THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIBLICAL HEBREW
PREPOSITIONS
THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIBLICAL HEBREW PREPOSITIONS

By
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SBL Press
In loving memory of
Kathryn Marie Hardy
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The present volume comprises more than a decade of research on grammaticalization and the development of Biblical Hebrew prepositions. Various components of this study were presented at three annual meetings of the Society for Biblical Literature in 2011, 2014, and 2017. These presentations and the subsequent feedback from a number of scholars aided considerably in my thinking and the development of the project.

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Finally, this volume is dedicated to my late wife, Katy. Her steadfast support—even in the most difficult days—is the reason the original study was completed. It is with great sadness that she was not able to see this finished product. May her memory be a blessing for she is not forgotten.
**ABBREVIATIONS**

The Leipzig glossing rules and conventions developed in consultation with the Max Planck Institute (http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php), as much as possible, are used for the interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme linguistic abbreviations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>first person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>absolute state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCRD</td>
<td>accordantive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJ</td>
<td>adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJP</td>
<td>adjective phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADV</td>
<td>adverb(ial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVZ</td>
<td>adverbializer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUX</td>
<td>auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BH</td>
<td>Biblical Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEN</td>
<td>benefactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTWN</td>
<td>between function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>common gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUS</td>
<td>causative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJ ADV</td>
<td>conjunctive adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>comitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTR</td>
<td>construct state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIR</td>
<td>directional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOM</td>
<td>direct object marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Development of Biblical Hebrew Prepositions


EVAL evaluative
EXIST existence marker
F feminine gender
FUT future
GEN genitive
GN geographical name
IMP imperative
INF infinitive
INSTR instrumental


LM landmark
LOC locative
LOG REL logical relation
M masculine gender
N noun
NEG negation, negative
NP noun phrase
PART partitive
PC prefix conjugation
PL plural
PN proper noun
POSTP postposition
PP preposition phrase
PREP preposition
PRS present
PRO pronoun
PTCP participle
PTCL particle
PURP purpose
Q question particle/marker
RCPR reciprocative
REL relative
ABBREVIATIONS

S   sentence
SC  suffix conjugation
SG  singular
SPRT separative
TEMP temporal
TR  trajector
VB  verb
VP  verb phrase
WCPC  *waw*-consecutive prefix conjugation
WCSC  *waw*-consecutive suffix conjugation
## TRANSLITERATION

The Biblical Hebrew consonant system is represented in Latin transliteration following the paradigm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>א</td>
<td>ʔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ב</td>
<td>b</td>
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<tr>
<td>ב</td>
<td>b̄</td>
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<tr>
<td>ג</td>
<td>g</td>
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<tr>
<td>ג</td>
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<td>ח</td>
<td>ḡ</td>
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<td>כ</td>
<td>k̄</td>
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<td>כ</td>
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<td>n̄</td>
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<td>ר</td>
<td>r̄</td>
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<tr>
<td>ש</td>
<td>ʃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ש</td>
<td>ʃ̄</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a more phonemically-oriented description of Tiberian Hebrew, this representation may be compared with that of Khan (2020, 240–42).

The Tiberian seven vowel system for Biblical Hebrew is transliterated as a, o, e, i, o, and u. For a discussion of the allophonic realizations of pataḥ as the open front [a] and the open back [ɑ] qualities, see Khan (2020, 248–51). The zero-vowel (Ø) realization of schwa is not transliterated. Even though vocalic schwa ([a]) and the ḥaṭef vowels ([a], [ɔ], [ɛ]) were likely read as full vowels (Khan 2020, 305–20), the graphic distinction is maintained with vocal schwa signified as ə and the compound-schwa vowels supra-linearly as ā, ɔ̄, and ɛ̄. The presence of matres lectionis is not represented in transliteration system. Vocalic length is not represented.

The individual Semitic languages are transliterated according to their standard phonetic systems. The Central Semitic languages are represented consistent with Fox (2003, xvii–xix); Akkadian follows Huehnergard and Woods (2004); Ge’ez corresponds to Leslau (1987); and Old South Arabian conforms to Beeston (1984) and Stein (2003).
INTRODUCTION

At every linguistic level—phonological and morphological, syntactic and pragmatic—speakers interact and adapt to one another’s speech in discrete, recurrent steps to create meaning. These collaborative steps produce ongoing language variation and the perception of change. Structural innovation and procedural spread are offset with contraction and abandonment. On one level, concrete utterances generate variation in new contexts. But also, discourse occasions incipient structures, or procedures, that construct emergent grammar. Like partners dancing, verbal interaction couples mementic speech with expanding eclecticism. This improvised negotiation results in the emergence of shared grammar as epiphenomenal. Notably, such a conception contrasts with the common notion of grammar as “an abstract mentally represented rule system … [of] already available abstract structures and schemata” (Hopper 1987).

Two linguistic approaches are often employed to describe the choreography of language. A mostly synchronic assessment explains the relationship between the convergences and divergences of grammar from the standpoint of an individual and/or circumscribed community, whereas a diachronic examination explores the origin, development, and spread of adaptations unbounded by the temporal constraint of a speaker. While not ignoring the synchronic realities of language, the present work adopts a diachronic framework to investigate the development and emergence of Biblical Hebrew prepositions. It should be noted that determining actual historical change is not the end goal of the present study but rather potential (or shall we say cogent) semantic development. The resulting grammatical exploration accounts for language variation and change within a robust linguistic framework and an inductive, data-driven investigation in the textual corpus of the Hebrew Bible. Findings from cognitive linguistics and diachronic typology help to shed light on the evolution of prepositions. Moreover, it is showed that a “grammaticalization theory” can provide not just a descriptive rubric for individual changes but can help to account for the system-wide development of innovative grammatical functions.

In view of the extensive research conducted on Biblical Hebrew prepositions, one may query what, if anything, another study can offer. Previous work, while valuable, has largely been conducted using traditional philological approaches
often without substantial integration of current linguistic frameworks. Where up
to-date methods have been employed, the scope of study—rarely more than a lone
preposition—affords only limited evaluation. This study presents a more compre
hensive appraisal. It integrates an utterance-based or discourse-oriented approach
with a clause-by-clause analysis of the Biblical Hebrew preposition usage. Forty
one source constructions (types) are examined comprising a total of nearly seven
thousand tokens. Several novel semantic functions are plausibly identified. A se
mantic development pathway is proposed for each preposition from its source to
all evidenced outcomes. In sum, the study yields a novel accounting of prepo
sitions not merely as polysemous semantic glosses but through developmentally
related functional use.

Chapter 1 presents an introduction to the theoretical framework of grammat
icalization. A review of common approaches and a working definition is provided.
Chapter 2 describes the grammatical characteristics of Biblical Hebrew prepo
sitions including the morphological categories of simple and multi-word
prepositions. Chapter 3 provides an examination of a subset of the simple prepo
sitions. The source constructions, the functional usages, and the potential
development(s) are assessed. Chapter 4 includes a similar accounting of the
changes attested with Biblical Hebrew multi-word prepositions. Finally, Chapter
5 aggregates and compares the data on a corpus-wide scale.

One overarching goal of the study is to provide an interchange of ideas, or
maybe even a prototype for constructive discourse, between research in linguistics
and traditional grammatical approaches. The volume includes both a linguistic
discussion—for those interested in the theoretical background—and a philolo
gical discussion—for those interested in the more data-driven approach. The
intended audience includes grammatically minded readers in biblical studies who
are interested in understanding and implementing current linguistic models for
language variation and diachronic development. The result is a type of diachronic
lexicon of preposition meaning that is useful not merely for linguistic investiga
tion but Hebrew exegetes. That said, an effort to provide broader accessibility for
the historical linguist and diachronic typologist is attempted with the hope that the
wealth of Semitic data available may be more widely integrated into cross-lin
guistic investigations. This endeavor is largely accomplished through following
common linguistic glossing practices and adhering to established functional ter
minology.