the Revival of Two Semitic Languages* by Joshua Blau, Berkeley: UC Press, 1981

This is reinforced by the following

As the reader must have noticed, the examples illustrating the preceding chapter operate by and large with a seemingly classical vocabulary. The illusion of having to do with unadulterated Arabic is there. The dictionary will only rarely be of any use in detecting deviations from the classical language. The occurring verbal semantic

extensions are so broad and transparent that they do not impede satisfactory comprehension. Adjectival extensions have the backing of metaphorical context. The overall impression is that such a language is clear, precise, and self-explanatory. Writers and poets do not hesitate to use it. Critics rarely dwell on its particularity.... At the same time very few users of this new Arabic literary idiom realize how close it has brought them to other linguistic spheres. Translators can now quite effortlessly and smoothly render contemporary Arabic into other modern languages, and vice versa. Linguistic affinity is appearing where before there had only been disparity. Arabs find foreign languages easier-as others find Arabic.

Now that the stumbling block of a lack of semantic equivalence between the Arabic lexicon and the lexica of modern European languages has been largely overcome, the vocabulary question loses its forbidding character as a defining factor of the Arabic language. As for morphology, it has never been an insurmountable barrier between languages. It provides the pieces, the working elements of the verbal mosaic. It constitutes the elementary level of linguistic structure and logic, a level which varies little from one language to another-just as one elementary thought formation varies little from another. Arabic is not different from English because *yaktubu* has a preformative and "writes" does not. The semantic and morphological logic is still the same. The simplest workable idea of an action has been conveyed in both cases. The shortest answer to the question "What does he do?" will be "write," "walk," and the like. An answer in Arabic might show some discrepancy, since *yaktubu* or *yamsh'i* reveal a different person. This is not so, however, because in the English case the full answer is either "he does write" or "he writes." A parallel with Spanish would be much closer....

Lexical and morphological considerations are not an impediment to the logical equation of languages. The syntax, however, as seen in the comparison of the above simple phrases-"What does he do?" *mādhā yaf'lu?* puts such an equation in jeopardy. Syntax, which is the structure of complex, integrating linguistic logic, quite naturally varies more from language to language. But syntax, in the final analysis, is the reflection of thought-patterns which from thought-discoveries developed into thought-habits and then turned into thought-rules. We usually operate with thought-rules.... There are fluctuations in languages, gradual changes, developments. Local colloquialisms become generalized; idiomatic expressions turn from casuistic into analogically formative phenomena; linguistic patterns cross borders and become assimilated by neighboring languages.

It is this latter form of change which concerns us here. Modern Arabic is coming into being only inasmuch as it changes and thus becomes different from non-modern Arabic.... But what does modern Arabic become? .... Modern Arabic has become a usable, functional language. It has done away with things which are not in our present realm of thought and experience and substituted relevant ones for them. Modern Arabic, as the simplistic claim goes, has become simplified; it is grammatically more logical according to one claim and grammatically more flexible and lenient (and thus less disciplined, discipline being a kind of logic) according to another; it has bridged the gap between the classical and the colloquial; and so forth, in ever-widening circles....

For more than one hundred years Arab modernists both in letters and the sciences-were captivated by the new objects. They saw the trees without realizing that they were in the midst of a forest. They were making a new vocabulary without yet achieving a modern idiom. They did not think like modern men yet, because thought, for all

practical purposes, is inseparable from language. The early modernists were neoclassicists, however. They believed in engrafting new words upon the rigid classical linguistic forms. They failed to realize that, culturally, new words bring with them new linguistic contexts which must replace the old ones, and that these new contexts create a new language. Modern Arabic, therefore, is modern only insofar as it is a culturally new language.

Modern Arabic culture ... is very much something borrowed and assimilated. The bearing of this fact upon the language is not marginal-it is essential. Timidly at first, and massively during the last fifty years, Arabs were understanding the world and their new cultural aspirations through concepts and thought contexts which could not have been of their making. Western influence was making itself felt not only in vocabulary but also in a new style and rhythm of thought, and thus in a wholly new feeling for the language. A series of assimilated thoughts had to produce a linguistic thought-configuration which had its origin in the influencing culture. An Arab writer trying to come to terms with Anatole France, for example, would find that knowing French to perfection would not suffice, and that knowing classical Arabic equally well was not enough either.

The discovery that there was a mysterious link missing for a successful thought transfusion from the Western into the Arabic culture became a source of frustration, particularly for the literary generation active in the first quarter of the present century, as it was fully committed to innovation. At the same time, it was this generation which put modern Arabic on its present course, which unknowingly defined modern Arabic, and which produced the first firmly rooted and consequential cultural communication with modernity. What enabled all this to happen was the gradual appearance of affinities between Arabic and the modern European family of languages....

The generic category of Western languages-a term we so often use without full conceptual precision-is first of all a cultural phenomenon. Out of a cultural community arises a linguistic community, producing a common linguistic spirit which pervades languages participating in a collective culture and is the expression of linguistic unity beyond genealogical frontiers and differences.... Present European thought habits and thought patterns reveal a striking unity of linguistic spirit. The differences of grammatical structure within the European community of languages did not prevent the appearance of lexical-contextual and idiomatic cross-borrowings which modulated even individual language structures. The generic concept of Western languages, as an influencing factor upon Arabic, is therefore not a vague, undisciplined generalization but a linguistic and cultural reality....

It is the relationship of an individual language to the idea of modern culture ...which determines its modernity. This culture-determined modernity of contemporary languages is thus a measurable entity, and, as a result, we may speak, in a case like that of Arabic, of the language's premodern state, of its classical and then modern orientation, and finally of its approaching the requirements of modernity.

After these definitions we should understand the far-reaching significance of our term-modern Arabic. Through its new lexicon, the thought-shaping context of that lexicon, and last but not least through the great wealth and variety of assimilated idiomatic patterns and literally taken-over phraseological units, the contemporary Arabic literary language has crossed its genealogical linguistic borders and has entered into cultural linguistic affinity with the broad supragenealogical family of modern Western languages. The process of its integration into the Western Sprachgeist has of course only begun, but its orientation now seems firm and its pace decidedly fast. Arabic

continues, morphologically, to be a Semitic language.... The configuration of its syntax now conforms to new, largely non-Semitic thought-dynamics. The modern Arabic mind is becoming an offshoot of the modern Western mind and is retaining fewer and fewer of the rigidly Semitic thought-habits and thus fewer of the classical idiomatic molds and structural particularities. A common modern cultural linguistic spirit is becoming the defining factor of modern Arabic.

... The classical language was "more" logical in its own cultural context. The modern language has to be equally logical in its own time and culture. The classical Arabic style of thought duly reflected the classical Arabic civilization. The modern style has different purposes to fulfill....

Modern Arabic is moving away from both the classical and the colloquial languages. While retaining the morphological structure of classical Arabic, syntactically and, above all, stylistically it is coming ever closer to the form and spirit of the large, supragenealogical family of Western culture-bearing languages. Provided modern Arabic remains in that sphere, it may take no more than two or three generations for it to become a highly integrated member of the Western cultural linguistic family, sharing fully in a common modern linguistic spirit. The Arabic syntax will then have undergone far-reaching changes dictated by modern thought-dynamics. The categories of the verbal and the nominal sentences will not be the main syntactical characteristics. Instead, the notion of meaning-stress will dictate the order of sentence elements. This will suppose a healthy shift in attitude from the formalistic grammatical one to a dynamic, stylistic one. The Arabic sentence will also become richer in subordinate clauses, and their order and coordination will be as flexible as modern thought-habits. A clear trend away from syntactical simplicity can already be observed....

...Linguistic processes, once started, are capable of self-perpetuation from within the language. In fact, secondary developments, which will be the results of primary idiomatic borrowings, will naturally and effortlessly produce the main stock of modern expressions or molds of expression. Analogical imitation of borrowed expressions will entail chains of effective stylistic derivations which will sound authentic within the new spirit of the language. The future of the Arabic language will thus not lie in artificial compromises between the two native linguistic sources of classicism and colloquialism, which work against each other, but rather in a straight line of development out of a classical Semitic morphology towards a new, largely non-Semitic syntax which will be dictated by habits of thought rather than by habits of live speech. Only then, in possession of a language by which to think, will the Arabs be able to overcome the problem of conflicting colloquialism and classicism...."

From *THE MODERN ARABIC LITERARY LANGUAGE; Lexical and Stylistic Developments*, Jaroslav Stetkevych, U Chicago Press, 1970

<sup>70</sup> See [Gilnert](#) § 28.3, 28.6 and [Bar-Adon 1966](#).

<sup>71</sup> For modern Hebrew see Bolozky p. 21 ff. Similar developments occur in Modern Literary Arabic see From *THE MODERN ARABIC LITERARY LANGUAGE; Lexical and Stylistic Developments*, Jaroslav Stetkevych, U Chicago Press, 1970. For broader Semitic language view see Lipinski 1997 pp. 234-235.

<sup>72</sup> See [Zuckermann](#).

<sup>73</sup> According to Uriel Weinreich (*College Yiddish*, YIVO, 1971) - "Standard Yiddish does not distinguish between long and short vowels; in this respect it resembles languages like Italian, Spanish or Russian. Compared to the long and short vowels of English or German, the Yiddish vowels are of medium length."

<sup>74</sup> The weakening of the gutturals in post-Biblical [Ancient Hebrew](#) and their disappearance from [IH](#) are paralleled in a number of other Semitic languages see [Kapeliuk 1989](#) pp. 303-305.

<sup>75</sup> For the general tendency for tenses, in modern Semitic languages, to indicate time rather than aspect, see sect 38.19 in [Lipinski 1997](#).

<sup>76</sup> There is a possibility that this shift may have occurred very early see [Joüon-Muraoka](#) § 26e.

<sup>77</sup> Emphasis bolded in this quote are my own.

<sup>78</sup> A modern non-Israeli scholar of Hebrew wrote -

I found I cannot read Shakespeare nor the KJV translation of the Bible

except very superficially and letting a lot of things I don't understand slide. It is not the words that have dropped out of use that are the problem, rather those that have remained in the language but changed their meanings.

Modern Hebrew is a different language from Biblical Hebrew in many ways. From what little I know, its verbal use is completely different. I don't know how many words have different meanings, but I suspect it is substantial.... It ... insures that anyone who is fluent in modern Hebrew but learning Biblical Hebrew, will tend to read modern uses into the Biblical text because there are no obvious clues when it should be read differently and when it should be read the same.

Karl W. Randolph.

<sup>79</sup> For the use of nouns in place of adjectives see sect 51.17 in [Lipinski 1997](#).

<sup>80</sup> A good source for Arabic patterns of neologism is ARABIC LANGUAGE PLANNING: THE CASE OF LEXICAL MODERNIZATION, by Aziz Bensmaali EI-Mouloudi, PhD dissertation in linguistics, Georgetown University, 1986.

<sup>81</sup> MSA is based on the Arabic of the Quran and has the same relationship to the spoken forms of Arabic as Classical Latin has to modern French or Italian. The prestige of the language of the Quran in Islam, and the fact that MSA is similar throughout the Arab world, have combined to support the opinion among many Arabic speakers that their native spoken language is "bad Arabic". Of course, Egyptian Arabic or Moroccan Arabic is no more "bad (Classical) Arabic" than the language of Madrid is bad Latin. The tremendous barrier to education and modernization of diglossia is described in "Language Education and Human Development Arabic diglossia and its impact on the quality of education in the Arab region".

An analogous situation was overcome in Europe during the renaissance by the development of the vernaculars as literary vehicles. In all likelihood, something similar will have to happen in the Arab world by either adopting

educated spoken Egyptian Arabic as a universal standard or by the development of a few regional standards based on the educated speech of major regional cities.

<sup>82</sup> For Semitic languages see [Lipinski 1997](#) pp. 484 *DS*

The situation is similar in Modern Standard Arabic see Joshua Blau's book "*The Renaissance of Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic*" (Berkeley: UC Press, 1981), pp. 60-141. Blau's conclusion is - "... it was through the influence of Standard Average European that the syntax and especially phraseology in both Modern Standard Arabic and Modern Hebrew underwent far-reaching changes. These features, as well as the use of periods (although they are well attested in earlier stages of Arabic as well), make Hebrew and Arabic similar to European languages. Both Hebrew and Arabic exhibit the tendency of becoming a part of the European language bundle. In spelling and morphology both Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic have preserved their ancient character; in other linguistic fields, however they exhibit new layers in the development of their respective languages." *DSS* See also *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties* (Georgetown Classics in Arabic Language and Linguistics) by Clive, Holes (Georgetown University Press; Revised edition, 2004) p. 292.

<sup>83</sup> Note the same development in the Neo-Syriac and Neo-Ethiopian languages ([Kapeliuk 1989](#) pp. 306-308).

K. E. Harning (*The Analytic Genitive in Modern Arabic Dialects*, 1980) shows that though the analytic genitive arose very early in the development of Arabic dialects, it generally has remained a marginal phenomenon complementing the synthetic genitive i.e. construct constructions. This contrasts with middle and late Aramaic, and Israeli Hebrew where how the analytic genitive displaced the synthetic genitive as a productive form.

<sup>84</sup> See The Endings – *iyya(h)* and – *yaat* as Productives Suffixes in Modern Arabic: Implications for Translation by J. M. Giaber, 2005. "Another similarly but less frequently used termination is *-u:t*, which Arabic seems to have acquired from Aramac...." *A Linguistic Study of the Development of Scientific Vocabulary in Standard Arabic* by Abdul Sahib Mehdi Ali, (publisher Kegan Paul (March 1987), ISBN-10: 0710300239; ISBN-13: 978-0710300232) p. 32 .

<sup>85</sup> See [Holes 2004](#) pp. 173.

<sup>86</sup> Some of the commonest: adjective in masc. sing. or fem. pl. used as adverb; adjective following **בְּצוּרָה** or **בְּאִפְסוֹן** ("in – manner"); abstract noun with prefix **בְּ**. (See [Gilnert 1989](#) sect. 21.4).

<sup>87</sup> See [Holes 2004](#) pp. 312.

<sup>88</sup> For Arabic see [Holes 2004](#) pp. 320-323.

<sup>89</sup> [Holes 2004](#) pp. 319-320.

<sup>90</sup> [Abu-Haidar 1989](#) p. 475.

<sup>91</sup> "A very important phenomenon, betraying European influence, has been pointed out by H. Blanc:

...the necessity of translating terms from Standard Average European (SAE), have resulted in the introduction of prefixes, a type of morpheme virtually unknown to Semitic languages and for which there is but the barest

precedent in earlier Hebrew; these have been adapted from, or invented on the base of, existing Hebrew and Aramaic particles or words, or lifted bodily from SAE, and today form an extremely important and productive part of the language. Most prefixes are so productive that they can be added, as the need arises, to almost any noun or adjective. Thus we have -'i-un-'or 'dis-' for nouns, *bilti* for adjectives ( '*i-seder*, 'disorder', *bilti-mesudar*, 'disorderly'); *du* 'bi-, di-, as in *du-siakh*, *tlat* as in *tlat-regel* 'tripod'; *tut*, ' sub-, under-, ' as in *tut-meymi* 'underwater'; *beyn*, 'inter' as in *beyn-lumi*, 'international' etc. Of those borrowed outright from SAE we may list pro-and anti-: *pro-aravi* 'pro-Arab', *anti-mitzri* 'anti-Egyptian.' One of the reasons of the wholesale introduction of prefixes was structurally feasible and easy, even though quite novel, is the partial resemblance such constructions bear to the way Hebrew, as other Semitic languages, uses phrases of closely bound words (the so-called "construct phrases") to form complexes of noun-plus-noun or adjective-plus-noun: *rav-tsdadim*, 'many-sided,' literally 'many of sides,' is such a construct phrase, but *rav-tsdadi* (same meaning) is formed with a prefix *rav* meaning 'multi- or poly'."...

A HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE HEBREW LANGUAGE EDUARD ECHEZKEL KUTSCHER Edited by RAPHAEL KUTSCHER 1982 THE MAGNES PRESS, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY, JERUSALEM EJ. BRILL, LEIDEN DS

On the other hand see From *THE MODERN ARABIC LITERARY LANGUAGE; Lexical and Stylistic Developments*, Jaroslav Stetkevych, U Chicago Press, 1970, p. 51 for a similar development in Modern Literary Arabic. Also for Arabic see *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties* (Georgetown Classics in Arabic Language and Linguistics) by Clive Holes (Georgetown University Press; Revised edition, 2004) pp. 160, 161, 313, 328, 330.

Compare: (a) Arabic "... adding the negative particle *lā* to words like *ijtimāʿī* 'social' to make *lāijtimāʿī* 'asocial'" (Adrian Gully, 'Arabic Linguistic Issues and Controversies of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries', JSS Spring 1997, vol. XLIL, p. 84); with, Israeli Hebrew *בלתי־חוקי* 'illegal'.

<sup>92</sup> Hebrew examples largely drawn from [Rosén 1962](#) and [Gilnert](#) pp. 492-493.

<sup>93</sup> Arabic examples largely drawn from *A Linguistic Study of the Development of Scientific Vocabulary in Standard Arabic* by Abdul Sahib Mehdi Ali, pp. 32,33, 73, 152 .

<sup>94</sup> Others listed by [Gilnert](#): me'en (מעין); *pseudo-*; *proto-*; *proto-*; *neo-*; *infra*; *ultra*.

<sup>95</sup> See examples in Holes p. 329.

<sup>96</sup> For Hebrew see Berman. For spoken Arabic dialects - see *The Arabic Language* by Kees Versteegh, Columbia University Press 1997 p.100. For Literary Arabic see Adrian Macelaru's lemma "causative" in EALL.

<sup>97</sup> *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties* (Georgetown Classics in Arabic Language and Linguistics) by Clive, Holes (Georgetown University Press; Revised edition, 2004) p. 121

<sup>98</sup> For Hebrew see above. For Arabic see *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties* (Georgetown Classics in Arabic Language and Linguistics) by Clive, Holes (Georgetown University Press; Revised edition, 2004) p. 232

<sup>99</sup> Hebrew examples largely drawn from [Bolzky](#).

<sup>100</sup> Arabic examples largely drawn from *A Linguistic Study of the Development of Scientific Vocabulary in Standard Arabic* by Abdul Sahib Mehdi Ali, pp. 142 ff.