Observations on Tenses in Archaizing Poetry

by David Steinberg

David.Steinberg@houseofdavid.ca

Home page http://www.houseofdavid.ca/

Return to Table of Contents

See *Tenses or Aspects in Biblical Hebrew*

Note that in most instances, in the following examples, the general context of meaning, together with the preceeding or succeeding SC_{past}[1] (sometimes also PC_{pretWC}) in the same verse make identification of verb as PC_{pret_sim} probable.

Table D

PC_{pret_sim} and SC in the Same Verse Referring to the Past

Chapt./Vs. of Hebrew Text	PC and SC Verbs Indicating Time Reference (Reconstructed JEH Style Spelling; */EBHP/*; n.b. EBHP PC_{pret} and PC_{jus} were identical.)	English Translation(s)[2]	Masoretic Text[3]
A) Preterite and Jussive Distinguished from PC_{imp} in */EBHP/ by the Placement of Stress			
Ex 15:16	PC_{pret_sim} - past תפל - 'tippul (:tip'pul PC_{imp}) ידמו - Stress not distinctive in this form. יעבר - 'yiᶜbur (:yiᶜ'bur PC_{imp}) SC_{past} - past (קנת)	Terror and dread fell upon them; by the might of your arm, they became still as a stone until your people, O LORD, passed by, until the people whom you acquired passed by.	תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימָתָה וָפַחַד בִּגְדֹל זְרוֹעֲךָ יִדְּמוּ כָּאָבֶן עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַמְּךָ יְהוָה עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַם־זוּ קָנִיתָ
Dt 32:27	PC_{pret_sim} - past אגור '' 'agur (:ʾa'gu:r PC_{imp}) PC_{jus} – jussive (יאמרו ינכרו). Identical	but I feared provocation by the enemy, for their adversaries might misunderstand and say, "Our	לוּלֵי כַּעַס אוֹיֵב אָגוּר פֶּן־יְנַכְּרוּ צָרֵימוֹ פֶּן־יֹאמְרוּ יָדֵינוּ רָמָה וְלֹא יְהוָה פָּעַל כָּל־זֹאת

Chapt./Vs. of Hebrew Text	PC and SC Verbs Indicating Time Reference (Reconstructed JEH Style Spelling; */EBHP/*; n.b. EBHP PC_pret and PC_jus were identical.)	English Translation(s)[2]	Masoretic Text[3]
	form in PC_pret_sim and PC_imp. **SC_past** - past (פעל)	hand is triumphant; it was not the LORD who did all this."	
Ju 5:17	**SC_past** - past (ישב שכן) PC_pret_sim - past יגר - 'ya**gur** (:ya'**gu:r** PC_imp) ישכנ - 'yiš**kun** (:yiš'**kun** PC_imp)	Gilead remained across the Jordan; And why did Dan stay in ships? Asher sat at the seashore, And remained by its landings.	גִּלְעָד בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁכֵן וְדָן לָמָּה יָגוּר[4] אֳנִיּוֹת אָשֵׁר יָשַׁב לְחוֹף יַמִּים וְעַל מִפְרָצָיו יִשְׁכּוֹן
2Sam 1:22	**SC_past** - past (נשג) PC_pret_sim - past - תשב - 'ta**šub** (:ta'**šu:b** PC_imp)	From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, nor the sword of Saul return empty.	מִדַּם חֲלָלִים מֵחֵלֶב גִּבּוֹרִים קֶשֶׁת יְהוֹנָתָן לֹא נָשׂוֹג אָחוֹר וְחֶרֶב שָׁאוּל לֹא תָשׁוּב[5] רֵיקָם:
B) Preterite, PC_jus and PC_imp. Identical in */EBHP/			
Ex 15:5	PC_pret_sim - past (יכסימו). **SC_past** - past (ירדו)	The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone.	תְּהֹמֹת יְכַסְיֻמוּ יָרְדוּ בִמְצוֹלֹת כְּמוֹ־אָבֶן
Ex 15:12	**Table A** **SC_past** - past – נטת. PC_pret_sim - past - תבלעמו - tibla'ʿimō. Identical form in PC_jus and PC_imp.	You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them.	נָטִיתָ יְמִינְךָ תִּבְלָעֵמוֹ אָרֶץ
Ex 15:14	**Table A** **SC_past** - past (אחז שמעו) PC_pret_sim - past (ירגזן). Identical form in PC_imp.	The peoples heard, they trembled; pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia.	שָׁמְעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגָּזוּן חִיל אָחַז יֹשְׁבֵי פְּלָשֶׁת:
Ex 15:15	**Table A**	Then the chiefs of Edom	אָז נִבְהֲלוּ אַלּוּפֵי אֱדוֹם אֵילֵי מוֹאָב

Chapt./Vs. of Hebrew Text	PC and SC Verbs Indicating Time Reference (Reconstructed JEH Style Spelling; */EBHP/*; n.b. EBHP PCpret and PCjus were identical.)	English Translation(s)[2]	Masoretic Text[3]
	SC_{past} - past (נמגו נבהלו) PC_{pret_sim} - past - יאחזמו - yôḥiʾzimō. Identical form in PC_{jus} and PC_{imp}.	were dismayed; trembling seized the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away.	יֹאחֲזֵמוֹ רָעַד נָמֹגוּ כֹּל יֹשְׁבֵי כְנָעַן:
Dt 32:17	PC_{pret_sim} - past (יזבחו). SC_{past} - past (שערם באו ידעם)	They sacrificed to demons, not God, to deities they had never known, to new ones recently arrived, whom your ancestors had not feared.	יִזְבְּחוּ לַשֵּׁדִים לֹא אֱלֹהַּ אֱלֹהִים לֹא יְדָעוּם חֲדָשִׁים מִקָּרֹב בָּאוּ לֹא שְׂעָרוּם אֲבֹתֵיכֶם:
Dt 32:18	Table A , Table C, Table E SC_{past} - past (ילדכ) PC_{pret_sim} - past תשי 'tišy (:tiʾšê PC_{imp}) PC_{pretWC} [6] - past (ותשכח) - waṭ'tiškaḥ (:waṭiš'kaḥ PC_{imp} :waʾtiškaḥ PC_{jus})	You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.	צוּר יְלָדְךָ [7] תֶּשִׁי וַתִּשְׁכַּח אֵל מְחֹלְלֶךָ
Dt 33:8	Table A SC_{past} - past (נסתה אמר) PC_{pret_sim} - past (תרבהו).	Of Levi he said, "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man, whom You proved at Massah, with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah	וּלְלֵוִי אָמַר תֻּמֶּיךָ וְאוּרֶיךָ לְאִישׁ חֲסִידֶךָ אֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתוֹ בְּמַסָּה תְּרִיבֵהוּ עַל־מֵי מְרִיבָה
Dt 33:9	Table A SC_{past} - past (נסתה אמר) ינצרו could be read as either: PC_{pret_sim},OR PC_{imp_pdur} which are identical in form.	who said of his father and mother, "I regard them not"; he ignored his kin, and did not acknowledge his children. For they observed your word, and kept your covenant.	הָאֹמֵר לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לֹא רְאִיתִיו וְאֶת־אֶחָיו לֹא הִכִּיר וְאֶת־ [בָּנוֹ כ] (בָּנָיו ק) לֹא יָדָע כִּי שָׁמְרוּ אִמְרָתֶךָ וּבְרִיתְךָ יִנְצֹרוּ
Ju 5:6	Table A	In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael,	בִּימֵי שַׁמְגַּר בֶּן־עֲנָת בִּימֵי יָעֵל חָדְלוּ

Chapt./Vs. of Hebrew Text	PC and SC Verbs Indicating Time Reference (Reconstructed JEH Style Spelling; */EBHP/*; n.b. EBHP PC_pret and PC_jus were identical.)	English Translation(s)[2]	Masoretic Text[3]
	ילכו (/EBHP/ yi'liֵkū) could be read as PC_imp_pdur or as PC_pret_sim which are identical in form.	caravans ceased and travelers kept to the byways.	אֳרָחוֹת וְהֹלְכֵי נְתִיבוֹת יֵלְכוּ אֳרָחוֹת עֲקַלְקַלּוֹת
Ju 5:17	**Table A** SC_past - past (ישב שכן) PC_pret_sim - past יגר - 'ya gur (:ya'gu:r PC_imp) ישכן - (:lō -ta'bo:' PC_imp)	Gilead remained across the Jordan; And why did Dan stay in ships? Asher sat at the seashore, And remained by its landings.	[8]גִלְעָד בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁכֵן וְדָן לָמָּה יָגוּר אֳנִיּוֹת אֲשֶׁר יָשַׁב לְחוֹף יַמִּים וְעַל מִפְרָצָיו יִשְׁכּוֹן
Ju 5:26	PC_pret_sim - past (תשלחנה). Identical form in PC_jus and PC_imp. SC_past - past (וחלפה ומחצה מחקה)	She reached out her hand for the tent peg, and her right hand for the workmen's hammer. Then she struck Sisera, she smashed his head and she shattered and pierced his temple.	יָדָהּ לַיָּתֵד תִּשְׁלַחְנָה וִימִינָהּ לְהַלְמוּת עֲמֵלִים וְהָלְמָה סִיסְרָא מָחֲקָה רֹאשׁוֹ וּמָחֲצָה וְחָלְפָה רַקָּתוֹ

---

[1] IN EBHP and LBHP THE JUSSIVE (PC_jus), COHORTATIVE (PC_coh), IMPERFECT (PC_imp) AND PRETERITE (PC_pret_sim/PC_pretWC) are, in some forms, distinguished by the placement of syllabic stress when not carrying object suffixes. See -

- http://www.adath-shalom.ca/history_of_hebrew3a.htm#indic_jus AND
- http://www.adath-shalom.ca/history_of_hebrew3a.htm#Prefix_Conjugation

[2] For convenience, I have used NASB or NRSV as the basis of my translation modifying the wording and layout as appropriate.

3 From The Westminster Leningrad Codex - http://www.tanach.us/.

[4] I assume this pointing, יָגוּר (PC_imp), is an error and should be read יָגֹר (PC_pret_sim).

[5] I assume this pointing, תָּשׁוּב (PC_imp), is an error and should be read תָּשֹׁב (PC_pret_sim).

---

[6] Nb. In /EBHP/ PC$_{pretWC}$ was distinguished from PC$_{imp}$ and PC$_{jus}$ by the germination of the prefix consonant. Additionally, PC$_{pretWC}$ was distinguished from PC$_{imp}$ in some forms, when not carrying object suffixes, by placement of stress - http://www.adath-shalom.ca/history_of_hebrew3a.htm#indic_jus.

[7] 2ms PC$_{pret\_nonWC}$ תֶּשִׁי i s dialectial variant or archaic form or Aramized form of normal תִּשָּׁא

[8] I assume this pointing, יָגוּר (PC$_{imp}$), is an error and should be read יָגֹר (PC$_{pret\_sim}$)..