The Biblical sources of Modern Hebrew syntax[1]

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Abstract

The paper assesses the influence on Modern Hebrew of the two previous spoken stages of Hebrew: Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew in its early, Mishnaic, phase. Contra the received view in the current literature, I argue that Modern Hebrew has in many respects readopted the syntax of Biblical Hebrew, the earlier of the two ancient stages, rather than being a development of the subsequent Rabbinic stage. The paper discusses particular constructions whose Biblical syntax had historically been replaced by Rabbinic syntax, yet were reinstated in Modern Hebrew. These include clausal constructions such as conditional and unconditional clauses, clausal complements of aspectual and modal auxiliaries, and gerundive clauses. The Rabbinic component in the syntax of Modern Hebrew seems to be limited to values and exponents drawn from Rabbinic Hebrew for the functional categories originating in Biblical Hebrew or in languages with which Hebrew was in contact during its history.

1. Introduction

Modern Hebrew, the contemporary spoken stage of Hebrew, is separated by a hiatus of almost 17 centuries from the two previous spoken stages of Hebrew, Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew (in its early, Mishnaic, phase). The present paper aims to assess the influence of the two ancient stages on the modern stage, particularly in the field of syntax. Surprisingly, and contra the received wisdom, the present findings are that Modern Hebrew syntax is heavily influenced by that of Biblical Hebrew, the earlier of the two ancient stages, rather than being a development of the subsequent Rabbinic Hebrew.

Modern Hebrew (MH) is the outcome of dramatic historical circumstances which, toward the end of 19th century, saw the formation in Palestine of a community of Jewish refugees from Europe and elsewhere dreaming of reviving their ancient ancestral estate and its language. Hebrew had been spoken in Palestine until the end of the 2nd century CE, and had since then consisted of a large body of writings -- scripture, liturgical, legal, scholarly and literary works -- which were read and studied and used in worship over the centuries in Jewish communities across the world. The language of all the writings contains elements of both early stages of written Hebrew from the period when it was still a language with native speakers, and also elements of the written language from subsequent periods when it was no longer spoken. Though for centuries the language had no native speakers, it was productively used in Jewish communities, who did not settle for merely reading and studying existing Hebrew texts, but rather continued to produce new texts.

MH was created through a conscious ideological decision of it speakers. It was not formed for the purpose of communication between groups that had no language in common, since the original speakers of MH could typically converse in Yiddish.[2] Yet they undertook to

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[2] In the era which predated MH, the traditional Jewish communities of Palestine, known as the *Old Yishuv*, did actually use Hebrew as a lingua-franca because they did not have a native language in common. The oldest communities of the Old Yishuv spoke Arabic, and others were divided into communities speaking different

communicate among themselves and to educate their children in a language which for over a millennium and a half had mostly existed as a written language, used orally only in religious rituals.[3] MH is thus different from a creole, since creoles are believed to have been formed for the purpose of communication between groups that lack a common language (Bickerton 1981, but see Aboh, this volume, for a different view).

According to Lefebvre 1998, creole speakers have very limited access to superstratum data, hence they typically fail to identify the functional categories of the superstratum language. As a result, creoles are often isolating languages, and they derive many of their grammatical properties from the substratum languages. We find the opposite situation in MH. MH is as inflectional as the preceding stages of Hebrew, and, as indicated by many studies, most recently those in Doron 2016, the grammar of MH derives from previous stages of Hebrew, though there undeniably is some influence of Yiddish, Russian, and other contact languages. MH is a development beginning in the ancient stages of Hebrew, when it had still been a spoken language, and continuing through stages when it was only written (Rabin 1985). All this argues strongly against the view of MH as a creole suggested by Wexler 1990.

2. The two previous spoken stages of Hebrew

As mentioned, of the historical stages of Hebrew, only two had been spoken in antiquity, first Biblical Hebrew (BH), and later Rabbinic Hebrew (RH), in its early, Mishnaic, phase. Both survived as written corpora. The present paper seeks to determine the relative contribution to Modern Hebrew (MH) syntax of these two stages of Hebrew.

The fact that both stages contributed to MH morphology and lexicon is well known, and moreover it is known that many lexical items and morphological forms of MH are based on the original forms and structures of BH rather than on the corresponding ones from RH, though the latter stage is a historical development of the former. In the words of Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim (my translation):

> What is special about Hebrew is not that it underwent change (this is the case in every language of the world)… but that nothing has died within it… Therefore there exist within our language… layers each beside the other rather than each above the other as in languages which have proceeded in historical continuity. (Ben-Hayyim 1953/1992: 58)

Ben-Hayyim's recognition of the non-linear development of MH is based on consideration of words and morphemes. I would like to extend his claim to syntax as well, and also reinforce it by arguing that the grammar of MH is actually based to a large extent on that of BH rather than on that of RH. In the formation of the lexicon, morphology, and syntax of MH, an earlier historical stage was significantly influential in comparison to a later stage. Maybe this is not really surprising, since many of the first MH speakers favoured the secular literature of the enlightenment, which was heavily modeled on the Bible and less so on other corpora.

What *is* surprising is the fact that the received view on syntax among Hebraists is radically different. It is widely believed that MH syntax is based on RH (Kutscher 1982, 202-203; Reshef 2013). One repeatedly reads, yet without much evidence, that "the distance between the syntax of BH to the syntax of RH is bigger than the distance between RH and our syntax" (Gadish 2009: 3). Schwarzwald 2001:47 suggests that this view be restricted to the syntax of the sentence/clause, and that the syntax of sub-clausal phrases of MH is Biblical. In the

languages according to their land of origin: Judeo-Spanish in the case of the Sephardic communities, and Yiddish (also Hungarian, Rumanian etc.) in the case of the Ashkenazic communities.

[3] There is even some evidence of circumstances where Hebrew was used to converse, e.g. Eldar 2018, Vol 1: 76.

present paper, I will adduce evidence for Schwarzwald's view, and also argue for the stronger hypothesis that sentential syntax is to a large extent Biblical as well.

Before turning to syntax, I would like to devote a few words to the lexicon, where there seems to be no consensus.[4] Some scholars maintain that both ancient stages are equally prominent within MH (Bendavid 1967: 3-12). Other scholars, most recently Reshef 2003, have noted the primacy of BH. Though the present paper is mainly concerned with syntax, I would like to add an argument for the primacy of BH over RH in the lexicon as well.[5] More specifically, I claim that within the lexicon of MH, lexical items originating in BH are unmarked, whereas those originating in RH are marked. I demonstrate this with pairs of synonymous lexical items, one originating in BH and the other in RH. When considering such pairs, it becomes apparent that the RH lexical items manifest markedess in comparison to the synonymous BH lexical items in two ways. First, the RH items have restriced use – they are only found in the literary register of MH. Second, they have restricted denotation. I will briefly discuss these two dimensions of markedness.

It is often mentioned that the lexicon of MH contains many synonymous pairs of nominal elements, where the first is from BH and the second – from RH, e.g. the pairs in (1), some from Avineri 1931:

(1)
šemeš – ħama 'sun'; *yareaħ – leḇana* 'moon'; *ʔapⁿ – ħoṭem* 'nose'; *ʕec – ʔilan* 'tree'; *gal – naħšol* 'wave'; *ʔoniya -- spⁿina* 'ship'; *misdaron – prozdor* 'corridor'; *ħag – yom-toḇ* 'holiday'; *ʔopⁿe – naħtom* 'baker'; *qar – conen* 'cold'; *raze – kaħuš* 'skinny'; *zaqen – qašiš* 'old (person); *meʕaṭ – qimʕa* 'a little'; *po – kan* 'here'; *eypⁿo – heyḵan* 'where'; *zot – zu* 'this.F'; *kmo – kegon* 'like/as'; *raq – bilḇad* 'only'; *ʔeyḵ – keycad* 'how'; *kaḵa – kaḵ* 'thus'; *laḵen – lefiḵaḵ* 'therefore'; *ʔaḇal – bram* 'but'; *beḵol.zot – ʔaf.ʕal.pi.ḵen* 'nevertheless'

What has not been noted is that in most such examples, and indeed in all the examples in (1), the BH item is used generally, in all registers, while the RH item is literary.[6]

The second dimension of markedness is found in pairs where a distinction emerges between the denotations of the two pair members. Here too, it is the item originally from BH which is unmarked in practically all cases, while the RH term is marked. The lexical item of BH origin typically denotes the general term, usually a basic-level category, whereas the RH item,

[4] Within morphology, there is already full recognition that MH is based on BH (Schwarzwald 2010), with some RH modification, notably in the domain of verbal temporal inflection. Within phonology as well, there is clear influence of BH on the MH system: both BH and MH are stress-timed systems (Khan 2012); both in BH and MH, truncation of the second person suffix is the basis of the formation of imperative forms (Bolozky 1979); but see Ariel's article in the present volume.

[5] The discussion in the text concerns synonymy. Regarding polysemy, further research is needed. MH preserves BH polysemy in some cases: *ʕec* 'tree/wood' serves as both count and mass both in BH and MH, though RH had already developed two separate terms, one count and the other mass: *ʔilan* 'tree' (count) – *ʕec* 'wood' (mass). But in other cases, MH rejects BH polysemy: *baśar* 'body/meat' is polysemous in BH, but MH adopts the RH distinction between *baśar* 'meat' – *guf* 'body'. Yet there seems to be blanket MH rejection of RH polysemy in favour of BH disambiguation. MH uses the RH preposition *bišḇil* to express *purpose*, thus rejecting the RH polysemous use of the same preposition to express both purpose and reason 'for'/'because'. BH has two separate terms: *lemaʕan* 'for' vs. *ki* 'because', and MH maintains the separation: *kedey/bišḇil* 'for' vs. *ki* 'because'.

[6] Bendavid 1967:278 denies that such a markedness difference exists between BH and RH, on the basis of a few pairs where it is reversed, i.e. the member of the pair which originates in BH is marked in its use, such as: *ʕata – ʕaḵšav* 'now'; *dror – ħopⁿeš* 'freedom'; *ʕadi – ṭaḵšit* 'jewelry'; *ʕoḇed.adama – ħaqlay* 'farmer'; *ʔorħa – šayara* 'convoy'; *šaḇiḇ – gec* 'spark'; *donag – šaʕava* 'wax'.

which was originally synonymous with it, now denotes a subordinate, more specific and specialized, category.[7]

(2)

	BH/MH		**RH**	**MH**
yeled	child	*tinoq*	child	infant
šopēṭ	judge	*dayan*	judge	rabbinic court judge
sapā	language	*lašon*	language	Hebrew (linguistics)
sir	pot	*qdera*	pot	casserole
cemed	pair	*zug*	pair	couple
ʔahaḇa	love	*ħiba*	love	affection
beṭen	belly	*keres*	belly	paunch
gam	also	*ʔapē*	also	even
gḇul	limit	*tħum*	limit	delimitation
ʕam	a people	*ʔuma*	a people	nation
riḇ	feud	*qṭaṭa*	feud	brawl
siba	reason	*ʕila*	reason	legal grounds

In the rest of the paper, I will argue that a distinction in markedness emerges in syntax as well. When parallel BH and RH constructions exist, we find that MH has mostly incorporated only one of them, and I argue that it is typically the one from BH, in syntax just as much as in the lexicon. The parallel RH constructions are still extant in special literary texts and high register speech, and are recognized by educated speakers. As will be illustrated in the next section and in the appendix, MH syntax is clearly not closer to RH than to BH. BH structures are used daily and colloquialy, while parallel RH structures are literary. Thus, in the syntax as well as in the lexicon, there is an asymmetry in the role of the two ancient stages. Section 3 illustrates this for several clausal/sentential constructions. In the Appendix, I list additional constructions, which are sub-clausal. The RH influence on MH is discussed in section 4.

3. The syntax of the Modern Hebrew clause

3.1 Clausal subordination

Rosén 1956 classifies BH syntax as paratactic (concatenative/ coordinative) rather than hypotactic (subordinating), and hence less fit than RH as a model for a modern language. He writes (my translation):

[7] It is possible that the Latinate vocabulary has the same role in English as that of the RH vocabulary in MH, cf. *infant, casserole, couple, affection, paunch, delimitation, nation* in the table above. Bendavid 1967:299 notes the markedness of the Latinate vocabulary, yet denies the markedness of the RH vocabulary on the basis of the very few pairs where markedness is reversed, e.g. *maħol – riqud*, where it is the RH *riqud* 'dance' which is the basic-level category, whereas *maħol*, which in BH meant 'dance', denotes in MH the sub-category 'artistic dance'.

> ‘Even a cursory study of the Biblical text demonstrates that it is the total opposite of the hypotactic style, and is a typical example of the paratactic style, which conjoins propositional units like pearls on a necklace, arranged in one dimension rather than the two dimensions of horizontal and vertical organization… Reverting to the syntactic nature of the Biblical language would set us back thousands of years in the development of human intelligence…’ (ibid. 129 - 133)

Goldenberg 1996 rightly points out that in this passage, Rosén’s claim may be understood as being about the style of the Biblical corpus rather than its syntax. Indeed, parataxis is used more often in BH than in MH. But, in full agreement with Goldenberg, I consider this a stylistic issue. Biblical narrative style favours parataxis over hypotaxis, mainly for expressing reported speech (this is practically unchanged in RH as well, Segal 1936: 224). In passages of reported speech, the Biblical text typically prefers direct over indirect discourse. Assuming that a clause encoding direct discourse is conjoined to the clause describing the speech situation, whereas a clause encoding indirect discourse is subordinate to it, reported speech in BH is indeed often paratactic, as in (3) below. In (3), the two clauses belong to two separate, juxtaposed, discourse situations. In the first, the participants are referred to in the 3rd person, whereas in the second, the same participants are referred to by the 1st person pronoun *we*. This indicates that the clause which encodes direct speech belongs to a new discourse situation (Potts 2007). In particular, the two clauses are not embedded within one another, but are indeed conjoined.[8]

(3) *wayyōmrū ʔīš ʔɛl rēʕēhū mā ănaḥnū yōšḇīm pō ʕaḏ māṯnū*
and.said.3MP each to his.friend what we sit.PTC.3MP here until died.1P

They said to one another, “Why are we sitting here until we die?” (2Kings 7:3)

The use of direct discourse is less prevalent in Modern Hebrew. However, as we have stressed, this is a matter of style and not of the syntactic structures made available by the languages. BH syntax displays all the kinds of subordinate clauses as any other language. Even in reported speech, one finds indirect discourse in BH, such as (4a), cited in Miller 1996, and (4b). Both examples involve indirect discourse expressed as a subordinate clause. In both, the coreferential participants of the two clauses are in the 3rd person, as is to be expected in indirect discourse.

(4)a *wayyaggēd yaʕăqōḇ lə-rāḥēl*
and.said.3MS Jacob to-Rachel

kī ʔăḥī ʔāḇī-āh hū wə-ḵī ḇɛn riḇqā hū
that brother.CS father-GEN.3FS PRON.3MS and-that son.CS Rebekah PRON.3MS

And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s brother and that he was Rebekah’s son. (Gen. 29:12)

b *wə-ʕaḏ māṯay lō ṯōmar lā-ʕām lā-šūḇ mē-ʔaăḥărē ʔăḥē-hɛm*
and-until when NEG say.MOD.2MS to.the-people to-return from-behind brothers-GEN.3MP

[8] Unless stated otherwise, all Biblical translations are from the New King James Version (NKJV). The pairs of allophones *b-β g-ɣ, d-ð, k-x, p-f, t-θ* are transcribed according to the traditional transcription *b-ḇ, g-ḡ, d-ḏ, k-ḵ, p-p̄, t-ṯ*. Three vowel qualities are distinguished, in accordance with the Tiberian tradition, e.g. *ā* vs. *a* vs. epenthetic *ă*. I use the following abbreviations in example glosses: ACC – Accusative case; AUX – Auxiliary; COH – Cohortative; CS – Construct State (morphological marking of a possessee head); F – Feminine; GEN – Genitive suffix; ILL – Illative case; IMPR – Imperative; INFABS – Infinitive Absolute; IRR – Irrealis; JUS – Jussive; M – Masculine; MOD – Modal; NEG – Negation; P – Plural; PRON – Pronominal copula; PST – Past; PRSTV – Presentative; PTC – Participle; Q – Question particle; S – Singular.

How long will it be then until you tell the people to return from pursuing their brethren? (2Sam 2:26)

Moreover, BH has a plethora of additional types of subordinate clauses, shown in (5) – (18). Each subordinator is shown in boldface:

(5) Clausal complement

wə-ḏāwiḏ yōšēḇ bam-miḏbār way-yar
and-David stay.PTC.3MS in.the-desert and-saw.3MS

kī *ḇā šāʔūl ʔaħăr-āw ham-miḏbār-ā*
that came.3MS Saul after-3MS the-desert-ILL

But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw **that** Saul came after him into the wilderness. (1Sam. 26:3)

(6) Clausal subject[9]

ṭōḇ ***ʔăšɛr*** *tɛʔĕħōz bā-zɛ*
good **that** grasp.MOD.2MS at-this

wə-ḡam miz-zɛ ʔal tannaħ ʔɛṯ yāḏ-ɛḵā
and-also from-this NEG remove.MOD.2MS ACC hand-GEN.2MS

It is good **that** you grasp this and also not remove your hand from the other (Eccl. 7:18)

(7)a Relative clause

lō ṯāḇīʔū ʔɛṯ haq-qāhāl haz-zɛ ʔɛl hā-ʔārɛṣ ***ʔăšɛr*** *nāṯattī lā-hɛm*
NEG bring.MOD.2MP ACC the-assembly the-this to the-land **that** gave.1S to-3MP

You shall not bring this assembly into the land **which** I have given them (Num. 20:12)

b Free relative clause

wə-ḵī yāḡūr ʔittə-ḵɛm gēr
and-in.case dwell.MOD.3MS with-2MP stranger

ʔō ***ʔăšɛr*** *bəṯōḵ-əḵɛm lə-ḏōrōṯ-ēḵɛm…*
or **that** among-2MP to-generations-GEN.2MP

And if a stranger dwells with you, or **whoever** is among you throughout your generations … (Num. 15:14)

(8) Comparative clause

rabbīm ʔăšɛr mēṯū bə-ʔaḇnē hab-bārāḏ
more that died in-stones.CS the-hail

mē-ʔăšɛr *hārəḡū bənē yiśrʔēl bɛ-ħārɛḇ*
than-that killed.3MP sons.CS Israel with-sword

There were more who died from the hailstones **than** the children of Israel killed with the sword. (Josh. 10:11)

(9) Similative clause

yaʕaś YHWH ʕimmāḵɛm ħɛsɛḏ ***ka-ʔăšɛr*** *ʕăśīṯɛm ʕim ham-mēṯīm wə-ʕimm-āḏī*
do.JUS.3MS Lord with.you grace **as-that** did.2MP with the-dead and-with-1S

The Lord deal kindly with you, **as** you have dealt with the dead and with me (Ruth 1:8)

[9] In the NKJV translation, the clausal subject has been extraposed, but in the Hebrew original it is licit for a subject to follow its predicate.

(10) Temporal adverbial clause

*šəḇū lānū ḇā-zɛ **ʕaḏ ʔăšɛr** nāšūḇ ʔăl-ēḵɛm*
sit.IMPR.2MP for.us in-this **until that** return.MOD.1P to-2MP

Wait here for us **until** we come back to you. (Ex 24:14)

(11) Circumstantial clause[10]

*wayyērā ʔēl-āw YHWH… **wə-**hū yōšēḇ pɛṯaḥ hā-ʔōhɛl kə-ḥōm hay-yōm*
and.appeared.3MS to-3MS Lord … **and-**he sit.PTC.MS door.CS the-tent as-heat.CS the-day

Then the Lord appeared to him … **as** he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day (Gen. 18:1)

(12) Concessive adjunct clause

*wəhikkā-hū nāpɛš **wə-**l-ō ʔēn mišpaṭ māwɛṯ*
will.hit.3MS-ACC.3MS soul **and-**to-3MS NEG.AUX sentence.CS death

… and kill him **though** he was not deserving of death (Deut. 19:6)

(13) Reason clause

wə-lō ʔēn mišpaṭ māwɛṯ
and- to-3MS NEG.AUX sentence.CS death

***kī** lō śōnē hū lō mit-təmōl.šilšōm*
since NEG hater PRON.3MS to.him from-before

…he was not deserving of death, **since** he had not hated the victim in time past (Deut. 19:6)

(14) Explanation for commitment

***yaʕan ʔăšɛr** lō hālə̄ḵū ʕimmī*
because that NEG went.3MP with.me

lō nittēn lāhɛm mē-haš-šālāl ʔăšɛr hiṣṣalnū
NEG give.MOD.1P to.them of-the-spoil that recovered.1P

Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered (1Sam. 30:22)

(15) Purpose clause

*ḥāmal hā-ʕām ʕal mētaḇ haṣ-ṣōn wə-hab-bāqār **ləmaʕan** zəḇōaḥ la-YHWH*
spared.3MS the-people on best.CS the-sheep and-the-oxen **for** sacrifice to-Lord

the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen **to** sacrifice to the Lord (1Sam 15:15)

(16) Conditional clause

*wəhāyā **ʔim** lō yaʔămīnū gam li-šnē hā-ʔōṯōṯ hā-ʔēllɛ …*
will.be.3MS **if** NEG believe.MOD.3MP also to-two.SC the-signs the-these…

wəlāqaḥtā mim-mēmē ha-yəʔōr
will.take.2MS from-waters.CS the-river

And it shall be, **if** they do not believe even these two signs …, that you shall take water from the river (Ex. 4:9)

(17) Concessive conditional clause

[10] BH sometimes uses the conjunct *wə-* 'and' to introduce subordinate circumstantial clauses, also contrastive clauses such as (12) below, but this does not make the constructions coordinative.

wə-lū *ʔānōḵī šōqēl ʕal kapp-ay ʔɛlɛp̄ kɛsɛp̄*
and-if.IRR I weight.1S on palms-GEN.1S thousand silver

lō ʔɛšlaḥ yāḏ-ī ʔɛl bɛn ham-mɛlɛḵ
NEG aim.MOD.1S hand-GEN.1S at son.CS the-king

Even if I were receiving a thousand pieces of silver, I would not strike the king's son! (2Sam 18:12; NET Bible)

(18) Avertive clause

...hū yānūs ʔɛl ʔaḥat hɛ-ʕārīm hā-ʔēllɛ wā-ḥāy
he flee.MOD.3MS to one.F.CS the-cities.F the-these and-live.3MS

pɛn *yirdōp̄ gōʔēl had-dām ʔaḥărē hā-rōṣēaḥ wə-hiśśīḡ-ō*
lest pursue.MOD.3MS avenger.CS the-blood after the-killer and-overtook.3MS-ACC.3MS

…he shall flee to one of these cities and live; **lest** the avenger of blood … pursue the manslayer and overtake him (Deut. 19:5-6)

(19) Exceptive clause

hă-yēlḵū šnayim yaḥdāw ***biltī*** ***ʔim*** *nōʕāḏū*
Q-walk.MOD.3MP two.MP together **unless** **if** agreed.3MP

Can two walk together **unless** they are agreed? (Am. 3:3)

(20) Adversative clause

ʔašrē hā-ʔīš ʔăšɛr lō hālaḵ ba-ʕăṣaṯ rəšāʕīm…
blessings.CS the-man that NEG walked.3MS in-counsel.CS wicked.people…

kī.ʔim *bə-ṯōraṯ YHWH ḥɛpṣ-ō*
rather in-law.CS Lord delight-GEN.3MS

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly… **but** his delight is in the law of the Lord… (Psalm 1: 1-2)

To conclude this section, the richness and variety of the syntax of subordination in BH demonstrates that MH is no departure from the syntax of BH in being subordinating.

3.2. Clausal word order

Word order is a thorny issue, not well understood in Hebrew (recently Ilani, Goldberg and Shlomo 2006). Yet it can be determined that MH clausal word order is not closer to RH than to BH: both BH and RH allow V1 in constructions where MH only allows V2. Both (21a) and (21b) below include V1 clauses, where *see* is followed by its first-person pronominal subject *I*, from BH and RH respectively. But in the corresponding MH (21c), it would be unnatural (actually it would sound archaic) to have a post-verbal subject as in (21d) without fronting some other constituent, such as the adverbial *for the first time in my life* fronted in (21c):[11]

(21)a. *way-yōmɛr lāhɛn* ***rōʔɛ*** ***ʔānōḵī*** *ʔɛṯ pənē ʔăḇī-ḵɛn*
and-said.3MS to-3FP **see. PTC.MS** **I** ACC face.CS father-GEN.2FP

kī ʔēn-ɛnnū ʔēlay ki-ṯmōl.šilšōm
that NEG.AUX-3MS to.me as-before

[11] All MH examples, just like the BH and RH examples, are attested. RH examples from the Mishnah are translated as in the 1933 English translation by Herbert Danby, published by OUP. RH examples from the Babylonian Talmud are translated as in the 1935-1948 Soncino Edition.

and said to them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before (Gen 31:5)

b. *amar la-hem* ***roʔe*** ***ʔani*** *ʔet diḇre ʔelʕazar ben ʕaraḵ mi-diḇr-ekem*
said.3MS to-them **see.PTC.MS I** ACC words.CS Eleazer ben Arack from-words.GEN.2MP

He said to them: I prefer the words of Eleazer ben Arack to your words. (MishnahAboth 2:12)

c. *netanyahu le-tramp* ***la-rišona be-ħay-ay*** ***roʔe*** ***ʔani*** *tiqva le-šinuy*
Netanyahu to-Trump **to-first in-life-GEN.1S** see.PTC.MS I hope for-change

Netanyahu to Trump: For the first time in my life I see hope for change. (Walla News 23.5.2017)

d. # *netanyahu le-tramp* ***roʔe*** ***ʔani*** *tiqva le-šinuy larišona be-ħay-ay*
Netanyahu to-Trump see.PTC.MS I hope to-change to-first in- life-GEN.1S

Similarly, V1 is possible within relative clauses in BH and RH, as shown in (22a-b) respectively, where the resumptive pronoun may remain post-verbal and does not have to be fronted to the pre-verbal position. MH, on the other hand, requires the fronting of the resumptive pronoun if the verb would otherwise be in first position within the relative clause, as shown by the contrast in acceptability between the attested (22c) and the archaic (22d):

(22)a. *wayyaṯʕūm kizaḇ-ēhɛm ʔăšɛr* ***hālḵū ʔăḇōṯ-ām*** *ʔaħărē-hɛm*
led.astray.3MP lies.MP-GEN.3MP that **went.3MP fathers-GEN.3MP** behind-3MP

Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed. (Amos 2:4)

b. *ha-ʔiša še-****halaḵ*** ***baʕal-a*** *li-medinat ha-yam*
the-woman that-**went.3MS husband-GEN.3FS** to-country.CS the-sea

If a woman's husband had gone overseas…. (MishnahYebamoth 10:1)

c. *ba-post ha-noḵeħi mesaper cḇi ʕal ha-mitħare*
in.the-post the-current tells.3MS Tzvi about the-competitor

še-ʔaħar-av racu ʕod šnayim
that-behind-3MS ran.3MP more two

In the current post, Tzvi tells about a competitor followed by two other runners (Internet)

d. # *ba-post ha-noḵeħi mesaper cḇi ʕal ha-mitħare*
in.the-post the-current tells.3MS Tzvi about the-competitor

še ***racu ʕod šnayim ʔaħar-av***
that-**ran.3MP more two behind-3MS**

To conclude, word order in MH does not follow that of RH (though neither does it that of BH). This is an issue that needs further study, with attention to the languages with which MH was in contact during its emergence. Yet, for the purpose of the present study, suffice it to say that word-order does not show that the syntax of MH is closer to RH than to BH.

3.3. The syntax of conditional clauses

Following Rabin 1973: 179, I argue that the syntax of MH conditionals is BH rather than RH. RH strictly distinguishes unreal from real conditionals by obligatorily using the irrealis conjunction *ʔilu* 'if.IRR' in unreal conditionals instead of the unmarked conjunction *ʔim* 'if':

(23) RH real conditional with *ʔim*

apō hem ʔamru lo ***ʔim*** *ken hayita noheg*
also they said to.him **if** so were.2MS behave.PTC.MS

lo qiyamta micvat suka mi-yameḵa
NEG fulfilled.2MS law.CS Sukkah from-your.life

They said to him: If such has been your custom, you haven't ever in your life fulfilled the law of the Sukkah. (Mishnah,Sukkah 2:7)

(24) RH unreal conditional with *ʔilu*

rabi ṭarp̄on and-rabi ʕaqiḇa ʔomrim
rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Aqiva say.PTC.MP

***ʔilu** hayinu ba-sanhedrin lo neherag ba ʔadam leʕolam*
if.IRR were.1P in.the-high.court NEG was.killed.3MS in.it person ever

Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Aqiba said: Had we been in the [Rabbinic] High Court, no one would ever have been put to death. (MishnahMakkoth 1:10)

BH uses *ʔim* both for real and unreal conditionals:

(25) BH real conditional with *ʔim*

***ʔim** tɛħĕzaq ʔărām mim-mɛnnī wəhāyiṯāl l-ī lī-šūʕā*
if be.strong.MOD.3FS Syria from-1S are.2MS to-1S to-help

*wə-**ʔim** bənē ʕammōn yɛħɛzqū mim-məkā wəhālaḵtī lə-hōšīaʕ l-āḵ*
and-**if** sons.CS Ammon be.strong.MOD.3MP from-2MS go.1S to-help to-2MS

If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. (2Sam. 10:11)

(26) BH unreal conditional with *ʔim*

a Subjunctive conditional:[12]

ū-may yiṣdaq ʔĕnōš ʕim ʔēl
and-what be.right.MOD.3MS human with God

***ʔim** yaḥpōṣ lā-rīḇ ʕimm-ō lō yaʕănɛ-nnū*
if want.MOD.3MS to-argue with-3MS NEG answer.MOD.3MS-ACC.3MS

ʔaḥaṯ minni ʔālɛp̄
one from thousand

But how can a man be righteous before God? If one wished to contend with Him, he could not answer Him one time out of a thousand. (Job 9:2-3)

b Counterfactual conditional:

***ʔim** ʔămartī ʔăsapərā kəmo, hinnē ḏōr bānɛ-ḵā ḇāḡāḏətī*
if said.1S speak.COH.1S thus behold generation.CS sons-GEN.2MS betrayed.1S

If I had said, "I will speak thus," behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. (Ps. 73:15) (cited in Bivin 2017)

The use of *ʔim* as a general conditional conjunction is not due to BH lacking the real/unreal distinction within conditionals. BH optionally uses an irrealis conjunction *lū* 'if.IRR' instead of *ʔim*, but only in unreal conditionals, e.g. in the concessive (17) above, and also in the following counterfactual:[13]

(27) *wattōmɛr lō ʔištō, **lū** ħāp̄ēṣ YHWH la-hămīṯ-ēnu*
and.said.3FS to.him wife-GEN.3MS **if.IRR** wanted.3MS Lord to-kill-ACC.1P

[12] According to Joosten 2004 and many other scholars, verbs with prefixed forms, such as the verbs *yaʕănɛ* in this example, are modal. A modal verb in the apodosis is one way of making the conditional unreal.
[13] The RH irrealis conjunction *ʔilu* is actually the combination of the two BH conjunctions *ʔim* and *lū*.

lō *lāqaħ* *mīy-yāḏ-ēnu* *ʕōlā* *u-minħā*
NEG took.3MS from-hand-GEN.1S burnt.offering and-grain.offering

But his wife said to him, "If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands (Judg. 13:23)

MH, like BH, allows *ʔim* 'if' both in real and unreal conditionals, and optionally uses an irrealis conjunction in unreal conditionals. But there is a twist: the irrealis conjunction which is typically used in MH is actually the RH conjunction *ʔilu* rather than the BH conjunction *lū*. As will be shown in section 4, it is often the case that MH adopts, within BH constructions, RH features and exponents of the functional head of the construction. In the case at hand, this results in the use of the RH exponent *ʔilu*.

3.4. The syntax of unconditional clauses

The unconditional is a construction where two (or more) antecedents are related to a consequent. The construction asserts that the consequent holds unconditionally of the question which one of the antecedents is true. In Hebrew, the unconditional is constructed by conjoining the antecedents (Rubinstein and Doron 2015). In MH each conjunct is introduced by *ʔim* 'if', optionally also by the preposition *ben* 'between':

(28)a *pirsomot,* ***ʔim*** *ze le-šampo* ***ve-ʔim*** *ze le-mip̄laga, noʕadu* *besofo.šel.daḇar* *li-mkor*
ads, **if** it to-shampoo **and-if** it to-party, are.designed ultimately to-sell

'Ads, whether for shampoo or for a political party, are ultimately designed to sell.' (Internet)

b *en šave* *be-godl-o* *le-mišqal-o* *šel ha-ʔiš,*
n equals in-value-GEN.3MS to-weight-GEN.3MS of the-man

ben ***ʔim*** *ha-maʕalit bi-menuħa* ***ve-ben*** ***ʔim*** *hi naʕa* *bi-mehirut qḇuʕa*
between if the elevator in-rest **and-between if** it moves in-speed constant

'the value of n is the weight of the man, whether the elevator is static or moves with constant speed.' (*Foundations of Physics 1999*)

It appears that the MH unconditional follows BH more closely than RH. In BH too, each conjunct is introduced by *ʔim*:

(29) *ʔim min hab-bāqār hū maqrīḇ,* ***ʔim*** *zāḵār* ***ʔim*** *nəqēḇā,*
if from the-herd he offers.PTC.MS **if** male **if** female

tāmīm *yaqrīḇ-ɛnnū* *lip̄nē* *YHWH*
whole offer.MOD.3MS-ACC.3MS before Lord

If he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord (Lev. 3:1)

In RH on the other hand, the conjuncts are not introduced by *ʔim*, but only by the preposition *ben* 'between':

(30)a *bet* *šammay* *ʔomrin*
house.CS Shammai say.PTC.MP

ʔen *moliḵin* *ħala* *u-matanot* *le-kohen* *be-yom.toḇ*
NEG.AUX take.PTC.MP dough and-offerings.MP to-priest in-holiday

ben *še-hurmu* *me-emeš* ***ben*** *še-hurmu* *me-hayom*
between that-were.set.3MP from yesterday **between** that-were.set.3MP from today

'The School of Shammai say: One does not take dough offering or priest's dues to the priest on a festival day, whether they were set apart on the day before or on the same day.' (Mishnah,Beitsa 1:6)

b *napl̄u mayim ṭmeʔim ve-napl̄al kikar šel truma …*
fell.3MP water.MP unclean.MP and-fell.3MS loaf.3MS of offering

rabi šimʕon ʔomer, ***ben*** *še-hidiaħ* ***u-ben*** *še-lo hidiaħ, ṭame*
Rabbi Simeon says **between** that-rinsed.3MS **and-between** that-NEG rinsed.3MS unclean

if unclen water fell into it and a loaf of offering fell in … Rabbi Simeon says: Whether he rinsed it or not, it becomes unclean. (Mishnah,Mikvaoth 1:3)

Thus the MH unconditional construction is built like the BH one, whereby each antecedent is introduced by the conditional conjunct *ʔim*, which does not appear in the RH construction.

3.5. Clausal complements of aspectual and modal auxiliaries

MH clausal complements of aspectual and modal auxiliaries have the same structure as in BH rather than RH (Bendavid 1967: 499, Dubnov 2005). In both BH and MH, such complements are non-finite. Here are examples from BH:

(31)a. *yōʔāb̲ bɛn ṣərūyā* ***hēħēl*** ***li-mnot*** *wə-lō k̲illā*
Joab son.CS Zeruiah **began.3MS** **to-count** and-NEG finished.3MS

Joab the son of Zeruiah began a census but he did not finish (2Chr. 27:24)

b. *kī mī* ***yūk̲al*** ***li-špōṭ*** *ʔɛṯ ʕamm-ək̲ā hak-kāb̲ēd̲ haz-zɛ*
for who **can.MOD.3MS** **to-judge** ACC people-GEN.2MS the-great the-this

For who is able to judge this great people of Yours? (1Kgs. 3:9)

Though RH also used the BH complements, it innovated an additional type of complement which was participial (32a), or a full finite clause (32b):

(32)a ***heħelu*** ***maʕalin*** *b-a-gzirin le-sader ʔet ha-maʕarak̲a*
began.3MP **raise.PTC.MP** in-the-logs to-set.up ACC the-altar.fire

They began to bring up logs to set up the altar fire. (Mishnah, Tamid 2:3)

b. ***yak̲ol*** *hu* ***še-yomar***
can.PTC.MS he **that-will.say.3MS**

He may say (Mishnah, Ketuboth 6:2)

The RH innovation was discontinued in MH, which only kept the BH type of complement. In (33) and (34), the aspectual verb modal verb take a non-finite complement, as in BH, rather than a participial or a tensed complement as in RH.

(33)a ***hitħilu*** ***le-hab̲i*** *supḡaniyot l-a-misrad ħodeš lipne ħanuka*
began.3MP **to-bring** doughnuts the-the-office month before Hanukkah

'People started bringing Hanukkah doghnuts to the office a month before Hanukkah!' (Internet)

b * *hitħilu meb̲iʔim supḡaniyot l-a-misrad ħodeš lipne ħanuka*
began.3MP bring.PTC.MP doughnuts the-the-office month before Hanukkah

(34)a *mi* ***yak̲ol*** ***le-henot*** *me-ha-šerut*
who **can.3MS** **to-enjoy** from-the-service

'Who can enjoy the service?' (Internet)

b * *mi yaḵol še-yehene me-ha-šerut*
who can.3MS that-will.enjoy.3MS from-the-service

Again, as in the previous constructions discussed, MH discontinued the changes innovated by RH, and reverted to the BH structure.

3.6 The gerund clause

We now turn to the most dramatic example of the BH nature of MH syntax. In the examples of the previous sections, MH discontinued changes innovated by RH within BH constructions. In the present section we will find a BH construction which did not even make it into RH, yet found its way into MH. In MH, as in BH, nonfinite clauses include gerund clauses, whereas RH uses only the infinitive and does not use the gerund (Sharvit 2008: 116). In other words, the Hebrew gerund is a clausal construction which originated in BH, was lost in RH, and reappeared in MH.

3.6.1 The infinitive and the gerund in MH

The term *gerund* is borrowed from the grammars of European languages. It was introduced into the study of MH by Rosén (1962: 323-325, 1977: 104-106), and has been used by others since then (Berman 1978: Ch. 9, Hazout 1992, Siloni 1999: Ch.5). It describes a non-finite form of the verb (uninflected for tense and agreement), and is usually contrasted with the infinitive, which is also a non-finite form of the verb. In (35) we see a MH example of the gerund; in (36) – of the infinitive:

(35) **Gerund clause**

ha-yoʕec ha-mišpaṭi Yehuda Weinstein nahag naḵon
the-counselor the-legal Yehuda Weinstein behaved appropriately

be-qabl-o ***ʔet*** *hamlacat praqliṭ ha-medina Shay Nitzan*
in-accepting-GEN.3MS ACC recommendation.CS prosecutor.CS the-state Shay Nitzan

'Attorney general Yehuda Weinstein behaved appropriately **in accepting the recommendation of state prosecutor** Shay Nitzan.' (Internet)

(36) **Infinitive clause**

hu mitqaše ***le-qabel ʔet*** *ha-aħer ve-ha-šone*
he find.hard.3MS **to-accept ACC** the-other and-the-different

'He finds it hard **to accept the other and the different**.' (Internet)

Both the gerund and the infinitive are obligatorily introduced by prepositions in MH, the infinitive exclusively by the preposition *le-* 'to', and the gerund -- by a variety of prepositions (such as *be-* 'in' (35)). Both forms select a direct object in the accusative case, as shown by the use of *ʔet* in both (35) and (36). But the two non-finite clauses strictly contrast in two structural properties.

- The gerund clause never functions as a complement, but typically as a temporal/circumstantial adjunct. The infinitive clause functions as a thematic/purpose complement.[14]

[14] cf. Haspelmath 1989, Verstraete 2008, for the inclusion of purposives together with thematic complements. A biblical example is shown in (i), where 'to see the city' is the purpose complement of the verb 'come down', exactly as it would be in MH:
(i) *way-yērɛḏ* YHWH ***li-rʔōṯ*** *ʔɛṯ hā-ʕīr*

- The gerund clause obligatorily has an overt genitive subject (such as the possessive clitic *-o* 'his' in (35)), whereas the infinitive clause never has an overt subject.

The strict complementarity between the overt subject of the gerund and the null subject of the infinitive is puzzling. It would be tempting to correlate it to the different functions of the gerund and infinitive as adjunct vs. complement respectively. In the next section we will see that this correlation is due to BH syntax.

While for most verbs the gerund and the infinitive have stems with the same form (e.g., *qabel* in (35) and (36) above), the gerund and the infinitive are in fact derived from different stems. This is apparent in verbs with weak-initial roots (roots with a first consonant that tends to elide or assimilate, such as /y/ or /n/, called *weak consonant* in traditional Hebrew grammars). The weak consonant is often elided in the infinitival stem but preserved in the gerund stem. As will become clear in the next subsections, the stem of the MH infinitive is not that of the RH infinitive but actually that of the BH gerund.

(37)

root	*ydʕ*	*ntn*	*yšḇ*	*yrd*
MH Inf.	*la-daʕat* 'to-know'	*la-tet* 'to-give'	*la-šeḇet* 'to-sit'	*la-redet* 'to-descend'
MH Ger.	*be-yodʕ-o* 'in-knowing-GEN.3MS'	*be-notn-o* 'in-giving-GEN.3MS'	*be-yošḇ-o* 'in-sitting-GEN.3MS'	*be-yord-o* 'in-descending GEN.3MS'

3.6.2 The gerund in BH

In BH, there is no distinction between the gerund and the infinitive. Rather there is a single category – the gerund. Indeed, the grammars of the Bible in the last 1000 years have not distinguished the gerund from the infinitive, and have all assumed a **single category**, traditionally called the *Infinitive Construct*, which has actually been likened to a gerund (Gesenius 1910:§45; Joüon 1923:§124).[15] I will use the term *gerund* rather than *Infinitive Construct*, but the terminology is not important. What is important is that the BH gerund

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and-came.down.3MS Lord **to-see** ACC the-city
But the Lord came down **to see** the city (Gen 11:5)

Another biblical example was shown in (15) above with a controlled null argument in object position, an option which distinguishes purpose complements from adjuncts. Verstraete also classifies clauses denoting intended endpoint as complements, together of purpose clauses. An example appears in the text in (41).

[15] I set aside the so-called *Infinitive Absolute*, another non-finite BH form of the verb, extremely rarely used in MH (Schwarzwald 1989), which seems to be neither infinitive nor gerund, and hence irrelevant to our discussion (cf. Goldenberg 1971, Fassberg 2007, Morrison 2013, Hatav 2017). It contrasts with the gerund in form, e.g. *yaṣō* in (i) vs. *ṣēṯ* in (ii) below, and also in distribution: the Infinitive Absolute typically does not take arguments, unlike the gerund (e.g. the gerund in (ii) takes the locative complement *from his country*), and typically functions as a prefix to a finite form of the same verb:

(i) **Inf Abs**
wə-ʔim ***yaṣō*** ***yēṣē*** *hā-rōṣēaḥ ʔɛṯ gəḇūl ʕīr miqlāṭ-ō….*
and-if **go.out.INF**ABS **go.out.MOD.3MS** the-murderer ACC limit.CS city.CS refuge-GEN.3MS
But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge … (Num. 35:26)

(ii) **Gerund**
wə-lō hōsīp̄ ʕōḏ mɛleḵ miṣrayīm ***lā-ṣēṯ*** *mē-ʔarṣ-ō*
and-NEG continued.3MS more king.CS Egypt **to-go.out** from-land-GEN.3MS
And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore (2Kg. 24:7)

encompasses both the MH infinitive and gerund. In particular, there is a single stem for each non-finite form in BH, as in (38) below, unlike the two different MH stems in (37) above.[16]

(38)

root	*ydʕ*	*ntn*	*yšb*	*yrd*
BH Ger. with *lə-*	*lā-ḏaʕaṯ* 'to-know'	*lā-ṯɛṯ* 'to-give'	*lā-šɛḇɛṯ* 'to-sit'	*lā-reḏeṯ* 'to-descend'
BH Ger. with *bə-*	*bə-ḏaʕt-ō* 'in-knowing-GEN.3MS'	*bə-ṯitt-ō* 'in-giving-GEN.3MS'	*bə-šiḇt-ō* 'in-sitting-GEN.3MS'	*bə-riḏt-ō* 'in-descending-GEN.3MS'

The correlation found in MH between the grammatical function of the nonfinite construction and the presence of a subject in the construction can be traced back to a BH alternation internal to the gerund clause:

> The Gerund Subject Alternation (BH)
> A BH gerund in thematic/purpose complement position cannot have a subject;
> a BH gerund in temporal/circumstantial adjunct position must have a subject.

The Gerund Subject Alternation is very salient in BH (though not noticed before in the literature). The vast majority of the circa 5000 occurrences of the gerund in the Bible function either as thematic/purpose complement or as temporal/circumstantial adjunct,[17] and yet there is only a handful of counter-examples violating the subject alternation. Thus, the Gerund Subject Alternation is a very robust generalization of BH.[18]

An account for the Gerund Subject Alternation is not offered here (cf. Doron to appear), but it should be emphasized that the gerund's function in BH does not correlate with the choice of preposition. The same directional prepositions *lə-* and *min-* are found both in complement gerunds and adjunct gerunds. Obviously, temporal prepositions are found in adjunct gerunds only.

The following are complement gerunds, with both directional prepositions:

(39)a *u-ḇinyāmin hēḥēl* ***lə-hakkōṯ*** *ḥălālīm bə-ʔīš yiśrāʔēl*
and-Benjamin begun.3MS **to-strike** casualties in-man.CS Israel

Benjamin had begun to strike down the Israelites (NET; Judg. 20:39)

b. *wə.ḵillā* ***mik-kappēr*** *ʔɛṯ haq-qōḏɛš*
and.will.finish.3MS **from-atoning** ACC the-holy

And when he has made an end **of atoning** for the Holy Place (Lev. 16:20)

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[16] The BH gerund with *lə-* is often translated to English as an infinitive, where the BH gerund with other prepositions is often translated as an English gerund or tensed clause. In BH this is a single category irrespective of the translation.

[17] There are additional configurations in which gerunds are found: in subject position, in comparatives, in relative clauses, in rationale clauses (cf Jones 1985, Nissenbaum 2005 on the distinction between rationale and purpose clauses), to which the analysis should be extended. Unlike the clear contrast between complement gerunds (with a null subject) and temporal/circumstantial adjunct gerunds (with an overt subject), the additional configurations allow both null and overt subjects.

[18] The Gerund Subject Alternation is only formulated for those gerunds, which, as in MH, are introduced by a preposition. It does not apply to bare gerunds (gerunds not introduced by a preposition), which, unlike in MH, are possible in BH. BH bare gerunds are found as complements of some propositional attitude verbs:

(i) *zāḵartī l-āḵ… **lɛḵt-ēḵ** ʔaḥărˇ-ay bam-miḏbār*
remember.1S to-2FS **going-2FS** after-1S in.the-desert
I remember…when you went after Me in the wilderness (Jer 2:2)

The same directional prepositions are found with adjunct gerunds:

(40)a *ba-ħōḏeš haš-šəlīšī* ***lə-ṣēṯ*** *bənē yiśrāʔēl mē-ʔɛrɛṣ miṣrāyim…*
in.the-month the-third **to-going.out** sons.CS Israel from-land.CS Egypt

In the third month after the children of Israel **had gone out** of the land of Egypt (Ex. 19:1)[19]

b ***mib-biltī yəḵōlɛṯ*** *YHWH lə-hāḇī ʔɛṯ hā-ʕām haz-zɛ ʔɛl hā-ʔārɛṣ*
from-NEG being.able Lord to-bring ACC the-people the-this to the-land

ʔăšɛr nišbaʕ lā-hɛm, wayyišħāṭ-ēm bam-miḏbār
that swore.3MS to-3MS and.slaughtered-ACC.3MP in.the-desert

Because the Lord **was not able** to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness. (Num. 14:16)[20]

Indeed one finds examples where a complement gerund and an adjunct gerund cooccur, both with the same preposition (*lə-* in this case). (41) has both a complement gerund *lə-ḇiltī ʕăśōṯ ʔɛṯ kol miṣwōṯ-ay* 'to not perform all my commendments' which denotes an intended endpoint (cf. fn. 14 above) and a circumstantial adjunct gerund *lə-hapār-əḵɛm ʔɛṯ bərīṯ-ī* 'to break my covenant'. As is to be expected, the complement gerund (with a null subject) is closer to the verb than the adjunct gerund (with an overt genitive clitic subject):

(41) *wə-ʔim bə-ħuqqōṯ-ay timʔāsū*
and-if at-laws-GEN.1S despise.MOD.2MP

wə-ʔim ʔɛṯ mišpāṭ-ay tiḡʕal nap̄š-əḵɛm
and-if ACC verdicts-GEN.1S abhor.MOD.3FS soul.FS-GEN.2PL

lə-ḇiltī ʕăśōṯ *ʔɛṯ kol miṣwōṯ-ay* ***lə-hapār-əḵɛm*** *ʔɛṯ bərīṯ-ī*
to-NEG perform ACC all.CS commandments-GEN.1S **to-breach-**GEN.**2MP** ACC pact-GEN.1S

ʔap̄ ʔănī ʔɛʕĕśɛ zōṯ lā-ḵɛm
also I do.MOD.1S this to-2MP

and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments to the extent that you do not perform all My commandments, so as to break My covenant, I also will do this to you (Lev. 26:15-16) [adapted from the NKJV][21]

Temporal prepositions are only found with adjunct gerunds, not with complement gerunds. An example is shown here with the preposition *since*, but others abound with additional prepositions *bə* 'in' (2Sam 15:5), *ʕaḏ* 'until' (Deut. 22:2), *kə* 'as' (Judg. 9:33) etc:

(42) *way-yōmɛr parʕō ʔɛl yōsēp̄,* ***ʔaħărē hōḏīaʕ*** *ʔĕlōhīm ʔōṯ-ḵā ʔɛṯ kol zōṯ,*
and-said.3MS Pharaoh to Joseph **since** **showing** God ACC-2MS ACC all.CS this

ʔēn nāḇōn wə-ħāḵām kām-ōḵā
NEG.AUX discerning and-wise like-2MS

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[19] The contrast in vowels between the preposition *lə-* in this example *lə-ṣēṯ* and in ex. (ii) of fn. 15 above: *lā-ṣēṯ* is not a difference in stem between adjunct and complement gerunds, but a mere phonological difference. See Khan (2013) for an explanation in terms of pre-tonic lengthening affecting the preposition when it precedes the stressed *ṣēṯ* in the absolute state in the latter, but not in the unstressed construct state in the former.

[20] According to Avineri 1976:374, the form *yaxolɛṯ* has been classified as a gerund by Jonah Ibn Jannah (11th century) in his grammar *Sefer Harikma*, precisely because it can take the verbal negation *biltī* which is found in tensed verbal phrases like the following:

(i) *wə-ħizzəqū yəḏē mərēʕīm* ***lə-ḇiltī šāḇū*** *ʔīš mē-rāʕāṯ-ō*
and-strengthened.3MP hands.CS evildoers **to-NEG turned.back.3MP** each from-wickedness-GEN.3MS
They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness. (Jer. 23:14)

[21] In the original NKJV translation, the two gerund clauses are conjoined, in accordance to the syntax determined by the Masoretic cantillation.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. (Gen. 4:39)

3.6.3 The infinitive in RH

RH gave up the BH gerund and innovated an infinitive (Segal 1936, Azar 1995) and many event nominal forms (Bar-Asher 2015). Temporal/circumstantial adjuncts which were expressed by gerunds in the Bible are expressed by event nominals in RH. To give an example, the temporal adjunct 'when leaving/bringing out' was expressed in BH by the gerund in (43a), and in RH – by the event nominal in (43b):

(43)a BH

bəriṯ YHWH ʔlōhē ʔăḇōṯ-ām ʔăšɛr kāraṯ ʕimm-ām
covenant.CS Lord God.CS fathers-GEN.3MP that made.3MS with.3MP

bə-hōṣīʔ-ō *ʔōtām mē-ʔɛrɛṣ miṣrāyim*
in-bringing.out-3MS ACC.3MP from-land.CS Egypt

… the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt (Deut. 29:25)

b RH

ʔamar raḇ yehuda ʔamar raḇ
said Rab Judah said Rab

bi-šeʕat ***hoṣaʔat*** *poʕalim u-ḇi-šeʕat haḵnasat poʕalim….*
in-hour.CS **bringing.out.CS** workers and-in-hour.CS bringing.in.CS workers

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: At the time when the labourers leave [work] and at the time when they enter [upon their work] … (Babylonian Talmud Arachin 6:21)

Other gerunds, in particular complement gerunds, are replaced by the infinitive, as in the following example:

(44) *ʔim* ***raca*** ***li-yten*** *letoḵ-o mayim ʔo yayin yiten*
if **wanted.3MS to-pour** into-3MS water or wine pour.MOD.3MS

If one, however, **desires to pour** water or wine into it, he may do so (Babylonian Talmud; Rosh Hashana 32b)

The RH infinitive in (44) does not have the same stem as the BH complement gerund. Additional examples are shown in (45), again with weak-initial roots. The RH infinitive derived from these roots is based on the imperfective stem rather than on the Biblical gerund stem (Avirbach 2013):

(45)

root	*ydʕ*	*ntn*	*yšḇ*	*yrd*
BH Ger. with *lə-*	*lā-ḏaʕaṯ*	*lā-ṯɛṯ*	*lā-šɛḇɛṯ*	*lā-reḏeṯ*
RH Inf.	*li-ydaʕ*	*li-yten*	*li-yšev*	*li-yred*
both:	'to know'	'to give'	'to sit'	'to descend'

Moreover, the preposition *le-* 'to' is reinterpreted as an obligatory part of the RH infinitive. Evidence for this re-analysis comes from the fact that an additional preposition can precede

the *le*-infinitive, e.g. *min-* 'from' (Segal 1936:135-138). This can be accounted for if the preposition *le-* 'to' has been grammaticalized and reanalysed as the tense-value of the inflectional head of the infinitival clause.

(46) *leʕolam ʔal yimnaʕ adam ʕacmo* ***mi-li-yleḵ*** *le-bet.ha.midraš*
never NEG prevent.MOD.3MS man himself **from-to-go** to-the.Torah.school

Never should a person prevent himself from going to the Torah School. (Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat 4:32)

RH infinitival clauses are also assimilated to finite clauses in that they can be embedded under the complementizer *še-* 'that', obligatorily so for negated infinitives:

(47) *maqom še-nahagu* ***še-lo*** ***le-haśkir*** *ʔen maśkirin*
place that-were.accustomed.3MP **that-NEG to-lease** NEG.AUX lease.PTC.MP

Where it is not customary to lease [the trees together with the fied], they are not leased. (Babyl. Talmud Baba Metzia 103b)

Why did RH replace the gerund with an infinitive? The answer is probably contact with Aramaic. In general, due the contact with Aramaic, RH gave up the aspectual system which characterized BH (Bar-Asher Siegal 2013). It therefore introduced a modal category to clauses, which, in the case of the non-finite gerunds -- turned them into infinitives. This is a case where a lexical preposition is reanalysed as a functional modal category, i.e. the grammaticalization of the infinitive described in Haspelmath 1989 and Roberts & Roussou 2003. The same process was shown for the Romance languages in Bauer 1993.

3.6.4 Back to the MH gerund

MH readopted the BH gerund for temporal/circumstantial adjuncts, but also kept the RH infinitive (with BH morphology, but structural RH properties). Since the RH infinitive was originally a replacement for the BH complement gerund, it follows from the Gerund Subject Alternation that it has a null subject. Accordingly, the MH infinitive has a null subject as well. And since the MH gerund is a revival of the BH adjunct gerund, it follows from the Gerund Subject Alternation that it has an overt subject. We have thus shown that the puzzling complementarity within MH between the null subject of the infinitive and the overt subject of the gerund is due to the syntax of the BH gerund.

Schematically, the process can be represented as follows:

(48)

BH complement gerund + *lə-* (without subject) → RH infinitive → MH infinitive
BH adjunct gerund + *lə-*, *bə-*, *kə-*, *ʕaḏ…* (with subject) → absent in RH → re-appears in MH

4. The contribution of the syntax of RH

The previous section has demonstrated that the syntax of MH is not closer to the syntax of RH than to the syntax of MH (subsections 3.1 and 3.2), and moreover (subsections 3.3 – 3.6), that many MH clausal constructions stem from the syntax of BH rather than RH. The BH origin of an even larger number of sub-clausal constructions is shown in the Appendix. MH thus seems to have readopted the syntax of BH in many respects, rather than continuing that of RH. On the other hand, there is also RH syntax in MH. We have just seen that the RH infinitive is found in MH, alongside the BH gerund. Yet what is the RH infinitive? It consists

of a reinterpretation of the BH gerund through reinterpreting its *lə-* head, originally a BH preposition, as a modal head, which results in the gerund becoming infinitive.

I suggest that the same holds for other RH features of MH syntax. What MH syntax has adopted from RH are RH values and exponents for particular functional heads of BH constructions. In the case of the infinitive, one category (a preposition) was reinterpreted as a different category (modality). In other examples, the category is unchanged, and only the exponent is due to RH. The latter type of example was mentioned above in relation to the choice of conjuncts introducing unreal conditionals (section 3.3), where the RH *ʔilu* replaces the BH *lū* without modifying the BH category.

In both types of cases, MH has adopted RH values and exponents for functional categories within BH constructions. In a third type of cases, the functional category might be due to a language with which MH was in contact during its emergence. Typically in such cases it is an RH exponent rather than a BH exponent which is adopted for the head of the new category.

Thus, the contribution of RH syntax to MH actually consists in RH values and exponents of the functional heads of constructions originating from BH or from contact with other languages. This type of change has been called *convergence* by Matras 2000, "the adaptation of an internal element in Language A to match the scope and distribution of an element in Language B that is perceived as its functional counterpart" (ibid. 83). All the following examples involve such convergence:

A. Tense replaces aspect as the main inflectional category of the clause (section 3.6).

B. Prepositional possessives replace construct-state possessives:

(49)a BH construct-state possessive

ba<u>t</u> *ʕomrī* *mɛlɛ<u>k</u>* *yiśrāʔēl*
daughter.CS Omri king.CS Israel

daughter of Omri King of Israel (2Kgs. 8:26)

b RH prepositional possessive

bit-o *šel* *ʔa<u>b</u>raham* *ʔa<u>b</u>i-nu*
daughter.GEN.3MS of Abraham father-GEN.1P

daughter of Abraham our father (Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah 3a)

MH adopted the agreement category which was added in RH to mark the agreement of the head of the possessive construction to the possessor (following the analysis of Engelhardt 2000). As noted by an anonymous reviewer, those nominal heads which even in RH are not marked by agreement, such as family relation nouns, *mother, sister, wife*, have kept the non-agreement Biblical value in MH.

C. Periphrastic anaphora in BH was reciprocal only (Bar-Asher Siegal 2012).[22] MH incorporated the periphrastic reflexive found in RH, e.g. in (50), and replaced the BH reciprocal exponent in (51a) with the RH reciprocal exponent in (51b), cf. also (3) above:

[22] An anonymous reviewer suggests that BH might have had a periphrastic reflexive *napš-ō* 'soul-GEN.3MS'. Indeed, *napš-ō* is bound by the sentence subject in many examples. Still, it is not a reflexive anaphor, since it can also be free:

(i) *wat-tiqṣar* ***napš-ō*** *ba-ʕămal* *yiśrāʔēl*
and-collapsed.3FS **soul-GEN.3MS** in-misery.CS Israel

And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel. (Judg. 10:16)

(50) RH

be-k̲ol dor va-dor ħayaḇ ʔadam li-rʔot ʔet ***ʕacmo***
in-every generation and-generation obliged person to-see ACC **himself**

ke-ʔilu hu yaca mi-micrayim
as-if he came.out from-Egypt

In every generation a man is bound to regard himself as though he personally had gone forth from Egypt. (Babyl. Talmud, Pesahim 116b)

(51)a BH

way-yəhī ħōšɛk̲ ʔăpēlā bə-k̲ol ʔɛrɛṣ miṣrayim šəlōšɛṯ yāmīm
and-was.3MS darkness obscurity in-all.CS land.CS Egypt three.CS days

lō rāʔū ***ʔīš ʔɛṯ ʔāħi-w*** *...* *šəlōšɛṯ yāmīm*
NEG saw.3MP **each ACC brother.GEN.3MS** three.CS days

And there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see **one another**... for three days. (Ex. 10:22-23)

b RH

sanhedrin hayta ke-ħaci goren ʕagula kede še-yihyu roʔin ***ze ʔet ze***
high.court was.3FS as-half circle round so that-will.be.3MP see.PTC.MP **this ACC this**

The [Rabbinic] High Court sat in the form of a semicircular threshing floor so that they might see **one another**. (Babyl. Talmud Sanhedrin 36b)

Hence the BH category of periphrastic anaphora acquired RH exponents.

D. In MH, as in RH, *wh*-headed free relatives replace zero-headed BH free relatives (Bar-Ziv Levy and Agranovsky 2016):

(52)a BH: zero-headed free relative

way-yar ʔĕlōhīm ʔɛṯ ***kol ʔăšɛr ʕāśā*** *wə-hinnē ṭōḇ məʔōḏ*
and-saw.3MS God ACC **all.CS that made.3MS** and-PRSTV good very

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. (Gen. 1:31)

b RH: *wh*-headed free relative

kol ma še-ʕaśa *ʔaḇraham le-malʔaḵe ha-šaret be-ʕacmo*
all what that did.3MS Abraham for-angels.CS the-ministry by-himself

ʕaśa ha-qadoš baruḵ hu le-ḇan-av be-ʕacmo
did.3MS the-holy blessed PRON.3MS for-sons-GEN.3MS by-himself

Everything which Abraham personally did for the Ministering Angels, the Holy One, blessed be He, did in person for his sons; (Babyl. Talmud, Baba Metzia 86b)

Again, the head of a BH category has acquired RH exponents.

E. Sentential complements of all prepositions, including Biblical prepositions, are introduced in MH by the RH *še-* rather than the BH *ʔašer* (Dubnov and Mor 2012). An example is given in (53) with the preposition *until*. Parallel examples can be shown for the prepositions *after,*

as, because-of etc., all taking a clause introduced by *ʔašer* in BH, and by *še-* in RH. MH uses the RH *še-* with all these BH prepositions.[23]

(53)a BH

wa-ʕăzartɛm ʔōṯ-ām ***ʕaḏ ʔăšɛr*** *yānīaḥ* YHWH *la-ʔăḥē-ḵɛm kā-ḵɛm*
and-help.2MP ACC-3MP **until that** give.rest.MOD.3MS Lord to-brothers-GEN.2MP as-2MP

and help them, **until the Lord has given** your brethren rest, as He gave you.
(Josh. 1:14-55)

b RH

ʔen meḇarḵin ʕal-av ***ʕad še-****yiten letoḵ-o mayim*
NEG.AUX bless.PTC.MP over-3MS **until that**-will.add.3MS into-3MS water

a blessing should not be said over it **until water has been added**. (Babyl. Talmud Berachot 50b)

It appears that this is not simply a lexical change, but a syntactic change: the formation of a new category C (Complementizer) under the influence of the contact languages of the first MH speakers. Many European languages make use of a general complementizer found both in propositional complements and modifiers. BH did not have such a general C. BH typically uses *ʔašer* in modifiers and *ki* in propositional complements of verbs. An example with *ʔašer* within temporal adjuncts was just provided in (53a) above, and I repeat below example (5) with a clausal complement introduced by *ki*:

(54) Clausal complement

wə-ḏāwiḏ yōšēḇ bam-miḏbār way-yar
and-David stay.PTC.3MS in.the-desert and-saw.3MS

kī ḇā šāʔūl *ʔaḥăr-āw ham-miḏbār-ā*
that came.3MS Saul after-3MS the-desert-ILL

But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw **that Saul came** after him into the wilderness. (1Sam. 26:3)

ki also functioned in BH as a circumstantial or reason conjunct, as shown by examples in section 3.1 above, repeated here:

(55) *wə-**ḵī** yāḡūr ʔittəḵɛm gēr*
and-**in.case** dwell.MOD.3MS with-2MP stranger

And if a stranger dwells with you… (Num. 15:14)

(56) ***kī*** *lō śōnē hū lō mit-təmōl.šilšōm*
since NEG hater PRON.3MS to.him from-before

… **since** he had not hated the victim in time past (Deut. 19:6)

Accordingly, it was impossible to consistently use the exponents *ʔašer* or *ki* as general values for C. Rather, the RH *še-* became the general complementizer exponent. The adoption of *še-* as a general C was possible despite the fact that it was also a reason conjunct in RH (as shown in 57b below), since MH preserved the BH particle *ki* in reason clauses. Thus, a reason clause in MH would be constructed in parallel to (57a) but not (57b):

[23] As pointed out to me by Miri Bar-Ziv Levy, the BH *ʔašer* can be used in MH with prepositions such as *ke-* 'as' and *me-* 'from'. Perhaps the RH clitic complementizer *še-* is less favoured when combining with a clitic preposition.

(57)a BH

*way-yīḇaš han-nāḥal **kī** lō hāyā gɛšɛm bā-ʔārɛṣ*
and-dried.3MS the brook **because** NEG was.3MS rain in.the-land

And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, **because there had been no rain** in the land. (1Kgs. 17:7)

b RH

ribono šel ʕolam bane-ḵa śamu pene-hem ʕal-ay
Lord-GEN.3MS of world sons-GEN.2MS turned.3MP faces-GEN.3MP to-1S

***še-**ʔani ke-ḇen bayit lepāney-ḵa*
because-I like-son.CS house before-2MS

O Lord of the world, thy children have turned their faces to me, **for I am like a son** of the house before thee. (MishnahTaanith 3:8)

Thus it appears that whereas BH had different conjuncts introducing different constructions, MH innovated the category C with the RH exponent *še-*. Once *še-* was reanalysed as a complementizer, it did not function any longer as a reason conjunct in MH.[24]

5. Conclusion

I have substantiated Ben-Hayyim's view of the non-linear development of Hebrew by showing that it holds of the syntax of the language, and not just of its morphology and lexicon. In particular, the paper has compared the contribution to MH syntax of the two historical stages of Hebrew which had been spoken in antiquity, first BH and later RH. The present findings suggest that the syntax of MH is largely modeled after that of BH, the earlier of the two, and that cases where the syntax of MH is that of RH are due to value/ exponent changes undergone by functional categories mainly originating in BH functional categories.

Such non-linear development is due to the fact that the various stages of Hebrew did not replace each other in the history of the language, but all remained part of the corpus of written Hebrew which formed the heritage of the first speakers of MH. These speakers came from various backgrounds, and originally their speech must have been very varied. Most probably, the community of first speakers of MH at the end of the 19th century was immensely diversified, with many very different idiolects. As shown by Reshef 2015, the language conventionalized in a very short time around the 1930s (manifesting a development similar to that described in Meir and Sandler's article in the present volume concerning new sign languages).

The centrality of BH syntax in the language which conventionalized (and for that matter its morphology and lexicon too) had both conscious and unconscious motivations. The newcomers to the Biblical land sought to revive the language of its glorious past. Many consciously rejected traditional religious Jewish culture, and unconsciously rejected the Rabbinic linguistic features characteristic of that culture. These were the people who assumed leadership role in the formation of the Jewish community which reclaimed Palestine during these years, and their speech set the norm for the language of the community as a whole.

[24] This is not contradicted by the fact that the formal register of MH allows restricted uses of *ki* and *ʔašer* as complementizers in very particular environments. *ki* is not used for complement clauses in general, but only for complements of certain speech/attitude verbs (Kuzar 1991). *ʔašer* is not used for adjuncts in general, but only for headed relative clauses.

Such development conforms to the sociolinguistic considerations in language change known since Labov 1963.

In his renowned study of Martha's Vineyard, Labov shows how "in response to threats by outside forces, the fishermen on the island started to look to past generations for their values: the figures of the past carry with them the ever-present conviction that the island belongs to them. The great figures of the past are continually referred to, and fishermen imitate features of their speech… The meaning of the sound change is *positive orientation towards Martha's Vineyard*… Once the figures of the past are adopted as a reference group by the fishermen, the features of speech are adopted and exaggerated as a sign of social identity in response to pressure from outside forces. Hypercorrection under increased pressure leads to a generalization of the features to other fishermen. A new norm is established, and adopted by neighboring groups for whom the fishermen serve as a reference group." (*ibid.* 305-307)

What is striking about the Hebrew case is that it does not consist in a bias towards a particular phonological feature, but towards a full syntax. How were the first speakers of MH able to disentangle BH from RH syntax in the first place? This question has not been studied yet. Perhaps the Hebrew heritage of the first speakers consisted of fragmented grammars. Unlike speakers of an oral language, who only possess a grammar for the current stage of their language, people with the knowledge of written Hebrew perhaps had various mental grammars. As already mentioned, generations before them productively used Hebrew in writing. It is striking that writings were typically not mixed, but tended to either be in the Rabbinic tradition or in the Biblical tradition (the latter mainly in Medieval poetry and modern Maskilic writings). Only at the very end of the 19th century there grew tolerance for synthesis, instigated around 1886 by the influential writer S. Y. Abramovich, alias Mendele Moykher-Sforim. In a way, the first speakers of MH could have been diglossic in versions of BH and RH, at least for written capacities. When they spoke, then for the kind of sociolinguistic preferences identified by Labov, they would have chosen to exclusively use their mental grammar of BH. I leave this speculation to future research.

6. Appendix -- The BH Syntax of sub-clausal MH constructions

I briefly list here a number of sub-clausal constructions where MH syntax follows BH rather than RH.

6.1. The progressive

The aspectual category of progressivity is expressed periphrastically in the syntax of RH, by the auxiliary *hyy* 'be', in past, future, and imperative form, attached to the active participle. In MH, like in BH and unlike RH, the progressive aspect is not grammatically expressed.[25]

6.2. Habituality

The aspectual category of habituality is expressed in RH by the same periphrasis as the progressive, i.e. the auxiliary *hyy* 'be' attached to the active participle. This holds for all tenses of the auxiliary, including the future and the imperative. MH lost these RH options, and only allows the past tense of the auxiliary for the habitual, as in BH.

[25] Though, as noted by Schwarzwald 2001: 62-63 and others, MH speakers influenced by Arabic do use the progressive; but they use the construction in the past tense only, unlike RH which also uses it in the future and the infinitive.

6.3. Negation

The participle in BH and RH is typically negated by the negative inflected auxiliary *ʔēn* 'NEG.AUX', which is still the case in formal registers of MH. In all stages of Hebrew, the participle may also be negated as a verb, by the negation particle *lō*. But whereas in BH and MH, this simply yields clausal negation, in RH *lo* which negates a participle can only be interpreted as constituent negation or contrastive negation (Segal 1936: 134; Azar 1995: 171-182; Bendavid 1967: 770, Almagor-Ramon and Dubnov 2009).

6.4. Null subjects

In all stages of Hebrew, the negative auxiliary *ʔēn* 'NEG.AUX', when uninflected by agreement features, may be attached above the clause and function as sentential negation. This sentential negation licenses null subject pronouns in RH, but not in BH or MH (Bendavid 1967: 776).

6.5. The pronominal copula in predicate-nominal clauses

The post-predicate position of the copula is extremely common in RH, and much less so in BH and MH (Bendavid 1967: 716). In BH the post-predicate position of the copula is mostly confined to cases where the predicate does not agree with the subject, and accordingly the copula adds the missing agreement features, or where the predicate is not semantically a predicate but a quantifier, a PP, or a definite DP.

6.6. The pronominal copula in verbal clauses

The pronominal copula is found with the active participle in RH, but not in BH or MH.

6.7. Pronominal doubling of verbal inflection

Pronominal doubling is used to mark focus in BH and MH, but not in RH.

6.8. Clitic doubling of verbal arguments

Clitic doubling with prepositional arguments of verbs is found in RH, but not in BH or MH.

6.9. Interrogative determiners

The role of interrogative pronouns and determiners is reversed in MH with respect to RH. As an interrogative determiner, the MH *eyze* replaces RH *ma*:

(58)a RH

ma *qol* *šamaʕta* *be-ħurḇa zo*
what sound heard.2MS in-ruin this

What sound did you hear in this ruin? (Babyl. Talmud, Berachot 3a)

b MH

eyze *qol* *šamaʕta* *ba-ħurḇa* *ha-zot*
which sound heard.2MS in.the-ruin the-this

What sound did you hear in this ruin?

And vice versa, in questioning a predicate, the MH *mi/ma* replaces RH *eyze*:

(59)a RH

eyze ***hu*** *ħaḵam* *-- ha-lomed* *mi-kol* *adam*
which **PRON.3MS** wise the-learns.PTC.MS from-every person

Who is wise? He who learns from every man. (Mishnah,Aboth 4:1)

b MH

mi-hu *ħaḵam* *-- ze* *še-lomed* *mi-kol* *adam*
who-PRON.3MS wise this that-learns.PTC.MS from-every person

Who is wise? The one who learns from every man.

The situation in MH revives the BH situation, where *ma* questions the predicate and does not serve as a determiner.

6.10. Accusative case assignment by deverbal nouns

In MH, as in BH, arguments of deverbal nouns may be assigned accusative case, but not in RH (Blau 1990). This may be related to the fact that both BH and MH, but not RH, have gerunds (cf section 3.6. above), which take accusative objects.

6.11. The demonstrative pronoun as marker of the perfect time span

The use of the demonstrative pronoun to mark the perfect time span is a BH usage revived in MH, but not found in RH.

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