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Is the Prose Tale of Job in Late Biblical Hebrew?*

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Abstract
An influential article published in 1974 by Avi Hurvitz argues that the language of the Prose
Tale of Job (Job 1:1-2:13; 42:7-17) is incompatible with a date prior to the exile. Hurvitz's sug-
gested Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) linguistic forms are examined, and while some forms are
rejected, Hurvitz's judgement that the Prose Tale contains LBH linguistic elements is found to
be correct. However, these do not occur in a sufficient accumulation for the text to be consid-
ered LBH according to Hurvitz's own methodology, but rather the accumulation is consistent
with a classification as Early Biblical Hebrew (EBH). This conclusion has no chronological
implications, however, since EBH and LBH represent not two chronological phases but co-ex-
isting styles of Hebrew in the post-exilic and quite possibly pre-exilic periods.

Keywords
Job, Late Biblical Hebrew

1. Introduction

In 1974, Avi Hurvitz, the leading scholar in the study of "Late Biblical
Hebrew" (LBH), published a study of the Prose Tale of Job (Job 1:1-2:13;
42:7-17) in which he argued that various linguistic features of the Prose Tale
were "incompatible with a date prior to the Exile".[1]

Scholars of Job have generally considered Hurvitz's argument to be conclu-
sive. Thus, E. Greenstein states: "The Prose Tale of Job (chs. 1-2 and 42:7-17)

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[1] A. Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered", *HTR* 67 (1974),
pp. 17-34, quote from p. 33.

is clearly a product of the Persian period; see Avi Hurvitz, 'The Date...'".[2] So too J. J. Collins in his recent *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* states unequivocally: "The language of the prose tale points to a date no earlier than the sixth century B.C.E.".[3] Even scholars who appear to see grounds for an earlier dating of Job express their acceptance of Hurvitz's argument. Thus, J. Crenshaw states: "Linguistic evidence seems to indicate a date in the 6th century or later (Hurvitz 1974), despite the complete silence about the national calamity in 587 B.C.E.".[4] Other scholars get around the problem by arguing that although Hurvitz is correct, the current form of the Prose Tale with its late language represents a late reworking of an old tradition, a possibility which Hurvitz himself raised.[5]

The purpose of this paper is to argue that, in fact, Hurvitz has not made a decisive argument for the lateness of the Prose Tale of Job. First, even within Hurvitz's system and using his own carefully thought out methodology, the Prose Tale of Job turns out to fit the profile of "Early Biblical Hebrew" (EBH), not LBH. Second, there are serious difficulties with the chronological approach to Biblical Hebrew (BH) which negate its attempt to date texts linguistically.

2. Hurvitz's Data

Hurvitz identifies a total of seven features which he considers LBH in the Prose Tale of Job. Two of these relate to a preference for the preposition עֹל, which I would classify together, making six separate features. Hurvitz's classic methodology for identifying LBH has three criteria. A fourth criterion is then used to decide whether a particular text is to be considered late on linguistic grounds.[6]

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[2] E. L. Greenstein, "The Language of Job and its Poetic Function", *JBL* 122 (2003), p. 652 n. 6.

[3] J. J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, 2004), p. 507. Cf. N. C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia, 1985), p. 40: "The linguistic evidence of the text is ambiguous, though the investigations of Hurvitz... suggest that the work is no earlier than the sixth century B.C."

[4] J. L. Crenshaw, "Job, Book of", in *ABD* (1992), II, p. 863.

[5] B. Zuckerman, *Job the Silent: A Study in Historical Counterpoint* (New York, 1991), pp. 26-27; J. C. de Moor, "Ugarit and the Origin of Job", in *Ugarit and the Bible Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible Manchester, September 1992* (ed. G. J. Brooke, A. H. W. Curtis and J. F. Healey; Münster, 1994), pp. 230-31; see Hurvitz, "Prose Job", p. 31.

[6] For the criteria discussed here, see e.g. A. Hurvitz, *The Transition Period in Biblical Hebrew: A Study in Post-Exilic Hebrew and Its Implications for the Dating of Psalms* (Hebrew; Jerusalem,

The first criterion is linguistic distribution: the linguistic feature in question must occur exclusively or predominantly in biblical books which are indisputably post-exilic in date, that is the core LBH books Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles,[7] whose historical setting indicates without doubt a post-exilic date. Thus, the form מַלְכוּת for "kingdom" occurs in each of the core LBH books, a total of 78 times out of 91 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. A further 6 occurrences are in LBH-related psalms and Qoheleth.

The second criterion is linguistic contrast: there must be expressions in earlier biblical books which express the same meaning as the linguistic item in question. This is intended to rule out of discussion linguistic forms that may appear in LBH sources simply because there was no opportunity to use them in EBH texts. Thus מלכות can be considered in linguistic opposition to other BH words for "kingdom" such as ממלכה.

The third criterion is extra-biblical attestation: the linguistic form in question must appear in post-exilic sources, whether Hebrew or Aramaic, from outside the Hebrew Bible. This is intended to demonstrate that the form was indeed current in the post-exilic period. Thus מלכות is widely used in later Aramaic dialects and Tannaitic literature and is also found at Qumran.[8]

Fourth and finally, there is the criterion of accumulation: if a particular biblical text is to be judged late on linguistic grounds it must exhibit a clustering of late linguistic items identified using the above three criteria.

We now turn to a detailed discussion of the data presented as evidence of the LBH status of the Prose Tale of Job.

1972); A. Hurvitz, "Linguistic Criteria for Dating Problematic Biblical Texts", *Hebrew Abstracts* 14 (1973), pp. 74-79; Hurvitz, "Prose Job"; A. Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (CahRB 20; Paris, 1982). A detailed introduction to Hurvitz's methodology can be found in I. Young, R. Rezetko, and M. Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts Volume 1: An Introduction to Approaches and Problems; Volume 2: A Survey of Scholarship, a New Synthesis and a Comprehensive Bibliography* (Bible World; London: Equinox, 2008), I, pp. 12-23.

[7] Hurvitz includes Qoheleth as well. However, this is dated only on linguistic grounds, and I in fact consider it a pre-exilic text: I. Young, *Diversity in Pre-Exilic Hebrew* (FAT 5; Tübingen, 1993), pp. 140-157; I. Young, "Biblical Texts Cannot be Dated Linguistically", *HS* 46 (2005), pp. 347-348; cf. C. Rabin, "The Song of Songs and Tamil Poetry", *SR* 3 (1973-74), p. 216; M. A. Shields, *The End of Wisdom A Reappraisal of the Historical and Canonical Function of Ecclesiastes* (Winona Lake, IN, 2006), pp. 22-27. I therefore place Qoheleth in the category "LBH-related".

[8] On מלכות see Hurvitz, *Transition Period*, pp. 79-82.

2.1. נְקַבֵּל *"We Receive" Job 2:10, 10*[9]

Although this is the second of Hurvitz's examples, we deal with it first since it is by far the strongest piece of data he presents. The verb קבל has a good distribution throughout LBH sources. קבל appears in three of the core LBH books, Esther (4:4; 9:23, 27), Ezra (8:30), and Chronicles (1 Chron 12:19; 21:11; 2 Chron 29:16, 22),[10] comprising a total of eight out of eleven occurrences in BH.[11] Further, there are demonstrable linguistic oppositions, where the verb קבל is used in contexts where other texts use the common EBH/LBH word לקח.[12] Finally, קבל is well attested in Hebrew and Aramaic sources from the post-exilic period and later.[13] The value of this final observation is limited, however, since the overwhelming majority of our evidence for extra-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic dates to a "late" period, and hence it is almost inevitable that BH forms, whether early or late, will be attested somewhere in a "late" non-biblical source. Nevertheless, the criteria of distribution and opposition indicate that קבל "receive" is a linguistic usage characteristic of the core LBH books.

We agree with Hurvitz, therefore, that the use of the verb קבל "receive" is a feature of LBH, in the sense of representing a linguistic form used a number of times in the core LBH books in contexts where other biblical books would choose other linguistic forms, notably לקח. However, it is not clear that this fact can be explained simply due to chronological factors, i.e. קבל entered Hebrew in the post-exilic period, and was thus adopted as a matter of course by the writers of the core LBH books. First, we argue below that EBH was also a style of Hebrew used in post-exilic times. LBH is not simply post-exilic Hebrew, but rather one distinct style of post-exilic Hebrew.

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[9] Other treatments of קבל as LBH include R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (HSM 12; Missoula, 1976), pp. 149-150; R. Bergey, "The Book of Esther: Its Place in the Linguistic Milieu of Post-Exilic Biblical Hebrew Prose: A Study in Late Biblical Hebrew" (PhD thesis, Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1983), pp. 145-147; R. M. Wright, "Further Evidence for North Israelite Contributions to Late Biblical Hebrew", in *Biblical Hebrew Studies in Chronology and Typology* (ed. I. Young; JSOTSup 369; London, 2003), pp. 140-142; R. M. Wright, *Linguistic Evidence for the Pre-exilic Date of the Yahwistic Source* (Library of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament Studies 419; London, 2005), pp. 103-106.

[10] In the Aramaic section of Daniel see also Dan 2:6; 6:1; 7:18.

[11] Wright, "Further Evidence", p. 140; Wright, *Linguistic Evidence*, pp. 103-104 seems to refer to eight total in BH; he does not list Esther 4:4; Ezra 8:30; 2 Chron 29:22.

[12] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 21-22.

[13] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 20-22; Wright, *Linguistic Evidence*, pp. 104-105.

Second, in regard to our specific word קבל, while eight of eleven occurrences are in the core LBH books and two more are in the Prose Tale of Job, there remains the troubling occurrence of the form in Prov 19:20.

A century ago, in his classic *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, S. R. Driver stated: "According to the common opinion, the oldest collection [in the Book of Proverbs] is 10¹-22¹⁶. At what date this collection was formed, cannot be determined with precision; but from the general picture of society which the proverbs seem to reflect, and especially from the manner in which the king is uniformly alluded to, it is generally referred to the golden days of the monarchy".[14] A dating in the monarchic era still remains widely accepted.[15] Thus recently Wright notes the appearance of קבל "in a text of uncertain but probably pre-exilic date: Prov. 19.20". Wright's solution is to propose that this form was a feature of early, northern Israelian Hebrew, which only entered southern Hebrew in time to be a feature of LBH.[16] In other words, קבל is in fact not late in some varieties of Hebrew. This in fact seems to be Hurvitz's opinion. One of his major contributions to scholarship is his emphasis that certain varieties of early Hebrew were more open to Aramaisms and that such Aramaisms have no chronological significance. One of

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[14] S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (9th edn.; Oxford, 1913), pp. 404-405.

[15] E.g. J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament: From Its Origins to the Closing of the Alexandrian Canon* (3rd edn.; OTL; Louisville, 1989), p. 446; M. V. Fox, "The Social Location of the Book of Proverbs", in *Texts, Temples and Traditions A Tribute to Menahem Haran* (ed. M. V. Fox et al.; Winona Lake, IN, 1996), esp. pp. 235-236; R. J. Clifford, *Proverbs: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, 1999), pp. 3-4; Collins, *Introduction*, p. 488; M. V. Fox, "The Dating of Proverbs 10-29" (Hebrew), in *Festschrift Avi Hurvitz* (forthcoming). O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford, 1965), p. 474, and G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (trans. D. Green; London, 1970), p. 320, argue that since Aramaisms cannot be pre-exilic this collection must be post-exilic, despite its subject matter. Against this argument, see the following discussion for modern understandings of the significance of Aramaisms.

[16] Wright, "Further Evidence", pp. 140-142, quote from p. 142. Qimron states: "it is certainly not by chance that the verb קבל is absent from biblical books written in the First Temple period, for there are contexts in those books in which קבל could have occurred but other words are used instead. From this we may conclude that this verb did not exist in the literary language of the kingdom of Judah, where C[lassical] BH was written. But it would be going too far to deduce that this root first came into use in Hebrew during the exilic and post-exilic periods. It may just as well have existed in some Hebrew dialect at the time of the First Temple…" (E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4. Volume 5: Miqṣat Ma'aśe Ha-Torah* [DJD 10; Oxford, 1994], p. 106). It is not clear whether Qimron therefore views Prov 19:20 as post-exilic, or whether his point concerns only the core EBH texts as examples of the standard literary language of pre-exilic Judah.

the categories Hurvitz mentions is that of Wisdom literature such as the Book of Proverbs.[17] In line with this, Hurvitz mentions that the appearance of קבל in Prov 19:20 is due to genre, not chronology.[18] One is entitled to wonder, in this case, since the Prose Tale of Job is also part of a work of the Wisdom genre, whether genre, not chronology, is the explanation of the appearance of קבל, here just as in Proverbs?[19]

The use of קבל "to receive" is demonstrably a feature of the core LBH texts. However, we find that other styles of Hebrew, possibly early ones, could also use LBH linguistic features.

2.2. הַשָּׂטָן *"the Adversary/ Satan" Job 1:6 etc.*

Hurvitz argues that "the emergence of the figure of The Satan in the Bible–which is linguistically associated with a semantic development שׂטן = 'stumble'> שׂטן = 'The Satan'—is an exclusive feature of post-exilic literature".[20] In fact, the use of שׂטן to refer to a heavenly figure is extremely rare in the Hebrew Bible. 1 Chron 21:1 is the only text which has been understood to use שׂטן without definite article as an apparent personal name. However, this understanding of the verse is rejected by other scholars.[21] The other occurrence of שׂטן outside Job,[22] Zech 3:1, 2 agrees with Job in referring to a figure called "the Adversary" with a definite article השׂטן. First of all we note that this is a poor distribution. Outside of Job, we have but one possible, but

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[17] A. Hurvitz, "The Chronological Significance of 'Aramaisms' in Biblical Hebrew", *IEJ* 18 (1968), p. 236; A. Hurvitz, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period: The Problem of 'Aramaisms' in Linguistic Research on the Hebrew Bible", in Young, *Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 32-33.

[18] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 22-23 n. 21.

[19] Young, *Diversity*, p. 134.

[20] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 19-20, quote from p. 20.

[21] On the one hand, R. W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, 2006), p. 418 is an example of a scholar who argues: "Only in Chronicles, however, does this word lack the definite article and therefore function as a personal name". Cf. P. B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven, 2005), p. 257. On the contrary, other scholars reject the interpretation as a personal name. Thus, S. L. McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles* (AOTC; Nashville, 2004), p. 171 argues: "Rather, the simplest explanation and the one that best suits the context is that *satan* here simply refers to an enemy as it commonly does elsewhere in the Old Testament". Cf. S. Japhet, *I and II Chronicles* (OTL; Louisville, 1993), pp. 374-375; G. N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29: A New Translation With Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (AB 12A; Garden City, NY, 2004), pp. 744, 751.

[22] Modern translations of Ps. 109:6 replace the AV's "Satan" with "an adversary" (human) or the like.

disputed, attestation in a core LBH book, Chronicles, and two in one context in Zechariah which, while certainly post-exilic, is not linguistically classifiable as LBH (see below). Even accepting Zechariah as LBH, since it is post-exilic, still does not give a wide distribution.

Much worse, however, is the problem of linguistic opposition. The first thing that needs to be said is that we do not seem to be dealing with a linguistic phenomenon at all.[23] There does not seem to be any reason to argue that if in EBH the word שׂטן meant "adversary" (1 Kgs 5:18; 11:14, 23, 25) one could not attach a definite article to this word as a means of designating "*the* Adversary", a heavenly figure.[24] There is no obvious linguistic development here. It is possible to argue that there is a linguistic development involved in Chronicles, if it is the case that the definite article has been dropped and the word reanalysed as a proper noun. This *might* be an argument that Job and Zechariah are older than Chronicles, although such an argument would hardly cause a stir among biblical scholars.

Linguistic opposition rightly is at the core of Hurvitz's system. If we do not have two contrasting linguistic forms in the same contexts we have no basis for arguing for a linguistic development. Hurvitz fails to provide a linguistic contrast for השׂטן in Job. He is able to demonstrate that most biblical texts do not mention a heavenly being called "the Adversary". However, he can find no context where another linguistic form is used for a heavenly figure who performs the same function as in Job and Zechariah. His attempt to find such a contrast with the "lying spirit" in 1 Kgs 22:21 does not seem to convincingly parallel what we know of the activities of "the Satan" in our texts. Even when the core LBH book of Daniel talks about angelic opposition to Michael, the opponent is not designated as "Satan" (Dan 10:21).[25] There were many heavenly beings, who had various functions, in addition to one whose designated task was "the Adversary".

The argument that the failure of most biblical texts to mention "the Adversary" is due to the fact that such an idea was a late development in Israelite thought is not a linguistic argument. The argument may still have validity in an attempt to date the Prose Tale of Job on non-linguistic grounds. However, one could also interpret the reticent manner in which most biblical texts talk

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[23] M. Ehrensvärd, "Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts", in Young, *Biblical Hebrew*, p. 180; cf. Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 62-63.

[24] Cf. R. Gordis, *The Book of Job Commentary New Translation and Special Studies* (New York, 1978), p. 14.

[25] J. J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, 1993), pp. 374-375.

about heavenly beings as telling us more about the ideologies of the authors of those texts than that such ideas were not available to them. Even late in the Second Temple period there were quite different pictures of the heavenly realm on offer.[26] In any case, whether the question of the Satan turns out to be helpful in dating the Prose Tale of Job or not, it is not a linguistic argument, and hence has no place in a discussion about whether the Prose Tale of Job is in LBH.

2.3. יִתְפַּלֵּל עֲלֵיכֶם "(Job) Will Pray for You" Job 42:8

With the sense of "to intercede for" the combination התפלל על occurs, outside of Job, only in the core LBH books of Nehemiah and Chronicles (Neh 1:6; 2 Chron 30:18). This is not a wide distribution, but this specific case is part of a wider linguistic phenomenon of preference for the preposition על over other prepositions which is considered a feature of the core LBH books,[27] albeit also occurring in EBH contexts, as is usual with most well attested LBH features.

Hurvitz is able to establish a linguistic opposition with the regular use of בְּעַד in the expression "to pray/ intercede for" which in fact occurs in Job 42:10.[28] He also notes the use of על in some post-biblical literature,

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[26] Some examples include: (1) Acts 23:8 "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three". For a detailed discussion of this passage see F. Parker, "The Terms 'Angel' and 'Spirit' in Acts 23,8", *Bib* 84 (2003), pp. 344-365, who concludes that it indicates that "the Sadducees rejected the extravagant beliefs about angels and spirits" (p. 365). (2) The statement of Josephus in *B.J.* 2.142 that the Essenes carefully preserve "the names of the angels" implies that their insights and beliefs about the heavenly realm were distinct to them and not shared with other Jewish groups. (3) Many contrasts can be found between the presentation of heavenly matters in various Second Temple period texts. Thus, while often considered "Enochic", Jubilees contrasts with e.g. the Book of the Watchers (1 En 1-36) by avoiding giving the names of any of the angels, other than the leader of the evil spirits, who is called Mastema (see e.g. Jub 10:8). See also the comments of M. Mach, "Angels", *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman and J. C. VanderKam; 2 vols; Oxford, 2000), I, p. 25: "The different works attributed to the Qumran community show sometimes quite disparate beliefs and motifs concerning angels... A work like the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice... is a classical source for a fully developed angelology; Temple Scroll[a]... in contrast, does not mention heavenly beings at all". I would like to thank Shani Berrin Tzoref for her helpful advice on this issue.
[27] Hurvitz, *Transition Period,* p. 22; M. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel* (JSOTSup 90; Sheffield, 1990), pp. 127-131; I. Young, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Qumran Pesher Habakkuk", *JHS* 8 (2008) Article 25.
[28] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", p. 23.

although as stated above such an attestation is virtually inevitable and hence of little evidential value.

The collocation of התפלל plus על, when seen in the wider category of "preference for על" is a linguistic feature of the Prose Tale of Job which links with LBH, while of course not being absent from EBH. Admittedly, it comes under the category of an Aramaism, and hence may be explained by the non-chronological openness of Wisdom books like Job to Aramaisms discussed above. Whatever the case in this regard, it is still a link with the core LBH books.

2.4. אַחֲרֵי זֹאת "after This" Job 42:16

Strictly speaking, the expression אחרי זאת for "after this" is only found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in Ezra 9:10. However, Hurvitz links this expression in with the parallel ones used in Chronicles: 2) אחרי כל זאת 2 Chron 21:18; 35:20) and 2) אחר זה 2 Chron 32:9),[29] which gives the form a reasonable, if small, distribution. A linguistic opposition with other expressions like אחרי כן (well attested also in LBH) is established.[30]

This rare biblical expression is thus a feature of the language of the core LBH books and hence counts as a LBH feature in the Prose Tale of Job.

2.5. לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל "to Present Oneself before" Job 1:6; 2:1

The combination of the *hithpael* התיצב with the preposition על (rather than לפני) in the specific sense of "to present oneself before" or "stand at the side of" a *person* is only found outside Job in the core LBH text 2 Chron 11:13, and the post-exilic EBH Zech. 6:5.[31] This is not a very broad distribution. Furthermore the linguistic contrast is extremely subtle. על is in fact used in the expression "to stand by" someone in EBH, but only with the *niphal* נצב. Further, the combination התיצב על in the sense of "stand beside" is also attested in EBH, but only in the sense of "stand beside *something*", not "stand beside a *person*".

Because of the rarity of the form in question, the fact that it occurs in but one core LBH text, and because of the very restricted area of linguistic contrast with EBH, Ehrensvärd rightly expressed extreme reservations about

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[29] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 24-25.

[30] Hurvitz does not deal in any detail with the extra-biblical data for this expression, but does mention parallel expressions in Biblical Aramaic, see Hurvitz, "Prose Job", p. 24.

[31] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", p. 25-26.

confidently deciding that this was an exclusively LBH form.[32] However, we can strengthen the link with LBH by including this case in the broader category of "preference for עַל" which we have described above, section 2.3. We thus accept this as a LBH feature of the Prose Tale of Job, but consider it as a manifestation of the same LBH feature as התפלל על.

2.6. עַד + Participle "while…" Job 1:18

Hurvitz points out that the use of עַד plus participle in the sense of "while", as opposed to the common use of עוֹד in both EBH and LBH, is only found in Job 1:18 and the core LBH Neh 7:3 in BH.[33] This is, of course, a very poor distribution, and so Hurvitz tries to bolster the case that it is a "late" linguistic feature by pointing to the use of עד plus participle in post-biblical Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew (MH). However, as usual, the testimony of the extra-BH sources is of limited value. Aramaisms are not only found in all strata of Hebrew,[34] but also, as we mentioned above in section 2.1, Aramaisms are considered characteristic of Wisdom works like Job. In regard to MH, even though it is mainly attested in post-biblical sources such as the Mishnah, it is a widely held consensus that MH is a Hebrew dialect, independent of BH, which existed long before its full literary attestation in the Mishnah.[35] Incidental contacts between MH and BH texts of all supposed ages are attested. Thus, *hapax legomena* in the core EBH book of Samuel such

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[32] Ehrensvärd, "Dating Biblical", p. 180.

[33] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 26-28.

[34] E.g. רמה "throw" in Exod 15:2, often considered the earliest biblical text, see D. A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (SBLDS 3; Missoula, MT, 1972), p. 155; F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA, 1973), p. 121; B. D. Russell, *The Song of the Sea: The Date of Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1-21* (Studies in Biblical Literature 101; New York, 2007), p. 149. On the appearance of Aramaisms throughout BH see Hurvitz, "Chronological Significance"; G. A. Rendsburg, "Hurvitz Redux: On the Continued Scholarly Inattention to a Simple Principle of Hebrew Philology", in Young, *Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 104-128; Young, *Diversity*, pp. 59-63; Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 208-216.

[35] See e.g. G. A. Rendsburg, *Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew* (AOS 72; New Haven, 1990); Young, *Diversity*, pp. 76-81, 87-93; M. Bar Asher, "Mishnaic Hebrew: An Introductory Survey", *HS* 40 (1999), pp. 118-119; Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 242-243. E. Qimron, "Observations on the History of Early Hebrew (1000 B.C.E.-200 C.E.) in the Light of the Dead Sea Documents", in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Forty Years of Research* (ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport; Leiden, 1992), p. 361 n. 49 states: "It stands to reason that the dialects underlying both D[ead] S[ea] S[crolls] Hebrew and MH already existed in the First Temple period".

as משרת "baking tray" (2 Sam 13:9) or מפרקת "neck" (1 Sam 4:18; contrast common BH צואר) are attested in MH and "late" Aramaic. So too forms in monarchic era Hebrew inscriptions such as the use of the participle of יכל "be able" in the eighth century Arad ostracon 40:13-14 are not attested elsewhere until the appearance of written MH.[36]

We should be clear also that once again the LBH usage which Hurvitz is proposing is quite subtle. The use of עַד meaning "while" is attested in other places in BH such as the core EBH text 1 Sam 14:19, as demonstrated by J. Barr.[37] It is the specific use of the rare עַד "while" *with participle* that is the link Hurvitz is suggesting with Neh 7:3.

The value of עַד plus participle for the linguistic classification of the Prose Tale of Job is further lessened by the likelihood that עַד in Job 1:18 is a mis-vocalisation of a defective writing of the normal BH form עוֹד. Job 1:18 is a repetition of the phrase "while this one was still (עוֹד) speaking", the supposed EBH form, found in the preceding two verses 1:16 and 1:17 (cf. 2:3, 9). Scholars commonly consider that we should vocalise the form in verse 18 also as עֹד.[38] Hurvitz is quite correct that the form with עַד is not impossible in view of the post-biblical evidence, and Barr is correct to point to other BH contexts where עַד means "while". However, it seems equally possible that the vocalisation עַד was a mistake induced by the use of עַד plus participle in the post-biblical period. Hughes argues: "Certainly deliberate variation is a common stylistic feature but it is odd to find it in a passage that is consciously symmetrical [like Job 1]. Still more odd is the apparent fact that the writer should have chosen to break this symmetry in a single place by using a word from a quite different root in place of another word with which it happened to be almost identical in its written form. It is surely much easier to assume that עַד is simply a variant spelling of עוֹד..."[39] In any case it is precarious to

[36] I. Young, "Late Biblical Hebrew and Hebrew Inscriptions", in Young, *Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 301-302. Further examples of links between the inscriptions and MH are found in that article and cf. G. B. Sarfatti, "The Inscriptions of the Biblical Period and Mishnaic Hebrew" (Hebrew), in *Language Studies V-VI: Israel Yeivin Festschrift* (ed. M. Bar-Asher; Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 41-65.

[37] J. Barr, "Hebrew עַד, Especially at Job I. 18 and Neh. VII. 3", *JSS* 27 (1982), pp. 177-188, apparently independent of Hurvitz's work.

[38] See e.g. S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1921), p. 9: "it is altogether improbable that the original writer intended עַד in vv.[16.17], but עַד (MT) here, nor very probable that he intended עַד throughout...". KBL, II, p. 787 emend this and other uses of עַד for "while". Cf. also e.g. Gordis, *Job*, p. 17; J. E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, 1988), p. 75 n. 6.

[39] J. Hughes, "Additional Note" (to Barr, "Hebrew עַד"), *JSS* 27 (1982), p. 191.

argue from the fact that the form עַד *might* be correct in Job 1:18 that this gives us solid evidence for the language and hence date of the text.

Hurvitz is therefore correct that the appearance of עַד plus participle in the Prose Tale of Job might be a link with LBH. However, the poor distribution of the form in (L)BH, and the use of עַד "while" in core EBH contexts, quite apart from the doubtful nature of its attestation in Job, make it unacceptable as evidence in the current discussion.

2.7. אִישׁ הָיָה ... וּשְׁמוֹ *"There was a Man... and his Name..." Job 1:1*

Hurvitz argues that the use of אִישׁ הָיָה ... וּשְׁמוֹ in Job 1:1 contrasts with the EBH formula beginning וַיְהִי אִישׁ. As examples of the EBH form, Hurvitz cites Jdg 13:2; 17:1; 1 Sam 1:1; 9:1. He links the non-use of וַיְהִי in Job with an occurrence in the core LBH book of Esther where we find also אִישׁ הָיָה ... וּשְׁמוֹ (Esth 2:5).[40] Once again this is a very poor distribution of the supposed LBH form, so Hurvitz tries to bolster his case by claiming that the non-use of וַיְהִי in Esther and Job is a symptom of the breakdown of the classical verbal system using *waw*-consecutives in LBH.

In response to this we should note that the claim that there was any major disruption to the system of *waw*-consecutives, in particular the use of וַיְהִי in LBH, has very little evidential basis, as Rezetko has recently shown.[41] One could in fact argue that the use of וַיְהִי in EBH sources at the beginning of a book or story is a sure sign that the function of וַיְהִי was misunderstood by the authors! Even more serious for Hurvitz's case is the unclear nature of the linguistic contrast involved. First, one may question, as we have mentioned, whether this is a linguistic development at all. Second, the EBH "formula" differs in other ways from the occurrences in Job 1:1 and Esth 2:5. All of Hurvitz's EBH examples are along the lines of "Now there was a man *from* (place or tribe) and his name was...". In contrast, Job and Esther have "There was a man *in* (place)". In other words, the examples Hurvitz gives describe *origin* whereas Job and Esther describe not origin but current location. This is no more subtle a distinction than we saw above in section 2.5 in the case of "stand at the side of person *not* thing". This observation is substantiated by the core EBH text 2 Sam 12:1, שְׁנֵי אֲנָשִׁים הָיוּ בְּעִיר אֶחָת "there were two men in a certain city". Once again we see the non-use of וַיְהִי in a text describing current location of the protagonists as opposed to origin.

40) Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 28-30.
41) R. Rezetko, "Dating Biblical Hebrew: Evidence from Samuel-Kings and Chronicles", in Young, *Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 233-237; cf. Ehrensvärd, "Dating Biblical," pp. 171-174.

In line with this approach, it can be said that scholars have generally understood the syntax of Job 1:1 in literary, stylistic terms, not in terms of chronology. Thus, recently, Williamson has connected the syntax in Job not only with Esth 2:5 and 2 Sam 12:1, but also core EBH 1 Kgs 21:1 and Isa 5:1; and LBH-related (?) Cant 8:11. He concludes that we have a stylistic option where "the reader is being alerted to watch out, because there is more in what follows than meets the eye".[42]

Linguistic contrast is rightly at the core of Hurvitz's methodology. For the reasons outlined above, the case of איש היה...ושמו in Job 1:1 cannot be considered to be in linguistic contrast with the EBH formula Hurvitz cites. Thus, even without adding in the problem of the weak distribution of the form in LBH sources, we cannot accept this as a LBH feature of the Prose Tale of Job.

2.8. *General Comments on Hurvitz's Data*

Of the seven forms which Hurvitz mentions in his article we have had cause to reject two outright (2.2 and 2.7). Of the remaining five, two (2.3 and 2.5) are manifestations of the same phenomenon, the preference for the preposition על, leaving us four LBH forms.

Of the four remaining forms, there is a disturbing lack of distribution in regard to three of them (2.3 and 2.5; 2.4; 2.6). Each individual case has a link with only one or two similar forms in core LBH books. This raises the possibility that these links are purely by chance. One can, however, put 2.3 and 2.5 on firmer ground by linking them with the general category of "preference for על", and one can find similar cases to אחרי זאת in LBH which add to the distribution of the form. עד plus participle, with the additional textual problem discussed above, remains so poorly attested that I would exclude it, leaving three LBH forms in the Prose Tale of Job.

An additional problem with these LBH forms is that most of them link with Aramaic (2.1; 2.3/5; 2.6). The problem is, as mentioned, that Wisdom works like Job might be expected to have a higher number of links with Aramaic than other books. Hence the Aramaisms shared by Job and LBH may tell us nothing about common origin of the works, simply that both were

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[42] H. G. M. Williamson, "Once Upon a Time...?" in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (ed. R. Rezetko, T. H. Lim, and B. A. Aucker; VTSup 113; Leiden, 2007), p. 528. Further discussion and extensive bibliography of the various stylistic interpretations of Job 1:1 and Esth 2:5 can be found in Rezetko, "Dating Biblical Hebrew", pp. 236-237; to which add Gordis, *Job*, p. 10.

more open to Aramaic than EBH books. However, this is not an important problem for this study, since we can accept that these are links with LBH without having to enquire into the nature of the link.

Hurvitz is correct, therefore, to argue that there are a number of linguistic links between the Prose Tale of Job and the core LBH books. In fact, as we show in the next section, we can add some extra LBH forms to those we have accepted from Hurvitz's list.

3. Additional LBH Linguistic Elements

3.1. אַחְיוֹתֵיהֶם *"their Sisters" Job 1:4*

The use of third person masculine plural suffix -יהם on feminine plural nouns, as opposed to -וֹתָם is characteristic of LBH texts.[43] As with most well-attested LBH features, it is also found in EBH, but only sporadically. The specific form for "sisters" is only attested twice in BH, the other one being in the core LBH text 2 Chron 2:16, and like Job, exhibiting the LBH suffix -ותיהם. Although there is not a linguistic contrast with a form *אחיותם, the link with the more general phenomenon of the suffix -ותיהם makes this another LBH feature of the Prose Tale of Job.

3.2. עִמָּהֶם *"with Them" Job 1:4*

The distribution of the two linguistic forms for "with them", עמהם and עִמָּם is given by BDB.[44] עמם appears 27 times, of which 20 are found in the core EBH books of Genesis to Kings, and only one (Neh 13:25) in a core LBH text. In contrast עמהם is, as BDB notes: "chiefly late: Nu 22¹² Dt 29¹⁶ (v²⁴ עמם), Jon 1³ Jb 1⁴, and 19 t[imes] Ne Ezr Chr". In other words, apart from a few EBH cases, the longer form is characteristic of the core LBH books, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. The appearance in Job 1:4 is thus another link with LBH.

3.3. וָאִמָּלְטָה *"and I Escaped" Job 1:15, 16, 17, 19*

The long first person "cohortative" form with the *waw*-consecutive is characteristic of the core LBH books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel, but not

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[43] Hurvitz, *Ezekiel*, pp. 24-27; Wright, *Linguistic Evidence*, pp. 26-30.
[44] BDB, p. 767a.

Chronicles. It is thus generally considered a feature of LBH.[45] Like most well attested LBH features, it is also attested in EBH texts.[46] However, its many occurrences in the three core LBH books we mentioned qualifies this as another LBH feature in the Prose Tale of Job.[47]

3.4. Verb Suffixes

The radically reduced use of the object marker את with pronominal suffixes is considered a mark of LBH.[48] Thus, core LBH Daniel never uses את plus suffix and Polzin claims that the non-synoptic sections of core LBH Chronicles prefer verbal suffixes over את plus suffix at a ration of 10:1. Polzin contrasts this with core EBH sections from the Pentateuch and Samuel where he claims the ratio is 12:7, still in favour of verbal suffixes.[49] In actual fact, EBH is more varied than these overall statistics would suggest, with some EBH books and passages exhibiting a LBH-like preference for verbal suffixes.[50] The appearance of characteristics of LBH in EBH texts is, however, as we have seen, nothing unusual.

The Prose Tale of Job exhibits 10 cases of verbal suffixes (Job 1:5, 11, 15, 16, 17; 2:3, 3, 5, 11, 12) against just one case of את plus suffix (42:11). This is therefore another LBH feature of the Prose Tale of Job.

3.5. Conclusion: LBH Forms in the Prose Tale of Job

In section 2, we agreed that Hurvitz is right that there are characteristic LBH linguistic features in the Prose Tale of Job. We accepted a total of three features from Hurvitz's list. Now, in section 3, we have added a further four items to those we accepted from Hurvitz's list.[51] This gives us seven LBH items in the Prose Tale of Job. Does this mean that the Prose Tale of Job is in LBH?

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[45] Wright, *Linguistic Evidence*, pp. 22-26.
[46] Rezetko, "Dating Biblical Hebrew", pp. 227-228 points out, among other things, that it occurs in nearly half of the possible occurrences in core EBH Judges and Samuel!
[47] We do not discuss the appearance of the somewhat related long III-*He* ויראה in Job 42:16 since the long form appears only as the *qere*, the *kethib* being וירא.
[48] Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 28-31; Rooker, *Ezekiel*, pp. 86-87; Wright, *Linguistic Evidence*, pp. 37-41.
[49] Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 28-31.
[50] Young, "Pesher Habakkuk", section 3.2.3.
[51] Other possible cases of preference for על could be considered, but would not add to this total.

4. Accumulation

Hurvitz argues in his article on the Prose Tale of Job, as he does elsewhere, that the late elements in the text "betray their actual background; and if they are not few or sporadic—in which case their occurrence may be regarded as purely incidental—they effectively date a given text." Later, he mentions "the existence of a considerable number of such [late] elements in the Prose Tale..." and concludes: "As far as can be judged from the linguistic data at our disposal, these *non*-classical idioms ought to be explained as *post*-classical—namely, as imprints of late Hebrew—thus making the final shaping of the extant Prose Tale incompatible with a date prior to the Exile".[52] Thus: "It would appear that in spite of his efforts to write pure classical Hebrew and to mark his story with 'Patriarchal colouring', the author of the Prose Tale could not avoid certain phrases which are unmistakably characteristic of post-exilic Hebrew, thus betraying his actual late date".[53]

Thus, according to Hurvitz, despite his best efforts, it was not possible for the author of the Prose Tale to avoid using LBH linguistic features. Here, however, we note a striking fact about the argument. Even demonstrating, using Hurvitz's careful methodology of distribution-contrast-external attestation, that a particular linguistic feature is LBH does not lead to the classification of the text in which it is found as LBH. As we have seen, and as Hurvitz admits, LBH linguistic elements are found in EBH texts.[54] Thus, as Hurvitz emphasises in the quote above, it requires a "considerable number" of such LBH elements in a text before that text can be considered LBH. This is the criterion of accumulation.

Before moving on to discuss accumulation, however, we may be permitted to discuss some of the questions raised by the concession of the methodology that LBH elements occur in EBH texts. Is, say, the form -ותיהם actually a "late" linguistic item after all? If so, its appearance in a text should indicate that therefore the text is to be dated late. And if EBH texts which use -ותיהם were dated late, this means late texts need not exhibit an "accumulation" of LBH features. If against this is it argued that the LBH linguistic feature found in the EBH text is not actually "late" but was also available in an early period, then its value for dating texts "late" is negated. Despite the claims of the criterion of accumulation, discussed below, there is no reason to assume

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[52] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", pp. 32-33; italics his.
[53] Hurvitz, "Prose Job", p. 18.
[54] As another example, note the case of מלכות which we used above (section 2) as our example of a LBH form. Despite its strong distribution in core LBH texts, מלכות also occurs seven times in EBH texts: Num 24:7; 1 Sam 30:31; 1 Kgs 2:12; Jer 10:7; 49:34; 52:31; Ps 45:7.

that an early author could not produce a text with a clustering of LBH ele-
ments if they were available to him. Or perhaps the LBH elements in EBH
texts are evidence of later textual alteration of the language of the BH books?[55]
Proponents of the chronological model have been very reticent about invok-
ing this explanation. Once it is admitted that the language of the biblical texts
has been changed in scribal transmission, the claim that the language of the
current texts is evidence of the date of the original author is thrown into doubt.[56]

    Hurvitz suggested seven LBH linguistic items in the Prose Tale of Job. By
his comments quoted above, he must consider this a "considerable number",
enough to date the text to the post-classical period after the exile. By reject-
ing some of Hurvitz's forms and adding others, we have also arrived at seven
LBH linguistic items in the Prose Tale of Job.

    Is seven LBH linguistic items in a text the length of the Prose Tale of Job
(749 words) a considerable number? Nowhere, to my knowledge, has Hur-
vitz or anyone else been more specific as to how much of an accumulation of
LBH features is necessary for a text to be LBH. Nor has anyone suggested
how such an accumulation should be measured.

    In response to this problem we developed a simple test of accumulation.
Plainly put, this counts how many different LBH features occur in a given
stretch of text. Normally, this stretch of text will be of 500 words length,[57] so

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[55] Or more extensive textual reworking such as the introduction of later sections either short
or long.

[56] For the argument that the language of the biblical texts has been changed in transmission,
see Young "Biblical Texts," pp. 349-351; Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I,
especially pp. 341-359, and II, pp. 100-101, with references to earlier studies.

[57] In fact, by necessity sometimes texts will not be 500 words in length. Thus we discuss below
2 Samuel 22//Psalm 18, which texts each have only about 380 words. Nevertheless, where at all
possible, the stretch of text analysed is 500 words in each case. We use the term "words" to refer
to Hebrew graphic units. Thus וּבָעִיר "and in the city" counts as but one "word", rather than
four. Hebrew graphic units correspond on average to about 1.5 words in this latter sense, and
hence a 500 word (graphic unit) sample is approximately equivalent to a 750 word sample
in English. D. Biber, "Methodological Issues Regarding Corpus-based Analyses of Linguistic
Variation", *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 5 (1990), pp. 258-261 argues that a 1000 word
English sample is reliable for analyses of linguistic variation of grammatical features. Cf.
C. L. Miller, "Methodological Issues in Reconstructing Language Systems from Epigraphic
Fragments", in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions* (ed.
J. K. Hoffmeier and A. Millard; Grand Rapids, 2004), p. 285, for the application of this
principle to ancient Semitic linguistics. Note that Biber is not arguing that 1000 words is a
minimum, only that 1000 words is adequate. The argument being made here is rather less
linguistically sophisticated than the studies for which Biber found 1000 words adequate. 500
graphic units represents a compromise between having a large enough sample, and the problem
that too large a sample size will render the method unable to be used on texts of the size, say, of
biblical Habakkuk or the Qumran Pesher Habakkuk.

that samples are comparable. Within this sample we count how many different LBH features there are. We do not count repetitions of the same feature. Once an author has demonstrated the possibility of using a particular LBH form, there is no reason it cannot be repeated as many times as opportunity presents itself. Thus, for example, we have seen that the form ואמלטה is found four times in Job 1 due to the repetition of the same sentence. The 500 word sample from the Prose Tale of Job stretches from 1:1-2:11a. This sample includes all of the forms accepted above, except אחרי זאת in Job 42:16. Manipulating the sample to include this would cut out the several forms at the beginning. There is thus no way to get more than six LBH features in the Job sample.[58]

Table 1. LBH Features in BH Texts (Descending Order)[59]

Text	Number of LBH Features[60]
Ezra 1:1-11; 9:1-10:29	25[61]
Daniel 1:1-20; 11:44-12:13	24[62]
2 Chronicles 30:1-31:3	22[63]
Nehemiah 1:1-2:17	20[64]
Esther 5:1-6:13a	17[65]
Arad Ostraca	9[66]
1 Kings 22:6-34	8[67]
1 Samuel 13:1-14:9	6[68]
2 Samuel 6:1-20a; 7:1-12	6[69]
2 Samuel 22:1-51	6[70] (7.9)[71]
1 Kings 2:1-29	6[72]
Psalm 18:1-51	6[73] (7.6)[74]
Job 1:1-2:11a	6[75]
Pesher Habakkuk 5:3-12:13	6[76]
Habakkuk 1:1-3:4	5[77]
Genesis 24:1-36 (J)[78]	4[79]
Ben Sira 41:13-44:17 (cols. 3.15-7.24)	4[80]
Zechariah 1:1-3:1a	3[81]
Exodus 6:2-12; 7:1-13; 9:8-12; 12:1-7b (P)[82]	1[83]

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[58] As we shall see, even counting seven LBH features in the Prose Tale of Job would have no impact on the results.

[59] Data from Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 129-139. Out of the data presented there, here we concentrate on samples from the core LBH books Esther, Daniel,

Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles, and each of the core elements in EBH, i.e. the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic History, pre-exilic prophets, and EBH poetry. We also include the pre-exilic Arad inscriptions, the post-exilic prophet Zechariah, Ben Sira and the Qumran Pesher Habakkuk since we discuss them later.

[60] There is no space in this context to justify each feature judged to be LBH; below we merely list them. Although Rezetko, Ehrensvärd and I have thoroughly checked the samples, it is still possible that we have missed some forms in some of the samples, but the results are so clear that a slight adjustment here or there will not affect the picture that emerges.

[61] יָה-names (1:1; 10:2); מַלְכוּת and עֲבֹדוּת with אֶת- afformative (1:1; 9:8, 9); אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (1:2); motion verb + ל (1:3, 11); בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים (1:4; 9:9; 10:1); וַתְּחִיֶהם- (1:6; 9:1, 2, 11, 12); נדב hithpael (1:6); עַל יָד (1:8); Persian words (1:8, 9); substantive before numeral (1:9 [x3], 10 [x3], 11); כפורים (1:10 [x2]); זָהָב...כֶּסֶף order (1:11); (ū)b/k°qotlō temporal clause (9:1, 3, 5; 10:1 [x2]); נשא as "to marry" (9:2, 12); weqatálti (9:2, 13); double plurals (9:1, 2, 11, 14); wa'eqtlah (9:3 [x2], 5 [x2], 6); שמם poel participle (9:3, 4); עַד ל- (9:4, 6); בֹּזָה (9:7); עמד hiphil (9:9); אַחֲרֵי (9:10); לְאֵין (9:14); ידה hithpael (10:1); preference for verb suffixes 8-0 (1:4, 7, 8 [x2]; 9:8, 9, 11 [x2]).

[62] מַלְכוּת with אֶת-afformative (1:1, 20); מִקְצָת (1:2); בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים (1:2); infinitive for direct speech (1:3, 4, 18); Persian words (1:3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16; 11:45); מַדָּע (1:4, 17); מנה piel (1:5, 10, 11); משתה as "drinking" (1:5, 8, 10, 16); substantive before numeral (1:5, 12, 14, 15; 12:11, 12); יָה-names (1:6 [x2], 7 [x2], 11 [x2], 19 [x2]); גאל hithpael (1:8); אֲשֶׁר for כִּי (1:8 [x2]); pluralisation (1:15; xii 2); nun of מִן unassimilated (1:15); הָיָה + participle (1:16); בֵּין ב hiphil (1:17); בֵּין...ל... (11:45); עמד for קום (12:1, 13); weqatálti (12:5); (ū)b/k°qotlō temporal clause (12:7; cf. 1:15, 18); wa'eqtlah (12:8); weyiqtol instead of weqatalti (12:10 [x2], 13 [x2]); רשע hiphil for qal (12:10); preference for verb suffixes 8-0 (1:2, 4, 5, 14, 18 [x2], 20; 11:44).

[63] עַל instead of another preposition (30:1 [x2], 9, 18, 22); אִגֶּרֶת (30:1, 6); infinitive for direct speech (30:1, 5); עמד hiphil (30:5; 31:2); וְתְּחִיֶהם (30:7, 22); חָנוּן...רָחוּם order (30:9); הָיָה + participle (30:10 [x2]); לעג hiphil for qal (30:10; cf. שחק hiphil); motion verb + ל (30:11); postpositive לָרֹב in the sense "a lot of" (30:13, 24); day-month word order (30:15); pluralisation (30:17); מצא niphal as "to be present" (30:21; 31:1); ידה hithpael (30:22); רום hiphil as "to contribute for sacrifice" (30:24 [x2]); substantive before numeral (30:24 [x2]); (ū)b/k°qotlō temporal clause (31:1); עַד ל- (31:1); אַחֲזָה (31:1); מַחְלְקוֹת as "divisions" of people (31:2 [x2]); nun of מִן unassimilated (31:3); preference for collectives with plural verbs 6-0 (30:3, 13, 17, 18, 23; 31:1; cf. 30:25).

[64] יָה-names (1:1 [x2]; 2:10); בִּירָה (1:1; 2:8); מְדִינָה (1:3); בכה wayyiqtol + long III-*He* (1:4); wa'eqtlah (1:4; 2:1, 6, 9, 13); הָיָה + participle (1:4; 2:13, 15 [x2]); אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (1:4, 5; 2:4); ידה hithpael (1:6); הַמֶּלֶךְ ZYX (2:1); חיה jussive + long III-*He* (2:3); אֲשֶׁר for כִּי (2:3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 17); Robert Holmstedt [e-mail 21.05.06] considers most of these examples uncertain; only Neh. 2:10 is cited in R. D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis* [Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2002], p. 294 n. 25; R. D. Holmstedt, "The Story of Ancient Hebrew *'asher*," *ANES* 43 [2006], p. 10 n. 10); מֵהֵלֵךְ (2:5, 6); יטב לפְנֵי (2:5, 7); אִם עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב (2:5, 7); (2:6); זְמָן (2:6); אִגֶּרֶת (2:7, 8, 9); עַל instead of another preposition (2:7; cf. 2:4); Persian word (2:8); substantive before numeral (2:11); preference for verb suffixes 8-0 (1:2, 9 [x2], 11; 2:5 [x2], 6, 7).

[65] מַלְכוּת with אֶת-afformative (5:1 [x3], 3, 6; 6:8 [x2]); אִם עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב (5:3, 6, 7, 8); בַּקָּשָׁה (5:4, 8); (ū)b/k°qotlō temporal clause (5:9); זוע qal (5:9); substantive before numeral (5:14); יטב לפָנַי (5:14); infinitive for direct speech (6:1, 4); הָיָה + participle (6:1); אֲשֶׁר for כִּי (6:2); גְדוֹלָה

(6:3); לאמר as embedded infinitive expressing purpose/result (6:4); יותר מן (6:6); עַל יָד (6:9); Persian word (6:9); דחף (6:12); preference for verb suffixes 5-0 (5:11 [x2]; 6:9, 11, 13).

66) Substantive before numeral (1:3, 7; 16:5; and many other cases); *weqatálti* (3:2-3; 16:4); עַל instead of another preposition (3:3); *(ū)b/k*c*qotlō* temporal clause (16:3); עַל יָד (24:15); *nun* of מן unassimilated (26:2); רצה as "to want" (40:6-7); יָה-names (107:2; 110:1, 2); לקח *niphal* for *qal* passive (111:4).

67) עַל/אֶל interchange/עַל instead of another preposition (22:6 [cf. 22:15], 17, 32); יָה- name (22:11); אֲשֶׁר for כי (22:16); masculine plural suffix for feminine plural (22:17); נבה and עלה *wayyiqtol*s + long III-*He* (22:24, 34, 35); substantive before numeral (22:31); היה + participle (22:35; cf. 2 Chron 18:34); preference for verb suffixes 6-0 (22:8, 16, 21, 26, 27, 34; note that אֵת + suffix in 22:14 is forced).

68) פוץ *hiphil* for *qal* (13:8); עלה *wayyiqtol* + long III-*He* (13:12); עַל/אֶל interchange (13:13; 14:4; cf. 13:12); מצא *niphal* as "to be present" (13:15, 16); ה definite article non-syncope (13:21); יָה- name (14:3).

69) עַל/אֶל interchange/עַל instead of another preposition (6:3, 10; cf. 6:6); *weqatálti* (6:16); היה + participle (6:16; 7:6); ל for אֵת (6:16); היה *wayyiqtol* + long III-*He* (7:6, 9); *wa'eqtlah* (7:9).

70) *Nun* of מן unassimilated (22:14); pluralisation (22:22, 48, 49; cf. 22:12); היה *wayyiqtol* + long III-*He* (22:24); *wa'eqtlah* (22:24); absence of cohortative (22:50; cf. Ps 18:50); preference for verb suffixes 31-2 (22:3, 5 [x2], 6 [x2], 15, 15 [*kethib*], 17 [x2], 18, 19, 20, 21, 34, 36, 38, 39 [x2], 40, 41, 42, 43 [x3], 44 [x3], 49 [x3], 50 vs. 22:1, 20).

71) Since 2 Samuel 22 contains only 382 words, the figure in parentheses gives the projected number of LBH features in a 500 word sample.

72) Absence of locative *he* (2:3, 6, 8, 9; cf. 2:26); מַלְכוּת with וּת-afformative (2:12); הַמֶּלֶךְ ZYX (2:17); עַל instead of another preposition (2:26); יָה- names (2:28; cf. 2:5, 22 with צְרוּיָה, but the etymology is disputed); preference for verb suffixes 7-0 (2:5, 8 [x2], 9, 24 [x2], 26).

73) *Nun* of מן unassimilated (18:4, 49); pluralisation (18:22, 48); absence of cohortative (18:38; cf. 2 Sam. 22:38); עַל instead of another preposition (18:42); וּתיהם- (18:46); preference for verb suffixes 31-1 (18:2, 5 [x2], 6 [x2], 15 [x2], 17 [x2], 18, 19, 20 [x2], 21, 33, 34, 36 [x2], 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 [x2], 44 [x3], 49 [x2], 50 vs. 18:1).

74) Since Psalm 18 contains only 394 words, the figure in parentheses gives the projected number of LBH features in a 500 word sample.

75) וּתיהם- (1:4); עמהם (1:4); עַל instead of another preposition (1:6; 2:1 [x2]); *wa'eqtlah* (1:15, 16, 17, 19); קבל (2:10 [x2]); preference for verb suffixes 8-0 (1:5, 11, 15, 16, 17; 2:3 [x2], 5).

76) Biblical quotes are excluded from the sample. אֲשֶׁר for כי (5:3, 7; 6:3, 6; 7:7, 15); רשע *hiphil* for *qal* (9:11); עַל/אֶל interchange/עַל instead of another preposition (5:11; 6:11; 7:7, 12, 15; 9:12; 12:3); pluralisation (6:4; cf. 8:12-13; 12:8); Persian word (7:5, 8, 14); preference for verb suffixes 17-0 (5:11; 7:2, 4; 8:2; 9:10 [x2]; 10:4, 5 [x2], 11; 11:5, 7, 8, 15; 12:5, 13 [x2]).

77) עשה *wayyiqtol* + long III-*He* (1:14); pluralisation (2:7, 8, 17); עַל instead of another preposition (2:14, 15, 18; cf. 2:16); זָהָב ... כסף order (2:19); preference for verb suffixes 14-0 (1:3, 10, 12 [x2], 15 [x2]; 2:2, 7, 8, 11, 17 [x2], 18; 3:2).

78) M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Scholars Press reprint series 5; trs. B.W. Anderson; Chico, 1981), pp. 29, 264.

79) אלהי השמים (24:3, 7); אֲשֶׁר for כי (24:3; Holmstedt, *Relative Clause*, p. 294 n. 25 does not cite this example but Holmstedt, "Story", p. 10 n. 10 does); עַל/אֶל interchange (24:11); preference for verb suffixes 7-0 (24:3, 7, 16, 17, 18, 19, 27; note that אֵת + suffix in 24:14 is forced).

Table 1 is very clear. While all the samples contain LBH linguistic forms, the core EBH and core LBH books are at different ends of the scale in terms of the amount of accumulation of these LBH features. Thus, while the highest EBH sample, 1 Kings 22, has 8 different LBH features, the lowest LBH sample, Esther 5-6, has 17, more than twice as many as 1 Kings 22, while the other LBH samples have yet higher numbers of LBH features.

Firmly in the midst of the EBH samples, we find our sample from the Prose Tale of Job. Among the EBH texts, it represents one of the higher numbers of LBH features, but not an unusually high amount for an EBH text, and far away from even the lowest sample from a core LBH book. Thus, according to Hurvitz's own criterion of accumulation, the Prose Tale of Job is not in LBH.

5. Reflections on the Nature of EBH and LBH

It is evident from the table above that Hurvitz underestimated the amount of LBH features in EBH texts. His argument that post-exilic authors like the author of the Prose Tale of Job are betrayed by the use of a number of LBH features would lead inevitably to the conclusion that the EBH books are all from the post-exilic period, since we can see that they have accumulations of LBH features comparable to those in the Prose Tale of Job. The logical outcome of Hurvitz's system is that the biblical books are all post-exilic compositions, the only difference being that the EBH authors tried (but failed) to avoid the LBH features which the LBH books use freely. EBH and LBH would thus turn out to be two styles of post-exilic Hebrew.

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[80] The sample is based on the Masada manuscript, with some LBH forms restored as possible. עַל instead of another preposition (42:25 [col. 5.16]); בֵּין... לְ... (damaged context; 42:4 [col. 4.10]); כְּתָב (42:7 [col. 4.13]); נְבוּאָה (partially restored; 44:3 [col. 7.8]). We do not accept הלך *piel* (42:5 [col. 4.11]) as LBH since this is *never* attested in core LBH and is strictly a Mishnaism (cf. Hurvitz, *Ezekiel*, pp. 48-52). In addition, we do not accept as LBH בין ב *hithpolel* (42:18 [col. 5.6]) or בין *hiphil* (42:21 [col. 5.11]) since the distinctive LBH idiom is בין ב *hiphil* (Hurvitz, *Transition Period*, pp. 136, 138-39; Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 142-43; E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (HSM 29; Atlanta, 1986), p. 88; Qimron and Strugnell, *Miqsat*, p. 89; contra Driver, *Introduction*, p. 536).
[81] יָה-names (1:1 [x2], 7); day-month word order (1:7); motion verb + לְ (1:16).
[82] E.g. Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, pp. 18, 268.
[83] Preference for אֲנִי over אָנֹכִי 8-0 (6:2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12; 7:3, 5).

In some of his early work, Hurvitz left open the possibility that some works with low accumulations of LBH features could still be post-exilic.[84] However, Hurvitz's work generally seems to reject this possibility.[85] The primary characteristic of EBH books that marks them apart from the core LBH books is a relatively low accumulation of LBH linguistic features. That EBH continued to be written throughout the post-exilic period is, in fact, evident from the low accumulations of LBH features in Zechariah 1-8, Ben Sira, and Pesher Habakkuk in the table above. Zechariah is internally dated as a prophet in the early post-exilic period, while Ben Sira dates to the early second century BCE and the Qumran Pesher Habakkuk is a work from the first century BCE.[86] In fact, Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd did not find a non-biblical work at Qumran with a LBH-like accumulation of LBH features.[87] From this angle, too, then, we arrive at the conclusion that LBH was but one style of Hebrew in the post-exilic period, alongside EBH.

It is even questionable whether LBH was a style of Hebrew restricted to the post-exilic period. Dating the MT forms of the EBH books to the pre-exilic period, as Hurvitz does, would indicate that a large number of LBH features were already in existence and available to be used in the pre-exilic period. As has begun to emerge from our earlier discussion, only a very small number of well-attested LBH features are not also found in EBH books.[88] That these LBH forms in EBH and other relatively early texts are not simply due to post-exilic modification of the language of pre-exilic books is evidenced by a number of LBH features in monarchic era inscriptions.[89] The 500 words of the Arad inscriptions exhibit an accumulation of 9 LBH features (see Table 1). There is thus a strong case that many, if not most, LBH linguistic features already existed in pre-exilic Hebrew. If so, there is no reason why a pre-exilic author—like Qoheleth as I have argued[90]—could not

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[84] Hurvitz, *Transition Period*, pp. 171-176.

[85] See, for example, the quotes regarding the Prose Tale of Job above.

[86] On the latter, see further Young, "Pesher Habakkuk".

[87] Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 131-136, 266-275.

[88] For detailed substantiation of this important fact see Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 83-87, 111-119. Note that Hurvitz and Rooker have themselves argued for a significant LBH element in Ezekiel (Hurvitz, *Ezekiel*; Rooker, *Ezekiel*), a book much of which is internally dated to the late *pre-exilic* period. On Ezekiel and Lamentations see further Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 56-57 and II, pp. 90-91.

[89] Young, "Hebrew Inscriptions"; Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 143-172.

[90] See above, note 7. The Qoheleth sample in Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, p. 133 yields the highest accumulation of LBH features outside the core LBH books, with 15 forms.

produce a work with a significant accumulation of LBH features. Thus it is a reasonable suggestion that even in the pre-exilic period LBH could have been a style of Hebrew which co-existed with EBH.

The accumulations of LBH features in the table above do not reflect a chronological development. For example, in addition to Pesher Habakkuk and Ben Sira, the Community Rule and the War Scroll from Qumran[91] all have less than or equal the number of LBH features found in the Arad Ostraca, extra-biblical sources from the *pre-exilic period*. In other words, some sources from the end of the Second Temple period have less LBH elements than the Arad Ostraca from the end of the First Temple period. Chronology is not the explanation for these accumulations of LBH features, but rather that some authors have a stylistic preference for them.

Instead of a model whereby LBH is considered a linear development of EBH, which is incompatible with the evidence, a better model sees LBH merely as one style of Hebrew in the Second Temple period, and quite possibly the First Temple period, alongside EBH. These two general language types, EBH and LBH, are best taken as representing not two chronological phases but two tendencies among scribes of the biblical period: conservative and non-conservative. The authors and scribes who composed and transmitted works in EBH exhibit a tendency to conservatism in their linguistic choices, only rarely using forms outside a narrow core of what they considered literary forms. At the other extreme, the LBH authors and scribes exhibited a much less conservative attitude, freely adopting a variety of linguistic forms in addition to (not generally instead of) those favoured by the EBH scribes. Between extreme conservatism (e.g. Zechariah 1-8) and extreme openness to variety (e.g. Ezra), there was probably a continuum into which other writings may be placed (e.g. the Temple Scroll).[92]

6. Conclusion

Even within Hurvitz's own system, the Prose Tale of Job is not in LBH. It does not exhibit enough of an accumulation of LBH features to place it with

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[91] Both the Community Rule and the War Scroll samples in Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 134, 273 have an accumulation of nine LBH features, the same as the Arad Ostraca.

[92] The Temple Scroll sample presented in Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd, *Linguistic Dating*, I, pp. 133, 273 has the highest accumulation of LBH features of any Qumran text yet studied. However, its accumulation of 13 LBH features is still significantly lower than the lowest core LBH sample presented in Table 1, above.

the core LBH books. Instead, it aligns with the core EBH books in having a lower accumulation of LBH features.

This conclusion, however, has no necessary implications for the date of the Prose Tale of Job. EBH and LBH represent co-existing styles of Hebrew in the post-exilic and quite possibly pre-exilic periods. Thus the Prose Tale could be EBH and still post-exilic. Even if it had exhibited a LBH-like accumulation, this would still not inevitably date it late. This is for several reasons. First, we have presented evidence that LBH could have been a style of Hebrew even in the pre-exilic period. Second, there is strong evidence that the language of the biblical books has undergone updating in the course of its transmission.[93] Thus, there is no guarantee that the linguistic profile of MT Job stems from the "original author" of the book.

In conclusion, the Prose Tale of Job is not in LBH, neither in the old sense of being chronologically late, nor in the new sense of being in the same style as the core LBH books.[94]

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[93] See note 56.

[94] Note recently that other scholars, working within the chronological paradigm, have raised questions about the late linguistic status of the Prose Tale of Job. Thus, F. Polak presents data which he believes strongly points to an early date for the Prose Tale of Job; yet he takes Hurvitz's work as conclusive (F. H. Polak, "On Prose and Poetry in the Book of Job", *JANESCU* 24 [1996], p. 88). So too J. Joosten argues that Job's use of iterative *weqatal* precludes a very late date for it (J. Joosten, "The Disappearance of Iterative WEQATAL in the Biblical Hebrew Verbal System", in *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives* [ed. S. E. Fassberg, and A. Hurvitz; Publications of the Institute for Advanced Studies 1; Jerusalem, 2006], pp. 146-147).