

Randall Buth

Biblical Language Center

The Hebrew Verb is Simple and Powerful:
A Cognitive, Prototypical, and Functional Approach
to the Semantics and Word Order of 1Samuel 1-2

While she was walking down the street her friend approached and said **הִיא תָּבוֹא**. On hearing “**הִיא**” she instantly knew that she was expected to know who was being talked about. And on hearing **תָּבוֹא** she instantly knew that the arrival would happen some time in the future. By default she did not think that her friend was saying that the coming “might happen” or only that the coming was “currently in process.” No, the particular lady understood the verb as “will come.” The verb **תָּבוֹא** was understood as indicative, as future, as perfective. (Yes, perfective, that is, complete, including the end point of arrival!) The context would refer the hearer to a default situation and a default interpretation based on typicality. Of course, that would have been three thousand years ago, without the benefit of learning biblical Hebrew through metalanguage or grammar books. (Incidentally, we truly appreciate grammar books, or we would not have written this short study.)

Part of the purpose of this collection of articles is to answer a frequent question among those learning or studying the classical Hebrew verbal system.¹ Is the Hebrew verb mainly a tense, a mood, or an aspect? And how does any answer relate to reading a text?

1.0 Overview

The Hebrew verb is categorically simple. With finite verbs Hebrew has five structural categories that relate to tense, mood, and aspect, the *yiqtol*, *qatal*, *wayyiqtol*, *weqatal*, and *qotel*. Those five categories interact systematically across first, second, and third persons (‘I’, ‘we’, ‘you’[m.&f.], ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘they’[m.&f.]).² Hebrew also has a system with second person imperatives, short *yiqtol*s and jussives, and cohortatives, that that are uniquely volitional and will be discussed later.

Prototypically, the Hebrew *yiqtol* refers to the **future** as a whole event, perfectively [!], **including the end-point of the action**, although it may also refer to something that will be repeated or in progress in the future (1Ki 12:27 **יַעֲלֶה** *will go up [repeatedly]*). In contexts that overlap with the **present** the *yiqtol* will prototypically have **modal** (less-than-real) force to mitigate a question (1Sam 1:8)³ or to express non-temporal, or omnitemporal habituality (1Sam 2:8 **יָרִים** *he raises up*). Then in past contexts the *yiqtol* will prototypically refer to a **past habitual** (1Sam 1:7 **וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה** *and he used to do that year after year*). It may relatively rarely refer to something that was in-progress in the past, open-ended without an

¹ I would like to thank Aaron Hornkohl, Brian Schultz, and Sharon Alley for extensive interaction and helpful comments on this article. The faults and shortcomings are wholly mine.

² The participle, of course, comes with adjectival morphology and only marks singular and plural, masculine and feminine. However, participles can be used with all the personal pronouns for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person.

³ An item like the mitigated question in 1Sam 1:8 may use a participle if it only wants to mark present imperfectivity without mitigation.

endpoint (1Sam 1:10 **וַיִּבְכֶּה תְּבַכָּהּ** *and she was crying profusely*). This last example is a prototypical imperfective aspect (past progressive) but that is rare for *yiqtol*.

The Hebrew *qatal* prototypically refers to a **past** event that is **perfective** (including its endpoint) and indicative (stated as real). The past may include a present implication, a “**present perfect**,” (1Sam 1:15 **וַיֵּין וְשָׁכַר לֹא שָׁתִיתִי** *I have not drunk wine or beer*). With stative and psychological verbs the *qatal* may be ambiguous between a past and a present (Gen 28:16 **לֹא יָדַעְתִּי** *I did not know*, 2Sam 1:10 **כִּי יָדַעְתִּי** *because I knew*, Gen 22:12 **עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי** *now I realize, know*, 2Sam 15:26 **לֹא הִפַּצְתִּי בָךְ** *I do not want you*).⁴ It may be used as a **relative anterior tense** in a subordinate clause to a future (cf. Jer 8:3 and Jer 24:9). It may also be used as a **performative** (1Sam 2:16 **לִקְחָתִי** *I [hereby chose to] take*), which may be thought of modally as a *realis* used for a virtual fact, as a modal *realis* even though the event may not yet be real. Rarely, it may be used modally as a “wished for” contrafactual (Nu 14:2 **לֹא מָתָנוּ** *if only we had died*), or an undesired hyperbole (Nu 17:27 **אֲבִדְנוּ** *we are dead*—technically this is another stative verb. Like a performative, **אֲבִדְנוּ** is being used rhetorically, as a virtual fact.)

The Hebrew participle, *qotel*, is the primary means for expressing a single event with **imperfective** aspect, without an endpoint. The participle was freely used in the past (or future) to mark an event as in-progress, as prototypical imperfectivity (1Sam 1:13 **הִיא מְדַבֶּרֶת** *she was speaking*, **שִׁפְתֶיהָ נָעוּת** *her lips were moving*). In addition, the participle could also refer to a **past habitual** (with **הָיָה**: Jud 1:7 **מִלְקָטִים** ... **הָיוּ** *they would gather up*, 1Sam 2:12 **הַנֶּעֱרַר הָיָה מְשָׁרֵת** *the boy was serving*), and to an **omnitemporal habitual** (1Sam 2:6-8). However, in a conversational setting in the Bible the participle had entered the Hebrew verbal system and had become the **actual present** tense (Gen 48:1 **הִנֵּה אָבִיךָ חָלָה** *your father is sick*, Nu 11:27 **מִתְנַבְּאִים** *Eldad and Medad are prophesying*, 1Sam 2:23-24 **אֲנִי שׁוֹמֵעַ** *I am hearing*). As an extension of the present tense it could refer to a near future (Ex 3:13 **וְאָמַרְתִּי בָּא ...** *I am coming* ... *and will say*, Ex 12:33 **כָּלֵנוּ מֵתִים** *we are all dead*).

Hebrew is also somewhat unique among the world’s languages⁵ in having a pair of thematic tenses⁶, *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*. The *wayyiqtol* corresponds broadly with the *qatal* as a past tense and the *weqatal* corresponds broadly with *yiqtol* as a

⁴ Synchronically, **יָדַעְתִּי** *I knew, I know* (perfective) was able to contrast with **אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ** *I know* (present imperfective). The *qatal* is the more emphatic and definite of the two in the present. Contrast Greek that has a perfect as a present state $\sigma\acute{\iota}\delta\alpha = I \text{ know}$, but it distinguishes a pluperfect for the past state $\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota\nu = I \text{ knew}$.

⁵ Languages with “sequential tenses” typically have one such tense, not two, because they do not carry their own tense-mood-aspect (TMA) but link to the broader context. Hebrew has two thematic tenses and each one carries its own TMA.

⁶ A thematic tense is a tense that provides a structural, communicative thread or linkage to a sentence or paragraph. They are prototypically related to foregrounding in discourse studies and they are prototypically sequential and perfective. However, while the Hebrew thematic tenses carry their own TMA, their function is to provide communicative structure and linkage within a communication. Not using a thematic tense can also serve a special communicative purpose by breaking the linkage of a sentence and paragraph. In Hebrew studies the thematic tenses have often been called sequential tenses because breaking a thematic linkage allows the author to provide simultaneous information or to backtrack and describe previous events (cf. Gen 39:1). However, a story may also break a thematic link and still move forward sequentially where a

prototypical future, modal, and habitual. In other words, the thematic verbs are not two additional tenses, moods, or aspects, but their tense-mood-aspect (TMA) roughly corresponds with the TMA of *qatal* and *yiqtol*. This can be readily seen in long passages where the thematic verbs and the simple verbs interchange, like in the procedural and building descriptions of the tabernacle in Exodus 25-40. For example, Ex 40:2-3 וַיִּשְׁמְרֵם...וַיִּקְרָא *you will/should set up...and you will/should place*.

Compare this with the description Ex 40:18 וַיִּשְׁמְרֵם...וַיִּקְרָא *and he set up...and he placed*. The primary purpose of these thematic tenses is to provide a framework and presentational structure to communications and sentences. The default structure of communication in a biblical narrative is none other than the *wayyiqtol*.⁷ In fact, if one considers the most pervasive structural distinctions of the Hebrew language, these thematic tenses may be said to provide the character of the language even more than the TMA of the *yiqtol* or the TMA of the *qatal*. Classical Hebrew may be a “packaging prominent” language when it comes to the verbal system.

2.0 The Pie Concept

A pie is a closed system. If a system is closed, then any piece of the system affects the other pieces of the system. The number of pieces of a pie will affect the size of the pieces. Also, if any piece is larger, the other pieces will be smaller. The verb system of a language cuts up a metaphorical “pie” consisting of all the possible situations of events. The meanings of the pieces of the “verb” pie affect each other. While this may seem like common sense, it is regularly violated by people talking about verbal systems of a language. Over thirty years ago Derek Bickerton published a seminal work on how language systems develop based on how creole languages develop and on how children learn verb systems. He clearly spelled out the applicability of the “pie concept” to a verbal system.⁸ The pie concept is especially relevant to Hebrew because Hebrew has only the two simple tenses *yiqtol* and *qatal* and only the two thematic tenses *weqatal* and *wayyiqtol*. Hebrew verb tenses are essentially binary, although the participle has penetrated into the simple tense system. In terms of tense, mood, and aspect, this means that a binary verb system in a language runs a good chance of developing **polysemy**, multiple meaning for the same form.

new unit is signaled. Compare Jonah 1:4 where a new unit begins by not using a thematic tense structure when God sent a storm, even though it is temporally sequential, following the departure from Jaffa port. See Randall Buth, “The Hebrew Verb: A Short Syntax,” in Randall Buth, *Living Biblical Hebrew, Selected Readings with 500 Friends* [Living Biblical Hebrew, vol. 3] (Jerusalem: Biblical Language Center, 2006: 137-164).

⁷ Israeli Hebrew pronounces this as *vayyiqtol*, ‘w’ in *wayyiqtol* can be interpreted as [v], like German, should one desire.

⁸ “We must note a particular characteristic of TMA systems which, though seemingly obvious, has been ignored by virtually all work up to and including Comrie’s (1976) influential study of aspect. . . . A TMA system may be compared to a cake, a cake that is always the same size, for TMA systems, whether simple or complex, all have to cover the same semantic area: every verb has to have some tense, mood, aspect, or combination of these applied to it, for there are (pace some creolists) no such things as ‘TMA-neutral’ sentences. . . . If a cake is divided into five slices, while another identical to it is divided into eight slices, there is no way in which each of the slices in Cake A can contain exactly the same amount of material as each of the slices in Cake B. In other words, how much, and exactly what, is contained in each slice will be largely determined by the number of slices. This is exactly the state of affairs in TMA systems throughout language; what each marker of modality, tense, or aspect means will be largely determined by how many markers of these things there are in the system and by what each of the others mean. Facts such as these are, however, ignored by most scholars in the field, who strive to fit all phenomena into the same conceptual straitjacket.” (Bickerton, *Roots of Language*, Ann Arbor: Karoma Publishers, 1981:90.) His comments remain true after thirty years and especially for Hebrew.

We can capture the structural simplicity of Hebrew in our descriptions if we approach Hebrew naturally, through cognitive linguistics.

2.1 Verb Meaning Developed as Mapping

How did little children learn the meaning of the Hebrew verbal system? Children apply analogy to situation after situation while using the language, they do not learn specific definitions.⁹ A child absorbs the categories of *yiqtol*, *qatal*, *weqatal*, and *wayyiqtol* and learns how this very limited number of categories connects to the seemingly limitless situations of the multidimensional world of human communication. This mapping must remain the basis for any description of the Hebrew verb. If a language system is under-differentiated in its tense-mood-aspect categories, then an analyst must be prepared for potential mapping to more than one parameter of TMA. Hebrew is basically binary yet the two categories need to account for at least six values of TMA, that is at least two values for each of the three parameters of TMA. More than one surprise may await anyone who would try to map the two Hebrew simple verb categories.

2.2 Hebrew is a Language with a Continuous History of Usage

The history of any language is a worthy subject of study, but it is different from deciphering an unknown language. Hebrew is not an unknown language. It is good to remember that Hebrew has been in continual use from the time of Moses and David, up through the Second Temple period with a high formal and low colloquial register. Later in the Talmudic period (3rd century CE and following) Hebrew was a second language based on the previous low register (while the old high register was continually read in synagogue), followed by a medieval dialect mixing the two old registers, and finally an expansion of the medieval dialect into a resurrected first language, modern Hebrew. Insights about Hebrew have been recorded over the last millennium. These reflect both an understanding of the language and a difficulty in describing it. During the Second Temple and following, Hebrew was in use with multilingual users of Greek, Aramaic, and other languages into which the Bible was translated.

The history of the language is helpful when we look at how some bilingual translators dealt with the Hebrew verb in Greek. Greek is an aspectual language *par excellence*. A person cannot encode anything without making an aspectual choice. Imperatives, subjunctives, infinitives, optatives and participles all require an aspectual choice in Greek. Sometimes this showed up in translation, like Gen 37:28 where the indicative ‘passing by’ of the caravan was specifically put in the Greek imperfect (past imperfective), apparently because the passing was envisioned as not yet having reached its endpoint, but in

⁹ The idea of using analogy to develop the meaning of a word, a category, or a system is part of what may be called *prototypicality theory*. Prototypicality and the mapping of form to meaning fit within what may be called *cognitive linguistics*. Cognitive linguistics is a loose framework that approaches language as something that is part of human thinking and human processing. [More technically: “Because cognitive linguistics sees language as embedded in the overall cognitive capacities of man, topics of special interest for cognitive linguistics include: the structural characteristics of natural language categorization (such as prototypicality, systematic polysemy, cognitive models, mental imagery and metaphor); the functional principles of linguistic organization (such as iconicity and naturalness); the conceptual interface between syntax and semantics (as explored by cognitive grammar and construction grammar); the experiential and pragmatic background of language-in-use; and the relationship between language and thought, including questions about relativism and conceptual universals.” Dirk Geeraerts “Cognitive Linguistics,” in Jef Verschueren, Jan-Ola Östman and Jan Blommaert, editors, *Handbook of Pragmatics: Manual* (John Benjamins, 1995: 111-112)]

progress. However, the Greek translators were not always so sensitive to Greek and the translated context. At Judges 14:5 the Greek used an aorist indicative (past perfective) just like the similar case in Jud 14:1 to describe Samson's travel to Timna. However, while in the first case the story picks up from within the town, in 14:5 Samson met a lion while still on the way, before getting to the town. Similarly, compare Jacob's non-arrival in Padan Aram (Gen 28:5, 7, 10, all וַיֵּלֶךְ *and he went*). This phenomenon is frequent in Hebrew narrative with verbs expressing movement. The Greek aorist indicatives confirm, by the way, that the Greek translators felt the *wayyiqtol* to be **perfective** and not imperfective. They did not read *wayyiqtol* as if it were some kind of historical present or past progressive. On the contrary, throughout the Greek translation the *wayyiqtol* is prototypically linked to the past perfective, the Greek aorist indicative, *even when the perfective didn't fit the context very well*. Aramaic and Syriac, too, linked the *wayyiqtol* with their *qatal* (Aram. *qatal*).

2.3 Cognitive Linguistics and Prototypicality

Cognitive linguistics provides a necessary flexibility to override mistakes that might be made on the basis of etymology and language history. For example, in the Semitic languages we have structural differences between languages as closely related as Arabic and Hebrew. Arabic has a composite past imperfective tense based on the 'be' verb plus *yaqtulu* (parallel to *yiqtol*) while the corresponding composite tense in Hebrew has the 'be' verb plus a participle. We will discuss this important difference later in the paper. Similarly, Arabic and Hebrew both share a recognition of the existence of a past-tense *yiqtol* in their history. In Arabic it only remains as a vestigial, marginal structure with a negative (*lam yaktub* 'he did not write') while in Hebrew the corresponding *yiqtol* structure is the default structure in narrative (וַיִּכְתֹּב 'and he wrote').

Another example of structural flexibility and development occurs with the stative verbs in Hebrew. Already in the First Temple period, before the Babylonian captivity, the participle entered the stative system. In the First Temple period a mental state like "want, desire" was used in the *qatal* הִפְצִיתִי *I wanted, have wanted, want*, for both past and actual present.

Thus, for stative verbs the majority of examples divided the world into past-up-to-the-present versus future. Unpredictably, the participle as an actual present tense entered the First Temple period system and made אֲנִי הֹפֵץ grammatical (1Ki 21:6 אִתָּהּ אֲהֵא if you want; also Mal 3:1 אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם הֹפְצִים, although post-exilic). However, with a particular verb יָכַלְתִּי *I was able*, the time relationship was reversed. The *yiqtol* was used in the present אוֹכֵל *I am able, will be able, would be able*, and the *qatal* was restricted to the past. This is probably a function of the semantic meaning of this particular verb, since 'capability' relates to potentiality and 'less-than-indicative'. Surprisingly, the participle structure with יָכַל does not occur in the Hebrew Bible in either pre-exilic or post-exilic texts, but it does show up in the pre-exilic Arad letters, so we know that it was already a part of the system (Arad 40:14 אִינְנוּ יָכֵלָם *we are not able*).¹⁰

2.4 Functional Linguistics

¹⁰ It is interesting that the verb יָכַל refers to capability and potentiality, something semantically related to non-indicativeness. However, the pattern of יָכַל may be backwards from cross-linguistic extrapolations. D.N.S. Bhat (*The Prominence of Tense, Aspect, and Mood*, [Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1999] pp. 17, 183) claims that mood-prominent languages prefer a non-future(past+present)//future dichotomy rather than a past//non-past(+present+future) dichotomy of a tense-prominent language. So Hebrew יָכַל fits tense-prominent expectations, while Hebrew הֹפֵץ fits modal expectations. Facts like these should keep us alert when discussing cross-linguistic patterns.

Functional linguistics describes formal linguistic theories that include pragmatic functions, like focus marking and topic marking, within the formulae for describing sentences. One Functional Grammar theory was developed in the Netherlands by Simon Dik and successors. Functional linguistics provides a useful template for describing Hebrew because of the pragmatic packaging structures that have been woven into Hebrew morphology and sentence structure. In particular, the “thematic verbal structures,” *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*, have a kind of complementary distribution with *qatal* and *yiqtol* that reflect pragmatic choices and require certain word orders. That also means that the verbal system is structurally linked to word order. Choosing a particular thematic verb forces a word order, and choosing not to use a thematic verb forces a word order. Both narrative structure and functions like contextualizing constituent (“topic”) and focus (marked salient constituent) influence the Hebrew verbal system.

3.0 Introducing the Parameters of Time, Mood, and Aspect

From a cognitive perspective it is possible to embrace some facts about the Hebrew verb before we try to determine its best linguistic characterization. The important item is to portray the facts accurately so that we do not misrepresent the verb to ourselves.

This paper opened with a hypothetical example of someone using a Hebrew *yiqtol*. The verb referred to a future event as an indicative, to state that a particular event would, in fact, happen. Even though humans do not know what will certainly happen in the future, language allows humans to refer to various nuances of certainty about the future. In English, a person can state that an event “will happen,” that an event “should happen,” that an event “might happen,” and that an event “could happen.” These different presentations of an event express different nuances of actuality in the future. The Hebrew *yiqtol* allows a user to refer to a future as a simple statement. Isaiah 40:6 **דְּבַר יְהוָה יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם** *The word of Yhwh will stand forever*. The verb refers to the future as a statement and does not express a degree of doubt or unreality beyond the philosophical issue that the reference is future. 1Sam 9:16 is similar **כָּעֵת מָחָר אֶשְׁלַח אֵלֶיךָ אִישׁ** *at this time tomorrow I will send a man to you*. It is noteworthy that the *yiqtol* does not normally imply that the event will be “incomplete” or “in the process of happening.” Prototypically, the *yiqtol* is used in a future with a viewpoint that includes the endpoint of the action. In that sense, **the *yiqtol* does not mark imperfectivity**, because imperfectivity is the linguistic term for something that does not include the endpoints of the action within its view. This observation may contradict the way in which a majority of Hebrew students refer to the *yiqtol* as an “imperfect verb.” But this observation is in line with the way in which Hebrew has been used and described over the past three thousand years. Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka correctly state: “The *yiqtol* is used mainly to express future time, whatever the aspect of the action may be.”¹¹ When Hanna referred to a future possibility in 1Sam 1:11 **וְלֹא־תִשָּׁכַח ... אִם־תֵּרָאֶה תִּרְאָה** she was not viewing the events as incomplete or in-progress, but as future. Likewise, the “sign that will come” (1Sam 2:34) refers to a sign that will arrive, that will happen, not to something that will be in-progress. This *yiqtol* refers to the future and does not distinguish aspect and does not

¹¹ Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1996) §113b.

distinguish modality. This lack of aspectual distinction in the future is a feature that is common for future systems. Ancient Greek was a strongly aspect-prominent language, yet it did not distinguish aspect in its future.

3.1 Tense as time

Languages have two types of time references. An absolute time usually refers to the time of the speaker or writer, or the assumed point of the speaker or writer. Events before the author's present moment are in the past, the events may overlap the present moment in various configurations, or they may occur after the present moment, in the future. Languages may also have structures that provide a time reference in relation to another situation than the present. For example, in Jer 8:3 above (הִדְרִיתִים *I have driven them out*), the *qatal* is used to refer to an event that will be past relative to another future situation of the main sentence. One may call this a *relative past tense*.

So there is good reason for calling Hebrew a “relative tense” system¹², but doing so may introduce confusion and does not explain all of the temporal evidence and restrictions. For example, the *qatal* is not always anterior to its context. Consider 1Sam4:1:

וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל לִקְרַאת פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְמִלְחָמָה
וַיַּחֲנוּ עַל-הָאֶבֶן הָעֶזֶר
וּפְלִשְׁתִּים חָנוּ בְּאַפֵּק

and Israel went out toward the Philistines for war

and they camped over Even-Ezer

and the Philistines camped at Afeq.

In the context, Israel descended from the hill country to the bottleneck of the international road between Eben Ezer and Afeq in order to challenge Philistine control. Naturally, the build-up of troops on the Philistine side would have occurred after the Israelite challenge. The natural way to read the text is a past comparison. On the one hand, Israel camped at point A, and on the other hand the Philistines camped at point B. The *qatal* with the Philistines is acting as an absolute past tense rather than a relative tense. This is frequent in the Hebrew Bible where new narrative sections or paragraphs are started. For example, Jonah 1:4 וַיְהִי הַטֵּיִל רוּחַ-גְּדוֹלָה אֶל-הַיָּם and *the Lord threw down a big wind to the sea*. The natural reading of the narrative is that this storm occurred after Jonah sailed off from Yafo in the previous verse. Both 1 Sam 4:1 and Jonah 1:4 use the *qatal* as an absolute tense for the past, not as a relative tense of anteriority.

There are other indications that absolute time has also interacted with *qatal* and *yiqtol*. A curious test occurs with clauses in which **מָחָר** *tomorrow* occurs. The distribution of the Hebrew structures lines up exactly with expectations of use with an absolute tense. Out of 52 examples there are 25 *yiqtol*¹³, 5 *weqatal*¹⁴, 9 imperative¹⁵, 6 participle¹⁶, and 7 verbless¹⁷. These

¹² Ohad Cohen (this volume) prefers this metalanguage.

¹³ *Yiqtol*+ **מָחָר**: Exod 8:19, 9:5, 13:14 (also following **כִּי** וַיְהִי), Deut 6:20, Josh 3:5, 4:6, 4:21, 22:18, 22:24, 22:27 (with negative), 22:28 (also following **כִּי** וַיְהִי), Jud 20:28, 1Sam 9:16, 11:9, 11:10, 20:12, 2Sam 11:12, 1Ki 19:2, 20:6, 2Ki 6:28, 2Ki 7:18, Isa 22:13, Prov 3:28, Esth 5:8, 9:13.

¹⁴ *Weqatal*+ **מָחָר**: Gen 30:33, Exod 8:25, 19:10, Jud 19:9, Isa 56:12.

are all structures that are compatible with a future reference. But there is not a single reference with either *qatal* or *wayyiqtol*. There is nothing like *וּמָחָר בָּאתִי*, *ואֶבֹא מָחָר*. *And tomorrow I came is as ungrammatical in Hebrew as in English. Philosophically, of course, one cannot absolutely prove an impossibility or non-grammaticality from a fixed corpus. But 52 occurrences are strongly suggestive and users of Hebrew through the ages have not been averse to saying that a prominent time element exists somewhere inside the Hebrew *yiqtol* and *qatal*, as well as *weqatal* and *wayyiqtol*.

The composite structure *be* הָיָה + participle also testifies to a time element. The participle may be said to express primarily aspect and/or mood, as will be discussed below. However, the forms of the ‘be’ verb signal the time from the authorial point of reference (i.e, absolutely). The addition of either הָיָה and הָיָה in past contexts or יִהְיֶה and יִהְיֶה in future contexts is surely adding a time element to the system. No one who was internalizing Hebrew could miss this.

So where is the problem? The problem is not with the apparent interaction of time with the verb system, but in cases where absolute time would mis-predict the meaning of *yiqtol*.

Within past contexts classical Hebrew used both *yiqtol* and *weqatal* to mark habituais and iteratives (repeated events). For example, Genesis 29:2-3 is a classic text for seeing both *yiqtol* and *weqatal* interlace over five clauses of a habitual description. Verse 29:2 started with a verbless clause and participle for a description of what Jacob actually saw at that point in the story and then one *yiqtol* and four *weqatals* described what used to happen habitually (daily?) at that place. The TMA of the *yiqtol* and *weqatal* in this passage were equal. Examples like these of *yiqtol* and *weqatal* referencing the past were a primary stimulus in the nineteenth century for changing the metalanguage for Hebrew verbs from time to aspect. But before dealing with aspect we need to cover the parameter of mood.

3.2 Mood

Mood is a difficult parameter to describe because there are many facets to it. The most basic dichotomy is probably best described as indicative versus non-indicative, or in some linguistic parlance *realis* versus *irrealis*. *Realis* would refer to a situation as a fact while *irrealis* would refer to a situation as less-than-a-fact. Languages have developed special structures for referring to different kinds of *irrealis*. Some of the *irrealis* situations can be treated as volitional, as various kinds of wishes, commands, and obligations. Hebrew has a category of imperatives to deal with some of this, but the *-a* suffix on first-person *yiqtol*s, *weqatal*, special shorted *yiqtol* (יָקָם, יָעַשׂ, יִשְׁלַךְ) also interact with this modality. Less-than-indicative can also be used along a scale of facticity or certainty. Think of English “he might do it” “she should do it” “I will do it.” Some structures may refer to a situation as only probable or possible and not as an absolute fact. Conditions, subjunctives,

¹⁵ Imperative+מָחָר: Num 11:18 (followed by *weqatal*) 14:25, 16:7, 16:16, Josh 7:13, 2Ki 10:6, Prov 27:1 (with negative), 2Chr 20:16, 20:17.

¹⁶ Participle+מָחָר: Exod 9:18 (with יִהְיֶה 10:4 (with יִהְיֶה 17:9, Josh 11:6, 1Sam 19:11 (passive), Esth 5:12 (passive).

¹⁷ Verbless+מָחָר: Exod 8:6 (though referring to a *yiqtol* clause by the previous speaker), 16:23, 32:5, 1Sam 20:5 (followed by *yiqtol*), 20:18 (followed by *weqatal*), 28:19 (with *yiqtol* before and after), 2Ki 7:1 (quoted at 7:18 with יָהִיהָ *yiqtol*),

and optatives may interlace with such a modality in some languages. A modality of facticity may be called an *epistemic* modality (a modality that mitigates certainty of knowledge). Languages also have modalities that may be termed counterfactuals (like in English “if I were you [but I’m not]”).

Because *irrealis* technically refers to something that is less than a fact, there is a philosophical overlap with what is called *future*. Obviously, a future, by definition has not yet happened, so it is in some senses less-than-a-fact. On the other hand, languages that have a rich modal marking system are very happy referring to what “will happen” as a future indicative, and what “might happen” or “is wished to happen” as a future modal. This philosophical overlap can be seen in the morphology and history of many languages. For example, English has a future indicative “he will do it.” However, if someone pulls the word “will” out of context they immediately see that the English structure was developed from a verb for *wanting*. *Desiring* and *wanting* are prototypical examples of volitional modality that are lexicalized in most languages. Modern Greek, too, has used a verb for “wanting” to build its modern future tense. In antiquity it had a morphological signal “s” that marked future and ancient Greek could not distinguish aspect between “I will do it” and “I will be doing it.” Today Greeks say θα αγοράσω *I will buy* (future perfective), and θα αγοράζω *I will be buying* (future imperfective [open-ended/repetitive])¹⁸.

One of the problems of mood in the Hebrew verb is that classical Hebrew apparently dropped some of the endings that used to distinguish true modals (short *yiqtol*) from indicatives. There was apparently a final vowel distinction similar to Arabic -u (indicative), possibly -a (subjunctive), and null-ending (volitional and archaic past negative). Dropping the vowels meant that the one or two modal forms and the indicative form collapsed into the same form for the vast majority of verbs. Only verbs that were based on II-y/w roots, and III-y roots, and *hifʿils* without a suffix (*yafʿel*, *tafʿel*) preserved the difference.

In recent times there has been a more pronounced focus on mood and the Hebrew verb system.¹⁹ On the one hand, this is welcomed because it provides a corrective to mistakes of the “aspect” analysis that has predominated in Hebrew reference materials. On the other hand, one must ensure that new mistakes are not introduced by trying to fit everything into a modal analysis. One of the good points about Ohad Cohen’s recent synthesis is that he explicitly lists “future” as part of the semantics of *yiqtol*. I concur. Additionally, Jan Joosten has made a good case that the *yiqtol* in past contexts is not marking aspect, see below. However, we need to ask if *irrealis* or non-indicative is what the *yiqtol* is uniquely marking? If we subsume everything under non-indicative, then the reality of events like 1Sam 1:7, 1:10, 1:13, and Gen 2:25 or 15:6 is miscommunicated. (The same objection applies to futures that are stipulated as facts.) Just because something was repeated in the past does not make it less-than-real.²⁰ In addition, remembering the “pie” concept, the existence of cohortative,

¹⁸ The particle θα was paralleled early on by θέλω ἵνα *I want that*, in late Byzantine times it developed out of an impersonal θέλει, into θε + νά, and finally the fully modern θά. See Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (London: Longman, 1997:230-232 [§ 11.8.3]).

¹⁹ For example, Beat Zuber, *Das Tempusystem des biblischen Hebräisch* (Berlin: deGruyter, 1986); Galia Hatav, *The Semantics of Aspect and Modality: Evidence from English and Biblical Hebrew* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1997); Andrew Warren, *Modality, Reference and Speech Acts in the Psalms* (PhD dissertation, Cambridge, 1998); Jan Joosten, “The Long form of the Prefixed Conjugation Referring to the Past in Biblical Hebrew Prose. *Hebrew Studies* 40 (1999:15-26); Hélène Dallaire, “The Syntax of Volitives in Northwest Semitic Prose,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, 2002); Jan Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew, A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose* (Jerusalem: Simor, Ltd., 2012); Ohad Cohen, *The Verbal Tense System in Late Biblical Hebrew Prose*, Harvard Semitic Studies 63, (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2013).

²⁰ Repeated, habitual actions in the past are difficult to classify linguistically. They are not prototypical imperfectives

jussive, and fronted *yiqtol* structures in Hebrew shows that a modal system was in existence outside of the *qatal/yiqtol* dichotomy. Although the fact that ordinary *yiqtol* and *weqatal* can have non-indicative, future-related nuances, the language still felt the need for explicitly volitional forms, i.e., the cohortative and the jussive, along with clause-initial *yiqtol*. Within Cognitive Linguistics we do not need to have the parameters airtight. Polysemy is possible and it is necessary for mapping the Hebrew *yiqtol/qatal* dichotomy to all the parameters of meaning.

3.3 Aspect

An aspectual approach to the Hebrew verb has been used in much of the pedagogical material of the last century, so that one frequently hears *yiqtol* referred to as the “imperfect” and *qatal* as the “perfect.” However, a basic contradiction immediately becomes apparent when one opens the reference grammar of Joüon-Muraoka and finds the *yiqtol* called the “future.” Who is/was right? What went on inside an ancient Hebrew user’s head? Can we reconstruct that?

The first thing that must be done is that aspect must be understood prototypically. What is the most basic dichotomy of aspectual systems?²¹ Aspect refers to how a situation or event is viewed. Is the situation viewed as a whole, an indivisible unit, a *perfective*? For a perfective example in English: *she wrote a note*. Or is the situation viewed from within, looking at its continuity without including the endpoints of the situation, an *imperfective*? For an imperfective example in English: *she was writing a note*. As soon as one talks about the future, one finds that many languages default to perfective understandings of events. For example, Greek is a language that is highly sensitive to aspect, yet in the future it only had one aspect and much of the future morphology became congruent with the *aorist* (perfective) morphology.²² When a person reads the Hebrew Bible they also tend to discover that the future events include the end-point of the process, if the word or phrase has an end point.²³ That was made explicit by Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka (§113b): “The *yiqtol* is used mainly to express future time, whatever the aspect of the action may be; thus **יָבֹא** means *he will come, he will enter*, whether the action be unique or repeated, instantaneous or durative [perfective or imperfective–RB].” Joüon and Muraoka are correct. In future contexts the *yiqtol* is not marking an aspect and is not signaling prototypical imperfectivity. As the example in the beginning of this paper illustrated, the default reference needs to be taken as *perfective* and *future*.

So what can we say about the present and past in respect to the *yiqtol* and aspect? As soon as one reads large sections of the Hebrew Bible, they realize that the *yiqtol* is not an actual present tense, but is restricted in its usages wherever it appears to overlap with present time—with less-than-real modals and mitigating usages in present questions, overlapping

like past progressives (see section 3.3), but they are not prototypical *irrealis*, either, since they refer to real events in the past. In 1Sam 1:3 the author referred to actual pilgrimages that Elkanah made. The author was not stating that there were potential pilgrimages to be made, or that there was an obligation for pilgrimage. He stated that Elqanah made repeated pilgrimages. The past habitual may be considered an extension of time-mood: it is an indicative extension of a future indicative and a habitual extension of an *irrealis* habitual, situated in the past by context.

²¹ This refers to grammatical aspect like perfective vs. imperfective, and not to lexical aspect like atelic “they worked” vs. telic “they arrived”.

²² Herbert Smyth, (*Greek Grammar*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, §532): “Many, if not all, future forms in σ are in reality subjunctives of the first aorist.” In modern Greek it is the aorist subjunctive that ends up in the composite perfective future, but they have added an imperfective subjunctive [the so-called “present”–RB] for an imperfective future, too.

²³ That is, the future events are conceived as perfectives.

omnitemporals, and in poetry. On the other hand, it is the participle that is chosen when actual present situations are referred to in conversation and prose. One cannot say that *yiqtol* is a prototypical present tense. (*Yiqtol* is not like “I am writing” at the moment of composing this article.)²⁴ In addition, it turns out that *yiqtol* is not a prototypical imperfective, at all.

In past time contexts we find an unexpected restriction. Hebrew actually has difficulty expressing the imperfectivity of past progression in past narrative. This is rather surprising given the common pedagogical references to Hebrew as an “aspectual language.” When Hebrew wants to signal an open-ended event in the past progressive, the available structures are the participle, the infinitive construct with **עוֹשֶׂה**, and the participle with **הוֹלֵךְ** or **הוֹלֶכֶת**. The *yiqtol* is noticeably rare and marginalized. When we find a *yiqtol* in the past context, the default understanding is either habitual or repetitive. Jan Joosten (1999, 2012) is correct in pointing out the incongruity of an aspectual, imperfective analysis of *yiqtol*.

It needs to be pointed out that past habituals and past iteratives do not make up the central concept of imperfectivity in cross-linguistic studies.²⁵ In fact, habituals will often generate more marginal structures. In English, we have “he used to walk” and “he would walk”. The latter, of course, is an explicit extension of a modal structure “would+verb” to include past habituals. However, some languages, like Greek, do, in fact, use an imperfect indicative to include and to refer to past habituals. This difference between Greek and English shows the marginal semantic link between past habituals and either modality or imperfectivity. In sum, the *yiqtol* seems to be mainly perfective when used in a future context, mainly modal in a present context, and mainly habitual in a past context. The *yiqtol* is not a prototypical imperfective. That is why I now talk about the Hebrew verb as having a tense-mood-aspect. I think that aspect is the least-operative and least dominant of the components of the verbal polysemy in *yiqtol/qatal*.

We can learn an additional fact about the Hebrew verbal system by looking at the composite structure ‘be’+participle. The ‘be’ verb is recognized as providing time for the structure and the participle is recognized as marking imperfective aspect. The **הוֹלֵךְ** marks a past tense reference and **הוֹלֶכֶת** refers to a future tense. Again, this is already explicit in Joüon-Muraoka (§ 121f):

Participle in the sphere of the **past**. ... In the past the frequentative aspect is fairly common [i.e. habitual and iterative–RB] ... But the durative aspect is usual [past progressive, prototypical imperfective–RB] ... The participle in the sphere of the past being atemporal, a form of the verb **הָיָה** with past meaning (§ 154m) is added in order

²⁴ It is for that reason that I read the Lachish letter 4:12: **כִּי לֹא נִרְאָה אֶת עֶזְקָה** for the signal of Azeqa was not visible. I don’t read it as an actual present *yiqtol* “[as I write] we do not see.” A *yiqtol* would be a modal usage **לֹא נִרְאָה** we are not able to see (see Dt 1:9, 12), we would not see.

²⁵ Bhat (1999:177) points out that habituals are cross-linguistically problematic: “The question as to whether habitual is to be regarded as tense, aspect or mood has given rise to a dispute. ... The cross-linguistic variation that forms the basis of this dispute also appears to be correlatable with the typological distinction between tense-prominent, aspect-prominent and mood-prominent languages. For example, Kannada [tense-prominent–RB] represents the habitual meaning indirectly with the help of its tense forms. It uses the non-past tense form for denoting the habitual meaning in general, and the more complex auxiliary for denoting further temporal distinctions in the habitual. ... whether the habitual is past, present or future is denoted by the three tense forms of the auxiliary verb *iru* ‘to be’.” This link of a tense-prominent language with habituals may be relevant for Hebrew, since Hebrew uses *yiqtol* for present-future habituals, omnitemporal habituals, and past habituals. However, Hebrew uses the participle in composite forms when specifically marking the time with a “be” verb.

clearly to express time past: In absolute beginning: Job 1:14 הַבָּקָר הָיוּ חֹרְשׁוֹת *the cows were (in the process) of ploughing*.

(§ 154m) “In the group formed by הָיָה and a participle, the participle expresses the durative aspect and הָיָה the temporal sphere.”

The Hebrew structure can be compared to Arabic for confirmation of this analysis. Arabic used *kāna yaktubu*. But this would correspond to ‘be’+*yiqtol* (!) in both First-Temple and Second-Temple Hebrew. Hebrew and Arabic are cognate languages, but the difference in these structures shows that something was complicated in the prehistory of these languages. In Hebrew, the *yiqtol* was not, or was no longer, a primary marker for imperfectivity. John Cook completely missed the point on this when he cited Classical Arabic as evidence that Hebrew *yiqtol* was primarily an imperfective.²⁶ The Arabic does not prove or even suggest that the Hebrew *yiqtol* was marking imperfectivity. Instead, the comparative Arabic structure shows that Hebrew *qotel* marked imperfectivity, not Hebrew *yiqtol*. To reconstruct the semantics of a form based on its prehistory (and unrecoverable, at that) against its synchronic usage is a classic example of the etymological fallacy. We wish that we could know what pre-Hebrew and pre-Arabic looked like at the end of the third millennium BCE, but we do not know. What we do know is that Hebrew chose *qotel* to mark aspectual imperfectivity, not *yiqtol*. In addition, Arabic seemed to need a time marker in order to use its “*yiqtol*” in a past context.²⁷

Before leaving Arabic it would be good to point out another idiosyncrasy. Both the Arabic past negative *lam yaktub* ‘he did not write’, and the Hebrew *wayyiqtol* וַיִּכְתֹּב *and he wrote* use verbs that are homonyms with the modal/jussive verb, the short *yiqtol*. How did a modal verb like הָיָה *let it be* become a homonym with וַיִּהְיֶה *and it was*? There are unexplained changes and developments in the proto-history of the Semitic languages. Language users were happily using classical Hebrew without knowing the answers to the questions. As linguists we will want further clarification of the proto-history. But within cognitive linguistics we can simply map the forms to the meanings and functions, and then follow the first universal rule of grammar: “we do it like that, because that’s the way they do it.”

The structure of הָיָה plus participle would be internalized by any ancient Hebrew user and would add to the realization that the verb includes time in its TMA. The *yiqtol* has a three-valent, polysemic TMA (future, volitional, imperfective) and the *qatal* has a three-valent, polysemic TMA, past, indicative, perfective. However, the *yiqtol* and *qatal* are not equal in scope. The image of a mushroom might help. The *qatal* is like the stem and more restricted, strongly non-future, indicative, and perfective. The *yiqtol* is more like the cap of the mushroom and ranges more widely and loosely between future indicative, various modal functions, and rarely, and marginally, imperfectivity.

²⁶ John A. Cook, *Time and the Biblical Hebrew Verb, The Expression of Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Biblical Hebrew* (Eisenbraun’s, 2012:201).

²⁷ While Arabic *yiqtol* marks imperfectivity in the compound Arabic structure *kāna yaktubu*, I would argue that Arabic, too, has a polysemy that is directly rooted in under-differentiated verbal categories. But that would be another paper.

4.0 Typological Studies

Features in languages have tendencies to occur in conjunction with certain other features. For example, languages where the object tends to follow the verb (a VO language, Verb-Object) tend to have prepositions (“in the house”) rather than postpositions (“the house in”) for noun-phrase relators. There are even traits that collect around languages that are time-prominent, mood-prominent, or aspect-prominent. On the other hand, there are frequently exceptions to general tendencies. Any particular language needs to be understood as itself and within itself first, in order to correctly compare it with other languages.

4.1 Imprecision and Typology

Hebrew must be defined on its own terms. Only then can Hebrew be compared cross-linguistically in order to see where it is the same and where it is different from general trends in languages.

Much of the literature on verbal structures of lesser-studied languages is provisional and depends on the analyst’s definitions. This applies as much to those writing on a particular language as to those who make groupings of various languages. A perusal of Bhat’s seminal work on prominence of tense, aspect, and mood quickly reveals that the playing field is not level. The sections on mood and mood-prominent verb systems are compelled to deal with fuzzy definitions based on less reliable data than the other descriptions. Here is Bhat on habituals in mood-prominent languages (1999:178): “Mood-prominent languages appear to view habitual either as realis or irrealis, providing two different modal facets of habitual events.” That does not provide a definitive, cross-linguistic definition for mood-prominent languages.

4.2 Statives

In recent years John Cook has championed a cross-linguistic, typological approach to the Hebrew verb as a means of defining the verbal system of Hebrew. He has claimed that the existence of a stative verb category in Hebrew is strong support for Hebrew being an aspect-prominent language. However, that overlooks some important facts. First, Bhat claimed only that “some” tense-prominent languages did not have a stative verb category.²⁸ That does not mean that having stative verbs rules out tense-prominence or mood-prominence. Secondly, the Hebrew stative verbs are not a system-wide feature of Hebrew. There are no “stative” *niphals* or other *binyanim*. Thirdly, from the opposite perspective, a language may be aspect-prominent and not have a stative verb category at all. Greek is an excellent example. Greek is a strongly aspect-prominent language, as anyone who tries to use it quickly discovers. No one can encode an imperative, infinitive, subjunctive, optative, or participle without being forced to make an aspectual decision in Greek. The aspectual system is part of the warp and woof of the Greek verbal system. Nevertheless, Greek does not have stative verbs like Hebrew! Verbs in Greek that describe prototypical states, like *κεῖμαι ἐκείμην* *I am lying, I was lying* distinguish time and fit in with the rest of the verbal system. Fourth, modal-prominent languages also have statives. Fifth, one must point out that the classical Hebrew statives were already changing by the First-Temple period. The participle had already taken up semantic space

²⁸ Bhat (1999:152) “Another interesting characteristic that is shown by **some** [emphasis mine–RB] of the tense-prominent languages is the absence of state verbs.”

among dynamic verbs, while stative verbs did not need a participle for present tense. Nevertheless, the participle invaded the statives, too. Participles like שומע *hear, hearing* (1Sam2:23 אֲנֹכִי שֹׁמֵעַ, Gen 18:10 וְשָׂרָה שֹׁמַעַת פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל and שכב *lying* (Gen28:13 הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ) had already developed beyond a simple stative *qatal* to produce a fuller paradigm.²⁹ This is typological evidence that Hebrew may not fit Bhat's concept of aspect-prominence, in addition to the synchronic semantic evidence.

4.3 The Perfect

The “perfect” illustrates another difficulty of making reliable predictions for one particular language based on typology. Bhat (1999:170) claims that

- a. in tense-prominent languages a perfect tense will have present relevance
- b. in aspect-prominent languages a perfect (perfective) will have an imperfective relevance
- c. in mood-prominent languages a perfect (realis) tense will have irrealis relevance (something needs to be done).

There is a problem with Hebrew. Hebrew does not have a perfect tense. It has only *qatal*. It is a language with only a binary opposition and does not distinguish a perfective and a perfect, whether as a composite structure or with its own morphology. Consequently, the prediction for the perfect is irrelevant to Hebrew.³⁰ It might be better for surveys to be done of languages that only have a binary TMA system. Hebrew may still be its own special kind, though, because it has two thematic tenses.

4.4 Typological Aspect, Mood, and Tense

There are more typological surprises with the Hebrew verb if viewed as an aspect or a mood. Bhat (1999:182) claimed “Languages that give greater prominence to tense than to aspect develop past and present forms directly from their perfect and progressive constructions respectively.”

Already in First Temple Hebrew, the participle, which was the progressive aspect structure, not the *yiqtol*, developed into the actual present. This is just like a tense-prominent language. And the participle even penetrated the modal verbs (הִפְיֵץ, יָכַל) during the First Temple when those verbs started to use the participle/adjective as a verb alongside the *qatal* and *yiqtol*.³¹ Likewise, the *qatal* became a relative past tense and an even an absolute past tense as the data with מָחָר and with the הָיָה+participle construction show.

²⁹ שומע *hear* is shown to be “stative” by its pausal forms שֹׁמֵעַ שְׁמֵעוּ and by comparison with Arabic سَمِعَ *samiʿa*. שכב *lie down* is shown to be stative by its *yiqtol* יִשְׁכַּב and even infinitive לִשְׁכַּב! In addition, the participial category of the examples is certain and not related to the Masoretic vocalization because 1st and 2nd person statives have a suffix, e.g., שֹׁמְעִי and שֹׁכְבִי.

³⁰ Even Greek is problematic because its perfect (παράκειμενος) and pluperfect (ὑπερσυντέλικος) have become time sensitive, yet Greek also had modal adjectival forms (a kind of perfect-passive): πρακτέον *something needs to be done*; cf. εὔπρακτος *easy to be done*, but also a more simply stative ἀγαπητός *beloved*.

³¹ One may strengthen this observation by adding that the stative systems of פָּעַל and פְּעֻל were assimilating to the “dynamic verbs” פָּעַל. For example, a stative *qatal* verb tense commonly used as a paradigm in BH pedagogical material, *כָּבַד, is incorrect. The correct contextual form is כָּבַד (Isa 24:20 וְכָבַד). See below, footnote , for further examples.

Bhat (1999:183)

“In the case of mood-prominent languages, the general tendency is to develop elaborate systems of past and future tenses (involving distinction of temporal distance). This is also a ‘modal’ tendency in the sense that these distinctions of temporal distance correspond to the various evidentiality (or judgment) distinctions in these tenses.

One can be more certain about a past event that took place today than one that took place yesterday or last year.”

This last observation by Bhat would argue strongly against Hebrew being mood-prominent because Hebrew is basically an under-differentiated binary system of TMA and it does not distinguish elaborate systems of future/modality. While this does not stop someone from recognizing the strong interaction of modality and irrealis with the *yiqtol* in Hebrew, it adds strength to observations that Hebrew is not mood-prominent.

Classical Hebrew must first be learned and mapped out as classical Hebrew. Only then may it be reliably compared cross-linguistically on its tense, mood, and aspect system. Anomalies happen frequently in cross-linguistic typology. Hebrew should first be compared with verbal systems that are under-differentiated as regards the three parameters of tense, mood, and aspect. The “pie concept” cannot be forgotten. For example, Greek is an aspect-prominent language, but it has developed a relatively complicated indicative tense system that included a future, a present, a perfect³², a past perfect (pluperfect), a past perfective (“aorist”, simple past), and a past imperfective (“imperfect”). For that reason, Greek makes a poor comparison for Hebrew. I think that the most informative cross-linguistic comparison for Hebrew would be with languages that have a binary TMA and are under-differentiated for TMA. Current studies have not factored this into the comparisons, so that Bickerton’s criticism remains valid: linguists discussing verbs tend to ignore the constraints of the pie concept.

Finally, because languages have anomalies, we must be careful that we are not enticed into smashing a square peg into a round hole.

5.0 The Hebrew Morpho-Syntactic Categories in the Verb

The study recognizes that there are five primary categories that cover the indicative verb system in Hebrew. The five primary categories are *yiqtol*, *qatal*, *weqatal*, *wayyiqtol*, and *qotel*. To the five may be added a volitional system of imperatives, jussives (short *yiqtol*), cohortatives, and the non-finite verbs *qtol* (infinitive construct) and *qatol* (infinitive absolute).³³ These were relatively uncontroversial among Hebrew users over the past thousand years. The importance of the

³² The Greek perfect indicative had *present* relevance, so much so, that some verbs like ἵστηκα *I stand, am standing* do not use the present tense.

³³ There is an *energetic* category where an n-sound, *nun*, was added to *yiqtol* and some imperatives. This is usual between non-volitional *yiqtol* and object suffixes but is extremely rare with *wayyiqtol*. However, inconsistencies suggest that an energetic category may have no longer been perceived semantically. Joüon-Muraoka (§61f): “The 𐤏, originally, probably indicated a certain energetic meaning (as in Arabic). But it now carries no semantic value; its energetic force is merely phonetic.” I would call this phonetic force “rhetorical.” Since the *nun* was primarily associated with the non-modal *yiqtol*, as opposed to the jussive forms of the *wayyiqtol*, it may be thought to be associated with heightening the intended specificity, and/or indicative, factual quality, of a statement. It is possible that this vestigial *nun* and the vestigial *nun* after some plural *yiqtol* suffixes, *paragogic nun* (𐤏), were linked synchronically since the *paragogic nun* appears to have been linked with the indicative. Together they became a kind of rhetorical *nun*, synchronically.

“pie” concept can be seen immediately. If someone removes a system-wide category, the Hebrew verbal system will be misunderstood. This directly applies to *weqatal*.³⁴

Another category can often be observed with *we-yiqtol*. This last category is formed by placing the *yiqtol* in the first position with the normally vocalized *waw* and. As such, the *yiqtol* may be considered specially marked by position despite ambiguity with the Verb-Subject-Object word order of Hebrew. A fronted *yiqtol* has a strong tendency to be used with modal nuances. It is not the thematic tense (*wayyiqtol*). The structure has not been included as one of the five indicative categories of the verb. As part of the verbal “pie,” *waw+yiqtol* contrasts with *weqatal*. The *weqatal* is in complementary distribution with the simple *yiqtol*. Simple *yiqtol* is frequently used in modal environments and it is also a future indicative. The *weqatal* also functions as the future indicative counterpart to *wayyiqtol* so that *weqatal* is more indicative than the modally marked *waw+yiqtol*. This can be seen in a passage like 1Sam 17:46-47:

46 הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִסְגְּרֶךָ יְהוָה בְּיָדִי
וְהִכִּיתֶךָ
וְהִסְרֹתִי אֶת־רֹאשְׁךָ מֵעַל־י
וְנָתַתִּי בְּנֶר מַחֲנֶה פְּלִשְׁתִּים הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְחַיֵּת הָאָרֶץ
וַיֵּדְעוּ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי יֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל:
47 וַיֵּדְעוּ כָּל־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה
כִּי־לֹא בְּתָרֹב וּבְחֲנִית יְהוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה
כִּי לַיהוָה הַמִּלְחָמָה
וְנָתַן אֶתְכֶם בְּיָדוֹ

In this speech David uses a *yiqtol* as a future indicative for God’s action, יִסְגְּרֶךָ *he will hand you over*. David also uses three *weqatal* as future indicatives for his own future actions and an additional *weqatal* as a future indicative for an action of God: וְהִכִּיתֶךָ *and I will hit you*, וְהִסְרֹתִי *and I will remove*, וְנָתַתִּי *and I will give*, וְנָתַן *and he will give*. However, for the intended futures in this speech, the purpose clauses, we find a different structure: וַיֵּדְעוּ *waw+yiqtol*, and (so that) they will/may know (twice). Inside one of the purpose clauses there is a subordinated, omnitemporal, habitual *yiqtol* יְהוֹשִׁיעַ *he saves*. It nicely illustrates the difference between *weqatal* and *waw+yiqtol*. The thematic tense *weqatal* is prototypically part of the indicative system in the future while the *waw+yiqtol* is prototypically part of the volitional system and similar to clauses that use a conjunction+subjunctive or conjunction+optative in Greek.

³⁴ Anyone who would reject the category of *weqatal*, who would suggest that the verb in 1Sam 1:3 וַעֲלָה הָאִישׁ is semantically “perfective,” will necessarily misconstrue the synchronic Hebrew verbal system. The TMA of וַעֲלָה הָאִישׁ is the same as in the case of fronting the subject and writing וְהָאִישׁ יַעֲלֶה. The TMA of וַעֲלָה and יַעֲלֶה in that context would be equal. They are past and habitual. Neither *yiqtol* nor *weqatal* are “perfective” habituals. The fact that *weqatal* does not have a clear, proto-Semitic etymology is irrelevant. Hebrew must be understood as itself, without committing errors of etymological fallacies. Likewise, anyone who would reject the *wayyiqtol* category will necessarily misconstrue the Hebrew verbal system. Cook (2012) is unreliable and offbase because it rejects the *weqatal* structure.

These are the categories that a language user learns to map to the various situations. The following table presents their frequency in the Hebrew Bible.

| Category | Occurrences |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>wayyiqtol</i> , | 15029 |
| <i>weqatal</i> | 6548 |
| <i>yiqtol</i> | 14785 (16216, if including <i>ve-yiqtol</i>) ³⁵ |
| <i>qatal</i> | 14667 (21215, including <i>weqatal</i>) |
| <i>qotel</i> | 8205 |
| <i>we-yiqtol</i> | 1431 |
| <i>qtol</i> | 6672 |
| <i>qatol</i> | 816 |
| imperative | 4321 |

6.0 Verbal prominence—Packaging and Time

So how can we best describe the system-wide prominence of the Hebrew verbal system? From my perspective, Hebrew is a **packaging-prominent** language. The *wayyiqtol* and *we-qatal* structures provide the warp and woof of the Hebrew verbal system throughout First Temple Hebrew and during Second Temple Hebrew in the high register.³⁶

If forced to name one parameter as prominent from among time, mood, and aspect, I would point to **time**, because of prototypical semantics for *yiqtol* and *qatal* as **both functioning perfectly** in the respective future and past, and the structural changes that are already documented for the First-Temple Period. The introduction of the participle into the verbal system as the marker of imperfective aspect (continuous/progressive and open-ended) and as an actual present tense, the assimilation of the stative system in morphology (*paʕel*, *paʕol*) toward the dynamic verb (*paʕal*)³⁷, the expansion of the stative system with the participle (adding *qotel* to statives), the assimilation and inconsistent usage of the old modal system,³⁸ and the lack of complicated morphology for facticity,³⁹ all point away from either aspectual or modal prominence,

³⁵ There are volitional forms of *yiqtol*, often called “short *yiqtol*” according to the form of jussives like יְהִי and יַעַשׂ, which includes vowel shifts in hollow roots (e.g., *yaqom*) and *yafʕel* (*hifʕil* jussive). However, the Hebrew verbal system collapsed and assimilated the normal *yiqtol* and the short *yiqtol* for most verbs when a final vowel of proto-Hebrew *yiqtol* dropped off. The statistics here group the *yiqtols* together, however they are spelled, because the ambiguous forms are far more predominant than the short forms.

³⁶ The low register of Second Temple Hebrew was occasionally visible inside and outside biblical writings. It was a spoken, colloquial register and developed into “Mishnaic Hebrew.” Mishnaic Hebrew dropped the thematic tenses among many dialectical changes. Ironically, this low, spoken register is primarily known from the time that it became a new “high register,” from the third century CE and Byzantine period.

³⁷ While someone may rightly point out that the vocalization that establishes this shift was recorded long after the First Temple period, the morphology of words like יָרַעַת, שָׁכַבַת, and שָׁמַעַת with a final “ת” for the dynamic participial form instead of a “ה” as a stative adjectival form (שָׁכַבַת, יָרַעַת, שָׁמַעַת) confirms that the dynamic-verb participle encroached into stative verb morphology and that the later tradition of vocalization appears to be correct.

³⁸ This refers to the demise of an apparent proto-Hebrew distinction between indicative plural and volitional plural **yiqtolun* and **yiqtolu*, singular **yiqtolu* and **yiqtol*, as well as the encroachment of *yiqtol* and imperatives over modal *yiqtol* in verbs that retained a distinction like *yaqum/yaqom*, *yafʕil/yafʕel*, *yaʕse/yaʕas*, and the demise of the “energetic”

for what it's worth. I am not sure if it is worth very much, though, because a binary verbal system is **prototypically polysemic** and we do not yet have good cross-linguistic studies of binary tense-modal-aspectual systems. I think that asking a “prominence” question of a language with a pervasive binary TMA may be the wrong question. More crucial is the matter of a “pie” and mapping categories to the whole world of meaning.

7.0 Names, either according to Forms or actual Semantics, but not Incorrect Semantics

Pedagogy should get away from mistaken names of the verb, especially when the majority of students may relate to the Hebrew verb through metalinguistic labels rather than through real language use and real mapping of form to function and meaning. The *yiqtol* and *qatal* are names of forms, as are *weqatal* and *wayyiqtol*, so they are accurate although semantically empty. Another option for English is prefix-tense and suffix-tense, along with a thematic suffix-tense and thematic prefix-tense. A name according to form prevents crazy double-talk inside a learner's head. The form *wayyiqtol* is itself. It is not a sequential/consecutive/converted “imperfect.” A name according to wrong semantics, common though it is, is doubly problematic. First it requires a listener/learner/reader to continually rethink what the verb is. A “converted perfect” or “converted past” is also ambiguous, because these terms are often used to refer to forms rather than semantics. A “converted perfect” might be a *we-qatal*. If the term were truly semantic, then it would presumably be describing a **וַיַּעַל**. But the semantics of *weqatal* are “future, volitional, imperfective” and have nothing to do with past or perfect. Instead of mixing form and meaning in a name, if a verb were semantically a perfect, and a semantic name were desired, then one could call **וַיַּעַל** *weqatal* a “thematic future,” and the **וַיַּעַל** would be a “thematic past.” In common Hebrew for *wayyiqtol*, one could say **וַיֵּלֶךְ הַהִיפּוֹךְ לְעָבֵר**. Secondly, neither *yiqtol* nor *qatal* are truly aspects and should not be called “imperfects” or “perfects.” They are not prototypically aspects and they do not default to an aspectual perspective, so the semantic names are inappropriate, and doubly so as names of forms. In English I sometimes use suffix-tense and prefix-tense for *qatal* and *yiqtol*. In English and Hebrew I sometimes use *qatal* and *yiqtol* as names according to form. In Hebrew I also use **וַיֵּלֶךְ** (the *wayyiqtol*) and **וַיֵּלֶךְ הַהִיפּוֹךְ לְעָבֵר** (*we-qatal*). I avoid mixing form and meaning in the term, thus avoiding **וַיֵּלֶךְ הַהִיפּוֹךְ** *inverted future*, even though that is in common use. For semantically based names I sometimes use the prototypical *future*/עָתִיד and *past*/עָבֵר.

8.0 Notes on 1 Samuel 1-2

1Sam. 1:1 וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִן־הַרְמָתִים צוֹפִים מֵהָר אֶפְרַיִם -- The book and story open in the past with the classical story-starting verb **וַיְהִי**. Cf. Jonah 1:1, *inter alia*. The *wayyiqtol* is the structure that puts the story in the past from the storyteller's perspective. It is also prototypically indicative and perfective. Lexically the ‘be’ verb is prototypically a state, though in other contexts it can also be a perfective ingressive “became.”

וַיִּשְׁמָוּ אֶלְכָּנָה בְּיָרְחָם ... -- A verbless clause set in the past context.

וְלֹא שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים² -- A verbless clause set in the past context. The prepositional-phrase (syntactic predicate) לֹא is fronted as a contextualizing constituent, also called a “Topic,” leaving the syntactic subject as the salient information. A presentational structure.

וַיְהִי לְפָנֶיהָ יְלָדִים -- The singular past verb may be called subjectless. Here it introduces a plural subject/complement: “and it was (that) with Penina (were) children,” or in more idiomatic English “and it happened that Penina had children.”

וְלִחְנָה אֵין יְלָדִים: -- The parallel to Hanna is done without a past time reference. The options not chosen were וְלִחְנָה יְלָדִים and וְלֹא הָיוּ לְחָנָה יְלָדִים.

וַעֲלָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מְעִירוֹ מִיָּמִים | יָמִימָה³ -- This is a *weqatal* in a past context. The *weqatal* structure in a past context is prototypically past habitual and that fits this case exactly. The match between the verb form and the past habitual reference is based on *weqatal* itself and does not induce an imperfective or volitional meaning from somewhere else in the context. It is not based on a *yiqtol* that precedes it but the *weqatal* carries its TMA itself. To a child who has internalized this language, hearing this story while sitting around a campfire, the brain immediately fits the וַעֲלָה *wešala* in a past context to its prototypical primary reading, a past **habitual** understanding, the brain accepts the reading as appropriate, and proceeds on in its processing. In English this is “he used to go up.” The verb וַעֲלָה is **not** marking a **perfective** aspect in this context. If a subject had been included here, the structure would have been וַאֲלֻכְנָה יַעֲלָה, where the equivalent form would be *yiqtol*. (See verse 5 below.) In other words, the *weqatal* has the same aspect and mood as a *yiqtol*, which is certainly not perfective in past habituals.⁴⁰ Likewise, the structure is not marking non-indicative. This is intended as real, as indicative. A past habitual is not a prototypical indicative, but it is still indicative and presenting real events. Some languages can use a volitional structure to refer to a past habitual, but that does not make this sentence non-real or non-indicative.⁴¹ Other languages, like Greek, use an imperfective indicative, ἀνέβαινεν, to refer to a past habitual. However, even here, the reference is not to prototypical imperfectivity, not to an incomplete, specific event (“now while he was going up . . .”), but to a past habitual.

לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת וּלְזָבַח לַיהוָה -- The infinitive is commonly used as a purpose clause in classical Hebrew when the subject is the same as the main verb. Contrary to aspectually prominent Greek, Hebrew does not distinguish perfective and imperfective aspect in the infinitive forms. The LXX correctly translated with imperfective infinitives προσκυνεῖν καὶ θύειν because of the repetition that is implied in the Hebrew context.

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם⁴ -- An idiom that brings the story to a specific time and event in the past.

וַיִּזְבַּח אֶלְקָנָה -- A simple past tense on a particular occasion and treated as a thematic event.

⁴⁰ This once again illustrates how badly things can be misconstrued when a “pie” is re-cut. Anyone who would suggest that this *qatal* in וַעֲלָה is semantically a perfective needs to reconsider what perfective means and probably needs to relearn and internalize Hebrew. English speakers are not misled if someone calls the English future a “modal.” Nor does a metalanguage tag for “he runs” as the present tense cause confusion for speakers even though it is a semantically a habitual. Metalanguage tags belong to a layer of the language outside of itself and can be misapplied and/or later refined when they are left outside the language. But the labels may become problematic if they replace language use for determining meaning.

⁴¹ English has such a conditional, past-modal structure for a past habitual: “and he would go up . . .” English “would” is that past tense of “will.”

וְנָתַן לְפָנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁתוֹ וְלִכְל־בְּנֶיהָ וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ מְנוּחַ: -- This *weqatal* begins a habitual description as background for the story.

To restate the obvious, the aspectual part of וְנָתַן is not perfective, but imperfective, although habitual and not past progressive.

וּלְחַנָּה יָתֵן מְנָה אֶחָת אֶפְיִם⁵ -- “Hanna” is fronted for comparison with Penina, so the *yiqtol* is used for the habitual instead of *weqatal*.

כִּי אֶת־חַנָּה אָהָב -- A past, stative verb. The form is pausal. Its contextual form has become אָהָב. Although אָהָב was a stative, it developed a participle in classical Hebrew אֹהֵב, so 1Sam 1:5 is not ambiguous between the *qatal* (stative *qatel*) and participle (stative *qatel*).

וַיְהִי כִּסְגֵר רַחֲמָה: -- A simple past *qatal* that may be called “pluperfect” in context. The clause is parenthetical to the story and signalled by not using a “thematic tense.” Also, logically, the clause does not give a direct reason for the gifts like the previous clause.

וְכַעֲסָתָה צָרָתָהּ גַּם־כָּעַס בַּעֲבוּר הַדַּעְמָה⁶ -- The *weqatal* continues the description of the habitual occurrences.

כִּי־סָגַר יְהוָה בְּעַד רַחֲמָה: -- Another reason-clause with pluperfect semantics.

וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁנָה שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה⁷ -- The summary clauses uses *yiqtol* for marking habitual after *ken*.

מִדֵּי עָלְתָהּ בְּבֵית יְהוָה -- The infinitive clause is a setting for the main verb.

בֵּן תִּכְעַסְנָה -- The *yiqtol* for a summary habitual.

וַתִּבְכֶּה -- This is a *wayyiqtol* and probably shifts the description back to the particular visit and sacrifice that were mentioned in verse 4. “And she wept [that year].” The thematic habitual would have been וַיִּבְכֶּתָה. Since *weqatal* was not chosen, the *wayyiqtol* is best interpreted as a particular event for the particular visit.⁴²

וְלֹא תֹאכַל: -- This might be a relatively rare imperfective, past-progressive use of *yiqtol*, like in verse 10 below. Such a reading assumes that וַתִּבְכֶּה returned the story to the particular visit of verse 4 and to what follows with further *wayyiqtol*s. However, one may also suggested that תֹאכַל is a modal in a past context “she (was) not able to eat”⁴³ or volitional “she (was) not (wanting) to eat, would not eat.” Someone might argue against a modal/volitional reading by pointing out that the specific modal lexemes were not chosen, like וְלֹא יָכְלָה לֵאכֹל *she was not able to eat*, or וְלֹא תִמָּאֵן *and she refused to eat*, or וְלֹא חָפְצָה לֵאכֹל *and she did not want to eat*. However, it is equally significant that the imperfective structure was not chosen, וְאֵינָנָה אֹכֶלֶת, and a volitional reading makes good sense “she was not wanting to eat.”

⁴² See Num 10:35-36 below, for an example of *wayyiqtol* being used for marking past as a setting in a past habitual context. Such a habitual usage of both *qatal* (see Num 11:8) and *wayyiqtol* was part of biblical Hebrew, but was naturally restricted to contexts where the forms were linked to the main habitals. Numbers 10 does not provide a good explanation for the Samuel context. In 1Sam 1:7-10 the word וַתִּבְכֶּה does not function as a setting for a habitual “Elqanah said ... and she got up ... and she prayed.”

⁴³ Cf. Deut 1:9, 12 for modal capability, לֹא אוּכַל שְׂאת *I cannot carry* and אֵיכָה אֶשָּׂא *how can I carry?*

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִשָּׁהּ⁸ -- The *wayyiqtol* is not a habitual and continues the specific events of that particular visit mentioned in וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם. “And Elkanah said to her” is a simple past and is the thematic reply to וַתִּבְכֶּה. It is part of a chain of events that is described in the following verses as well.

חַנָּה לָמָּה תִּבְכִּי -- “Hanna, why would you be crying?” The *yiqtol* is used in polite questions to mitigate them, making them more polite and less direct. It is prototypically a volitional use of the *yiqtol*. The option not chosen was חַנָּה לָמָּה אַתְּ בֹּכֶה, using a participle for a direct question in the present.

וְלָמָּה לֹא תֹאכְלִי -- Another polite question. “Why would you not eat?” The questioning *yiqtol* may reinforce a volitional reading of וְלֹא תֹאכְלִי in the previous verse.

וְלָמָּה יָרַע לְבָבְךָ -- Another polite question.

וַתֵּקֶם חַנָּה⁹ -- The *wayyiqtol* continues the thematic events of that particular visit.

אֲחֵרֵי אֲכָלָהּ בְּשֻׁלָּהּ וְאַחֲרֵי שָׁתָה -- The word אֲכָלָהּ is a verbal noun (a long infinitive, like in Gen 1.29-30), like שָׁתָה. The “-ah” is not a feminine suffix and the verb does not refer to Hanna, but to the eating and drinking of the rest of the family. (The lack of *mappiq* in the *heh* of אֲכָלָהּ is correct in the MT.)

וְעֵלִי חִכְיָן יֹשֵׁב עַל-הַכִּסֵּא עַל-מְזוֹזַת הַיֵּכָל וַיְהִי: -- The clause with a participle describes an imperfective event in the past. “[Now at that particular time] Eli was sitting on the chair ...” The participle is prototypically the past progressive without an endpoint rather than a habitual. It is a background description and is not part of the thematic event structure.

וְהִיא מַרְתַּנְפֵּשׁ¹⁰ -- The verbless clause functions as an open-ended setting in the past.

וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל-יְהוָה -- The *wayyiqtol* describes the whole past event “she prayed.” The thematic past tense makes this the next thematic action after וַתֵּקֶם verse 9.

וּבִכָּה תְּבֻכָּה: -- A *yiqtol* is used for an imperfective past progressive, not a habitual. This usage of *yiqtol* is rare in classical Hebrew. “She was crying profusely.” The choice of *yiqtol* over the participle may have been influenced by choosing the infinitive absolute which normally precedes a finite verb.

וַתִּדְּרֹךְ נֶדֶר¹¹ -- The *wayyiqtol* describes the whole event “she vowed a vow.”

וַתֹּאמֶר -- This *wayyiqtol* is a *hendiadys* with “vowed” and introduces direct speech.

יְהִיָּה צָבָאוֹת אִם-רָאָה תִּרְאָה | בְּעֵנֵי אִמְתֶּךָ -- The *yiqtol* is used with a conditional.

וַיִּכְרַתְנִי -- The *weqatal* continues as a thematic event within the context of the conditional. It has the same time, mood and aspect as the *yiqtol*.

וְלֹא-תִשְׁכַּח אֶת-אִמְתֶּךָ -- The doublet pauses the sequence and uses a *litotes*, “do not forget” within the conditional context.

וַנִּתְּתָה לְאִמְתֶּךָ יָרַע אֲנִישִׁים -- The *weqatal* advances the thematic sequence of the condition.

וַנִּתְּתֵנוּ לַיהוָה כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּינוּ -- The *weqatal* is a thematic sequence that provides the vow as an apodosis to the condition.

(There is no formal distinction between continuation of the protasis and beginning of the apodosis.) The apodosis is future

and the aspectual understanding is perfective, that is, the “giving” will be completed at a particular time in the future. The *weqatal* is thus functioning like a *yiqtol* when something is placed before the verb.

וּמִזְבֵּחַ לֹא־יִעָלָה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ: -- The thematic sequence pauses by not using a *weqatal*. Instead a “contextualizing constituent” (*razor*) and a *yiqtol* describe the situation of the dedicated child. The verbs וַנְּתַתִּי and יַעֲלֶה are equally future and perfective, at least as much as one can talk about a negation being “complete.”

12 וְהָיָה: -- The *weqatal* describes the setting of the prayer imperfectly, without including the endpoint of the continuation of Hanna’s prayers. The past progressive [non-habitual] use of *weqatal* is relatively rare. It may emphasize the duration of the praying. The non-habitual use of the *weqatal* can be seen in 1Sam 17:48 where the beginning of the battle is introduced with a subjectless וְהָיָה “and (here) is what was happening . . .”

כִּי הִרְבָּתָה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה -- The *qatal* can be used in *ki*-clauses that describe habitual actions when subordinated to habitual actions. Here, however, the clause describes an imperfectly incomplete action of praying. In this particular case the semantics of הִרְבָּה, *made much, prolonged*, also help to make a *qatal* form acceptable for introducing a past progressive situation.

וְעָלִי שֹׁמֵר אֶת־פִּיהִי: -- The participle is the prototypical imperfective in Hebrew as a past progressive and is used here for the simultaneous and open-ended action of Eli.

13 וְחִנָּה הָיָה מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל־לִבָּהּ: -- The imperfective past progressive is continued with a second participle.

רַק שִׁפְתֶּיהָ נָעוּת -- The lack of *waw* provides for an explanatory, parenthetical comment. The participle is imperfective, describing the situation without the endpoint in view.

וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמָע: -- The *yiqtol* continues the parenthetical comment of a past progressive. The *yiqtol* is rare in biblical Hebrew for a prototypical imperfective, past progressive sense instead of a habitual. In terms of mood, of course, this is described as real, not hypothetical or potential, so the semantics should not be called *irrealis*. However, there is one more level of complexity because that reality of progressive hearing is then negated.

וַיְחַשְׁבֶּהָ עָלַי לְשֹׁכְרָה: -- This *wayyiqtol* is one of the thematic events of the story and includes its endpoint. The participle “was speaking” was the past-progressive, imperfective background against which the Eli’s observation took place.

14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיָה עָלַי: -- The thematic *wayyiqtol* for the next event in the story.

עַד־מָתַי תִּשְׁתַּכְרֶינִי -- The *yiqtol* for a future habit, although also potentially a mitigating question. The final *nun* may be a remnant from the old indicative system. However, its inconsistent use in biblical Hebrew turns it into a form that adds rhetorical weight to the verb rather than semantics.

הֲסִירִי אֶת־יְיָ מֵעָלַי: -- Imperative for a direct command.

15 וַתַּעַן חִנָּה וַתֹּאמֶר: -- The next event in the story is described with *wayyiqtol* and a common *hendiadys*.

אִשָּׁה קָשָׁת־רוּחַ אֲנִי -- The verbless clause refers to Hanna’s speech in her present time. The predicate is fronted as focus.

וַיִּינֵן וְשָׁכַר לֹא שָׁתִיתִי -- From Hanna's perspective the *qatal* is a perfect, a past event (past negation) with present relevance to her situation, the fronting is for contextualizing (topicalizing) what had already been mentioned.

וְאֶשְׁפָּךְ אֶת־נַפְשִׁי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: -- The thematic *wayyiqtol* refers to Hanna's past. Again, there is present relevance, but nothing in the verb specifically marks the present relevance.

אֶל־תִּתֵּן אֶת־אַמְתָּךְ לִפְנֵי בַת־כְּלִיעֶל¹⁶ -- The *yiqtol* is a mitigated, negative imperative. The negative אֶל is correctly used for a specific circumstance, for this context.⁴⁴

כִּי־מָרַב שִׁיתִי וְכַעֲסִי דַבַּרְתִּי עַד־הַנֶּה: -- *qatal* for past, fronting for focus.

וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר -- The next event in the story is described with *wayyiqtol* in a common *hendiadys* וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר.

וְאֵלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתֵּן אֶת־שְׁלָלְךָ: -- The subject is fronted. The verb may or may not be intended as a volitional. The way to mark the verb as a volitional "may He give" would have been to place it first. So this may be intended as an indicative "The Lord will give." However, classical Hebrew also knows examples where volitionals appear second (Gen 37:27 וַיִּדְנוּ

וַיְהִי וְאֵלֹהֵיךָ יְהִי עִמָּךְ 2Sam 14:17, אֶל־תְּהִי־בוּ). So the phrase is technically ambiguous in classical Hebrew. As a blessing a volitional understanding would be appropriate.

וַתֹּאמֶר¹⁸ -- The *wayyiqtol* is the next thematic event in the story.

תִּמְצָא שְׁפָחָתְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךְ -- The verb is fronted as a volitional "may she find."

וַתֵּלֶךְ הָאִשָּׁה לְדֶרֶכָה -- The *wayyiqtol* is the next thematic event in the story.

וַתֹּאכַל -- The *wayyiqtol* is the next thematic event in the story and confirms the correct reading of אָכְלָה in verse 9 as referring to the others but not Hanna.

וּפְגִינָה לֹא־הָיוּ־לָהּ עוֹד: -- The noun breaks the flow of thematic verbs and pauses the story as the end of a scene.

וַיִּשְׁבְּמוּ בִבְקָר־19 ... -- The thematic verbs continue the story by returning the family to their home.

וַיָּשָׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בֵּיתָם הָרִמְתָּה --

וַיַּדַּע אֶלְקָנָה אֶת־חֲנָנִה אִשְׁתּוֹ -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

וַיִּזְכְּרָה יְהוָה: -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

וַיְהִי לְתַקְפוֹת הַיָּמִים²⁰ -- The *wayyiqtol* וַיְהִי without a subject advances to a new time frame.

וַתֵּהָר חָנָה -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

וַתֵּלֶךְ בֶּן -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שְׁמוּאֵל -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

⁴⁴ The negative אֶל is used inconsistently in BH. Sometimes it is used with the morphologically indicative *yiqtol* (for example, Gen 19:17 אֶל־תִּפְּיט, Jos 1:7 אֶל־תִּסְּר, 2Sam 13:12 אֶל־תִּעַשֶׂה, Job 3:9 אֶל־יִרְאַה, though normally it is used with the morphologically volitional *yiqtol* (for example, Gen 37:27 אֶל־תְּהִי, Lev 10:9 אֶל־תִּשָּׂה, Job 3:6 אֶל־יִחַד). This is part of the evidence for the breakdown/simplification of the volitional system that was going on in the biblical language.

כי מיהוה שאלתיו: -- The “Lord” is fronted in a *ki*-clause for Focus. The *qatal* verb preserved its stative morphology.

וַיַּעַל הָאִישׁ אֶלְקָנָה וְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ:21 -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

וְחַנָּה לֹא עָלְתָה:22 -- The fronted subject “Hanna” provides a comparison along with a lack of a thematic tense as fitting for something that is simultaneous and not a temporal development of the story.

כִּי-אָמְרָה לְאִשָּׁה -- The *qatal* marks a past that is also pluperfect.

עַד וַיִּמָּל הַנָּעַר -- The *yiqtol* is a future that is contextually a condition to the following thematic verb.

וַהֲבֵאתִיו -- The *weqatal* is the thematic event and future apodosis.

וְנִרְאָה אֶת-פָּנָי יְהוָה -- The *weqatal* is the future thematic event

וַיָּשָׁב שָׁם עַד-עוֹלָם: -- The *weqatal* is the future thematic event

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִשָּׁה:23 -- This *wayyiqtol* is a thematic development from Hanna’s statement but is a back-reference from the perspective of verse 21.

אֲךָ יָקֻם יְהוָה אֶת-דְּבָרוֹ -- The form is a volitional “May Yhwh fulfill/establish his word.”

וַתֵּשֶׁב הָאִשָּׁה -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story after Elkanah’s statement.

וַתִּינַק אֶת-בָּתָּהּ -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

עַד-נִמְלָה אֹתוֹ: -- The infinitive phrase is a subordination.

וַתַּעֲלֵהוּ עִמָּה:24 -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

כַּנְמִלָּה אֹתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר -- The *כַּאֲשֶׁר* clause with a finite verb is a rhetorically heavy way of saying *כַּנְמִלָּה*.

וַתִּבְאֶהוּ בֵּית-יְהוָה שְׁלוֹ -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

וַהֲנַעַר נָעַר: -- The verbless clause breaks the flow of thematic verbs. It is a little surprising because it is a tautology, “the boy was a boy [=servant?],” unless a textual corruption, as widely assumed. It appears to break up the unit and becomes a “packaging boundary.”

וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ אֶת-הַפָּר:25 -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story. The plural appears to include Elkanah, since the next sentence has the boy as an object.

וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת-הַנָּעַר אֶל-עֲלִי: -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

וַתֹּאמֶר:26 -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

אֲנִי הָאִשָּׁה הַנֹּצֶצֶת עִמָּכָה בָּזָה -- The participle refers to the past encounter with Eli, not the present. A time marker only comes in the next verse.

אֶל-הַנָּעַר הַזֶּה הַתְּפִלָּלָתִי:27 -- The time is now explicit with *qatal*.

וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לִי אֶת-שְׁאֵלָתִי -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in her speech.

וְגַם אֲנֹכִי הִשְׁאֵלְתִּהוּ לַיהוָה כָּל-הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָה:28 -- The *qatal* *הִשְׁאֵלְתִּהוּ* is probably a performative. Hanna “hereby” loans her son to the Lord, permanently.

וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה שָׁם לַיהוָה: פ -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

--

1Sam. 2:1 וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל חַנָּה וַתֹּאמֶר:1 -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story, which is a long prayer by Hanna. The *hendiadys* וַתֹּאמֶר introduces the quoted content of the prayer.

עָלַץ לְבִי בַיהוָה ... רָמָה ... רָחַב ... שְׁמַחְתִּי -- Four past references use *qatal*.

אִין-קָדוֹשׁ בַּיהוָה:2 -- Three existential negatives follow.

אֶל-תִּרְבּוּ תִרְבְּרוּ גְבוּתָה גְבוּתָה:3 --

יֵצֵא עֲתָק מִפִּיכֶם -- A negative is implied from the previous verse.

כִּי אֵל יַעֲוֶה יְהוָה -- A verbless clause describes the Lord

וְלֹא [וְ] [לֹא] נִתְכַּנְּנוּ עַל לִוְיָ: -- A *qatal* describes a proverbial action based on the past.

קָשַׁת גְּבָרִים חֲתִים:4 -- A verbless clause makes a poetic description as a habitual/volitional/hypothetical.

וְנִכְשָׁלִים אֲזָרוּ חֵיל: -- A *qatal* in the parallel clause describes a proverbial action based on the past. This kind of alternation in parallelism with loose temporal reference is common in poetry.

שְׁבָעִים בְּלָחֶם נִשְׁפְּרוּ:5 -- A *qatal* describes a proverbial action based on the past. In this poetry they function like perfects, “past with present relevance.”

וַיַּעֲבִים חֲדָלוּ -- A *qatal* antithetically describes a proverbial action based on the past.

עַד-עֲקָרָה יִלְדָה שְׂבָעָה -- A *qatal* describes a proverbial action based on the past.

וְרַבַּת בָּנִים אִמְלָלָה: -- A *qatal* in the parallel clause describes a proverbial action based on the past.

יְהוָה מִמִּית וּמַחְיָה:6 -- Two participles describe habitual actions for the Lord.

מוֹרִיד שָׁאוֹל וַיַּעַל: -- The participle continues to describe a habitual action for the Lord, but the *wayyiqtol* breaks this habitual description and implies a past event “and He brought up [from *sheol*].”⁴⁵ The change of tense is arresting in this poem and causes the listener/reader to look for a possible application. A literal bringing back of a person from the place of the dead is not a likely meaning, but rescue from death or disaster is sometimes spoken of metaphorically in the Bible as a rising from *sheol* or the deep waters of the earth. Psalm 30:4: יְהוָה הֶעֱלִיתָ מִן-שָׁאוֹל נַפְשִׁי *you raised my soul from sheol*, 71:20 תֵּעָלֶנִי תִשׁוּב תֵּעָלֶנִי *from the deep waters of the earth you will come back and will raise me up*. What could Hanna have referred to? Probably the removal of the curse of barrenness. To be barren was sometimes considered to be dead. Gen 30:1 מִתָּה אֲנִי בָנִים וְאִם-אֵין מִתָּה אֲנִי *give me children and if not I am dead*. In any case, what is clear is that the poem breaks the list of habitual actions with a specific action that implies an inclusion of a historical fulfillment for Hanna.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Contra Walter Gross, *Verbform und Funktion, wayyiqtol für die Gegenwart?* (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1976, 111)

“1 Sam 2,6a. 7.8 bezeichnen generelle Sachverhalte der Gegenwart. Dasselbe muß man für v. 6b annehmen.”

⁴⁶ I was pleased to hear John Cook offer an interpretation along these lines at the SBL panel discussion, San Diego, 2014.

7 מְרֹמָם יְהוָה מוֹרִישׁ וּמַעֲשִׂיר מִשְׁפִּיל ... מְרֹמָם -- More habitual descriptions with participles

8 מְקִים מַעֲפָר דָּל מְאַשְׁפֵּל יָרִים אֲבִיו -- The *yiqtol* shifts from a participle for a modal/future for a habitual.

וְכִסָּא כְבוֹד יִנְחֵלָם -- Another *yiqtol* modal/future for a habitual.

וַיִּשֶׁת עֲלֵיהֶם תְּבֵלָה -- The *wayyiqtol* refers to the foundation of the earth in the past.

9 רִנְגְלֵי חֲסִידוֹ [חֲסִידוֹ] יִשְׁמָר -- The *yiqtol*s build a future metaphor of protection

-- וּרְשָׁעִים בְּחֻשָּׁד יִדְמוּ

-- כִּי־לֹא בָכַח יִגְבֵּר־אִישׁ:

10 [יְהוָה יַחַתּוּ מְרִיבוֹ] מְרִיבוֹ -- The *yiqtol* is probably a wish, a volitional, following a vocative

-- עָלוּ [עָלִין] בְּשָׁמַיִם יִרְעֹם -- The *yiqtol* is a morphologically volitional/jussive. “May He thunder.”

-- יְהוָה יָרִין אֶפְסִי־אַרְץ -- The parallel *yiqtol* is morphologically indicative and refers to something either habitual or future.

-- וַיַּתֵּן־עֹז לְמַלְכּוֹ -- The *yiqtol* is placed in first position (it is not *wayyiqtol*) so it has special marking as a volitional. “And may he give strength to his king.”

-- וַיִּרָם קֶרֶן מְשִׁיחוֹ: פ -- The *yiqtol* is placed in first position (it is not *wayyiqtol*) so it has special marking as a volitional. “And may he raise the horn of his anointed.”

11 וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶלְקָנָה הָרִמְתָּה עַל־בֵּיתוֹ -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story.

-- וַהֲנַעַר הָיָה מְשָׁרֵת אֶת־יְהוָה אֶת־פָּנָיו עָלֵי הַכֹּהֵן: -- The scene closes out with an imperfective, marking an open-ended event “the boy was serving . . .”

12 וּבְנֵי עָלֵי בְנֵי בְלִיעֵל -- A verbless clause for background description.

-- לֹא יָדָעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה: -- A *qatal* as background description.

13 וּמִשְׁפַּט הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָעָם -- A verbless clause for more background description.

-- כָּל־אִישׁ זִבְחָה זִבַּח וּכְאֵן נָעַר הַכֹּהֵן -- A fronted noun phrase as an extra-clausal contextualizing constituent “every man sacrificing a sacrifice—and the priest’s boy would come...” The *weqatal* is a past habitual, as is prototypical for Hebrew narrative.

-- כַּבְשֵׁל הַבָּשָׂר -- “after the meat boiled.” The infinitive provides a setting for the action.

14 וַהֲכָה בַכִּיֹּר אֹז בַּדּוֹר אֹז בַּקִּלְחַת אֹז בַּפְּרוֹר -- The *weqatal* is a thematic verb that continues the description of past, habitual actions.

-- כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲלֶה מִזֶּלֶג יִקַּח הַכֹּהֵן בּוֹ -- With a fronted object “everything that...” the *yiqtol* is used for the habitual. This verse is a classic example showing that *weqatal* and *yiqtol* have the same TMA (tense-mood-aspect).

-- בָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂי לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים שָׁם בְּשָׁלָה: -- The *yiqtol* is used for a summary habitual.

15 **נָם בְּטָרָם יִקְטְרוּן אֶת־הַחֶלֶב** -- The *yiqtol* is used with **בְּטָרָם** to refer to a time before whatever the *yiqtol* describes.

The *nun* at the end of **יִקְטְרוּן** may be a fossilized indicative although it functions as a rhetorical lengthening in the synchronic language.

וַיָּבֹא | נָעַר הַכֹּהֵן -- The *weqatal* is a thematic verb for this past habitual sequence and is prototypical for Hebrew narrative.

וַיֹּאמֶר לְאִישׁ הַזֶּכֶּחַ -- The *weqatal* is a thematic verb for this past habitual sequence

וַתֵּן בָּשָׂר לְצִלּוֹת לִפְנֵי -- The lengthened imperative form of ‘give’ has not been clearly understood.⁴⁷ Steven Fassberg has shown a strong tendency for these to imply motion directed to the speaker or to carry a benefactive “dative” sense.⁴⁸ That is fitting here.

וְלֹא־יִקַּח מִמֶּנּוּ בָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂל -- The *yiqtol* refers to a volitional “he [does not want] to take”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָאִישׁ 16 -- If this text is correct, the *wayyiqtol* would be the first of a sequence of two re-occurring statements “and he said ... and he would say.” This is like the *qatal* in the beginning of an iterative sequence in Num 11:8

שָׁטוּ הָעָם וְלָקְטוּ וַיִּטְחֲנוּ as well as the *wayyiqtol* in the iterative sequence of Num 10:35 **וַיֹּאמֶר... וַיֹּאמֶר**.⁴⁹ This is good

biblical Hebrew. However, a text of Samuel at Qumran (4Q51) reads **וַעֲנָה הָאִישׁ וַאֲמַר** where the prototypical *weqatal* for a past habitual is used. That is most likely a secondary rewriting of the text, perhaps at a time when the syntax of a *wayyiqtol* as a setting within a habitual was no longer used. So it is more probable that **וַיֹּאמֶר** was original and served as a setting to the following **וַיֹּאמֶר**.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Joüon and Muraoka 48d “emphatic in origin, but in practice does not often seem to add any particular nuance, ...honorific ...addressed to God ...since the nuance added by **וְ** is virtually non-discernible, the emotive particle **נָא** is added, if greater emphasis is required.”

⁴⁸ Steven E. Fassberg “The Lengthened Imperative **קָטְלָה** in Biblical Hebrew,” *Hebrew Studies* 40 (1999): 7-13. I want to thank Aaron Hornkohl for this reference.

⁴⁹ Numbers 10:35-36:

and it **וַיְהִי בְנֹסַע הָאָרֶץ**

happened in the travelling of the ark

and Moses said **וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה**

((!)), (as an example of what he would say

Arise, O Lord, “ **קוּמָה | יְהוָה וַיִּפְצְלוּ אֹיְבָיָהּ וַיִּגְסּוּ מְשֻׁנְאֵיהָ מִפְּנֵיהָ** “

”... and may your enemies be scattered

and in the ark’s **וּבִנְחָהּ**

resting

he would say **יֹאמֶר**

Return, O “ **שׁוּבָה יְהוָה רַב־בָּת אֶלְפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** “

”.Lord, to the myriads of clans of Israel

⁵⁰ The LXX appears to reverse this: ἔλεγεν was saying (sensitive to Greek) ... καὶ εἶπεν and he said (less felicitous in Greek).

קָטַר יִקְטִירוּ כִּיּוֹם הַחֹלֶב -- The *yiqtol* is probably a volitional “let them burn the fat”. If so, the final *nun* is purely rhetorical and not from a former indicative.

וְקַח-לָךְ -- The imperative follows the concession “let them burn.” The short form קַח is fitting because the motion is away.

כַּאֲשֶׁר תִּאֲוֶה נַפְשְׁךָ -- The *yiqtol* is a volitional that probably mitigates the statement “as your soul may desire.”

וְאָמַר -- The prototypical *weqatal* for a past habitual.

לֹא לְךָ -- “Do not!” is the *qre* and canonical reading. “To him” is the *ktiv*.

כִּי עֲתָה תִתֵּן -- The *yiqtol* may be an obligatory volitional “you should give it” or a future indicative that makes an absolute command here “you **will give** it now.” The more indicative לֹא instead of volitional אַל makes the context more absolute. Using the future for a present demand is arresting in Hebrew as in English.

וְאִם-לֹא --

לִקְחָתִי בְּחֹזֶקָה -- The *qatal* is a performative “I hereby take it by force.”

וְתִהְיֶה חֲטָאת הַנְּעָרִים גְּדוּלָה מְאֹד אֶת-פָּנֵי יְהוָה 17 -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event in the story. This is an event of the story and not the subjectless נִיְהִי that introduces a setting.

כִּי נָאֲצוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶת מִנְחַת יְהוָה -- The *qatal* refers to the whole, past activity of the sons of Eli.

וּשְׂמוּאֵל מְשַׁרֵּת אֶת-פָּנֵי יְהוָה 18 -- This participle clause is an imperfective that describe a background situation in the story. It is possible that the participle was chosen for the unbroken continuity of the event, as a lengthened past progressive, as opposed to the iterativity of a *yiqtol*.

נָעַר הַנּוֹר אֶפְרָיִם -- A verbless clause or appositional phrase to “Samuel” that provides explanatory background for the actions to come.

וַעֲשֶׂה לּוֹ כְּתֹנֶת 19 -- The *yiqtol* refers to a recurring gift of Samuel’s mother. (Cf. Gen 37:3 וַעֲשֶׂה לּוֹ כְּתֹנֶת where the *weqatal* is similarly iterative and probably describes a special “suit, uniform” that was provided to Joseph over and over again.) Once again we see the *yiqtol* and *weqatal* referring to the same TMA while occurring in different syntactical slots.

וְהָעֵלְתָה לּוֹ מִיָּמִים יְמִימָה -- The thematic *weqatal* is habitual and describes a visit and gift on a probable annual basis (מִיָּמִים יְמִימָה). Again, the TMA of the *weqatal* and *yiqtol* are the same.

בַּעֲלֹתָהּ אֶת-אִשָּׁהּ -- The infinitive clause with ב provides an imperfective setting to the main verb וְהָעֵלְתָה.

וַיְבַרֵךְ עָלָיָא אֶת-אֶלְקָנָה וְאֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאָמַר 20 -- The *weqatal* is habitual and part of the thematic sequence in the background.

יֵשׁ יְהוָה לָךְ זֶרַע מִן-הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת -- The *yiqtol* is volitional by form and meaning.

תַּחַת הַשָּׂאֵלָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂאֵל לְיָהוָה -- The *qatal* for past.

וַיִּלֶךְ הָאִישׁ -- The *weqatal* is habitual and part of the thematic sequence in the background. 4Q51 has וַיִּלְכּוּ לְמַקְמוֹ: לְמַקְמוֹ. 4Q51 would return the story to a specific event. It is probably a secondary editing because the following verse ends up smoother in 4Q51 than the MT.

כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־חַנָּה 21 -- The *ki*-clause with a past *qatal* breaks away from the habitual description above and is related to the next development of the story. The *ki* is unexpected and in the MT it appears to subordinate a clause “when God visited Hanna” to the following events. Gen 29:33 shows that כִּי may introduce a claim כִּי שָׁמַע “indeed He heard,” but *ki* is still rough for a narrative. 4Q51 smoothes this out by removing the *ki* and using *wayyiqtol* וַיִּפְקֹד and the Lord took care of Hanna.

וַתֵּהָר -- The *wayyiqtol* is the next thematic event in the story.

וַתֵּלֶךְ שְׁלֹשָׁה־בָּנִים וּשְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת -- The *wayyiqtol* is the next thematic event in the story.

וַיִּגְדֹּל הַנָּעַר שְׁמוּאֵל עִם־יְהוָה: -- The *wayyiqtol* is the next thematic event in the story.

וַעֲלִי זָקֵן מְאֹד 22 ס -- The stative זָקֵן is ambiguous between a *qatal*, *became old*, and a participle, (*was*) *old*. However, either form breaks the sequence of thematic *wayyiqtol* verbs.

וַשָּׁמַע אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂיוּ בְּנָיו לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל -- The switch to *weqatal* is describing a habitual, recurring event. Likewise, the *yiqtol* refers to the recurring actions.

וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁכְּבוּן אֶת־הַנָּשִׁים הַצְּבָאוֹת פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: -- The *yiqtol* refers to a recurring action in the past.

וַיִּנְאֹמֶר לָהֶם 23 -- The *wayyiqtol* appears to advance to the next event of the story where a particular, lengthy lesson is given by Eli. See the response in the next verse where it is implied that a similar warning and rebuke occurred on more than one occasion.

לָמָּה תַעֲשֶׂיוּ בְּדַבְרֵימִי הָאֵלֶּה -- The *yiqtol* may be a modal that mitigates a present question, although it could also be referring to habitual actions, past and or present. If the author was concerned about ambiguity he could have written, for example, לָמָּה הֵייתֶם עֹשִׂים בְּדַבְרֵימִי הָאֵלֶּה but such precision was unnecessary as everyone was already aware of the referential actions.

אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי שָׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרֵיכֶם רָעִים מֵאֵת כָּל־הָעָם אֵלֶּה: -- The participle for the present tense.

אֵל בָּנִי כִי לֹא־טוֹבָה הַשְׁמָעָה 24 -- Verbless *ki*-clause (with fronted predicate for focus) after negative command.

אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי שָׁמַע -- Participle as a present in a subordinate clause.

מַעֲבָרִים עִם־יְהוָה: -- participle as a habitual, or inclusive present.

אִם־יִחַטָּא אִישׁ לְאִישׁ 25 -- *Yiqtol* for a condition that is omnitemporal and potential.

וּפָלְלוּ אֱלֹהִים -- *Weqatal* for the omnitemporal and potential apodosis.

וְאִם לִיהוָה יִחַטָּא־אִישׁ -- *Yiqtol* for a condition that is omnitemporal and potential.

מִי יִתְפַּלֵּל־לִּי -- *Yiqtol* for a questioned omnitemporal and potential apodosis. We see the *yiqtol* used in the same semantic framework as the previous *weqatal* and they are not differentiated in aspect or mood.

וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקוֹל אָבִיהֶם -- This returns to the story with a negative *yiqtol* as a past habitual. Simple unwillingness could have been stated as *לֹא שָׁמְעוּ*. The *yiqtol* implies more than one warning from their father.

כִּי־חָפֵץ יְהוָה לַחֲמִיתָם: -- The form *חָפֵץ* is ambiguous between a *qatal* and participle. If it is a participle/stative-adjective then it is fronted as a Focus construction “the Lord (was) *wanting*.” The simplest reading is as a *qatal* “wanted” that gives a background reason related to the wicked behavior.

וְהַנֶּעַר שָׁמוּאֵל הָלַךְ וַיִּגְדַּל וַיִּמָּזַב26 -- The participles provide a background, imperfective description in the past. It provides a boundary to the scene. The idiom means to get bigger and better.

וַיָּבֹא אִישׁ־אֱלֹהִים אֶל־עֲלִי27 -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event of the story.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו -- The *wayyiqtol* advances to the next event of the story.

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה -- The *qatal* is a kind of performative that establishes God’s word as a given.

הַנִּנְלָה נִנְלִיתִי אֶל־בֵּית אָבִיךָ -- The *qatal* refers to the past.

בְּהִיוֹתָם בְּמִצְרַיִם לְבֵית פַּרְעֹה: -- The infinitive with *ב* is a simultaneous, incomplete setting.

וַיִּבְחַר אֹתוֹ מִכָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִי לְכֹהֵן28 -- The infinitive absolute is a rare construction as a synonym for a finite verb. It refers to God’s choosing Aaron and his descendants. The other option was *וַיִּבְחָר*.

וַאֲתָנָה לְבֵית אָבִיךָ אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֵׁי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: -- The *wayyiqtol* uses a long form in the first person. This is an optional form in Biblical Hebrew that became quite common in LBH and Qumran. The normal *wayyiqtol* uses a short form in the second and third persons that is a homonym with short jussive *yiqtol* forms. The first person long suffix (+ה) would be a homonym with the cohortative and would be similarly “volitional” outside the *wayyiqtol*. But in the *wayyiqtol* it is still a past indicative.

לָמָּה תִּבְעָשׂוּ בְּזִבְחִי וּבִמְנוּחָתִי29 -- The *yiqtol* is used volitionally as a mitigated question in the present that includes habituality.

אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי מֶעוֹן -- The *qatal* for past.

וַתִּכְבֹּד אֶת־בְּנִיךָ מִמֶּנִּי -- The *wayyiqtol* is the thematic continuation of the sentence in the past.

לָכֵן נֹאֲם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל30 -- This breaks the thematic sequence and begins a new topic in the prophecy.

אָמַר אֲמַרְתִּי -- The *qatal* is a performative in the prophet’s mouth. “*I have hereby spoken*.”

בֵּיתְךָ וּבֵית אָבִיךָ יִתְהַלְכוּ לִפְנֵי עַד־עוֹלָם -- The *yiqtol* refers to the future. The aspect is not in focus and it includes eternity as an endpoint, so it may be called either imperfective or perfective in this case.

וְעַתָּה נֹאֲם־יְהוָה --

חֲלִילָה לִּי -- The suffix (+ה) is a fixed form for a negated oath that implies that God will remain true. The suffix may be related to the long imperative suffix, this word became fixed and could be used both with ‘to me’ and ‘to you’ (Gen 18:25).

כִּי־מִכְבְּרִי אֲכַבֵּד -- The *yiqtol* is a future.

וּבְזֵי יִקְלוּ: -- The *yiqtol* is a future.

הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים 31 -- The participle refers to a “near future.”

וְגִדַּעְתִּי אֶת־זֶרְעִי -- The *weqatal* is the thematic continuation and refers to the future.

וְהִבְטַתְּ צֶרַח מֵעוֹן 32 -- The *weqatal* is the thematic continuation and refers to the future.

בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־יֵיטִיב אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל -- The *yiqtol* is a future in a clause the begins with **אשר**.

וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה זָקֵן בְּבֵיתָהּ כָּל־הַיָּמִים: -- The *yiqtol* is a negated future and may be parallel to **וְהִבְטַתְּ**.

וְאִישׁ לֹא־אֶכְרִית לָהּ מִזֶּמַּח 33 -- The *yiqtol* is a future and continuing the description of “there will not be” from the previous verse.

לְכַלּוֹת אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ -- infinitive clause for purpose.

וְלֹאֲרִיב אֶת־נַפְשָׁהּ -- infinitive clause for purpose.

וְכָל־מִרְבֵּית בֵּיתָהּ יָמוּתוּ אֲנָשִׁים: -- The *yiqtol* is a parallel future with a contextualizing constituent.

וְזֶה־לָּךְ הָאוֹת 34 -- A verbless clause for the future sign.

אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא אֶל־שָׁנִי בְּיָד אֶל־חֲפָנִי וּפִינָחִס -- The *yiqtol* is future.

בְּיוֹם אֶחָד יָמוּתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם: -- The *yiqtol* is future. Obviously, this future is perfective!!

וְהִקִּמְתִּי לִי כֶתֶן נֶאֱמָן 35 -- The thematic tense *weqatal* is future and continues the prophecy.

כַּאֲשֶׁר בִּלְבָבִי וּבִנְפֹשִׁי יַעֲשֶׂה -- The *yiqtol* is future. Here the context may be considered open-ended although it is technically not marked by the verb.

וּבְנִיתִי לוֹ בַּיִת נֶאֱמָן -- The thematic tense *weqatal* is future and continues the prophecy.

וְהִתְהַלַּךְ לִפְנֵי־מִשְׁחִי כָל־הַיָּמִים: -- The thematic tense *weqatal* is future and continues the prophecy.

וְהָיָה 36 -- The thematic tense *weqatal* is future, probably iterative/recurring, and continues the prophecy.

כָּל־הַנּוֹתָר בְּבֵיתָהּ יָבֹא לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לוֹ לְאַנְוֶרֶת כֶּסֶף וְכֶבֶד־לָחֶם -- The *yiqtol* is future and repetitive with a fronted contextualizing constituent.

וְאָמַר -- The thematic tense *weqatal* is future and continues the prophecy.

סִפְחָנִי נָא אֶל־אַחַת הַכֹּהֲנֹת -- Imperative in quoted material.

לְאָכַל פֶּת־לֶחֶם: ס -- Infinitive for a purpose clause.

9.0 Concluding Remarks

Time and mood dominate the classical Hebrew finite verbs. The least significant semantic category for the Hebrew verb is aspect. However, the selected texts provided two or three examples of past progressive aspect (possibly 1:7 *yiqtol*, 1:10 *yiqtol*, 1:12 *weqatal*), a relatively rare mapping in classical Hebrew. The prototypical imperfective aspect, a progressive

event without the endpoint, is signalled by the participle (1:9, 12, 13, *inter alia*), not the *yiqtol*. Single events in the future are prototypically perfective whether signalled by *yiqtol* or *weqatal*, contrary to much pedagogical metalanguage.

The Hebrew *yiqtol* is semantically trivalent or multivalent: future indicative (time), present-future volitional and irrealis (mood), occasionally past habitual indicative (as an extension of time-mood), and rarely past progressive (imperfective). The *weqatal* shares most of the trivalent or multivalent tense-mood-aspect of the *yiqtol* (future indicative, present-future volitional and irrealis, occasionally past habitual indicative, and rarely past progressive), although as a thematic tense it is more often indicative and not as volitional as the *we-yiqtol* idiom.

The *qatal* is also trivalent: temporally it is an absolute and relative past time, prototypically indicative and perfective. Modally it is indicative and realis, though it is also used for some virtual expressions like performatives and occasional contrafactuals. Aspectually, it is prototypically perfective, though it may be used in habitual settings. The *wayyiqtol* shares most of the trivalent TMA of the *qatal*, although as a thematic tense it has more absolute time reference and avoids performatives.

The account of 1Samuel 1-2 was situated in the past by the verbs. Likewise, references to the future were signalled by the verbs. However, the Hebrew verbal system is systematically concerned with “packaging,” beyond the simple marking of tense, mood, and aspect. The *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* categories have developed a sophisticated style that produces thematic threads of clauses and sentences that form the skeleton of a story and of communication.