

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A SYNTACTICAL STUDY OF THE WAW-CONSECUTIVE
AND HOW IT AFFECTS BIBLICAL HEBREW DISCOURSE :
AN APPLICATION TO THE BOOK OF RUTH
WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO
THE CONCEPT OF hesed

BY

AMINADAB BUTORANO

JULY 1999

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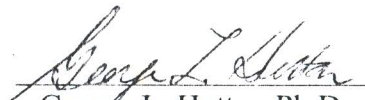
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in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Theology

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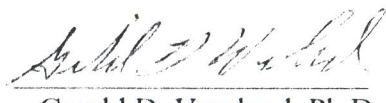
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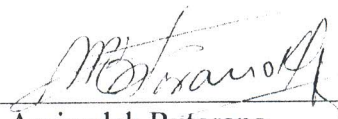
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Student's Declaration

A SYNTACTICAL STUDY OF THE *WAW*-CONSECUTIVE AND
HOW IT AFFECTS BIBLICAL HEBREW DISCOURSE:
AN APPLICATION TO THE BOOK OF RUTH
WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE CONCEPT OF **קֶסֶר**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been
submitted to any other College or University for academic credit

(Signed) 
Aminadab Butorano

Date: April 30, 1999

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was threefold: (i) a question of general interest, i.e., to help understand important issues surrounding the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon and the dichotomy mainline–exposition, in which the *waw*-consecutive is reflected; (ii) to do a discourse analysis of Ruth and to help understand how the structure of Ruth in the light of the dichotomy mainline–exposition gives evidence for the thematic use of וַיִּשְׁׁלַח ; and (iii) to draw a message in terms of וַיִּשְׁׁלַח from the study carried out in the paper and examine how this message is translatable into the life of the African Church today. The approach adopted for the paper was chiefly syntactic, with a relative use of semantic and pragmatic elements to substantiate the study, whenever this was helpful. The method used consisted of an interaction of the writer with written materials, notably books and articles from journals. Alongside the syntax of Ruth, the necessary exegesis was carried out, with special focus on the concept of וַיִּשְׁׁלַח as implied in the context of Ruth. The present work was basically a literary research. The necessary data was thus collected in libraries. The only libraries that I was able to access were those in Nairobi. The study has revealed that writers are not always agreed on the terming and the usage of *waw*-consecutive. Nevertheless, it is clear the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon is important for Biblical Hebrew scholarship, inasmuch as it initiates *wayyiqtol* verbal forms and as such, makes it possible to establish the dichotomy “mainline-exposition.” This dichotomy has helped us to unfold the plot development in Ruth and to better capture a fourfold message in this narrative. The message is as follows: the narrative helps understand (i) how Ruth’s faithfulness could not be quenched by the tragic events she and her mother-in-law had to face in Moab, (ii) how God works וַיִּשְׁׁלַח through human agents, (iii) how the concept of וַיִּשְׁׁלַח in Ruth illustrates selfless compassion for the poor in general and widows in particular, and (iv) how the same וַיִּשְׁׁלַח extended to Ruth the Moabitess by members of the Israelite family is a symbol and a foreshadow of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the family of God. The application of the study is twofold. Firstly, the study shows that a correct understanding of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon is important for an accurate analysis of an OT past-time narrative, especially with respect to the usage of the dichotomy “mainline-exposition” in unfolding the narrative plot and a key theme/concept in the analysed narrative. Secondly, the concept of וַיִּשְׁׁלַח needs to be at home in the African Church today, as it was in the case of Ruth. This is especially true in matters pertaining to faithfulness of people to each other, which in turn will display God’s faithfulness to and through fellowman, together with compassion toward the poor and the powerless, as well as a Christian testimony to those in and out of the Church.

To

My beloved wife Grace

And to our dear children Gloria, Rosine, Emery, and Yannick
who courageously and selflessly endured my often-prolonged absence from them
whenever my academic work demanded it
and dearly encouraged me throughout this taxing study

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work is the result of the efforts of many people. First of all, I am very much indebted to the Snyder-White Foundation, the Young Foundation, the Free Methodist Department of World Missions, the Free Methodist World Fellowship, and the unnamed individuals for their financial support, without which my studies and stay at NEGST would not have been possible. Secondly, my sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. M. Mercer for the sympathetic and continued supervision of this study in a gentle and stimulating way. I am grateful to Dr. G. Huttar for his helpful and thought-provoking remarks. I thank Mrs. M. Sim for giving much of her time to proof-read this paper and make the necessary corrections of the grammar. Her continued encouragement was particularly stimulating to me. I also am obliged to Dr. Gerald D. Vreeland for kindly accepting to be my external reader and for his valuable contribution to the final shape of the work. I thank the NEGST administration for giving me the opportunity to study at this seminary and those of the college faculty who taught me in various ways. I appreciate the NEGST community as a whole, for their prayerful support and encouragement even when I felt this assignment was too heavy for one person to carry. Last but not least, I am very thankful to the Jerusalem University College for giving me a chance to spend a whole semester with them, to gain more insights in Hebrew and the physical settings of the Bible. I am so grateful to God for you all.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

The thesis of this study is that “the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon is reflected in the dichotomy mainline–exposition,¹ and the structure of Ruth as a BH past-time narrative gives evidence for the thematic use of ׁוּׁוּ .” Keeping with the dichotomy under discussion, an accurate analysis of this thesis should contribute to

¹In the present study, I have basically considered the dichotomy “mainline–exposition.” The following data about “mainline vs. exposition,” is mainly from Gary A. Long, “Literature That Communicates. A Resource for Biblical Hebrew Text and the Exegetical Task” (Class Notes. Jerusalem: Jerusalem University College, 1997), 50-66. Following is a summary of the dichotomy “mainline–exposition,” as developed by Long. The past-time narrative within BH displays two types of primary main or non-subordinate verbal clauses: (i) those initiated with a “preterite,” viz. *waw*-consecutive + prefix conjugation, and (ii) clauses not initiated with a preterite (\emptyset -preterite clauses). In a past-time narrative, we understand “mainline” as the one pushing along the plot. This form mainly uses *fientive* forms, i.e. those (transitive or intransitive) verbal forms denoting activity or dynamic situation. However, this is far from being a rule without exception. Mainline includes three kinds of happenings: linear or subsequent happenings, i.e. those expressed in a linear or subsequent way (action a, followed by action b, then action c, . . .), cluster happenings, i.e. preterite clauses that cluster (though rarely) with a view to a single happening, and simultaneous happenings, viz., those taking place nearly at the same time. In contradistinction from “mainline,” “exposition” is generally marked by \emptyset -preterite clauses, but can sometimes be reflected through preterite clauses. It is an “interruption” from pushing along a narrative. It provides information that is necessary for understanding the “mainline” narrative (introducing new topics, background, dramatic pauses, . . .). “Exposition” is generally carried out through *stativity*. “Exposition” comprises two main subdivisions, i.e. (a) exposition that presents action and activity, and (b) exposition that reflects non-action and setting. Each of these forms includes at least two different syntactic arrangements: (i) Non-verb clauses followed by any constituent (V-X), and (ii) verb-initial clauses.

making an accurate exegetical study of the literary plot in a given past-time narrative, with special focus to a key concept in the narrative.

Key questions that underlie this study include the following:

1. What are the important issues that underlie the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon?
2. How is the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon reflected in the dichotomy “mainline–exposition?”
3. How can the knowledge of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon as understood in the light of the questions above help the exegesis of Biblical Hebrew² past-time narrative, for a correct understanding of a BH³ concept such as ׁוַיִּשְׁׁוּׁ ?
4. How does the dichotomy mainline–exposition bear upon the the thematicity of ׁוַיִּשְׁׁוּׁ in Ruth and how does this make it easy for the African Church to understand this concept in their own setting, “here and now?”

To answer briefly these four questions, I may say that the dichotomy mainline–exposition in which the *waw*-consecutive is reflected, is significant in the discourse analysis of a biblical past-time narrative, in order to capture the thematicity of a key concept in the analysed narrative and apply it in a contextualized situation.

²For convenience’s sake, the abbreviation BH will be used in the paper for Biblical Hebrew, since this term occurs more than 100 times in this paper.

³For some differing views, see Barbara Green, “The Plot of the Biblical Story of Ruth,” Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 23 (1982): 55.

B. Significance of the Problem

The *waw*-consecutive phenomenon is a crucial issue in BH scholarship. A careful look at both important issues related to the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon makes it clear that there exist differing and even conflicting views concerning the terms used to designate the *waw*-consecutive and related syntactic and literary questions. BH scholars are far from being agreed on the way this literary device affects the syntax of a given syntagm or of a whole cluster of phrases or sentences in a BH discourse. Yet understanding the plot of such a discourse is crucial in making its correct exegesis and therefore in correctly capturing its meaning. The past-time narrative in Ruth does not escape from this twofold observation.

This study is significant insofar as it is an attempt to do a simple presentation of important issues related to the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon, and how it is reflected in the dichotomy mainline-exposition. The study is particularly significant in its application. Beyond the syntactic and linguistic analysis of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon and its role in the literary plot of Ruth, special attention has been laid on the concept of וַיִּשְׁׁוּׁ and how a correct understanding of this concept could be applied to the African Church today. In relation to the importance of this paper for the African Church, the study is significant in that it reminds the African Church that the notion of וַיִּשְׁׁוּׁ should transcend all barriers and be at home in our milieus, in the *hic et nunc*.

C. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is threefold:

1. The first purpose of this paper is of general interest. The study aims to help understand important issues surrounding the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon and the text structure in the light of the dichotomy mainline–exposition, in which the *waw*-consecutive is reflected.
2. The study aims to do a discourse analysis of Ruth and to help understand how the structure of Ruth in the light of the dichotomy mainline–exposition gives evidence for the thematicity of וְהָיָה in Ruth.
3. As a result of the thematic study of the plot that underlies the discourse of Ruth, it is hoped that the paper has helped to understand the message of Ruth in terms of וְהָיָה , “there and then,” and how this concept is translatable into the life of the African Church, “here and now.”

D. Assumptions, Definitions, Limitations and Delimitations

1. Assumptions

As I undertook the present study, my assumptions were:

- a) That not enough BH syntactical studies have been done or applied to exegetical studies of the OT in African theological circles.
- b) That a good number of works have been done on the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon and on the Book of Ruth as well, but not many of those have been seriously applied to the discourse analysis of Ruth, namely, with respect to the dichotomy “mainline–exposition.”

- c) That the concept of **תּוֹרָה** in Ruth as a past-time narrative is present enough throughout the Book to justify that a serious study be done on its thematicity.

2. Definitions

Certain terms used in this paper needed to be clarified. These are:

a) Syntax

Syntax can be defined as “the study of the structure of phrases, clauses, and sentences.”⁴ Baldi contends that syntax “includes, among other things, the order and internal structure of constituents, the dependencies between order, and the marking of such phenomena as gender, number, case, subordination, and pronominal relations.”⁵

b) Semantics

Semantics is about meaning. It is the relation of signs to what they mean. In this paper, “semantics” is used in the sense of what a text or its constituents (sentence/phrase, utterance, word or parts of words) mean in a given discourse. Some of the semantic aspects that have been used for the study are those concerning word meaning, reference (referring expressions, predicates, participant roles), and logical connectors. Sometimes, semantics and pragmatics overlap, but this is not the focus of the present paper.

⁴P. Baldi, “Syntax, Proto Indo-European,” in The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, ed. R. E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), 8:4487.

⁵Ibid.

c) Pragmatics

Pragmatics is about language usage, i.e., the relation of “signs” used in a language or in a discourse to their users or interpreters. In this work, “pragmatics” is to be understood as the way in which a given discourse and its constituents are to be interpreted, either from a linguistic analysis of the text itself or from the analysis of what is (linguistically or otherwise) implied by the text, from the speaker and/or hearer’s point of view, in a given context. Pragmatic aspects that have been used in this paper mainly include the following elements: relevance theory (communication and the context; weak and strong implicatures; the co-operative principle and conversational maxims; explicature; assumptions; discourse connectors); speech acts (especially perlocutions/illocutions and felicity conditions).

d) Discourse/Discourse Analysis

Some scholars make a distinction between “story” and “discourse.”⁶ Long maintains that “the discourse of your life, the actual events that get written down a page, may begin with what you are doing this very moment, then it may flashback to your teenage years, skip forward to your 20’s, and on like that.”⁷ Long adds that if one were writing a fictional novel, “the discourse of that novel would be the actual manuscript or book a reader picks up to read.”⁸ McHoul, contends that

⁶Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 51-2. See also Seymour Chatman, Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

⁷Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 51-2.

⁸Ibid., 52.

“‘discourse,’ used as a mass noun, means roughly the same as ‘language *use*,’ or ‘language *in-use*.’”⁹ He adds that “. . . discourse is a way of ordering categories of thought and knowledge, echoing the ‘ordinary’ meaning of ‘discourse as a kind of text or treatise.’”¹⁰

Concerning “discourse analysis,” some scholars consider that this term is ambiguous.¹¹ Short centers his article, “Discourse Analysis and Drama,” on “the examination of the linguistic organization of spoken language above the level of sentence.”¹² Keeping with the ambiguity and the rather broad use of the expression “discourse analysis,” Simpson contends that “even in linguistic circles, discourse analysis is used as an umbrella of disciplines including pragmatics, speech act theory, conversational analysis, and the ‘Birmingham’ approach to spoken discourse.”¹³ Simpson maintains that “all these approaches are united insofar as they share a common interest in analyzing naturally occurring connected languages,” even though he concedes that “the term discourse analysis is both ambiguous and controversial.”¹⁴ As we can see from this brief review on

⁹A. McHoul, “Discourse,” in The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, ed. R. E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson, 2:940. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), 2:940.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Thus M. Short, “Discourse Analysis and Drama,” in The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, ed. R. E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), 2:952.

¹²Short, 949.

¹³Simpson, 952.

¹⁴Ibid.

“discourse analysis,” this term covers a significant range of meaning. It appears that it may refer both to the written and to the spoken languages.

3. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study had to keep with the following limitations and delimitations:

- a) The paper has attempted to be practical and to avoid being just a rephrasing of what is currently known on the *waw*-consecutive.
- b) I have no pretence of giving decisive answer to the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon.
- c) I have used some linguistic features, but with no pretence of venturing into a lengthy discussion of these features.
- d) Among the many possible ways of tackling the study of a given BH text, I have opted for the dichotomy “mainline – exposition.”¹⁵ I have thus left out some of the aspects developed in the area of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon.

E. Plan and Method

The approach in this study is essentially syntactic. A number of linguistic aspects are highlighted, but the study is basically in the area of BH, with the exegetical excursus and the application of the study to the African Church being clearly and more specifically in the domain of Bible and theology. The study therefore falls within the department of Biblical and Theology Studies. I have interacted with books and articles dealing with *waw*-consecutive and the

¹⁵Ibid., 57-66.

dichotomy mainline-exposition (chapters two and three), then applied the insights from this interaction to the Book of Ruth, with the concept of רִחֻם being the main focus (chapter four).

Whenever they fit, I have employed concept study, exegesis, and discourse analysis of the necessary concepts and/or passages, especially in connection with the concept of רִחֻם . This concept has been picked up because of its supposed thematicity in the Book of Ruth. In order to avoid the unnecessary overload of the paper, the application part has basically relied on passages from Ruth. Inasmuch as this could contribute to a better presentation of the paper, however, I have endeavoured to place the study in its historical, cultural, canonical and theological contexts, by giving attention to some aspects of a wider biblical theology directly linked with the study.

F. Collection and Management of Data

Since this is literary research project, I have basically done library research. Due to the difficulty of accessing libraries outside of Kenya, the research has been essentially limited to materials available in Nairobi. The following libraries have been useful for data collection:

- Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST)
- Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST)
- Daystar University (DU)
- Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA).

CHAPTER 2

IMPORTANT ISSUES RELATED TO THE STUDY OF *WAW*-CONSECUTIVE AND SIMPLE *WAW*

A. Background and Definition of *Waw*-Consecutive

Much has been written on *waw*-consecutive. Works on this important BH construction include a thorough analysis of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon by Waltke and O'Connor,¹ its role in the Hebrew verbal system by McFall,² and useful information on its historical background by Smith.³ The aim of this chapter is to review some of the aspects related to the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon over the years, and to look into some of the possibilities in which this important syntactic device can be understood in a more concise fashion.

The study of the *waw*-consecutive could be described in terms of four phases of scholarship. The oldest theory is embodied in the terminology of “converted” tenses.⁴ It is generally recognised that BH has no such simple tense forms

¹Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), paragraphs 29.2b-6g; 32.1-1.3e; 33.1-4b.

²Leslie McFall, The Enigma of the Hebrew Verbal System (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1982).

³Mark S. Smith, The Origins and Development of the *Waw*-consecutive: Semitic Evidence from Ugarit to Qumran (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 1-15.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1. See also McFall, 1-10.

as present and past.⁵ However, medieval Jewish grammarians and Christian scholars of BH were influenced by Mishnaic Hebrew and most European languages on this aspect. For at least eight centuries, from ca. 1000 on, they thought that BH had three simple tense forms: *qtl* past, *qôṭēl* present, and *yiqtol* future.⁶ They thought this literary device (ל) had the strange effect of “converting” a verb and its subsequent signification into its opposite. They therefore called this connecting device “*waw*-conversive.”⁷ Commenting on the allegedly “converting” power of *waw*-consecutive, McFall cites Menahem’s view to say that “Under the entry ‘*Waw*’ Menahem clearly thought that *waw* possessed a converting influence on the verb to which it was prefixed.”⁸ He adds that “To every word [i.e. verb, here] which refers to something past, an event [lit. “a thing”] that is past

⁵We need to note with Waltke and O’Connor, however, that this does not mean either that BH verbs do not convey information about time or that Hebrews lack any notion of time; they have other ways to express this (p. 458, n. 16).

⁶Waltke and O’Connor, 458. Waltke and O’Connor point out that such a system based on the structure of three simple tense forms is basically that of Mishnaic (and later) Hebrew.

⁷McFall, 4. Smith maintains that “Jewish scholars including Saadia Gaon (882-942) and Menahem ben Saruk (ca. 910-70) saw the prefixed *waw* as converting suffixal verbal forms into a future time frame and prefixed forms into a past-time reference” (Smith, 1). Another scholar who dealt with the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon is Japheth ha-Levi (McFall, 2). McFall contends that he was a tenth-century Qaraite grammarian of Jerusalem and a contemporary of Saadia Gaon, with whom he entered into a lengthy debate about the consecutive forms (p. 2-3). As McFall says (p. 3), Japheth called the *waw* with the suffix conjugation *waw* עֲתִידִי, “*waw* of future.” This idea was eventually echoed by David Kimḥi (ca. 1160–ca. 1235) in his *Mikhlol*, “The Gesenius grammar of his age,” which is believed by some to be “the most comprehensive exposition of Hebrew grammar ever written” and was never surpassed until some 600 years later (McFall, 7). Like his predecessors, Kimḥi thought in terms of tenses; he talked of the *waw* that “substitutes” the past for the future (Waltke and O’Connor, 459).

⁸McFall, 4.

and completed, if one prefixes to such a word the letter *waw*, the meaning of this word is changed into another.”⁹

Over the years, the “conversive” power of ׀ has been the object of much debate. The nature of the present paper does not allow us to venture into a deeper discussion on the alleged “converting” power of *waw*-consecutive. Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand that what is known as “*waw*-consecutive” or by whatever name the device is given, does neither “convert” the time reference of a verb into its opposite nor “change” the verb’s sense into another. It is better to see (׀) as a stratagem that allows BH to express an event in a given time reference in a biblical narrative, as it were.¹⁰

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰According to Gibson, *waw*-consecutive is one of the syntactical devices developed by Hebrew “for distinguishing among the different linking functions carried out by its ubiquitous conjunction Vav” (J. C. L. Gibson, Davidson’s Introductory Hebrew Grammar: Syntax [Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1994], 83). Gibson goes on to emphasise that the chief function of *waw*-consecutive is “to mark the continuance of a piece of narrative or discourse over at least one but more often several stages” (Gibson, 83). The characteristic usage of this syntactical device generally follows a form from the opposite conjugation. For some BH scholars, *waw*-consecutive behaves as if it had some “conversive” power, “as if the constructions involved of necessity not only a change of conjugation but a transfer to the converted form of the initial value” (Gibson, 83). It therefore follows from this discussion that *waw*-consecutive can be seen as a stratagem that allows BH to express aspectual meanings denoting “a state (or an action so viewed) (*waqtl*) or “a simple (i.e. non-frequentative and non-modal) action which arises out of something that has gone before . . . ” (Gibson, 84). The necessity for BH to use a stratagem in expressing “aspectual” matters is even made more inescapable by another fact. It has been pointed out earlier on that BH had a structure of three simple tense forms. The inability of such a structure to accommodate the facts of BH made it necessary to use a stratagem to express the “past” reference of *wayyiqtol* and the “future” reference of *wəqtl*. To some extent, such a stratagem was found in the use of *waw*-consecutive.

Particularly important for our study is a correct understanding of the role the *waw*-consecutive device plays in “marked” perfects and imperfects.¹¹ We can probably presume that it does not make sense that a conjugation could “convert” an expression of completed action into one of incomplete action and vice-versa.¹² Smith strongly defended the same position when he maintained that “it is a merely superficial description to call the *waw*-consecutive by the old-fashioned name *waw*-conversive, on the ground that it always converts the meaning of the respective tenses into opposite, i.e. according to the old view, the future into the preterite, and vice-versa.”¹³ Weingreen maintains that “eventually, it was observed that this seemingly “conversive” function of the *waw* device was confined to consecutive narratives.”¹⁴ Hebrew grammarians therefore termed it “*waw*-consecutive.” The idea of “succession” that underlies *waw*-consecutive has been greatly emphasised. Among the advocates of that idea is Nakarai. This writer stresses that “the consonant *waw* (that is *waw*-consecutive) is a

¹¹A “markedness” approach distinguishes between “preterite” as the “unmarked syntagm” and “Ø-preterite,” as the “marked syntagm” (Gary A. Long, “Approaches to Biblical Hebrew Past-Time Narrative” [Class Notes, Jerusalem: Jerusalem University College, 1997], 1-2).

¹²Many grammarians have argued against the alleged “conversive” power of *waw*-consecutive (so Gibson, 84; Waltke and O’Connor, 460-1; and McFall, 16, among others). Unless proved otherwise, simple logic makes it difficult to believe that a syntactical device such as *waw*-consecutive could “convert” a grammatical tense into its opposite, by its simple prefixation to a verbal form. It is thus better to see *waw*-consecutive as a stratagem used to mark some BH special constructions, notably with the idea of consecution, rather than a “conversive” device *per se*.

¹³Smith, 1, citing [Wilhelm Gesenius-] Emil Kautzsch, Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 133, n. 1.

¹⁴Weingreen, 90-1. It is noteworthy, however, that the use of *waw*-consecutive is attested in writings which are not necessarily (consecutive) narratives, including extra-biblical writings, Hebrew prose, prophetic writings, and Qumran literature (Smith, viii-xiii, 35-70).

particular kind of conjunctive *waw*. It is always attached to a verb which describes the action or state conditioned, or supposed to have been conditioned, by the initial verb of narration.”¹⁵ Nakarai goes on to say that “when the initial verb of narration is, or is supposed to have been, in the perfect, it is usually continued, unless interrupted by an intervening word or words, by means of a consonant *waw* and a verb in the imperfect or in the perfect.”¹⁶ The problem with this understanding of *waw*-consecutive is that the author does not seem to make a clear distinction between *waw*-consecutive and simple *waw*. Moreover, it is not clear in Nakarai’s approach how the described action or state is conditioned by the initial verb of narration.

The second phase in the study of the *waw*-consecutive ensued in the nineteenth century. Scholars reacted against the application of Indo-European categories of tense to the Hebrew verbal system.¹⁷ They sought other explanatory factors evolving around “aspect.”¹⁸ According to Smith, Ewald and S. R. Driver¹⁹

¹⁵Toyozo Nakarai, Biblical Hebrew (Philadelphia: Bookman Associates, 1951), 26.

¹⁶Weingreen observes that “because the term ‘*Waw*-consecutive’ is so familiar it seems advisable to retain it, but . . . this is done purely for convenience’ sake” (Jacob Weingreen, A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew. 2nd ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1059], 91). For further details, see Bailey and Strange, 66.

¹⁷Smith, 2-3; Waltke and O’Connor, 461-6.

¹⁸Waltke and O’Connor, 461-6.

¹⁹Smith, 2, referring to S. R. Driver, A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1892) and H. Ewald, Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen des Alten Bundes, 8th ed. (Göttingen: Dieterischen Buchhandlung, 1870).

emphasised the “aspectual” character of the BH verbal forms: *qātal* reflected completed action and *yiqtol* incomplete or durative action.²⁰ These forms could appear without respect to time-reference.²¹ Eventually, Hebrew tenses were referred to as “first” and “second” *aurists*, in place of “past” and “future,” respectively. The same terms were eventually referred to by later writers as “perfect” and “imperfect,” as signifying “complete” and “incomplete” action/state, respectively.²²

The problem with this phase, as Smith points out, is that, like the first, “it lacked historical comparative basis among Semitic linguistics.”²³ After Ewald had “freed” the Hebrew verb from “tense,” the *waw*-consecutive theory also came into

²⁰Smith, 2. This idea is echoed by C. L. Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 225. Seow contends that “a situation viewed by an outsider as a complete whole is generally expressed by verbs in the affirmative inflection (*qātal*) . . .,” while a situation that is viewed as incomplete ‘from the inside’ . . . is expressed by the preformative inflection (*yiqtol*). It follows that situations that are viewed as complete tend to be described by perfective verbal forms. Nevertheless, this is not always the case (see Seow, 255 for some exceptions). Seow contends that “for simplicity’s sake, we refer to the affirmative in general as *qātal* and the preformative inflections as *yiqtol*, but one must remember that there are variations for different verbs types and verbal patterns” (Seow, 225). For more details on perfect and imperfect, see Seow 207.

²¹For a full treatment of this aspectual question, see McFall, 43-57, 60-67.

²²McFall, 44. Samuel Lee (1783–1852) was Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Cambridge (1831-48). Lee’s contribution to the study of the Hebrew verbal system includes studies on the origin of the (Hebrew) verb forms (the *qtl* and *yqtl* forms), and the relative uses of the tenses. For a detailed account of Lee’s theory and subsequent assessment, see McFall 28-37. Lee’s contribution to the study of the Hebrew verbal system was “to provide a consistent meaning for the two forms [i.e., the *qtl* and the *yqtl* forms] that did not break down” (McFall, 34). McFall contends that Lee’s theory was revolutionary in that it severed any connection with the Western way of thinking (p. 34).

²³Ronald Sim, “Discourse Connectors” (Class Notes, Nairobi: Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology, 1997), 2.

question. In its place, Ewald advanced the notion of *waw*-relative as understood by some other BH scholars.²⁴

The third phase developed an historical-comparative approach in accordance with the approach of the previous stages.²⁵ This stage started by the opening of the twentieth century, when the major features of Akkadian grammar were understood and “could be brought to bear on the problems of Hebrew verbal conjugation.”²⁶ Drawing from the Akkadian and the Arabic *qatil*, G. R. Driver²⁷ viewed the original function of the BH perfect as “atemporal”; hence it could denote status or conditions with past, present or future time reference.²⁸ Similarly, the original function of the prefix form, illustrated by a comparison with Arabic *yaqtulu*, was “aspectual” and expressed durative or imperfective action.²⁹ Hans Bauer took a new comparative method; he found Driver’s interpretation artificial and reverted to the concept of time-reference.³⁰ Bauer hypothesised that Semitic

²⁴For a detailed discussion on *waw*-relative, see Waltke and O’Connor, paragraphs 29.3g, 5g; 31.1.1; 32.1.1; 33.1.2; 34.5.3b; 35.5.2c; 39.2.1d; and 40.2.1c. Some interesting remarks underscored by Waltke and O’Connor include the observation that Ewald, like other modern Hebrew scholars, “rightly” proposed that “*wqtl* functions as the antithesis of *wayyqtl*,” and that the latter form “is based wherever possible on the jussive form,” though Ewald overgeneralized on this, there being instances where *wayyqtl* is “built on the so-called longer imperfect forms” (Waltke and O’Connor, 463-4).

²⁵Smith, 2.

²⁶Waltke and O’Connor, 466.

²⁷G. R. Driver, A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1936), quoted by Smith, 2.

²⁸Smith, 2.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Waltke and O’Connor, 466.

languages originally had only the prefix conjugation, which was originally timeless; he therefore named it “aorist.”³¹ The suffix conjugation originated from a nominal clause construction involving the participle. Bauer therefore called it “nominal,” which could be assigned the meaning of verb (perfect or present).³² The perfect meaning of suffix conjugation prevailed in the West Semitic languages, with the result that the prefix conjugation became restricted to the present and future time-references.³³ Most importantly, BH “converted” forms were seen as representing aspect: the “converted” perfect signalled complete action in the future, while the “converted” imperfect represented durative action in the past. The problem raised by some BH scholars in relation to this approach was that it emphasised “aspect,” to the point of minimising tense, whereas critics such as Bauer, Blake and Rainey stressed the temporal character of West Semitic verbal forms.³⁴ Moreover, Smith contends that “in sum, a comparative approach which

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Smith, 3. He is citing Hans Bauer, “Die Tempora im Semitischen,” Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft 8 (1912): 1-53; F. R. Blake, A Reservey of the Hebrew Tenses (Rome: Pontificat Biblical Institute, 1951), 1; and A. F. Rainey, “The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarna Canaanite,” Hebrew Studies 27 (1986): 4-19. Waltke and O’Connor point out that the perfect meaning of the suffix conjugation prevailed in the West Semitic languages, which made the prefix conjugation to be restricted to the present and future periods (p. 466). By contrast, the Akkadian suffix conjugation underwent a metamorphosis and emerged as a prefix form, which was used for the present tense, which caused the old prefix form to be restricted to the past (Waltke and O’Connor, 466-7). According to Waltke and O’Connor, Bauer considered the fact that the preterite meaning for *yqtl* is also found in Hebrew and alleged that “Hebrew in its *wayyiqtol* form must preserve the Akkadian preterite conjugation” (Waltke and O’Connor, 466-7). Thus Bauer used the expression “*waw*-conservative.” There is need to address the question of West Semitic constructions more adequately, for better synchronic studies

examines verbal forms in prose texts more proximate in time and space to BH prose is required to address more adequately the question of *waw*-consecutive.”³⁵

At this point, it is interesting that the emphasis moves more and more from “tense” to “aspect.” Particularly important is the notion of “duration” of action/event or state, in relation to the use of “converted” imperfect and perfect.

The fourth and last phase to be reviewed here occurred since the discovery of the Amarna texts.³⁶ Diethelm Michel rejected “the older aspectual theories as well as historical comparative theories . . . and reconsidered a polar opposition between *qtl* and *yqtl* forms as necessary.”³⁷ During this phase, it was pointed out that “while the BH converted imperfect represents a restricted usage of *yaqtl* preterite, the BH converted perfect may be traced to the future uses of *qatal* in apodoses of BH conditional sentences as in Amarna and Ugarit.”³⁸

The fourth phase of the historical background of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon underlines six important observations: Firstly, “neither the Amarna letters nor the Ugaritic texts attest a clear instance of a ‘converted’ verbal form in independent clauses.”³⁹ Secondly, the *qatal* in BH conditional sentences as in Ugaritic and Byblian Akkadian, represents the most proximate antecedent for the

drawing from the West Semitic languages. A thorough study of this linguistic aspect would be interesting.

³⁵Smith, 3.

³⁶Ibid., 5.

³⁷Waltke and O’Connor, 470.

³⁸Smith, 13, citing Diethelm Michel, Tempora und Satzstellung in den Psalmen (Born: Bouvier, 1960), 11.

³⁹Ibid.

development of Biblical “converted perfect.”⁴⁰ Thirdly, “the *waw*-consecutive perfect in narrative apparently developed from the specified conditional sentence where *waw* suffixed forms and *waw* + nominal element (e.g., pronoun or noun) + prefixed forms expressed a future time-frame.”⁴¹ Fourthly, as Smith emphasises, “The central matrix of such an aspectual system is one *binary* feature which controls the *flow* of the story: The opposition between *unmarked* or *sequential* narration as against *counter-sequential* narration.”⁴² This observation emphasises the idea of “succession” in consecutive constructions. Fifthly, interestingly, Smith notes that in some cases *waw* is omitted before *qatal* expressing future tense, which would indicate that “it is the syntax and not *waw* which ‘converts.’”⁴³ He goes on to say that “hence ‘converts’ is an inappropriate term for verbal forms preceded by *waw*.”⁴⁴ Sixthly, Smith concludes his analysis of the fourth phase in the development of the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon by observing that “the extension of the converted perfect from dependent to independent clauses was apparently an inner Hebrew development, as the evidence from the first millennium suggests.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 14.

⁴²Ibid., 13-14. The dichotomy “unmarked-marked” roughly corresponds to that understood in terms of “mainline-exposition” which corresponds to the approach adopted in this paper.

⁴³Ibid., 14.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., 14-15. For a detailed account of the development of *waw-consecutive* during the first millennium and the use of this literary device in Hebrew prose, see Smith, 17-21.

The observations made on the fourth phase are crucial for a correct understanding of the use of “preterite” (*waw*-consecutive + prefix conjugation, i.e., *wayyiqtol*) and “non-preterite” verbal forms. We will come back to these usages in the third chapter of the paper.

After the discussion on the four phases which the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon has undergone, we will now try to reconstruct a functional definition of this syntactical device as understood in BH scholarship. We will then attempt to give our own definition of the phenomenon under discussion. To these two aspects of the paper we now turn.

To get a rough idea of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon, let us consider an introductory illustration proposed by Weingreen.⁴⁶ This writer takes two distinct sentences: שָׁמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־דְּבַר־יְהוָה, “the king kept the word of the Lord,” and שָׁפַט אֶת־הָעָם בְּצֶדֶק, “he judged the people in truth,” both of which are in the perfect and with past-time reference. Weingreen then puts the two sentences together, joining them with a *waw*-consecutive, in one continuous narration: בְּצֶדֶק שָׁמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־דְּבַר־יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת־הָעָם, “the king kept the word of the Lord and he judged the people in truth.” The result is that in this connection, only the first verb, שָׁמַר, “he kept,” is in the perfect, while the following verb to which the *waw* is prefixed, viz. וַיִּשְׁפֹּט, “and he judged,” is in the imperfect. Conversely, in a

⁴⁶J. Weingreen, A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 90-91.

continuous narration referring to the future, usually only the first verb is in the imperfect, while the following verb is in the perfect with a prefixed *waw*.⁴⁷

Bailey and Strange echo Weingreen's understanding of *waw*-consecutive. According to the two co-authors, *waw*-consecutive may be used in consecutive narratives, whereby the perfect is followed by one or more imperfections with *waw*-consecutive, and the imperfect by one or more perfects with *waw*-consecutive.⁴⁸

From these two accounts of the development of the study of *waw*-consecutive, it is helpful to note the following observations. First, the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon is generally associated with consecutive narratives.⁴⁹ Second, the *waw*-consecutive is prefixed to perfective and imperfective conjugations. Third, it is noteworthy that *waw*-consecutive with the perfect is

⁴⁷For a detailed example, see Weingreen, 91.

⁴⁸D. Waylon Bailey and John Strange, Biblical Hebrew Grammar (New Orleans: Insight Press, 1985): 66.

⁴⁹Many grammarians relate the appellation *waw*-consecutive to the fact that "consecutive" forms must "always" be preceded by a verb without an "inverting" *waw*, with *waw* basically adding the idea of succession. Usually a narrative starts with a *qatal* verbal form (historic perfect) and continues with one or a chain (usually unbroken unless for some particular reason) of *wayyiqtol*s. Nevertheless, as Muraoka stresses, the *wayyiqtol* form has become so much associated with its past tense function that it is even found at the beginning or the relative beginning of some narratives (T. Muraoka, A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew [Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1991]: 3:390). It is noteworthy that some biblical books begin with a *waw*-consecutive, such as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, Esther, and Nehemiah. Moreover, the following books, which are not narratives, begin with a *wayyiqtol*: Leviticus, Numbers, 2 Kings, Ezekiel, and 2 Chronicles. Furthermore, McFall cites cases where "the most emphatic consequence can be found without *wayyiqtol* form following, because the *waw* is separated from the verb by a short insertion, e.g. Gen. 41:30-31" (McFall, 93). All this shows that the idea of succession is not necessarily implied in the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon; in fact, the phenomenon is more complex than it appears at first glance, as we can see throughout this paper.

pointed like the *waw*-conjunction, while *waw*-consecutive with the imperfect is pointed “וֹ,”⁵⁰

After the discussion on some of the different ways in which *waw*-consecutive can be understood, we will now attempt to give our own definition of this syntactic construction. *Waw*-consecutive can be defined as a literary device which, when prefixed to a verb in a given tense, generally serves as a stratagem allowing us to understand the meaning of that verb in the sense required by the aspectual context, the syntax and the linguistic environment of the syntagm within which the *waw*-consecutive is found. This definition has the advantage of avoiding coinages such as “converting,” “conversive,” and the like. Understood in this sense, *waw*-consecutive will need to be put in the context of the syntagm in which it appears and the role it plays in that syntagm will equally need to be scanned in the light of the syntax and the linguistics of the discourse where the syntagm under discussion is located.

From the discussion above and the attempt made to reconstruct a functional definition of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon, we can note the following facts: Firstly, that Hebrew scholars are far from being agreed on the terming of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon. It follows that the phenomenon under discussion has been termed by different labels over the years. These include such designations as *waw*-consecutive, *waw*-conversive, and the like. Nevertheless, we have adopted the expression *waw*-consecutive in this paper, though the discussion on the study

⁵⁰For more details on the pointing of *waw*-conjunctive and *waw*-consecutive, see for instance Weingreen, 40-41; Seow, 227-31; Ronald James Williams, *Hebrew Syntax : An Outline* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 36-7; and Gibson, 95.

of this phenomenon is very often concerned with one or the other of the different labels conferred on this literary device. At any rate, however, we need to keep in mind that such a choice can only be made for convenience. Secondly, there does not exist a definite consensus concerning the role *waw*-consecutive plays in creating a kind of context in which a perfective (understood as completed event/action or state of affairs) or an imperfective (understood as incomplete or still going on event/action or state) should be understood. A correct understanding of such synchronic issues is crucial in a syntactic or exegetical study of a given literary genre in which *waw*-consecutive is used. This is notably the case in a BH past-time narrative, where the intervening events/actions or states of affairs involve approaches using notions such as “mainline” and “exposition” or the like.

B. Definition of Simple *Waw*

A correct understanding of simple *waw* as opposed to *waw*-consecutive is helpful in discourse analysis of BH past-time narrative, especially in relation to the dichotomy “mainline-exposition” and related literary syntagms. As has been said earlier on and in contrast to *waw*-consecutive,⁵¹ simple *waw* is termed by such expressions as the “ordinary *waw*,” the “simple conjunction,” or “*waw* of joining”; it is described as “*waw* of co-ordination.”⁵² Some writers describe simple *waw* as a conjunction (“and”) that is prefixed to the word with which it occurs, as an “inseparable particle.”⁵³ Simple *waw* (ו) is the principle co-ordinating conjunction

⁵¹For definition of technical terms, see introductory matters.

⁵²Waltke and O’Connor, 647-54.

⁵³For the usage of *simple waw* as a preposition, see Williams, 72.

of Hebrew.⁵⁴

Simple *waw* has two basic roles to play in Hebrew: it conjoins noun phrases on the phrasal level and it conjoins clauses.⁵⁵ Some of the roles that simple *waw* plays in BH syntax include at least four usages worth mentioning here.⁵⁶ These four usages can be summarised as follows. Firstly, simple *waw* joins logically subordinate clauses to a main clause (clausal *waw*). Secondly, *waw* serves as a conjunctive-sequential device, especially in volitional forms (cohortative, imperative, or jussive). Thirdly, disjunctive *waw* (often translated “but,” “while,” “since,” “because,” etc.) is placed before a non-verbal constituent with a disjunctive role (interclausal *waw*). Fourthly, as an epexegetical *waw*, the device under discussion is placed before clauses and serves to clarify or specify the sense of the preceding clause, notably in prose, or to intensify poetry.

C. Contrast Between *Waw*-consecutive and Simple *Waw*

Most of the points of contrast between *waw*-consecutive and simple *waw* can be underscored from the discussion under points A and B above.⁵⁷ The two literary devices differ in their pointing when prefixed to imperfect verbal forms.

⁵⁴Ibid. See also Waltke and O’Connor, 448.

⁵⁵Waltke and O’Connor, 648-9. In addition to these two basic roles, and as The New Brown, Driver, and Briggs English Lexicon of the Old Testament points out, *simple waw* is “very freely and widely used in Hebrew, but also with much delicacy, to express relations and shades of meaning which Western languages usually indicate by distinct particles” (Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., The New Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

⁵⁶Waltke and O’Connor, 650-2. See also Gibson, 1994, 37.

⁵⁷For more details on these points of contrast, see Waltke and O’Connor, 647-54; Williams, 72.

While *waw*-consecutive serves as a marker of the so-called “converted” imperfect and perfect, simple *waw* merely plays a conjunctive role. The idea of “succession” linked with *waw*-consecutive has some “hierarchical” connotation that is lacking in simple *waw*. Furthermore, the alleged “conversive” role attached to *waw*-consecutive is clearly absent with simple *waw*.

From the few differences underlined above between *waw*-consecutive and simple *waw*, it is clear that the roles that are played by simple *waw* and *waw*-consecutive are basically different.⁵⁸ Thus *waw*-consecutive has a key role to play in the dichotomy “mainline-exposition,” even as it is clearly reflected in this dichotomy. Moreover, it seems that both important issues related to the study of *waw*-consecutive are more controversial than those tied with simple *waw*; but this is only an assumption, since a deeper analysis of this aspect is not relevant to the present study. In any case, however, and in spite of all the differences we have underlined between the two kinds of *waw*, both literary devices are important for discourse analysis of a given BH text, though at different levels.

The first part of purpose number one of the paper was of general interest. This chapter shows how it is difficult to have a consensus on the terming of the *waw*-consecutive. Moreover, the chapter sets a good point of departure for the study of the dichotomy mainline-exposition, through which the *waw*-consecutive is reflected.

D. Summary

This chapter is basic for the present study. It mainly traces issues tied with the history of the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon in BH, throughout its

⁵⁸For more details, see David A. Clines, ed., The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 2:596, 1a.

four phases of development. The discussion carried out in this chapter has revealed that the issues related to the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon are far from being unified, especially in relation to the terms used to refer to this important construction. For the sake of convenience, however, this important construction is generally referred to as *waw*-consecutive.

CHAPTER 3

WAW-CONSECUTIVE AND TEXT STRUCTURE IN THE LIGHT OF THE DICHOTOMY MAINLINE–EXPOSITION

A. General Considerations

We can note two basic approaches to BH past-time narrative:¹ form-oriented and markedness approaches.² The form-oriented approach distinguishes between *preterite/mainline* and *Ø-preterite³/sideline*. Concerning the *markedness*⁴

¹For more details on this classification, see Gary A. Long, “Approaches to Biblical Hebrew Past-Time Narrative” (Class Notes, Jerusalem: Jerusalem University College, 1997), 1-2.

²Long, “Approaches to Biblical Hebrew,” 1-2. He mentions a third approach, viz., the “form-functionalist,” but I did not find any significant difference between this approach and the “form-oriented” one. A detailed study on the so-called “form-functionalist” approach would be helpful. For more details, see Christo H. J. van der Merwe, “Discourse Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Grammar,” in Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics, ed. Robert D. Bergen (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994): 23.

³Ø-preterite stands for non-preterite. In this paper, the symbol Ø- will be used throughout to signal the absence of a certain syntagm.

⁴A well-developed exposition on “markedness” has been done by L. R. Waugh and B. A. Lafford, “Markedness,” in The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, ed. R. E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1994), 5:2378-82. *Markedness* is generally understood in relation to linguistic phenomena consisting of “polar opposed pairs,” such as the antonyms long-short, the grammatical relations masculine-feminine and active-passive. Waugh and Lafford contend that “in such binary oppositions (contrasts) . . . the poles are not usually mere oppositions: typically there is an asymmetry, such as that one pole may be more special or specialized, more focused or constrained, less general and more complex than the other. In such cases, the specialized element is said to be marked, the more general one unmarked: in the examples given above, the unmarked element is given first, the marked element second. This is related to observations

approach, this includes *preterite* as the *unmarked* syntagm and \emptyset -*preterite* as the *marked* syntagm. The *preterite unmarked* syntagm contains five categories, namely, (i) *linear* or subsequent happenings *mainline* (including ingressive ׀׀׀), (ii) *cluster* happenings *mainline*, (iii) *non-subsequent* happenings *mainline*, (iv) *continuance* or *exposition*, and (v) ׀׀׀-initiated *exposition*. The *non-preterite marked* syntagm comprises two categories, namely, (i) *marked mainline* (focus phenomena,⁵ often *qatal* + *fientivity*⁶), and (ii) *exposition*. The latter includes two instances, which are action and activity (X-V forms and *verb-initial* clauses), and *non-action/setting*, comprising X-V⁷ (verbless clauses or stative verbal forms) and *verb-initial* clauses (*stative* verbal forms).

The terminology used in this chapter will be essentially that of both the “form-oriented” and of the “markedness” approaches, with the caveat that “form-oriented” approach is basically identical to “form-functionalist.” Using a terminology derived from these two approaches will provide us with a much broader choice of terms to apply to the study of the dichotomy *mainline* vs. *exposition* and subsequent topics. In this regard, I concur with Long when he contends that

such as the following: nouns are listed in the singular in dictionaries, since the plural is considered to be a special use; unvoiced [s] is more common in English than voices [z]; the active sentence *John hit the ball* is simpler than passive *the ball was hit by John*; *how long is that stick?* Is used only under special circumstances” (Waugh and Lafford, 5:2378).

⁵We consider “focus phenomena” as literary elements that constitute a parallel mainline and whose role is to provide salient information and contextualizing constituents.

⁶A *fientive* verb is that which describes “motion or change of state,” in opposition to a *stative* verb, which describes “a state or quality” (Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 691, 693).

⁷X-V stands for “non-verbal constituent followed by verb.”

“. . . a prudent approach to understanding the discoursing of Biblical Hebrew past-time narrative is a functionalist one, that is, trying to understand the *function* of a particular clause as the interface of syntax, linguistic semantics, and pragmatics.”⁸ Long goes on to stress that “markedness seems to provide a broad and workable platform for understanding past-time narrative phenomena.”⁹ It seems suitable to combine both functionalist and markedness approaches. As has been underscored in the preceding quote, such a combination provides a framework that is broad enough to integrate syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of a given past-time narrative. It is noteworthy that such a combination fundamentally entails also form-oriented aspects of the text, inasmuch as we consider form-functionalist approach as being basically form-oriented.

B. Past-Time Narrative Within Biblical Hebrew Text

To do a good discourse analysis of a past-time narrative, one needs to clearly understand the *plot* of the text and its different *episodes*, *scenes*, etc. Long cites Scholes and Kellogg’s definition of *plot*,¹⁰ and maintains that “plot can be defined as the dynamic, sequential (Aristotelian),” or “moment of exposition, incitement, complication, climax, turning point, falling action, resolution, last delay,

⁸Gary A. Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol” (Class Notes, Jerusalem: Jerusalem University College, 1997), 2.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Gary A. Long, “Literature That Communicates. A Resource for Biblical Hebrew Text and the Exegetical Task” (Class Notes, Jerusalem: Jerusalem University College, 1997), 58, citing R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (New York, 1966).

denouement.”¹¹ As he says, *plot* is described as “rising action, climax, falling action . . .” or “complication, climax, and unravelling.”¹² Long points out that “these moments are not to be regarded as corresponding neatly to delimited sections in a particular text; but a portion may be functioning in developing plot.”¹³ A plot may have many *episodes* and episodes many *scenes*. These may function as particular phases in developing the plot. BH past-time narrative shows two primary or non-subordinate clause types: clauses initiated with a *preterite* (*waw*-consecutive + prefix conjugation) and clauses not initiated with a *preterite*, i.e., \emptyset -*preterite* or *non-wayyiqtol*.¹⁴ In all the discourse types, a difference is made between *preterite* or *mainline* and \emptyset -*preterite* or *sideline/exposition*.¹⁵

1. Mainline

In BH past-time narrative, *preterite* clauses constitute mainline. The *preterite* clause appears to be linguistically *unmarked* or “normative” clausal structure that generally pushes along the scenes or the episode, and more broadly, the plot. *Mainline* takes one through the various phases of the plot. *Wayyiqtol* is

¹¹Long, *ibid.*, “Literature That Communicates”, 58. He is referring to Jean Louis Ska, “Our Fathers Have Told Us: Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives,” *Subsidia Biblica* 13 (1990): 20-22.

¹²Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 1, referring to G. Freytag, *Technique of the Drama* (Chicago, 1906).

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 57-8. He underlines that in Lambdin’s grammar, the dichotomy *preterite* vs. \emptyset -*preterite* is presented in terms of “conjunctive-sequential” and “disjunctive,” respectively.

¹⁵van der Merwe distinguishes between *mainline* or primary line and subsidiary line. Van der Merwe contends that the two constructions that are not associated with the “mainline communication” are “*wayyiqtol* and *wəqatal*” (p. 23).

basically *unmarked* mainline but can also function as *marked* mainline.¹⁶

a) Wayyiqtol as Unmarked Mainline

Wayyiqtol as *unmarked* mainline is generally carried out through *fientive* verb-initial, *preterite* (*waw* consecutive + prefix conjugation), main or *non-subordinate* verbal clauses. *Preterite-fientive* verbs fit most naturally with this notion of pushing along the plot. *Stative preterite* probably belongs under the *mainline* more than under *exposition* in light of the BH dichotomy *preterite* vs. \emptyset -*preterite* clauses, though *stative* verbs belong more naturally as *plot exposition*. When the *wayyiqtol* clause denotes happenings and pushes along the plot, the label *mainline* is adequate. As Long says, it seems to “describe appropriately the *wayyiqtol* clause’s COMMON function of ‘pushing along’ an episode and, more broadly, a plot.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, Long contends that “the label should likely be restricted to the happenings that are conceptually among the story’s ‘present.’”¹⁸

Wayyiqtol mainline, viz., that which is represented by happenings that push along the “story-present,” may denote: (1) *mainline* linear or subsequent happenings

¹⁶For more details on *wayyiqtol* as mainline, see C. John Collins, “The *Wayyiqtol* as ‘Pluperfect’: When and Why?,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 46 (1993): 129-34. *Wayyiqtol* is basically an *unmarked* syntagm and as such it initiates an equally *unmarked* mainline. Nevertheless, this is far from being always the case. *Wayyiqtol* can function as a *marked* syntagm and thus initiate a *marked* mainline, especially due to “semantic and temporal overlay,” as has been underlined by R. Buth, “Methodological Collision Between Source Criticism and Discourse Analysis: The Problem of ‘Unmarked Temporal Overlay’ and the Pluperfect/Non-Sequential *wayyiqtol*,” in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. Robert D. Bergen (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics), 139.

¹⁷Gary A. Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative *Vayyiqtol*,” 4.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

(2) *mainline* cluster happenings, and (3) simultaneous happenings.¹⁹

(1) Linear or subsequent happenings

Plot may be pushed along by happenings expressed in a *linear* or subsequent fashion, i.e., action I, then action II, then action III, etc. In BH past-time reference, mainline is thus basically constituted by a chain of *wayyiqtol* forms.

The sequence may be either *temporal* (example 1) or *logical* (example 2 below).²⁰

(i) וַיִּנְסֵם אֲדוֹנִי בְּזֶק, “and he fled Adoni-Bezeq;” וַיִּרְדְּפוּ אַחֲרָיו, “then they chased after-him;” וַיֹּאחֲזוּ אֹתוֹ, “then they caught him;” ... וַיִּקְצְצוּ, “then they cut off . . .” (Judg. 1:6). (ii) וַיֹּאכַל בֹּעַז, “when he ate Boaz;” וַיִּשְׁתֵּהוּ, “and he drank;” וַיֵּבֵא לְשֹׁכֵב בְּקֶצֶה הָעֵרְמָה, “and spirit of him and he was good;” וַיֵּבֵא לְשֹׁכֵב בְּקֶצֶה הָעֵרְמָה, “then he went to lie down to the grain pile at far end . . .”

Story happening is usually a stuff of *fientivity*, while story existent is the stuff of *stativity*, characters, setting.²¹ In BH past-time narrative, story happenings are conveyed through *fientive* verbs in either *wayyiqtol* or *non-*

¹⁹Long, “Literature that Communicates,” 59; Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 4.

²⁰Collins maintains that *waw*-consecutive with imperfect usually serves to denote “actions, events, or states which are to be regarded as temporal or logical sequel of actions, events, or states mentioned immediately before” (Collins, 123). We know, however, that this is not always the case. As has been mentioned in chapter two, *waw*-consecutive with imperfect can even start a narrative, without anything having being said before, especially in some historical books of the Bible.

²¹Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 1-3; “Literature That Communicates,” 55-7. He provides a useful illustration of “story existent.” Long defines *story existent*, in contradistinction from *story happenings*. He considers the following story: (1) Alan went to the market; (2) He bought fruit; (3) He was hungry; and (4) He went home. In this discourse, elements 1, 2, and 4 are “story happenings,” while 3 is “story existent.” Long goes on to underscore that ‘story existent’ is “one of those things that EXIST in a story: characters, state-of-being” (Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 1).

wayyiqtol clauses. The happenings may either be the stuff of *mainline* or *exposition*. It is noteworthy that verbless clauses and *non-wayyiqtol* clauses with *stative* verbal forms do not represent a *happening* but an *existent*.

(2) Mainline Cluster happenings

Not all *mainline* is linear or subsequent. Two or more *preterite* clauses may cluster with a view to a single happening. In particular, in BH, there exist several verbal roots that, while occurring *syntactically* as *wayyiqtol* mainline clauses and thus initiating a mainline clause, seem, *semantically*, to modify or give a comment on a following *wayyiqtol*.²² Roots so used within past-time narrative include the following:²³

√*וּסַף* Hiphil stem “do something again”: וַיִּסַּף אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אִשָּׁה. “Then Abraham added [did again] and he took a wife” (Gen. 25:1).

√*מָהַר* Piel stem “hasten; do something quickly”: וַיְמַהֵר דָּוִד וַיָּרַץ הַמַּעְרָכָה לִקְרַאת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, “And David hurried and he ran toward the battleline to meet the Philistine” (1 Sam. 17:48).

√*שָׁכַח* Hiphil stem: וַיִּמְהָרוּ וַיֵּשְׁכְּמוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ, “And they hurried and they got up early and they went forth” (Josh. 8:14).

√*שָׁב* Qal stem “do something again”: וַיֵּשֶׁב וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם, “And he did again and he stayed there” (Judg. 19:7).

√*שָׁכַח* Hiphil stem “do something early in the day”:
...וַיֵּשְׁכֶם דָּוִד בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּטָּשׁ. “David got up early in the morning, and he left the flock to a keeper...” (1 Sam. 17:20).

²²On these *initial* and *continuative wayyiqtol* forms and how they function, see van der Merwe, 24-26. He points out cases where the *wayyiqtol* form semantically “specifies” the content of a preceding sentence, such as Exodus 2:10b and subsequent discussion.

²³Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 60; Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 5.

The *wayyiqtol*s with roots in the examples above (viz., $\sqrt{\text{וּסַף}}$, $\sqrt{\text{מָהַר}}$, $\sqrt{\text{שׁוּב}}$, $\sqrt{\text{שָׁכַם}}$) syntactically initiate mainline clauses. Moreover, the actions expressed by each couple of *preterites* in the same examples (e.g., the actions of $\sqrt{\text{וּסַף}}$, “doing again,” and $\sqrt{\text{לָקַח}}$, “taking/marrying;” or $\sqrt{\text{מָהַר}}$, “hurrying up,” and $\sqrt{\text{רָוץ}}$, “running;”) have a view to the same happening. Furthermore, $\sqrt{\text{וַיִּסֶּף}}$ semantically modifies $\sqrt{\text{וַיִּקַּח}}$ by adding some emphasis on the action of “marrying.” Likewise, $\sqrt{\text{וַיִּשָּׁב}}$, “he [did] again,” makes a comment on “ $\sqrt{\text{וַיִּלְן}}$,” “he again spent the night,” i.e., “he spent the night.” A similar analysis can be made with the other roots to show how they modify the following verbal syntagms.

(3) Mainline simultaneous happenings

Two or more *wayyiqtol*s clauses may represent nearly simultaneous happenings.

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־קְלוֹ בִּבְכִי 2a
and-he-gave his voice in-crying
וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם 2b
2b and they heard Egyptians
וַיִּשְׁמַע בַּיִת פַּרְעֹה: 2c
and it heard house-of Pharaoh
(Gen. 45:2)

b) *Wayyiqtol* as Marked Mainline Exposition

This represents the *preterite* or *wayyiqtol*-initiated clauses as *exposition*.

The point of departure is to see the label *mainline* for the “story-present.”²⁴ Then

²⁴“Story-present” is the opposite of “story-past.” Long (“Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 4) contends that “the label ‘*story-present*’ gains meaning when set among the labels *story-past* and *story-future*.” Long (ibid.) goes on to say that “narrative story-past may refer to time that PREDATES the time of the happenings that are ‘at hand’ in the discourse.” “Story-past” is used to

it follows that a *wayyiqtol* clause functions as *exposition* when it denotes events other than “story-present,” in particular “story-past” situations, with regards to past-time narrative.²⁵ When a *preterite* clause functions as *marked* mainline, it must be labelled as *mainline exposition*.²⁶

2. Exposition

Exposition is generally carried out through *marked* syntagms, viz., \emptyset *preterite* clauses. It is used in part for focus and contextualizing constituent phenomena that normally “interrupt” the plot, though it may push along the plot as well. Nevertheless, it can also be reflected through *unmarked* syntagms, viz., *preterite* clauses. When the \emptyset -*wayyiqtol* is used to “interrupt,” the subsequent \emptyset -*wayyiqtol* clause provides indispensable information for understanding the

describe happenings that one expects to have happened. Such happenings can be described with a *wayyiqtol* referring to some sort of narrative *flashback*. Happenings can thus be described as “story-present” when the discourse used to describe them places them in the present time, as events “at hand”; they can be termed as “story-future” happenings when they are presented as occurring posterior to the time at which they are mentioned.

²⁵Examples of “story-future” include those found in Judges 1:28 and much of the following passage, and Judges 11:38b and the following verses. Each of these passages interrupts the sequence between what precedes and what follows.

²⁶As Gibson emphasises, the chief function of *waw*-consecutive is “to mark the continuation of a piece of narration or discourse over at least one but more often several stages” (J. C. L. Gibson, Davidson’s Introductory Hebrew Grammar: Syntax [Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1994], 83). The sequence thus established by *waw*-consecutive is fundamentally chronological, with or without the idea of succession, but can also be logical as well. It follows, therefore, that *wayyiqtol* forms characteristically follow a form from the *opposite* conjugation, as if the construction involved of necessity not only a change of conjugation but a transfer to the converted form of the initial verb’s value” (Gibson, 83). In contradistinction from the *wayyiqtol* usage as characteristically marking a chronological or logical idea, the *qatal* verbal form denotes actions viewed as such and occurring “in contexts that are static and independent (non-contingent)” (Gibson, 61). For more details on this discussion, see Gibson, 83-4. See also Gibson, 60-70 for a detailed account on the *qatal* conjugation.

development of the episode or the plot of *mainline* narrative. It provides setting, details on people, dramatic pause, flashback/background, introduction of new characters and situations, etc. In BH past-time narrative, the *non-preterite* clause continually *interjects* into the plot and may be then given the label “exposition.”

With regard to “flashback” in *exposition*, there exists a big debate whether *wayyiqtol* can have a pluperfect use.²⁷ Buth distinguishes between “unmarked temporal overlay” with the *wayyiqtol* “pluperfect” and “marked temporal overlay” or the usual perfect arrangement with the *qatal* verb form.²⁸ He feels that “the story makes a temporal retreat, it ‘overlays’ a time segment that has already been covered.”²⁹ With regard to “flashback,” Collins quotes Talmon and notes that in chains of events, “where the narrative of the first chain of events must be resumed after the second has been treated, the reader is often returned to the point of narrative at which the treatment of the second chain began, by means of the repetition of a statement made at that point.”³⁰

a) Non-*Wayyiqtol* as Sideline Exposition

The non-*wayyiqtol* is commonly the stuff of *sideline/exposition*. It may reflect

(i) action and (ii) non-action.

²⁷The use of *wayyiqtol* as “pluperfect” is a controversial issue, the discussion of which we have no room for in this paper. For a full treatment of this question, see Collins, 122-140. Waltke and O’Connor give examples that seem clearly to require a pluperfect use of the *wayyiqtol* form (Waltke and O’Connor, 551-2).

²⁸Buth, 139-40.

²⁹Ibid., 139. See also Collins, 127-9.

³⁰Ibid., 125, citing S. Talmon, “The Presentation of Synchronicity and Simultaneity in the Biblical Narrative,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 27 (1978): 9-26.

(1) Non-*Wayyiqtol* as Sideline Exposition: Action and activity

Exposition that reflects action and activity is presented in at least two different syntactic arrangements: X-V clauses and verb-initial ones.

(a) X-V clauses

X-V clauses are commonly X-V with the clause containing a *fientive* verbal form, commonly a verbal noun:³¹

וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־חַמֶּשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן: “and Abram son of five years and seventy years in his departing from Haran” (Gen. 12:4).

The action is reflected in בְּצֵאתוֹ, “when he *left*” . . .

(b) Verb-initial clauses

Clauses can be verb-initial with a *non-preterite* verbal form (with the caveat that וַיְהִי-initiated clauses may reflect exposition), the verb being a *fientive waw-consecutive* + suffix conjugation or *fientive* verbal noun:

(i) (*Waw-consecutive* + suffix conjugation) וַעֲלֶה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מֵעִירוֹ, “and he goes up that man from his city” (1 Sam. 1:3a).

(ii) (*Verbal noun* in the story-past) וַכְּבוֹא נְשֵׂאֵי הָאָרוֹן עַד־הַיַּרְדֵּן, “and as coming bearers of the ark to the Jordan” (Josh. 3:15).

(2) Non-*Wayyiqtol* as Sideline Exposition: Non-Action/Setting

Exposition that reflects non-action and/or setting is present, in part, as verbless, X-V, and verb-initial syntax.

(a) Verbless clauses

וְלָהּ שִׁפְחָה מִצְרִית, “and to her [Sarai] (was) a slave-girl, an Egyptian” (Gen. 16:1).

³¹Ibid., 8. Infinitive and participle are commonly in use; cf. Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 61.

(b) X-V clauses

X-V clauses³² may contain a *stative* verbal noun or suffix conjugation.

(*Stative* participle = Verbal adjective) וְאַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה זְקֵנִים, “and Abraham and Sarah old” (Gen. 18:11).

(*Stative* suffix conjugation) וְעֵינֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּבִרְוּ מִזְקֵן, “and eyes-of Israel they were heavy from old age” (Gen. 48:10).

(c) Verb-initial clauses

Verb-initial clauses may contain a *non-preterite* form (with the caveat that וַיְהִי-initiated clauses may reflect exposition) but may be a *stative* suffix conjugation or *stative* participle:

(*Stative* suffix conjugation) וְשִׂמְחָה וְהָעִיר שׂוֹשָׁן, “and she was glad the city-of Shushan) (Esther 8:15).

וְשִׂמְחָה גְדוֹלָה [כָּל-הָעָם] וְשִׂמְחִים שְׂמֵחָה גְדוֹלָה, “ [and all the people] were joyful with great rejoicing” (1 Kgs. 1:40).

b) Non-*Wayyiqtol* as Marked Mainline

It has been underlined earlier on that \emptyset -*wayyiqtol* is basically exposition and commonly “interrupts” the plot of a narrative. Nevertheless, this syntagm can also function as *marked* mainline. The *non-wayyiqtol* as *marked mainline* is used to bring *markedness* to a “*narrative mainline*,” marking it, in part, for focus—salient information—and contextualizing constituent (topic) phenomena.³³ When *non-wayyiqtol*s push along the plot/episode, the markedness may function as *parallel*

³²For a detailed discussion on X-V clauses, see van der Merwe, 29-34.

³³Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 6-7.

focus, i.e., “a broad label to refer to simultaneous or equal happenings, replacing focus, restricting focus, antithetical or contrasting happenings, etc.”³⁴ Clausal constituents may be specified, in part, as “active/given, resumptive, and new.”³⁵

Inasmuch as *unmarked* mainline is best understood as the *fientive* happenings within a story, the *non-wayyiqtol* *marked mainline* is consequently often *X-qatal*, an *initial* non-verb constituent followed by a *fientive* suffix conjugation verb. An illustrative example is that from 1 Samuel 17:1-2.³⁶

וַיֵּאסְפוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶת־מַחֲנֵיהֶם לְמִלְחָמָה 1a
 they-assembled Philistines their camps for-battle
 וַיֵּאסְפוּ שָׂכָה אֲשֶׁר לַיהוּדָה 1b
 and-they-were-assembled Socoh which to-Judah
 וַיִּחַנּוּ בֵּין־שׁוֹכָה וּבֵין־עֲזֹקָה בְּאֶפְסֵי דַמִּים 1c
 and-they camped between Socoh and-between Azekah in-Efes Dammim
 וַיִּשְׂאוּל וְאִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶאֱסְפוּ 2a
 and-Saul and-man-of-Israel they-assembled
 וַיִּחַנּוּ בְּעֵמֶק הָאֵלָה 2b
 and-they-camped in-valley-of the-Elah
 וַיַּעֲרְכוּ מִלְחָמָה לְקִרְאֵת פְּלִשְׁתִּים 2c
 and-they-arranged in battle to meet the Philistines)
 (1 Sam. 17:1-2).

Clause 2a (*X-qatal* in a discourse of five *fientive wayyiqtol* clauses) is hardly the stuff of *story exposition*, though *non-wayyiqtol*. The parallel focus in 2a is on Saul and the men of Israel, paralleling the Philistines, by way of contrast. So the author fronts the subject and no longer uses *wayyiqtol* form. It follows that the \emptyset -*wayyiqtol* clause in an *X-qatal* format marks focus and contextualizing phenomena.

³⁴Ibid., 3. On the concepts of *focus/topic*, see van der Merwe, 30.

³⁵Ibid., 6.

³⁶Ibid., 29-34.

The parallel actions of Saul and the army are made particularly salient as juxtaposed to the Philistines' ones. Moreover, with the overall story in mind, 2a is *resumptive contextualizing constituent* with regards to Saul as a character.

3. Stative Verb-Initial and וַיְהִי-Initial Preterite Clauses in Past-Time Narrative

a) Stative *wayyiqtol*

We need to formulate at least three working assumptions: (i) difference in morpho-syntax and syntactic forms denotes a difference in meaning; (ii) it follows that, at the linguistic level of text or discourse, a clause initiated with a *wayyiqtol stative* should be assumed not to have the same meaning at the text level as a \emptyset -*wayyiqtol* clause containing a *stative* verb; and (iii) there is need to explain the discourse level distinctions between *stative wayyiqtol* and *stative \emptyset -wayyiqtol* clauses vis-à-vis *fientive* ones.³⁷ In our discourse analysis, we need to notice that verbless clauses and *non-wayyiqtol* clauses with *stative* verbal forms do not represent a *happening* but an *existent*. We now turn to the *stative wayyiqtol*.

The *stative wayyiqtol* represents *punctive, chronological* happenings. We need to note that *stative wayyiqtol*s do not convey markedness. They may be used to denote “ingressive vis-à-vis a *stative non-wayyiqtol* for a state of being without a view of inception.”³⁸

(1) וַתֵּרֶעַב כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, “and-she-was-hungry all-of-land-of Egypt” (Gen. 41:55a).

(2) וַיְהִי חֹזֶק הָרָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, “and-it-was-strong the-famine in-the-land-of Egypt” (Gen. 41: 56d).

³⁷For more details on each of these assumptions, see Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 63-64.

³⁸Long, “Past-Time Narrative and the Stative Vayyiqtol,” 10.

(3) **וְכָל-הָאָרֶץ**³⁹ **בָּאוּ מִצְרַיִם לְשָׂבַר אֶל-יֹסֵף**, “and all-of-the country came to-Egypt to-buy from-Joseph” (Gen. 41:57a).

(4) **כִּי-חֲזָק הָרָעָב בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ**: “because-it-was-strong the-famine in-all-the-land” (Gen. 41:57b).

The “lexical inventory” of the examples 1, 2, and 4 is basically similar but it is different for the third one. The first two examples are *wayyiqtol* forms, while the two last ones are not. One needs to focus on the semantics of these different phrases and argue on basis of the *wayyiqtol* and the *non-wayyiqtol* syntax (ingressive uses, story-present events, focus and contextualizing constituent phenomena, . . .). Genesis 41:55a has the first mention of the famine being felt in Egypt, so it is ingressive and thus it is a *wayyiqtol* form. Genesis 41:56d is subsequent to 41:55a and is also a *wayyiqtol*. None of these syntactic elements is true of Genesis 41:57a and 56:57b. Genesis 41:57a is resumptive. The fourth example (Gen. 41:57b) is causal; it provides the reason for all the people coming to buy from Joseph. A pragmatic analysis of these examples helps us to assign a correct meaning to the text of Genesis 41:55-57, when both the syntax and the semantics have been properly tackled. A similar analysis is needed for any BH past-time narrative, to correctly capture its meaning.

b) **יָהָיָה**-initial preterite clauses in past-time narrative

The preterite **יָהָיָה** is extremely complex in that **יָהָיָה** seems to denote both stative (“to be”) and fientive (“to occur, happen”). A demarcation of this root in its preterite form into mainline or exposition thus becomes fuzzy. Therefore, whether a particular **יָהָיָה**-initiated clause is mainline or exposition must, in part, be derived

³⁹An alternative reading is **הָאָרֶץ צָוָה** (R. Kittel, ed., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 3rd ed. ([Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967/77], 69).

from “considering the co-text . . . and the immediate following allocations.”⁴⁰ Long maintains that ׀׀׀׀-initiated clauses that seem to mark mainline are those where “(1) ׀׀׀׀ appears to be inflected for and governed by a subject constituent lexically represented in the clause or in the immediate textual environment and (2) is followed by a ׀.”⁴¹ This syntax can express either the *ingressive* (coming into being, probably mainline), to denote a *process*, a *change* (“became”) or possession (less certain but likely most often exposition).⁴² Once again, the context will help to know which sense to assign to ׀׀׀׀-initial preterite clauses. To accurately do this, one needs to go to semantics and pragmatics to unfold the complete meaning of the analysed syntagm.⁴³

C. Conclusion

It appears that the difference between *mainline* and *exposition* is crucial in identifying scenes, episodes and plot in a BH past-time narrative. To capture the full meaning of a given discourse, we need to consider the dichotomy *wayyiqtol* vs. *non-wayyiqtol* and subsequent structures with regard to the necessary integration of syntax, semantics and pragmatics in discourse analysis. This observation will need to be made more evident in the next chapter, where the Book of Ruth as a BH past-time narrative will be analysed in the light of the dichotomy mainline-exposition.

⁴⁰Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 64.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²For further details on the use of ׀׀׀׀, see van der Merwe, 26-29.

⁴³For examples and more details on ׀׀׀׀-initial preterite clauses in past-time narrative, see Long, “Literature That Communicates,” 64-6.

In the syntactic and exegetical study of Ruth as a BH past-time narrative, the insights gained from the study of the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon will be applied to the discourse analysis of the book. In particular, the different levels of the text (marked/ unmarked and mainline/sideline-exposition) will help to make a syntactic layout of the book. From this layout, a careful exegesis will be applied to the concept of $\text{וַ$ as already mentioned. At this point, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the narrative will be applied to the text to have it say what it is meant to say. The study carried out in this work thus needs to be understood as a symbiotic integration of the different syntactic and linguistic elements of the text. Such a symbiotic analysis will be drawn from the *waw*-consecutive phenomenon as reflected in the dichotomy mainline-exposition and how this special construction affects BH discourse.

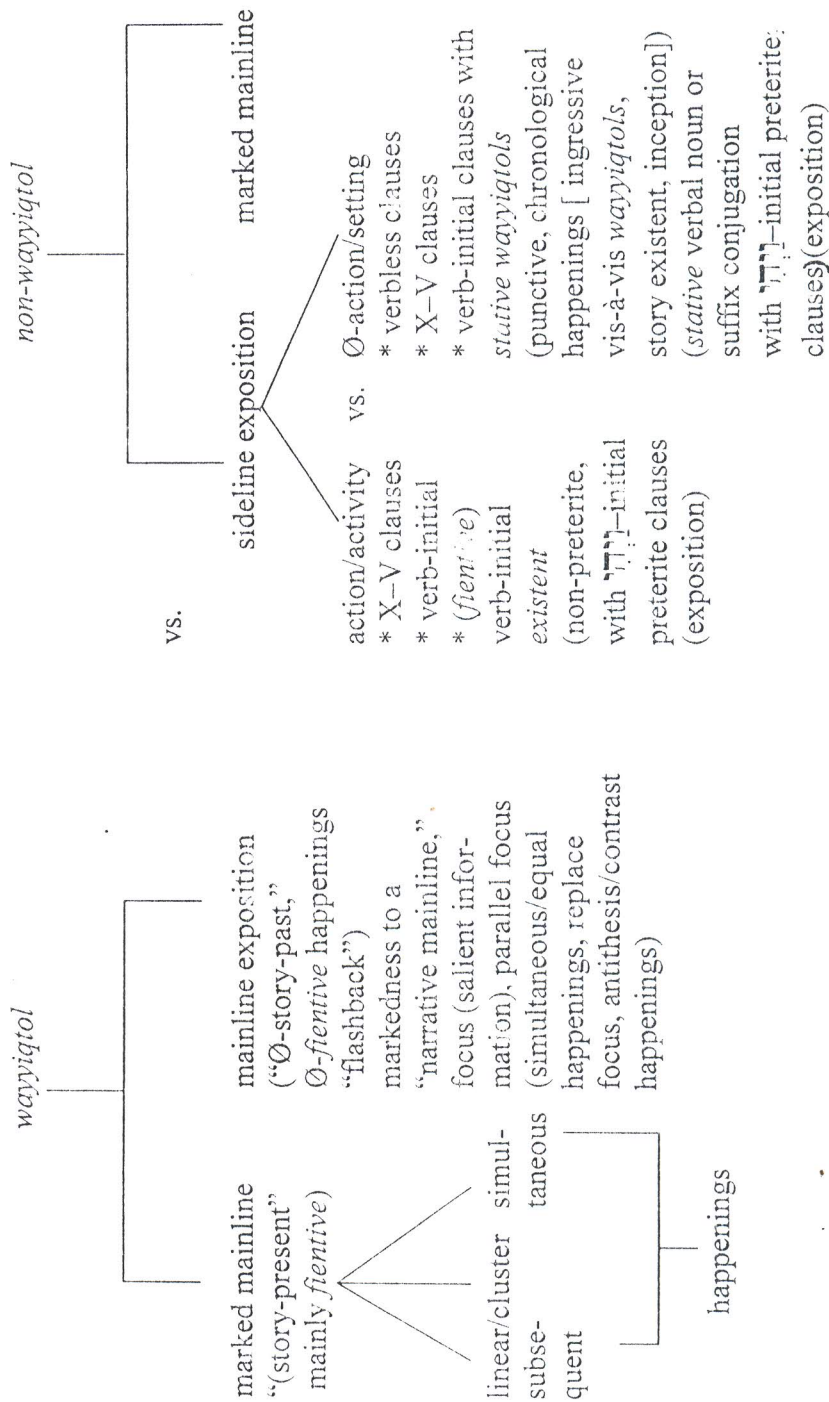
The study of the dichotomy mainline-exposition constituted the second part of purpose number one of this study. I want to suggest that this chapter has shown that the *waw*-consecutive is chiefly reflected in the dichotomy mainline-exposition. This sets an acceptable framework for an accurate discourse analysis of BH narratives. This material has been fundamental for the discourse analysis of the Book of Ruth, the object of chapter 4 of the paper.

D. Summary

This chapter has tackled the issue of the *wayyiqtol* phenomenon and the dichotomy mainline-exposition. The purpose of the chapter was to gather the necessary data on this dichotomy and subsequent syntactic constructions, in the context of BH past-time narrative. This chapter has outlined issues of two types. Firstly, unmarked *mainline* appears to be governed by *wayyiqtol*-initiated clauses,

while *sideline/exposition* is basically governed by *non-wayyiqtol*s. *Unmarked* mainline with *wayyiqtol*s includes *linear/subsequent* happenings, *cluster* happenings, and mainline *simultaneous* happenings. *Marked* *sideline/exposition* with *non-wayyiqtol*s is primarily the stuff of action and activity (X-V and verb-initial clauses) and non-action/setting (verbless clauses, X-V clauses and verb-initial clauses). Secondly, as an exception to what appears to be the general rule, *wayyiqtol*-initiated clauses can initiate *marked* mainline to mark events other than “story-present” and serve as mainline exposition, as opposed to pushing along the plot. Moreover, *non-wayyiqtol*s sometimes can initiate *marked* mainline, for *focus* and contextualizing phenomena. A special treatment has been reserved to *stative wayyiqtol*s and ׀׀׀-initial preterite clauses in past-time narrative. While *story* happenings (mainline or exposition) are the realm of *fientivity* (*wayyiqtol*s or *non-wayyiqtol*s), *story-existent* is the stuff of *stativity*, characters, setting. These observations can be summarised in a chart as on the following page.

The dichotomy machine-exposition: A Summary



CHAPTER 4

AN APPLICATION OF THE *WAW*-CONSECUTIVE STUDY TO THE DISCOURSE OF RUTH WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE CONCEPT OF רִחֻם

A. Brief Review on the Book of Ruth

1. Title and Background

The book is named after one of its main characters, a young woman of Moab, the great-grandmother of David and an ancestress of Jesus (Mt. 1:1, 5-6). This observation is underscored by Bush when he says that “not only is the book anonymous, but it gives not the slightest hint, directly or indirectly, of the identity of the writer as a historical person.”¹ “Theology of Ruth” maintains that extrabiblical sources mention neither the name nor the figure of Ruth, which are exclusively known from the Book of Ruth.²

Concerning the meaning of the name Ruth itself, Axel notes that “the name of this heroine remains mysterious.”³ Another alternative suggested by Kauf is to

¹Fredric W. Bush, *Ruth, Esther*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1996), 17.

²“Theology of Ruth,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 4:1453. For convenience’s sake, the abridged form, “Theology of Ruth” will be used for when referring to this article throughout the text of this paper, since the name of the author has been omitted in the dictionary.

³Ernst Axel, “Ruth la Moabite,” *Vetus Testamentum* 44 (1994): 547 (my translation).

see the name Ruth as a corruption of *r^eût*, “(female) friend” or *rwȳ*, “refreshment.”⁴ “Theology of Ruth” suggests that “though still uncertain, Ruth probably means refreshment, comfort (*rwh*, soak, irrigate, refresh, . . .). If so, the name may symbolise Ruth’s role as supplier or refreshment/comfort for Naomi amid her several tragedies”⁵ Other writers contend that “Ruth” means “the one who satiated (root *rwh*) Naomi with her kindness,” while Boaz means “the ingenious.”⁶

Concerning the historical background of Ruth, Barker maintains that the story occurs in the time of Judges, a time that the Book of Judges describes as “a period of religious and moral degeneracy, national disunity and general foreign oppression.”⁷ Barker stresses that “the Book of Ruth reflects a temporal time of peace between Israel and Moab and gives a series of intimate glimpses into the private life of the members of an Israelite family from Bethlehem, with presentation of a delightful account of the remnant of true faith and piety amidst an otherwise wholly dark picture of the period of the Judges.”⁸

We need to observe that there is no unanimity concerning the alleged link between the Ruth narrative and the period of Judges. For example, Merrill maintains that “the ‘Bethlehem connection’ referred to [in Ruth] is much earlier than

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Kiersten Nielsen, “Le Choix contre le droit dans le livre de Ruth: de l’aire de battage au tribunal,” *Vetus Testamentum* 35 (1985): 212.

⁷Barker, 360.

⁸Ibid.

the days of the Judges . . . as the genealogical section makes it clear . . . which joins Bethlehem (and hence David) to Perez and Judah.”⁹

2. Authorship and Date of Writing

According to Barker,¹⁰ the author of Ruth is unknown. Barker observes that Jewish tradition points to Samuel.¹¹ Nevertheless, scholars claim that this is unlikely, because the reference to David (4:17, 22) implies a later date.¹² It seems to me, however, that the reason given here to argue against Samuel’s authorship is inaccurate. Since David and Samuel were contemporaneous, it is logical that the latter could have traced the genealogy of Ruth 4:17 down to David. Moreover, I do not see any contradiction in the fact that Samuel believed the one he had anointed (1 Sam. 16:1-13) would be a king worth mentioning. Moreover, Ruth 4:17 mentions the name of David, without any relation to his kingship. I am not arguing for Samuel as the author of Ruth, but to contest this possibility one needs to use more convincing arguments. Some of such arguments could be the absence of any mention of or reference to Samuel or any other conclusive evidence from the Book of Ruth itself. A more acceptable argument against Samuel as the author

⁹Eugene H. Merrill, “The Book of Ruth: Narration and Shared Themes,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142 (1985), 133.

¹⁰Kenneth Barker, ed., *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), 363.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

of Ruth is that the literary style of the Hebrew used in Ruth suggests that the book was written during the period of monarchy.¹³ Proposed dates of writing of Ruth run from the Davidic era down to the latter period of the post-exilic period.¹⁴

3. Literary Structure

Barker underlines that the B72k of Ruth is a Hebrew short story, written in the form of a historical narrative told with skillful “compactness, vividness, warmth, beauty and dramatic effectiveness—on an exquisitely wrought jewel of Hebrew narrative art”¹⁵ “Theology of Ruth” further depicts Ruth as “a literary masterpiece,” the “author’s craftsmanship” which “in parts accounts for the book’s popularity and power, conscious use of inclusions and parallelism, . . . bracketing the thematic section about Naomi’s return,”¹⁶ Rossow shares the observation that the Book of Ruth is a literary masterpiece and depicts it as “beautiful, charming, delightful, idyllic, and picturesque.”¹⁷ Barker underlines that further features in Ruth include “symmetrical thought, with action moving from a briefly sketched account of distress (1:1-5; 71 words in Hebrew) through four episodes to a concluding account of relief and hope that is drawn with equal brevity (4:13-17; 71

¹³Ibid. In some cases, however, an argument solely based on style is not totally conclusive to argue against the authorship of an OT book. Moreover, Barker does not say on which literary features he bases his conclusion.

¹⁴Bush, 18.

¹⁵Barker, 363. See also “Theology of Ruth,” 1453.

¹⁶“Theology of Ruth,” 113.

¹⁷Francis c. Rossow, “Literary Artistry in the Book of Ruth and Its Theological Significance,” Concordia Journal 17 (1991): 12-19.

words in Hebrew).”¹⁸ Halfway, the crucial turning point occurs. As Barker says, “the opening line of each of the four episodes equals its own development (1:6, the return; 2:1, the meeting with Boaz; 3:1, finding a home for Ruth; 4:1, the decisive event at the gate), while the closing line of each episode facilitates transition to what follows.”¹⁹

Another literary feature is that related to the use of contrasts in Ruth. In this regard, Barker emphasises the following elements: the pleasant (the meaning of “Naomi”)²⁰ and bitter (1:20), the living and the dead, full and empty (1:21), and more remarkably, two contrasting characters, viz., the young alien and destitute widow, i.e., Ruth, and the middle-aged and wealthy Israelite securely established in his home city, i.e., Boaz, with corresponding contrasts, viz., Orpah and the unnamed kinsman, respectively.²¹

Concerning the overall literary structure, Barker points out that there is “harmony between movements and space, time and circumstance, between the main characters and clusters.”²² In keeping with the literary paradigm followed in the present paper, I suggest that there is a perfect harmony between mainline story and sideline/exposition account of the plot in Ruth.

¹⁸Barker, 364.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰The name Naomi means “good, pleasant, lovely” (Barker, 364).

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

4. Theme and Theology

Bush distinguishes four components of the theme of Ruth. These are the following:

(1) The loving loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience of Ruth the Moabitess, expressed in the commitment to her mother-in-law, Naomi, which transcended the claims of religion and national origin; (2) the kindness, graciousness, and sagacity of Boaz, expressed in his benevolence and his faithfulness to family responsibilities, . . . all of which transcended the claim of self-interest; (3) the loving concern of Naomi for the welfare of her daughter-in-law, expressed in her risky scheme to induce Boaz to marry Ruth; and (4) Yahweh's gracious provision of fruitfulness for field and womb; all have provided a son to restore Naomi's life and provide for her old age, reversing the death and emptiness that had afflicted her. This story of רִוְחָ was of utmost significance, for its outcome, its denouement, was the preservation of the family line that led from Perez through Boaz and Obed to David.²³

The major theological emphases flow from the theme of Ruth. We will underline four emphases. Firstly, Ruth can be depicted as the one who reflects very clearly and practically God's love, as demonstrated through the Moabitess's loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience to Naomi. This makes of Ruth a daughter of Israel and a worthy ancestor of David, and even more so, of Jesus Christ. Secondly, Boaz's רִוְחָ is clearly a picture of redemption, which is a key concept through the Ruth narrative. Thirdly, Naomi's move from her diverse tragedies to higher ground is paralleled with Israel in her own transformation "from national desperation at the death of Eli (1 Sam. 4:18) to peace and prosperity in the early days of Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-34; 5:4) through the selfless devotion of David, a true descendant of Ruth and Boaz."²⁴ Finally, we can conclude with Barker that

²³Bush, 17.

²⁴Barker, 364.

“the message is a reminder to Israel that the reign of David held the prospect of God’s promised peace and rest,” inasmuch as those who benefit from it “reflected selfless love exemplified by Ruth and Boaz”; similarly, “in Jesus, the great-son of David (Mt. 1:1), and his redemptive work, the promised blessings of the kingdom of God find their fulfilment.”²⁵

B. Discourse Analysis of Ruth in the Light of the Dichotomy Mainline-Exposition: A Thematic Study of the Concept of דָּוָר

1. General Considerations

As a point of departure, we need to keep in mind two things. Firstly, the Ruth narrative should be seen as a unity, despite its division into chapters. Secondly, an interlinear text will be provided for each sub-section for the discussion of the material in the four chapters of Ruth, for convenience. It follows that the Hebrew text/syntagms in the discussion will not be translated. The discussion in the present chapter of the paper will consist of a literary examination and exegesis of the discourse of Ruth, in the light of the dichotomy mainline-exposition. The aim of the study is to show how *wayyiqtol*-initiated syntagms push along the plot of Ruth, and how the structure of the analyzed narrative gives evidence for the thematic use of דָּוָר .

To have a consistent and clear focus in the presentation of the material, the discussion will revolve around four major turning points. It will aim to show how the plot is pushed from the inception of every major scene to its climax, with the necessary turning point somewhere in the narrative discourse. Some of the works

²⁵Barker, 364.

written on Ruth have suggested a division of the book into a number of major sections.²⁶ In this study, I will not necessarily follow any of the traditional divisions. I will focus on two aspects: (1) The turning point, which occurs somewhere in every scene, and (2) the climax, at or toward the end of each scene.

2. Overview of the Concept of חֶסֶד in the Light of OT Selected Passages

The exact etymology of חֶסֶד is unknown.²⁷ Zobel points out that this term is “a Hebrew word that has found its way into Middle Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Syriac . . .”²⁸ The word חֶסֶד occurs some 245 times in the OT and is well represented in narrative literature.²⁹

The term חֶסֶד is more generally understood in the sense of (loving)kindness. Zobel contends that “what is meant by *hesed* can almost be paraphrased by the expression ‘do good’ (Judg. 8:35; 2 Sam. 2:6).”³⁰

Characteristically, חֶסֶד like חֶסֶד, is constructed with עֲשֶׂה and עַם (Judg. 8:35)

²⁶For instance, see Michael E. W. Thompson, “New Life Amid the Alien Corn: The Book of Ruth,” The Evangelical Quarterly 65 (1993): 207. Thompson has suggested the following outline, in four major sections: (1) The road to Bethlehem (1:6-18), (2) The field of Boaz (2:1-17), (3) the threshing floor (3:6-15), and (4) the Gate of Bethlehem (4:1-12).

²⁷Zobel, “חֶסֶד *hesed*,” in Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, translated by David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 5:45.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 45.

³⁰Ibid., 47.

or אֱסֵ (2 Sam. 2:6). Baer and Gordon maintain that “the concept of faithfulness, steadfast love, or more generally kindness, represented by *hesed*, has a strongly relational aspect that is essential to any proper definition of the term.”³¹

According to Baer and Gordon, the term חֶסֶד “is commonly used of the attitudes and behaviour of humans toward one another, but frequently (ratio 3:1) describes the disposition and beneficent actions of God toward the faithful, Israel his people, and humanity in general.”³² Sometimes, we find the phrase חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת (Gen. 24:49: 47:29: Josh. 2:14). Zobel maintains that “this expression is generally (and correctly) understood as a hendiadys, in which the second noun וְאֱמֶת . . . emphasizes the permanence, certainty, and lasting validity of the demonstration or promise of *hesed*.”³³

The term חֶסֶד has a secular and a religious usage. Some Bible scholars suggest that it is advisable to begin with the secular usage of the concept of

³¹D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon, “חֶסֶד,” in New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 2:211.

³²Ibid. Baer and Gordon note that “the instances of *hesed* as a divine characteristic greatly outnumber the rest and attempts at a comprehensive definition can therefore easily become unbalanced” (Baer and Gordon, 212).

³³Zobel, 48. Some disagree that this is a hendiadys. For instance, Gerald D. Vreeland, “Evaluation and Notes” (Nairobi: Nairobi International School of Theology, 1999). He says that “חֶסֶד is active אֱמֶת is static. Zobel quote shoots himself in the foot anyway. They are different” (p. 5).

חֶסֶד “in order to determine the semantic component of *hesed* because the term is used most concretely in relationships among humans.”³⁴ Some claim that this will guard against the possibility of misinterpreting the religious use of חֶסֶד.³⁵

A number of observations can be made about the usage of חֶסֶד in relation to human interaction. On the basis of Judges 8:35 and 2 Samuel 2:6, it is clear that one who receives חֶסֶד responds with a similar act of חֶסֶד, or at least that one who demonstrates חֶסֶד is justified in expecting an equivalent act in return. The element of doing *נְשִׂפֹת* sometimes comes to the fore, in relation to חֶסֶד (Mic. 6:8). In such a case, חֶסֶד then appears in parallel in the statement of God’s requirements of man. Zobel distinguishes three elements constitutive of the חֶסֶד concept: it is active, social, and enduring.³⁶ The חֶסֶד concept is active inasmuch as it is a demonstration of friendship, goodness, grace or kindness, i.e., an intervention on behalf of someone suffering misfortune.³⁷ But חֶסֶד is also social, insofar as “there is always someone else to whom it is shown or from whom it is

³⁴It probably would be more accurate to distinguish the usage of this term in relation to human interaction from God’s חֶסֶד toward humans, contra Zobel’s dichotomy “secular usage” vs. “religious usage” of חֶסֶד (Zobel 46–57).

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 51.

³⁷Ibid. Baer and Gordon point out instances where חֶסֶד occurs within familial setting (Gen. 20:13; 47:29), or between friends (1 Sam. 20:8, cf. 2 Sam. 9:1); . . . (Baer and Gordon, 212). The formulaic “show (lit., do) kindness is frequently used and the importance of loyalty within friendship is normally assumed (Gen. 21:23; 1 Sam. 15:6; 2 Sam. 3:18: . . .).

expected.”³⁸ Zobel points out that “. . . *hesed* is done primarily between wife and husband, father and son [mother and daughter?], host and guest, relatives, friends, and those who have formed a relationship on unexpected acts of kindness . . . viz., *hesed* belongs by nature to the realm of family and clan.”³⁹ Finally, רַחֵם is enduring, especially when combined with אָמַן and, as Zobel emphasises, “because the close family and intimate society of the family requires enduring and reliable kindness as an essential element of its protective function.”⁴⁰

Concerning God’s רַחֵם toward humans, we need to distinguish the usages where Yahweh is the subject and those where He is the object of רַחֵם. Yahweh as subject of רַחֵם emphasises the actual nature of רַחֵם and uses the formula רַחֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ (Gen. 24:12, 14; Ruth 1:8). In this context, the usage of the term רַחֵם covers a great semantic range. Zobel suggests that “besides the individual and the small, well-defined group we find the entire people of Israel as recipients of Yahweh’s kindness.”⁴¹ Yahweh’s רַחֵם as the object of human action makes use of special verbs: those expressing “the recalling of God’s acts of kindness (*zākar*, Ps. 106:7) or trust in them (*bātah*, Ps. 13:6[5]), etc.”⁴² The provision of רַחֵם is appropriate

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Zobel, 51. Elsewhere, divine רַחֵם is depicted as enduring, persistent, and eternal (e.g., Is. 54:8). It contrasts God’s wrath and His רַחֵם (Is. 54:8, Ps. 36:10).

⁴¹Ibid., 55.

⁴²Ibid., 56.

to the superior party in a relationship involving life, deliverance or refuge (Ps. 36:8).⁴³

3. The “former” רָצָה or Ruth’s clinging to Naomi previews an even greater or “latter” רָצָה

- a) A total surrender or the “former” רָצָה: For better or for worse, Ruth selflessly clings to Naomi (1:3-2:22)

(1) Introduction (1:1-5)

S Eas Eaa Mx-q Mwe Mwf⁴⁴

הַשְׂפָּטִים בְּיָמֵי שָׁפֵט וַיְהִי וַיְהִי
the-ones-judging to judge in-days-of and- there-was

⁴³Baer and Gordon, 211, citing Sakenfeld, 1978:233. They contend that the sense of mutual responsibility is so strong in Glueck’s discussion that it seems to be played down here (Baer and Gordon, 237, referring to N. Glueck, Das Wort *hesed* im alttestamentlichen Sprachgebrauch als menschliche und göttliche gemeinschaftsgemässe Verhat tungsweise, 2nd ed. (ET *hesed* in the Bible, 1967). On the difficulty to always have a situation of mutual רָצָה, see Baer and Gordon, 267. Baer and Gordon underscore that “more recent developments within structural linguistics are reflected in Clark’s discussion, which is concerned with the relational dimension of *hesed*, . . . in terms of agent–patient relationship, and an engagement in semantic fields and associated usages much more than was true of previous studies” (Baer and Gordon, 212).

⁴⁴The criteria followed to make this literary layout are those found in chapter three, in keeping with the dichotomy mainline-exposition. These abbreviations will be used in the key to the literary layout and gloss of the Hebrew text of Ruth. They stand for the following expressions: (1) unmarked mainline foreground with *fientive wayyiqtol*, including וַיְהִי-initiated clauses whenever applicable (Mwf); (2) marked mainline exposition expressing events other than “story-present,” including וַיְהִי-initiated clauses (Mwe); (3) marked mainline with *fientive* ∅-*wayyiqtol*, viz. X-qatal forms (Mx-q); (4) marked sideline exposition expressing action/activity with *fientive* ∅-*wayyiqtol* (Eaa); and (5) marked sideline exposition expressing ∅-action/∅-activity with *fientive* ∅-*wayyiqtol* (E∅as) in verbless clauses, X-V forms with *stative* forms, or verb-initial clauses with *waw*-consecutive plus suffix conjugation or *fientive* verbal noun; and (6) speech (S). Furthermore, clauses introduced by וַיְהִי will be treated as marked exposition.

S Eøas Eaa Mx-q Mwe Mwf

וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּאֶרֶץ
in-the-land famine that-there-was
וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ
man and-he-went

מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
Judah Lehem-of from-Beth

לְגוֹרְבְּשָׁדַי מוֹאָב
Moab in-regions-of to-live

הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו
sons-of-him and-two-of and-wife-of-him he

וְנִשְׂמָה הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ
wife-of-him and-name-of Elimelech the-man now-name-of

נְעֻמִי וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי-בָנָיו מַחְלֹן וְכִלְיוֹן
and-Kilion Mahlon sons-of-him two-of and-names-of Naomi

אֶפְרַתִּים מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
Judah Lehem-of from-Beth Ephrathites

וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁדַי-מוֹאָב
regions-of-Moab and-they-went

וַיְהִיו-שָׁם:

and-they-lived there

תֵּלְמֵלֶךְ אִישׁ נְעֻמִי

וַיָּמָוֶה

Naomi husband-of Elimelech and-he-died

וַתֵּשָׂא רַחֵל וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ:

sons-of-her and-two-of she and-she-was-left

וַיִּשְׂאוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִמּוֹאָבִיּוֹת

Moabite women for-them and-they-married

שֵׁם הָאִתָּת עֹרְפָה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁנִיית רֹוּת

Ruth the-other and-the-name-of Orpah the-one name-of

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם כֶּעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים:

years about-ten there and-they-lived

וַיָּמָוֶתוּ גַם-שְׁנֵיהֶם מַחְלֹן וְכִלְיוֹן

Kilion Mahlon both-of-them also and-they-died

וַתֵּשָׂא הָאִשָּׁה מִשְׁנֵי יְלָדֶיהָ וּמֵאִשָּׁה:

and-without-husband-of-her sons-of-her without-two-of the-woman and-she-was-left and

The Book of Ruth opens with a temporal *stative wayyiqtol* (1:1a) but

with no evident connection with the preceding book, viz. the Book of Judges. In this introductory section, the Elimelech family members are experiencers in the tragic events that occur to them. They have no control on the course of what is

happening.⁴⁵

The following discourse . . . וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית (1:1b) starts with a *fientive wayyiqtol*, which introduces Elimelech family's move from Bethlehem to Moab.⁴⁶ The subsequent sideline exposition includes two parts. Firstly, verse 1c (לְגֹרֶל . . . בְּנֵיוֹ) is governed by a *fientive* infinitive (לְגֹרֶל) and thus gives way to exposition/sideline action. This part of the section begins the description of the Elimelech family. Secondly, verse 2a (וַיֵּשְׁבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים . . .) is verbless and is clearly the stuff of sideline exposition non-action/setting. As such, it provides further details on the Elimelech family. I suggest that we take מִבֵּית לְחַמְסִיהוּדָה (1:2a) as a construct exposition form, with regard to the city of Bethlehem's location in the very land of Judah.

Verse 2c starts with another *fientive wayyiqtol*, . . . וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂרֵי-מוֹאָב.

This *fientive wayyiqtol* introduces a parallel mainline, which gives a flashback of the idea of going already expressed by another *fientive wayyiqtol*, וַיֵּלֶךְ (1b). There follows another *fientive wayyiqtol*, וַיְהִי-שָׁם;. The first *waw*-consecutive, (וַיֵּשְׁבוּ) is translated “now,” to give some sort of update to the following scene.

⁴⁵In linguistic terms, the experiencer is “the entity which is aware of the action or state described by the predicate but which is not in control of the action or state” (John I. Saeed, *Semantics* [Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997]), 141.

⁴⁶A good transliteration would be “Moav,” since the ך does not have a dageš. For convenience, however, let us be consistent with the currently known transliterations and use “Moab,” instead. For the same reason, we will use such transliterations as “Moabite(s)” instead of “Moavite(s),” “Ruth” instead of “Rut,” etc.

The present scene of the narrative enters another crucial episode with the death of Elimelech, followed by the observation that Naomi was left only with her sons (parallel “focus” in mainline foreground). A number of assumptions can be inferred from this precarious situation. These include the fact that the Elimelech family had no more paternal authority. Therefore there is no one to guide their faith. The Elimelech sons marry Moabite women. Probably God punishes them by not giving them children and eventually by the death of the two sons, etc. The two last implicatures lack clear contextual support; they are very weak.⁴⁷

The episode occurring after the death of Elimelech opens with a *stative wayyiqtol*, . . . וַיִּשָּׂא (1:4c), initiating a mainline foreground. The author recounts the marriage of Elimelech’s sons to Moabite women. Subsequent explanation is provided in a verbless clause (1:4b). A parallel focus is then initiated with a *stative wayyiqtol*, וַיָּשְׁבוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים (1:4c), . . . מִמּוֹאֲבִיּוֹת to make a point on the duration of the Elimelech family’s stay in Moab, in a quick flashback. As this scene closes, a *fientive* and a *stative wayyiqtol* forms follow in verse 5a, . . . וַיָּמָוֶתוּ גַם־שְׁנֵיהֶם . . . וַתִּשָּׂאֵל הָאִשָּׁה . . . The two syntagms initiate further mainline to introduce the episode about the tragic happenings occurring in the

⁴⁷A clear and simple definition of (conversational) implicature is given by Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics*, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Levinson contends that “conversational implicature is about how it is possible to mean more than what is said (i.e. more from what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions)” (p. 97). The reverse process is the explicature. We have some insights on this process from Diane Blakemore, *Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 1992), 57-63. If I paraphrase Blakemore, I would say that explicature is about getting assumptions that are explicatured, viz., explicitly communicated.

Elimelech family, i.e. the death of Naomi's two sons and her situation as a childless widow. The *waw*-consecutive in 1:5 can be seen as a time deixis indicating a result, namely, that Naomi's situation as a desolate woman occurred after the death of her husband and sons.

Inasmuch as I consider this section as an introduction to the book, we should not expect its structure to give explicit evidence for the thematic use of קִטְר . Nevertheless, the dichotomy mainline-exposition is well attested in the section, as shown by the discourse analysis in these verses. The discourse analysis in the following sections will endeavour to show that every section of Ruth displays a context of קִטְר . The dichotomy under discussion provides us with a paradigm from which a literary layout of Ruth can be built. This layout helps us to visualise the text being analyzed, to better capture the key concept that is being discussed. To the analysis of the other sections of Ruth we now turn.

(2) Naomi and her daughters-in-law face the return to Bethlehem (1:6-7)

S	E _{as}	Eaa	Mx-q	Mwe	Mwf
					וַתֵּקַם ^{1.6} הִיא וְכַלְתֶּיהָ
					and-daughters-in-law-of-her she and-she-prepared
					וַתָּשָׁב מִשְׁדֵּי מוֹאָב כִּי שָׁמְעָה בְּשָׂדֵרֵהּ מוֹאָב
					Moab in-regions-of she-heard when Moab from-regions-of and-she-returned
					כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ לְתַתּ לָהֶם לֶחֶם:
					food for-them to-provide people-of-him Yahweh he-aided for
					וַתֵּצֵא מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָׁמָּה ^{1.7}
					at-there she-lived where from-the-place and-she-left
					וּשְׁתֵּי כַלְתֶּיהָ עִמָּה
					with-her daughters-in-law-of-her and-two-of

S	Eoas	Eaa	Mx-q	Mwe	Mwf
			בְּדֶרֶךְ	וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה	
			on-the-road	and-they-set-out	
		אֶל-אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה	לָשׁוּב		
		Judah	land-of	to	to-go-back

The discourse on the preparation of the three women's return to Bethlehem is initiated by a *fientive wayyiqtol*, וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה וְכִלְתִּיהָ (1:6a). Another *fientive wayyiqtol* immediately follows, . . . וַתָּשָׁב מִשֹּׁמְרֵי (1:6b). The mainline initiated here introduces another development in the plot of Ruth, namely, it provides information on the preparation of the journey and the beginning of the return. The reason of the return is provided in a causal clause initiated by כִּי (1:6c), in a marked mainline with a pluperfect idea expressed in a "story-past" syntagm, כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ לְהַתְּ לָהֶם לָחֶם (1:6c). The exact reason of the return is that she heard of God's provision for His people, while she was still in Moab. The phrase וַתֵּצֵא מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָׁמָּה in 1:6 is initiated by a *fientive wayyiqtol*. It gives a flashback and a summary of both the departure for Bethlehem and the duration of the Elimelech family in Moab. The *wayyiqtol* . . . וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה (1:7c) is important in the context of the return to Bethlehem, as it marks the beginning of the journey. The deictic device of place, שָׁמָּה (1:7) underlines the fact that Naomi has decided to leave Moab for her own country.

This section is about Naomi's move to return to Bethlehem, escorted by her daughters-in-law. The verbs used are mainly those of action, viz., *fientive* forms (1:6a, 6b, 7b). As in the preceding section, the dichotomy mainline-exposition does not yet give explicit evidence for the thematicity of הַסֵּדֶר in Ruth. From the layout

of the text of 1:6-7, however, it is already clear that the dichotomy mainline-exposition is well attested in this section.

- (3) Naomi prays to the Lord to show חֶסֶד to Ruth and Orpah in their mother's home, by granting her another husband (1:8-9a)

S E_∅as E_{aa} M_{x-q} M_{we} M_{wf}
 כִּלְתֵיהֶן לְשֵׁנַי לְנַעֲמִי לְנָאוֹמִי וְנָאוֹמִי 1.8
 daughters-in-law-of-her to-two-of Naomi then-she-said

לְכַנְהוּ שָׁבוּהָ אִשָּׁה לְבַיִת אִמָּה
 mother-of-her to-home-of each go back! go!
 יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד
 kindness to-you Yahweh may-he-show
 כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם עִמָּי וְעִמָּי
 and-to-me the-dead-ones to you-showed just-as
 וְיִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמִצָּאן מְנוּחָה 1.9
 and-find to-you Yahweh may-he-grant
 אִשָּׁה בַּיִת אִשָּׁה
 husband-of-her home-of each rest

Verse 8 starts with *stative wayyiqtol* initiating a new mainline foreground,

... וְנָאוֹמִי לְנַעֲמִי לְשֵׁנַי כִּלְתֵיהֶן. The *waw*-consecutive of 1:8 is a logical connector

indicating that Naomi is taking another step, i.e., urging her daughters-in-law to leave her. The episode enters in a crucial phase as Naomi decides to separate from her daughters-in-law. We have the first speech of the narrative,

... לְכַנְהוּ שָׁבוּהָ אִשָּׁה לְבַיִת אִמָּה.⁴⁸ Naomi is addressing her daughters-in-law.

Naomi's selfless attitude in freeing her daughters-in-law predates the idea of her

חֶסֶד for the two young widows. The word חֶסֶד is explicitly used here (1:8c). This

is God's חֶסֶד that Naomi wishes for Ruth and Orpah. Naomi's speech goes on

with her wish that Yahweh might reward Orpah and Ruth for their "former"

⁴⁸Bush suggests that this infinitive should be understood in its "expletive" use, viz., "an introductory word used to gain attention," just as the English "come, come on," or the colloquial rendering "Well!" or "Well now" (74-5).

חָסְדוֹ (1:8). They accepted to be with Elimelech's sons though the latter were foreigners, remained with them without children, with a foreign God of Israel.⁴⁹ Therefore, it was logical they could have wished to have husbands, rest, home, children, go back to their deities, etc.

The dichotomy mainline-exposition gives the first explicit evidence for the thematic use of חָסְדוֹ in the narrative. Naomi's act of חָסְדוֹ in her urge to her daughters-in-law to leave her is clearly introduced in a *fientive wayyiqtol*-initiated mainline (1:8) and found in the corresponding speech.

- (4) For better or for worse, Ruth selflessly clings to Naomi (1:9b-22)

	S	E _{∅as}	E _{na}	M _{x-q}	M _{we}	M _{wf}
				לְהוֹ	וַתִּשָׁק	9b
				on-them	then-she-kissed	
				וְקוֹלָם	וַתִּשְׂאֲנֶה	
				voice-of-them	and-they-raised	
					וַתִּבְכְּינָה:	
					and-they-wept	
					וַתֹּאמְרָנָה לָהּ	1.10
					to-her and-they-said	
כִּי־אַתָּה נָשׁוּב לְעַמֶּךָ:						
people-of-you to we-will-go-back with-you indeed						
						וַתֹּאמֶר נְעֻמִי
						Naomi but-she-said
				שׁוּבָנָה בָּנָתַי		
				daughters-of-me return!		
				לָמָּה תִּלְכָּנָה עִמִּי		
				with-me would-you-come why?		
				הֲעוֹד־לִי בָנִים		
				sons to me any-more?		
				וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְאִנְשִׁים:	בְּמִעִי	
				as-husbands for-you that-they-could-become inside-of-me		
				וְלִכְּנֹן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי	1.12	
				I-am-too-old for go! daughters-of-me return!		

⁴⁹Contra a Rwandese saying that, “inkoko iri iwabo ishonda umukara” (lit., “a cock that is in its home provokes a wild cat,”) viz. even the least in a society that is his/her own looks at foreigners with disdain. This did not seem to be the case with the two Moabitesses.

S E_{as} E_{aa} M_{x-q} M_{we} M_{wf}

מִהֲנִית לְאִישׁ כִּי אָמַרְתִּי
I-thought if to-husband than-to-be
יֵשׁ-לִי תִקְוָה גַם הָיִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה
the-night I-was if hope for me there-was
לְאִישׁ וְגַם יִלְדָתִי בְנִים:
sons I-bore and-then to-husband
1.13 הֲלֵהָן תִּעֲנֶנָּה

would-you-wait for-them

הֲלֵתָן תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ
they-grew-up when until would-you-wait for-them?
הֲלֵהָן תִּעֲנֶנָּה לְבִלְתִּי הַיּוֹת
to-become not would-you-remain for-them?
לְאִישׁ אֶל בְּנֹתָיו
daughters-of-me no to-husband
כִּי-מֵר-לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם
than-you more for-me bitter for
כִּי-יֵצְאָה כִּי יַד-יְהוָה:
Yahweh-hand-of against-me she-went-out for

1.14 וַתִּשְׁנֶנּוּ קוֹלָן

voice-of-them and-they-raised

וַתִּבְכְּינָה עוֹד

again and-they-wept

וַתִּשָּׁק עֲרַפָּה לְחַמּוֹתָהּ

on-mother-in-law-of-her Orpah then-she-kissed

וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ
to-her she-clung but Ruth

1.15 וַתֹּאמֶר

and-she-said

הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבִמְתְּךָ
sister-in-law-of-you she-goes-back look!
אֶל-עַמָּה וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֶיהָ
to-people-of-her gods-of-her and-to
שׁוֹבִי אַחֲרַי יְבִמְתְּךָ
sister-in-law-of-you with go-back!

1.16 וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת

Ruth but-she-replied

אֶל-תִּפְנְעֵי-כִי לְעִזְבֹךָ לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרַי
from-after-you to-turn-back to-leave-you to-me-you-urge-not
כִּי אֶל-אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלָיךְ
I-will-go you go to-where for
וּבְאֲשֶׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֵלָיִן
I-will-stay you-stay and-at-where
וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֵלִינִי עַמְּךָ עַמִּי:
people-of-me people-of-you God-of-me and-God-of-you
1.17 בְּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי אָמוּת וְשָׁם אֶקְבְּרָה
I-will-be-buried and-there I-will-die you-die at-where
כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יִסִּיף
may-he-be-severe and-so with-me Yahweh may-he-deal so

S E_∅as E_{aa} M_{x-q} M_{we} M_{wf}

כִּי הַמּוֹת יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ:

between-you and-between-me he-separates the-death unless

1.18 וַתֵּרָא כִּי־מִתְאַמְצֶת הִיא לְלַכֵּת אֵתָהּ
with-her to-go she being-determined that when-she-realisedוַתַּחְדֵּל לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ:
to-her to-urge then-she-stopped1.19 וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה שְׁתֵּיהֶם עַד־בֶּאֱנָה בֵּית לֶחֶם
Lehem Beth to-come-them until two-of-them so-they-went-onוַיְהִי כִּבְאֵנָה בֵּית לֶחֶם
Lehem Beth when-to-arrive-them and-he-wasוַתִּהְיֶה כָּל־הָעִיר עָלֵיהֶן
because-of-them the-town whole-of then-it-was-stirredוַתֹּאמְרָנָה
And-they-exclaimedהַזֹּאת נַעֲמִי:
Naomi this?1.20 וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶן
to-them and-she-toldאַל־תִּקְרָאנִי לִי נַעֲמִי
Naomi to-me you-call-not

קָרָאנִי לִי מָרָא כִּי־הִמְרָ שָׂדֶה

Almighty he-made-bitter because Mara to-me call

לִי מְאֹד:
very for-me1.21 אֲנִי מְלֵאָה הִלְכֹתִי וְרִיקָם הִשִּׁיבֵנִי יְהוָה
Yahweh he-brought-back-me but-empty I-went-away full I

לָמָּה תִּקְרָאנִי לִי נַעֲמִי

Naomi to-me you-call why?

וַיְהִי עַנָּה בִּי וְשָׂדֵי

and-Almighty to-me he-afflicted now-Yahweh

הִרְעָ לִי:

upon-me he-brought-misfortune

1.22 וַתָּשָׁב נַעֲמִי וְרוֹת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה כָּלְתָהּ עִמָּה

with-her daughter-in-law-of-her the-Moabitess and-Ruth Naomi so-she-returned

הַשָּׂבָה מִשָּׂרֵי מוֹאָב

Moab from-regions-of who-she-returned

וַהֲמָהּ בָּאוּ בֵּית לֶחֶם בְּתַחֲלֵת קַצִּיר שְׁעָרִים:

barley harvest-of at-beginning-of Lehem Beth they-arrived and-they

Verse 9b opens with a *fientive wayyiqtol* initiating a mainline foreground,... וַתִּשָּׂק לָהֶן Three other *fientive wayyiqtol*s immediately follow in the

mainline: . . . וַתִּשָּׂאנָה קוֹלָן , . . . וַתֹּאמֶן לָהּ. The actions of kissing, raising voices and saying are quite simultaneous. They express *quasi*-simultaneous actions.

The implied meaning of : וַתִּשָּׂאנָה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכֶּינָה (1:9b) is a debated issue. Fewell and Gunn comment on Naomi’s kissing her daughters-in-law Orpah and Ruth and the weeping of 1:9. They maintain that “the content of 1:9 is two-edged: it may well convey her recognition that the women have treated her kindly; yet it is at the same time a way of distancing herself as it wraps in piety her message to them to part from her.”⁵⁰ Fewell and Gunn see therefore the two young women’s gesture as ironic and even sarcastic. They also claim that “but even the piety is a little bit constrained—for her perception is that these Moabite women have their own gods (cf. 1:15).”⁵¹ The two writers contend that “verbal generosity is but polite rhetoric.”⁵² They add that “Naomi’s silence at Ruth’s unshakable commitment to accompany her emerges [is to be understood] as resentment, irritation, frustration, unease. Ruth the Moabite is for her an inconvenience, a menace even.”⁵³

It is true that the implied meaning behind the gesture of kissing in verse 9b is ambivalent. From the context of the opening statement of the second speech of Ruth (1:10b), we can infer that these three actions meant that the two daughters-in-

⁵⁰Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, “A Son is Born to Naomi: Literary Allusions and Interpretations in the Book of Ruth,” Journal for the Study of The Old Testament 40 (1988): 103-4.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

law wanted either to cling to Naomi or to kiss her goodbye. The context shows that eventually the former possibility applies to Ruth, while the latter holds for Orpah. At this point in the narrative, however, both women claim to be determined to follow Naomi. It follows that I find myself at a loss to understand how Fewell and Gunn can be so sure in ruling out any type of lovingkindness behind the two women's gesture. Moreover, the feminine plural suffix on קולן is in syntactic agreement with הן. Furthermore, the syntagm ותשאנה קולן ותבכינה is a hendiadys. In this regard, Bush emphasises that the concept of "all" is "necessary" in the idiomatic meaning which is "the one meaning conveyed by the two cognate expressions, 'to weep with loud cries and sobs, to raise the voice'."⁵⁴ It follows that all the three women did cry, very likely because their prospective separation would be painful to all of them.

Verse 11 begins with a *fientive wayyiqtol*, . . . ותאמר נעמי. The attached *waw* is a logical connector with an adversative idea. Naomi is trying to dissuade the two young women from following her. Two possible implicated motivations to Naomi's urge may be either her willingness to liberate these young widows, or her disguised intention to test their faithfulness. Or perhaps it would have been considered impolite for Naomi not to urge them to return to their roots. The second part of this second speech (1:11b-13) is depicted in a mixture of *fientive* suffix conjugation and verbless syntagms, which is a basic feature of sideline exposition non-action/setting. The ׀ in 1:12 can be translated as "even if." This

⁵⁴Bush, 77.

is a discourse concessive connector, whose logic depends on an implied condition.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Naomi's alleged motivation to "free" her daughters-in-law is initiated by another discourse connector, כִּי (1:13). The implied reason for Naomi's move is probably that the Lord's hand cannot come back to her.

In this sub-section (1:9b-13), the dichotomy mainline-exposition gives evidence for the thematicity of חֶסֶד in a number of ways. The opening mainline (1:9b-10a, all verbs are *wayyiqtol* forms) emphasises a mixture of intimate affection (kissing) and affliction anticipating a possible separation (crying, weeping). There seems to exist a climate of fondness between the three women in the narrative. The discourse used to describe this climate (1:8b-13) is conveyed through both mainline and exposition, and the corresponding speeches. We can infer from the discourse displayed in the two types of storyline that Naomi is displaying the above-mentioned qualities to her daughters-in-law. Thus the theme of חֶסֶד is made salient in this section of the Ruth narrative.

At a certain point, Naomi seems so empty and without anything good to offer but her misfortune. In such a situation, it is hard to imagine how one could still cling to her, unless moved by חֶסֶד. Nevertheless, the reaction of the three women to this hard situation is their repeated cry as described in a *fientive* *wayyiqtol*-initiated clause, וַתִּבְכְּינָה עֹד וַתִּשָּׂנֶה קוֹלָן (1:14, cf. 1:9b). After Orpah's kissing her mother-in-law, the implied logic is quite obvious: she parts company with Naomi and Ruth. A possible illocution in Orpah's kiss may be

⁵⁵Ronald J. Sim, "Discourse Connector" (Class notes. Nairobi: Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 1997), 2-3.

something like feigning sympathy or love.⁵⁶ And a subsequent perlocution may be that Orpah wanted Naomi to think that by her kiss she meant she would never leave her, but would cling to her forever. The simple *waw* in וְרוּתָהּ בָּקְהָהּ בָּהּ (1:14b) is clearly adversative. Nevertheless, this new attempt on Naomi's part definitely fails, just like the preceding ones. With the discourse analysis done in the preceding paragraph, the *fientive wayyiqtol* in 1:16a gives rise to another mainline foreground to start Ruth's speech (1:16a-17).⁵⁷ The device וְשָׂם (1:17) is a place deixis, pointing to the very fact that Ruth is ready to die and be buried at the same place as Naomi. This looks to me a testimony of Ruth's רַחֲמֵיךָ toward her mother-in-law.

Commenting on Ruth's cleaving to Naomi, Sasson stresses that "we find Ruth practically indenturing herself to Naomi; . . . which explains the unusual step taken by Boaz in acquiring Ruth (*qānāh* 4:5) before marrying her (*laqah*

⁵⁶An illocutionary act or illocution is an "act viewed in terms of the utterance's significance within a conventional system of social interaction" (Hurford and Heasley, 244). A perlocutionary act or perlocution is the "act of causing a certain effect on the hearer and others" (Hurford and Heasley, 243). Although Orpah's kiss is not an utterance, it is communicating something, as it were.

⁵⁷Basil A. Rebera, "Translating a Text to be Spoken and Heard: A Study of Ruth 1," *The Bible Translator* 43 (1992), 234. Commenting on the linear *wayyiqtol*s in Ruth 1:16-17, he talks of "alliteration," which "gives a song-like quality to the telling of certain events and utterances of speech in dialogue, e.g. 1:9c-10a; v. 17."

le 'iṣṣāh 4:13).”⁵⁸ The mainline introduced by וַתֵּאמֶר רֹוּת (1:16a) marks a significant step ahead as an important turning point in Ruth’s חֶסֶד understood as “lovingkindness,” even as Ruth is determined to cling to Naomi for better or for worse. The logical connector (*waw*-consecutive) used to introduce the discourse in 1:16a is adversative. Furthermore, Ruth’s speech opens with a negative command, . . . אַל-תִּפְגְּעִי-בִי לְעֹזֶבֶד לָשׁוּב.

The end of Ruth’s speech (1:16b-17) shows her irrevocable determination to cling to Naomi. The latter’s misfortune (cf. 1:1-5) contrasts with her selfless urge to Ruth to part company with her. Naomi’s attitude displays חֶסֶד in the sense Zobel defines it as “doing good.”⁵⁹ The mainline in 1:14b, by introducing Naomi’s kissing, gives evidence for the theme of חֶסֶד for the selfless aspect of this concept. The evidence for this theme becomes even clearer in 1:16-17. After Orpah’s departure (1:14), Naomi’s attempt to dissuade Ruth from following her fails. Ruth’s clinging to Naomi for better or for worse is literally depicted in the mainline occurring in 1:15-16a, whereby Naomi’s urge toward Ruth is immediately countered by the latter’s reply. The corresponding speech (1:16-17) gives flesh to Ruth’s reply, which is introduced in the mainline (1:16). The author of Ruth uses a songlike style to depict the Moabitess’s selfless and steady determination to cling to Naomi. Ruth relieves Naomi’s misfortune by some

⁵⁸Jack M. Sasson, “The Issue of *ge 'ullāh* in Ruth,” Journal for the Study of The Old Testament 5 (1978): 5.

⁵⁹Zobel, 47.

aspects of **חֶסֶד**.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Ruth's unshakeable determination to cling to Naomi as made salient in the former's speech of 1:16-17, displays qualities of **חֶסֶד** as expressed in Psalms 109:12. It seems to me that this is nothing less than showing favour to someone who has nothing to offer but her/his misfortune. I find four verbs in 1:16-17 that illustrate the idea of **חֶסֶד**: **אָלַךְ**, **אָלִין**, **אָמַוּת**, **אָקַבֵּר**. The first two verbs, viz. **אָלַךְ** and **אָלִין**, express Ruth's deliberate commitment to cling to Naomi. A subsequent illocutionary act can be that Ruth is swearing to be faithful to Naomi. A corresponding perlocution could be that Ruth is definitely determined to follow and care for Naomi at any cost. In her total surrender for her mother-in-law's sake, Ruth commits herself to leave all: her people and her gods. She espouses Naomi's God and religion. This surrender shows a striking parallel with Abram's commitment to surrender all for Yahweh's sake (Gen. 12:1). However, there is also a remarkable difference in that Abram's call was basically Yahweh's initiative and was accompanied by the promise of blessings (vv. 2-3).

Bos comments on Ruth's total surrender and the privileged relationship between her and Naomi. She says that:

The most radical reversal of the character arrangement of a betrothal type-scene has taken place: the encounter, which occasions the rest of the story, is two women. . . . Moreover, unlike the context of a betrothal, there is ostensibly no advantage for Ruth in her initial alliance to Naomi. The women's circumstances place them in a weak position. Both are childless and widowed, and both know the experience of foreignness. Ruth willingly joins herself to Naomi, [she joins] weakness to weakness, death to death.⁶¹

⁶⁰See the discussion on the overview of **חֶסֶד** in the light of OT selected passages, in this chapter.

⁶¹Joanna W. H. Bos, "Out of the Shadows: Genesis 38; Judges 4:17-22: Ruth 3," *Semeia* 42 (1988): 58.

Not all scholars agree with this position. For instance, Fewell and Gunn underscore Tribble's position when he says that "ironically, Orpah's separation from Naomi stems from her agreement with her, whereas Ruth's unity with Naomi stems from her opposition to her: Ruth's commitment to Naomi is Naomi's withdrawal from Ruth. . . . Throughout the exchange, her counsel is customary, her motive altruistic, and her theology tinged with irony."⁶²

Tribble's contention is self-contradictory, in that Ruth can scarcely be the recipient of Naomi's altruism and at the same time be the object of her alleged withdrawal. Fewell and Gunn make the same critique vis-à-vis Tribble's claim, when they say that there is "no reason for Naomi to so withdraw if she is so selfless, so wholly motivated by her regard for others. There is no reason that the altruism of Ruth should reduce an altruistic Naomi to silent withdrawal—even if we accept the conventional counsel and the caustic theology."⁶³

From the preceding analysis, I want to suggest that Ruth's commitment to Naomi stems from her self-giving and not from any opposition whatsoever. Bos rightly calls her "a valiant woman" and maintains that "Ruth allies herself to a most unlikely partner. The entire story and its development must be viewed in terms of Ruth's statement to Naomi in 1:16-17. The motivational force of Ruth's words and actions is confirmed by Naomi's neighbours to be love . . ."⁶⁴ Loyalty

⁶²Fewell and Gunn, "A Son is Born to Naomi," Journal for the Study of The Old Testament theology 40 (1988): 100, quoting Phillis Tribble, "A Human Comedy," in God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality: Overtones to Biblical Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress), ch. 6, 173.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Bos, 58.

is the leitmotiv that pushes Ruth to definitely cling to Naomi and constrains the latter to stop her plea toward the Moabitess. It seems to me that this is the logical conclusion that must be drawn from the exchange between the two women. Nicol provides a different view from that of Tribble that I have quoted above. Nicol stresses that “in the face of such a warm and genuine commitment, it would be churlish of Naomi to insist further that Ruth remain in Moab with her own family. She can do nothing but keep silent and accept the younger woman’s gift . . . Ruth offers far more; she seeks, in life and death, to identify herself with her mother-in-law; she wishes upon herself whatever fate might befall the old woman.”⁶⁵

The section in 1:19-22 starts with a mainline foreground initiated by a *stative wayyiqtol*, וַתֵּרָא כִּי־מִתְאַמְצָת. There is a new development in the plot with Naomi’s realisation that Ruth’s determination to follow her is irrevocable. Bush says that “the force of the hithpael אִמְצָא confers such a meaning as ‘to be firmly resolved, be determined.’”⁶⁶ Then follows another mainline foreground, וַתַּחְדֵּל לְדַבֵּר אֵלָיִךְ (1:18), where Naomi stops urging Ruth to go away. The following mainline foreground takes us back to the two women’s continued voyage and their arrival in Bethlehem.

The next mainline (1:19b) starts a new development in the plot. The inseparable ׀ on infinitive construct, which is temporal (circumstantial) introduces

⁶⁵George N. Nicol, “Ruth: Neglected Books of the Bible,” The Expository Times 102 (1990/1991): 273.

⁶⁶Bush, 83.

the arrival in Bethlehem. It serves as a time deictic device. The two women's arrival in Bethlehem is described with a וַיְהִי-initiated clause,

וַיְהִי כְּבֹאֲנָהּ בַּיַּת לָחֶם. This clause describes a linear event that occurs in the course of the disturbance alluded to in the following clause. Then follows the disturbance in the town, וַתִּהְיֶה כָּל-הָעִיר עָלֶיהֶן. The Bethlehemite women's amazement is then conveyed through a verbless clause, הִנְּזֹאת נִעְמִי.

One would wonder what kind of speech Naomi and Ruth are going to make upon their arrival in Bethlehem. This new turning point in the narrative is initiated by a *fientive wayyiqtol*, . . . וַתֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶן (1:20) Then Naomi's speech is given in a short account with use of *fientive wayyiqtol*s of saying, which is a normal way to present a sideline exposition/setting. The very closing description itself is clearly resumptive, with the mainline foreground focussing on Naomi and Ruth's return from Moab (1:22a). The parallel focus initiated by a suffix conjugation with simple *waw* adds a new element to the context of the two women's return: it was at the beginning of the barley harvest, . . . בְּתַחֲלֵת קִצְרֵי שְׂעָרִים: וְהָיָה (1:22b).

The discourse structure of 1:18-22 displays good evidence for קִסָּד in Ruth. The mainline in 1:18-19c stresses Ruth's impact on Naomi. Not only the latter realises the former's determination to cleave to her, but also she stops urging her to go away (1:18b) and accepts the Moabitess's company until Bethlehem (1:19). The Bethlehemite women's amazement in the corresponding exposition line (1:19d-21) contrasts with 1:22. In 1:22, a flashback on the return from Moab