

The Predicative Participle in Biblical Hebrew

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0.1. The present tense in Biblical Hebrew.

In Biblical Hebrew the present tense is properly the domain of the predicative participle¹. Two other verbal forms, the prefix-conjugation (PC, *yiqtol*) and the suffix-conjugation (SC, *qatal*), may be used in present-tense statements as well, but this use is subject to fairly strict conditions (see sections 3.2.2. and 3.2.3.). In fact, the present-tense uses of PC and SC are mere traces of an earlier stage of the language where the participle wasn't yet used as a tense form.

The normal way to form a present-tense statement in Biblical Hebrew is with the predicative participle². In such statements the participle is therefore more than a verbal noun: it has taken its place, aside PC and SC, in the conjugational system. It is the purpose of the present paper to clarify and describe this function of the participle³.

0.2. The sequences: Subject-Participle and Participle-Subject.

The participle is not, like PC and SC, a conjugated verbal form⁴. Whereas PC and SC contain in one form predicate and subject, the participle provides only the predicate. In other words, in order to form a clause, the participle requires the subject to be mentioned explicitly, even if the subject is a personal pronoun⁵.

If, with the participle, the explicit mentioning of the subject is necessary, the order of the two elements, predicate (participle) and subject, is in principle free.

¹ 'Predicative participle' is the participle functioning as predicate. The attributive uses of the participle will not be considered in the present article. For the necessity of distinguishing between attributive and predicative uses of the participle see W. Gross, *Das nicht substantivierte Partizip als Prädikat im Relativsatz hebräischer Prosa*, JNSL 4 (1975) 23, and B. Isaksson, *Studies in the Language of Qoheleth. With Special Emphasis on the Verbal System* (Uppsala 1987), 134.

² I leave aside the so-called nominal clauses. In a sense it is correct to say that the notion of 'tense' is relevant only to verbal clauses. The term 'present tense' is used for statements which refer to the time contemporary with the moment of speaking. The use of this term for Biblical Hebrew is not quite exact, see note 102.

³ The study is limited to clauses with a definite subject. As to the predicate, only active participles of the stems *qal*, *piel*, *hiphil* and *hithpael* have been taken into account. The clauses where a predicative participle has a purely nominal character, e.g. Gen 42:34 *lō m^eragg^elim 'attem* "You are not spies", have been excluded.

⁴ Maybe the remarkable *'att- 'ōse* in Num 11:15 is an indication that the syntagm pronoun-participle started to form a new conjugated verbal form (after the model of *ta^aše*).

⁵ Exceptionally a 3rd person pronoun may be dispensed with, e.g. 1 Sam 17:25, 20:1. These are the only sure examples for the two books of Samuel. For the omission of the 3rd person pronoun after *himne* see note 31.

Theoretically the subject (Su) can be placed either before or after the predicative participle, and in fact both sequences, Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su, are attested. Before attempting a detailed description of the functions of the predicative participle, it is proper to ask whether there is a difference in function between the sequence Su-Ptcp and the sequence Ptcp-Su.

0.3. Working hypothesis.

The thesis which will provide the outline for the main part of this paper is twofold.

Firstly, it will be held that both sequences, Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su, refer positively to the grammatical present, i.e. they represent an action as contemporary with the moment of speaking. Under certain conditions, the action which is reported by the participle may, in reality, have taken place already (the sequence then functions as a historic present) or still lie in the future (function of the sequence: *futurum instans*), but the action is *represented* as present.

This approach opposes the opinion that the predicative participle expresses duration in any time frame: past, present or future, which can be found in most grammars and handbooks⁶.

The sequence Su-Ptcp has an important function in circumstantial clauses, where it indicates that an action is contemporary with the action expressed in the main clause. Example: Gen 19:1 *wayyābō'ū š'nē hammal'ākīm s'dōmā bā'ereb w'lō! yōšēb b'sa'ar s'dōm* "The two angels came to Sodom in the evening while Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom"⁷. That in these clauses the participle often refers to a past action is due to this specific type of subordinate clause (the circumstantial clause), not to the participle⁸. The circumstantial-clause function of the sequence Su-Ptcp will not be treated in its own right in this paper.

⁶ So S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (Oxford 1892³), 165: "... the participle ... where stress is to be laid on the continuance of the action described." More recently it has been proposed that the expression of 'concomitance' is the main function of the predicative participle. See R. Bartelmus, HYH. Bedeutung und Funktion eines hebräischen „Allerweltswortes“ – zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage des hebräischen Tempussytems (St Otilien 1982), 50–51: „Das effektiv neue ..., daß als Hauptfunktion des als Prädikat verwendeten Partizips in temporeller Hinsicht der Ausdruck der GZ (= Gleichzeitigkeit) eines SV (= Sachverhalt) betrachtet wird.“ Also D. Cohen, *La phrase nominale et l'évolution du système verbal en sémitique* (Louvain 1984), 302: "La caractéristique de la phrase à prédicat participial est fondamentalement l'expression de la concomitance. Concomitance avec l'acte d'énonciation, mais aussi concomitance par translation avec n'importe quel moment qui serait posé par le discours comme point de référence."

These views probably result from not distinguishing between main clauses and circumstantial clauses. In main clauses the large majority of clauses with a predicative participle refer to the moment of speaking; where the participle refers to an action in the past or in the future it hardly expresses concomitance (see section 2.1.2., 2.1.3. and 2.2.1.2.3.).

⁷ The English version cited is the RSV, but here and there the translation has been adapted to show more clearly the function of the predicative participle. Except in section 0., translations have only been added where they clarify the argument in a meaningful way.

⁸ Compare the following examples where the participle is not a participle: 1 Sam 1:10; 1:24; 4:12; 9:22. F.I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch* (Nashville/New York 1970), has tried to show that for clauses with a nominal predicate, main clauses and circumstantial clauses are distinguished by the order of predicate and subject (P-S for main clauses, S-P for circumstantial clauses). Such a distinction does not

Secondly, I will argue that the formal opposition Su-Ptcp versus Ptcp-Su expresses an opposition of aspect. Su-Ptcp expresses the cursive present, the action is subjectively represented as a line contemporary with the moment of speaking. On the other hand, Ptcp-Su expresses the constative present, the action is subjectively represented a point simultaneous with the moment of speaking. The opposition expressed is the same as the opposition between the imperfect indicative (cursive aspect) and the aorist indicative (constative aspect) in classical Greek, with this difference that in Greek the opposition plays in the past tense whereas in Biblical Hebrew it is operative in the present tense.

More concretely these functions can be described as follows:

The main function of the sequence Su-Ptcp is to represent an action as actually going on at the moment of speaking. This function I will call the *actual present*. Example: 1 Sam 14:33 *hinnē hā'ām hōḥīm ladōnāy le'ekōl 'al haddām* "Behold the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood". – Secondary functions, applications or developments of the main function, are: the historic present, the *futurum instans* and the extended present. The actual present and its secondary functions will be further discussed in section 2.1.

The main function of the sequence Ptcp-Su is the expression of an action as present but not actually going on; the action is represented as a fact. This function I will call the *factual present*. Example: Psalm 34:8 *hōne mal'ak 'adōnāy sāvīb līrē'aw wayhall'ešēm* "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them". The factual present and its secondary functions will be discussed in detail in section 2.2.⁹

exist for clauses with a predicative participle. However, it is usually clear from the context when a circumstantial clause is meant. Where doubt could arise it is the main clause that is marked to distinguish it from circumstantial clauses, see section 2.1.1.

⁹ Inasmuch as grammarians have noticed the importance of the opposite sequences they have focused on the function of the sequence Ptcp-Su. Several functions have been proposed for this construction. Driver (Treatise, 169) holds that it puts a certain stress on the predicate. J. Hoftijzer, *The Nominal Clause Reconsidered*, VT 23 (1973) 501–4, goes in the same direction with his claim that the sequence expresses contrast. T. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem 1985), 20–28, draws attention to the fact that in the sequence Ptcp-Su the subject is often a pronoun, and weighs the possibility that the phenomenon is due to 'enclitisation' of the subject, i.e. to purely formal factors. Finally Muraoka cites A. Bendavid who holds that Ptcp-Su is used in first position in the clause, whereas Su-Ptcp is used when any element precedes the sequence.

It would take too long to explore the merits of each of these theories (see the discussion in Muraoka, 20–28). When all the material is gathered none of them seem adequate. Ptcp-Su very often does not express stress or contrast (see section 2.2. *passim* and note 88). It does not take the first position in the clause in Gen 15:14; Jer 4:29; Psalm 19:2; 31:24; Prov 17:17; Job 6:4; Eccl 1:6.

In reply to Muraoka's observation I want to point to the fact that pronominal subjects are very numerous also in the sequence Su-Ptcp. The great number of pronominal subjects in the two sequences is due to the present tense character of the predicative participle (see section 2.1.1. and note 77).

The two most recent studies on the predicative participle in Biblical Hebrew, D. Cohen (see note 6), and A. Gordon, *The Development of the Participle in Biblical, Mishnaic and Modern Hebrew*, *Afro-Asiatic Linguistics* 8/3 (1982) 1–59, do not discuss the functional opposition between the two sequences.

0.4. Method and outline.

To determine the grammatical function of a verb form is not an easy affair. An additional difficulty with the predicative participle is that there is only a limited number of examples¹⁰. In order to deal with the main methodological problems I will proceed in two stages.

In the first stage (section 1) I will concentrate on the opposition Su-Ptcp versus Ptcp-Su. Insofar as one can speak of proof in grammatical theory, the thesis formulated in 0.3. will be proven: a) in section 1.1. by opposing the two sequences with the same verb. If, with the same verb, Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su have clearly differentiated functions this allows us to draw conclusions about the functions of the sequences. b) in section 1.2. from the use of the sequences with particles. Certain particles select the sequence Su-Ptcp, others the sequence Ptcp-Su. As will be shown, this phenomenon gives powerful support to our thesis.

In the second stage (section 2) each sequence will be dealt with in its own right. Sections 2.1. and 2.2. give detailed descriptions of the main and secondary functions of the sequences Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su respectively. This description is at the same time an illustration of how the theory proposed in 0.3. works when applied to the texts. Also, it will become clear from section 2. that Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su do indeed express the present¹¹.

1. A demonstration of the functional opposition between Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su.

1.1. Su-Ptcp versus Ptcp-Su with identical verbs.

In this section we will examine the opposition of the two sequences Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su of identical verbs. If, with the same verb, the meaning of Su-Ptcp is somehow clearly different from the meaning of Ptcp-Su this allows us to define the different functions of the sequences.

In the following examples we will take our starting point, as much as possible, in the juxtaposition of two clauses, one containing the sequence Su-Ptcp and the other with the sequence Ptcp-Su. A short commentary will explain in which way the opposition between the sequences is actualised in the example. Other instances of a predicative participle of the verb under discussion are mentioned in the notes.

1.1.1. Verbs of perception.

The sensorial process can be viewed under two different aspects. On the one hand, one may observe that the senses register impressions passively. This is the primary meaning of verbs like 'to see' and 'to hear'. In this sense the action is determined by its object and if it takes place in the present it is automatically viewed as

¹⁰ There are 110 certain cases of the sequence Ptcp-Su and about four times as many cases of the opposite sequence, excluding the use of Su-Ptcp in circumstantial clauses (for the estimate see note 55). The relatively small number of present tense statements in the Old Testament is due to the simple fact that most statements are either past tense (in narrative texts) or modal statements (in law and poetry).

¹¹ To demonstrate that Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su refer to the present it would be necessary to study them in opposition to SC and PC. This study will not be undertaken in the present article.

ongoing. In Biblical Hebrew the ongoing here and now of this process is necessarily expressed by the sequence Su-Ptcp.

On the other hand one may describe the sensorial process as an activity of the mind. This activity may be of various sorts: the directing of the attention ('to look', 'to listen'), the interpretation of what is perceived ('to understand') etc. When this nuance of activity of the mind is present then the whole action may be viewed as a fact and the sequence Ptcp-Su may be used.

1.1.1.1. *rā'ā*

2 Sam 18:27 *'anī rō'e 'et m^erušat hārīšōn kimrušat 'ahima'aš ben šādōq,*

Gen 31:5 *rō'e 'ānōkī 'et p^enē 'abīken kī 'ēnennū 'elay kitmōl šilšōm.*

In Sam 18:27 the watchman who stands on the roof tells king David, sitting in the gate, what he sees. The function of the watchman is to communicate exactly his visual impressions as he perceives them: he relates the passive process of seeing. The ongoing of this process is expressed by the sequence Su-Ptcp¹².

In Gen 31:5 Jacob informs his wives, not of a sensorial impression but, of a judgment about his father-in-law. "I see" does not here refer to a process ongoing in the present but to Jacob's interpretation of his impressions: "I see *that* your father's face is not toward me as before". This interpretation is viewed as a fact and expressed by the sequence Ptcp-Su¹³.

The two clauses which appear to be a similar on first sight reveal an interesting difference in function which supports the thesis of section 0.3.

1.1.1.2. *šāma'*

Exod 32:18 *qōl 'annōt 'ānōkī šōmēa',*

2 Sam 20:17 *šōmēa' 'ānōkī,*

2 Kings 18:26 *dabber nā 'el 'abādekā 'arāmūt kī šōm^e'im 'aḥnū.*

In Exod 32:18 Joshua tells Moses (or vice versa) what he actually hears in the present. The sequence is Su-Ptcp.

In the other examples *šāma'* does not simply mean 'to hear', as a passive process; rather there is a nuance of an activity of the subject. In 2 Sam 20:17 Joab tells the Tekoite woman that *he is disposed to* hear what she has to say: "I'm listening"¹⁴. At the moment of his utterance Joab does not yet hear anything. He represents his disposition to hear as a fact using the sequence Ptcp-Su¹⁵.

In 2 Kings 18:26 the nuance is potentiality. Again, the politicians do not really hear anything at the moment they speak, but they assure the Assyrian messenger that *they are able to* 'hear' him (in English: understand him¹⁶) if he speaks Aramaic. The possibility of hearing is represented as a fact and the sequence of the factual present is used¹⁷.

¹² Other examples of Su-Ptcp with *r'h*: Jud 9:36; 2 Kings 9:17; Jer 1:11.

¹³ The other examples of Ptcp-Su with *r'h* are: Ezek 8:6 and maybe 2 Sam 15:27.

¹⁴ In English another verb has to be used. This does not mean that *šm'* has two meanings, 1) 'to hear' 2) 'to listen'; rather, *šm'* is the principal verb for auditorial perception and this perception may be viewed under different aspects.

¹⁵ Ptcp-Su of *šm'* is used in the same way in 1 Sam 3:9, 10.

¹⁶ Again this is not a different meaning of *šm'*, see note 14.

¹⁷ Ptcp-Su of *šm'* is used in the same way in Gen 42:23.

1.1.1.3. *yāda'*

Gen 33:13 *'ādōnī yōdēa' kī haylādūm rakkūm w^ehaṣṣōn w^ehabbāqār 'ālōt 'ālāy,*

2 Sam 17:10 *kī yōdēa' kāl yiśrā'ēl kī gibbōr 'abikā ubnē hayil 'ašer 'ittō.*

In Gen 33:13 *yāda'* does not have its usual meaning 'to know'. Jacob and Esau meet each other for the first time since many years, and Esau is amazed to find his brother, who left home with only a walking stick, with wives and children and much cattle (Gen 33:5). In this situation Jacob cannot say that Esau *knows* that his children are tender etc., rather he expresses that Esau *perceives* this. *yāda'* has meaning 'to take in knowledge' (as a passive process). The Septuagint has well captured this nuance: Ὁ κύριός μου γινώσκει ὅτι τὰ παιδιά ἀπαλώτερα κτλ. Since the participle describes the processes of registering impressions here and now, the sequence used is Su-Ptcp¹⁸.

In 2 Sam 17:10, on the other hand, Hushai refers to a fact which is encrusted in the mind of every Israelite. Here *yāda'* has its usual meaning 'to know', not as an ongoing action but as a fact¹⁹. The Septuagint translates correctly: ὅτι οἶδεν πᾶς Ἰσραηλ ὅτι δυνατὸς ὁ πατήρ σου κτλ.

1.1.2. Verbs of motion.

Verbs which express motion from one place to another lend themselves well to an analysis in terms. When a subject deplaces itself from a point X to a point Y, the deplacing consists of: 1) the departure from point X, 2) the course between the two points, 3) the arrival at point Y. This analysis in terms enables us to clarify the distinct functions of the two sequences of the predicative participle. The sequence Su-Ptcp is used to express the here-and-now onging of the motion, in other words, it presents term 2), the course. The sequence Ptcp-Su is used when the attention is directed to the first term: the motion is still going on but what is relevant is term 1), the fact that the movement has begun.

1.1.1.2. *bārah*

Gen 16:8 *mipp^enē šāray g^ebirtī 'ānōkī bōrahat,*

Jer 4:29 *miqqōl pārāš w^erōmē qešet bōrahat kāl hā'ir.*

The two clauses are almost identical in structure, and both refer to the present²⁰. To the structural difference: Su-Ptcp versus Ptcp-Su corresponds a difference in function. In Gen 16:8 the clause is Hagar's answer to the question: "Whence do you come and where are you going?" The focus is on the fleeing person, Hagar, and her movement. What is relevant is the course of the fleeing²¹.

In Jer 4:29 the focus is on the city (cities?) which is (are) left forsaken. The fleeing is still going on but what is of interest is the starting point of the motion: the fact that the people have left the city²².

¹⁸ The other cases of Su-Ptcp with *yd'* are: Josh 22:22; 1 Sam 23:17; Psalm 44:22; 94:11; 139:14; Eccl 9:5; Esth 4:11; 2 Chron 2:7.

¹⁹ The other cases of Ptcp-Su with *yd'* are Gen 3:5; Jonah 1:12; Psalm 1:6; 37:18; Ruth 3:11; Eccl 8:12; 9:1.

²⁰ In Jer 4:29 is the present time of Jeremiah's prophetic vision.

²¹ The only other case of Su-Ptcp with *brh* is Jonah 1:10. In this clause the focus is clearly on the course of the fleeing since the action is never completed: "The men knew that he was (literally: is, see note 44) fleeing (i.e. trying to flee) from the presence of the LORD."

²² The other cases of Ptcp-Su with *brh* are Gen 31:20; 1 Sam 22:17.

The sequence Su-Ptcp in Gen 16:8 expresses the actuality of the action, whereas in Jer 4:29 the sequence Ptcp-Su expresses the fact that the fleeing has started. Thus we see that this opposition supports the thesis proposed in this paper.

1.1.2.2. *hālak*

Zech 2:6 *'ānā 'attā hōlēk,*

Num 22:22 *wayyīḥar 'ap 'elōhīm kī hōlēk hū.*

Here of course the syntactical structure of the clauses is quite different²³. Still the opposite sequences express more or less the same difference in function as in the examples with *bāraḥ*. In Zech 2:6 all the interest is focused on the present, Su-Ptcp expresses the ongoingness, the course of the going²⁴. The starting point of the movement is not relevant.

In Num 22:22 it is precisely the starting point which is considered important²⁵. God's anger is aroused by the fact that Balaam has set off to go, that he started the motion. Of course Balaam is still going when God's anger is kindled, but his motion is seen under the aspect of its first term. Because of this, the action is viewed as a fact and the sequence Ptcp-Su is used.

Clauses with the participle of *hālak* provide us with examples to illustrate a different opposition, namely between the extended (see section 2.1.4.) and the general present (see section 2.2.1.2.4.).

Num 14:14 *ub 'ammūd 'ānān 'attā hōlēk lipnēhem yōmām ub 'ammūd 'ēš lāylā,*

Eccl 1:6 *sōbēb sōbēb hōlēk hārūaḥ w^eal s^ebībōtāw šāb hārūaḥ*

Here the terms of the motion are less relevant because both clauses are concerned with the action of going in its globality. Still each sequence has a distinct function. In Num 14:6 the sequence Su-Ptcp is used to express the extended present²⁶. The going of YHWH is not represented as ongoing here and now, but as ongoing 'nowadays', every day and night²⁷.

The reference of Eccl 1:6 is not to the extended present, to the time of 'nowadays'. Here the sequence Ptcp-Su expresses the general, 'eternal' present.

Though this opposition has a different basis it illustrates the correctness of the thesis that the opposition Su-Ptcp versus Ptcp-Su expresses the opposition actuality versus factuality.

1.1.2.3. *nāsa'*

Exod 14:10 *wayyiš'ū b^enē yiśrā'el 'et 'enēhem w^ehinnē mišrayim nōsēa' 'aḥ^arēhem,*

Num 10:29 *nōs^e'im 'aḥnū 'el hammāqōm 'ašer 'amar 'adōnāy 'otō 'ettēn lākem.*

In Exod 14:10 the sequence Su-Ptcp expresses the ongoing of the movement of Egypt in the historic present (the present time of the storyteller is fused with the

²³ The most important difference is that in Num 22:22 the sequence is preceded by *ki*. See section 1.2.7. and note 50.

²⁴ There are many examples of Su-Ptcp with *hlk* e.g. Jud 19:18; 2 Kings 4:23; Jer 16:12.

²⁵ There are two additional examples of Ptcp-Su with *hlc*: Jer 3:6; Eccl 12:5.

²⁶ The clause is part of a sentence which functions as an object to *šām^eu ki*. It is therefore in the present tense, see note 44.

²⁷ A distinction between the extended present and the general present plays an important role in A. Denz' axiomatic theory of tense, see A. Denz, *Die Verbalsyntax des neuarabischen Dialektes von Kwayris (Irak). Mit einer einleitenden allgemeinen Tempus- und Aspektlehre* (Wiesbaden 1971) 7f.

present time of the story, see section 2.1.2.). What is important is that Egypt is marching after Israel, the starting point of the motion is not relevant²⁸.

In Num 10:29 the action still lies in the future, but the speaker presents it as present. The sequence Ptcp-Su represents the motion under the aspect of its first term, what is relevant to Moses and Hobab is that the Israelites will *sett off* after a long pause in the desert. Compare the RSV: "We are setting out ...".

1.2. The use of Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su with particles.

A formal indication of the difference in function between the sequences Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su is that certain particles²⁹ appear exclusively, or predominantly, with one of the two sequences. On the whole the use of the predicative participle with the particles supports the thesis proposed in section 0.3.

1.2.1. *hinnē*

Example: 2 Sam 19:2 *hinnē hammelek bōke*.

The combination of *hinnē* with a participle is very frequent and if the subject is expressed the order is always *hinnē*-Su-Ptcp³⁰. This is in accordance with our thesis: *hinnē* is a presentative and stresses the actuality, the here-and-now character of an action. This actuality is expressed by the sequence Su-Ptcp, sequence of the actual present. *hinnē* is probably incompatible with the sequence Ptcp-Su which expresses the non-actual, factual present³¹.

The syntagm *hinnē*-Su-Ptcp is not only used as a real present as in the example quoted. The syntagm is attested also as a *futurum instans* (1 Sam 3:11, 10:8 and frequently) and a historic present (1 Sam 4:13, 5:3 and frequently). *Futurum instans* and historic present are secondary functions of the sequence Su-Ptcp. In fact they are special applications of the main function: the action is represented as actually going on even if in reality it lies in the future or has already taken place.

1.2.2. *ʾāšer*

Example: Gen 28:13 *hāʾāreš ʾāšer ʾattā šōkēb ʾalehā lʾkā ʾettʾennā ulzarʾekā*.

In relative clauses introduced by *ʾāšer* we find almost exclusively the sequence Su-Ptcp³². However, it seems that in these clauses the sequences Su-Ptcp is not the

²⁸ The only other instance of Su-Ptcp with *nsʾ* is Num 10:33, in a circumstantial clause.

²⁹ It would be more correct to speak about syntactical situations, since one particle may have several functions (see especially 1.2.7.). It is more expedient, however, to order the cases after the particle which introduces the clause.

³⁰ When the subject is a pronoun it sometimes takes the form of a suffix (*hinʿnī*, *hinnʿkā* etc.). This has raised the question whether the noun following *hinnē* is in the accusative (as in Arabic after *inna*, see especially G. Bergsträsser, *Hebräische Grammatik*, Vol. 2 [1929] 70). In this case the construction would be similar to the one we find with *rh*, e.g. Isa 6:1 *wāʾerʾe ʾet ʾadōnāy yōšēb* ... Note however that a nominal subject after *hinnē* is never marked by *ʾet*.

³¹ Amos 7:4 *wʿhinnē qōrē lārīb bāʿš ʾadōnāy ʾlōhīm* is not an example. *Hinnē* is here, as often (e.g. Gen 18:9; Deut 17:4), equivalent to *hinnē hū*, as was stated already by H. Ewald, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache des alten Bundes* (Leipzig 1855⁶), 664 (§ 299a). The clause must be analysed "And behold He is calling for judgment by fire, the Lord YHWH."

³² This was noticed by W. Gross, *JNSL* 4 (1975) 24. The only exception is Job 6:4 (in poetry).

expression of the actual present. This can be seen most clearly in a past-tense context, e.g. Gen 47:14 *waylaqqē! yōsēp 'et kâl hakkesep ... baššeber 'ašer hēm šōb'rīm*. Here the action expressed by the participle is not present at all, but contemporary with the action expressed by the main verb.

Therefore the sequence Su-Ptcp in the relative clause cannot be related to the function proposed in this paper. Rather it finds its explanation from a comparison with the circumstantial clause. In circumstantial clauses Su-Ptcp is the only sequence attested and, as for the relative clause, the action expressed by the participle is contemporary with the action expressed by the main verb (see the example quoted in section 0.3.). In addition, it can be remarked that relative and circumstantial clauses are similar in function in that they express facts which form, so to say, a background to the action of the main clause. Thus it seems that the use of the sequence Su-Ptcp in relative clauses is an extension of (or in any case: related to) its use in circumstantial clauses.

1.2.3. 'im

Example: Deut 5:22 *'im yōs'pīm 'aḥnū lišmōa' 'et qōl 'adōnāy 'elōhēnū 'ōd wā-mātnū*.

If the participle and its subject follow the participle 'im immediately, then the sequence is always 'im-Ptcp-Su³³. This is completely in accord with our thesis: in a conditional clause the interest bears on whether or not a certain action is accomplished, not on the ongoingness or the actuality of the action. This does not mean that in reality the action may not be ongoing, e.g. Hos 4:15 *'im zōne 'attā yišrā'el 'al ye'sam y'hūdā* "If you play the harlot, Israel, let not Judah become guilty": Israel is actually playing the harlot, but the condition is the fact of her playing the harlot, not its ongoingness.

If any other element comes between the particle and the participle with its subject the sequence Su-Ptcp is used. Example: Num 11:15 *w'e'im kākā 'att 'ōše lī ḥārgēnī nā ḥārōg*³⁴. In these clauses the condition bears almost completely on the element following 'im, and the action itself may be presented as ongoing. Num 11:15 may be paraphrased: "I know you are dealing with me (ongoing), but if it is like that you're dealing with me, then please kill me".

1.2.4. h^a-

Example: Ezek 8:6 *ben 'ādām h^arō'e 'attā mā hēm 'ōšīm*.

The construction of interrogative h^a- with a predicative participle is entirely analogous to the construction with 'im (1.2.3.). The sequence is h^a-Ptcp-Su³⁵, unless an element separates h^a- from the participle with its subject. In the latter case the sequence Su-Ptcp is used, e.g. Jer 7:19 *h^a'ōi hēm mak 'išim*³⁶.

Again this supports our thesis: in a direct or indirect question what is important is the factuality of a certain action (compare English "Do you see?", French "Est-ce

³³ The cases of 'im-Ptcp-Su are: Gen 27:46; Exod 7:27; 9:2; 10:4; Deut 5:22; Jud 11:9; Jer 26:15; 38:21; 42:13; Hos 4:15; Joel 4:4.

³⁴ Other cases of 'im-X-Su-Ptcp: Lev 3:1,7; Jud 9:15; 1 Sam 7:3.

³⁵ The cases of h^a- Ptcp-Su are, in a direct question: Gen 18:17; Num 11:29; 2 Sam 10:3; 15:27(?); Ezek 8:6; 9:8; 1 Chron 19:3. In an indirect question: Jud 2:22; Eccl 3:21,21.

³⁶ Other cases of h^a-X-Su-Ptcp: Exod 2:14; 2 Kings 1:3.

que tu vois?"), not its actuality. If another element follows *h^a*- the weight of the question falls on this element and not on the action expressed by the participle.

1.2.5. *yēš* (Remark to 1.2.3. and 1.2.4.).

It was stated above that *'im* and *h^a*- select exclusively the sequence Ptcp-Su (unless another element separates the particle from the participle with its subject) because the interest in such clauses bears on the factuality of the action and not on its actuality. However, under special circumstances a speaker may want to set as a condition, or ask about, the 'here and now' of a certain action, the actuality of it. In this case Biblical Hebrew provides a very peculiar construction with the existential particle *yēš*. The only examples of this construction are the following.

'im yēš:

Gen 24:42 *'adōnāy 'elohē 'adōnī 'abrāhām 'im yeškā nā mašlīaḥ darkī . . .*,

Gen 24:49 *w^eattā 'im yeškem 'ōšīm ḥesed we^emet 'et 'adōnī haggīdu lī*,

Gen 43:4 *'im yeškā m^ešallēaḥ 'et 'aḥīnū 'ittānū nēr^edā w^enišb^erā l^ekā 'okel*,

Jud 6:36 *'im yeškā mōšīa' b^eyādī 'et yišrā'ēl ka^ašer dibbartā . . .*³⁷.

h^a-yēš:

Deut 13:4 *kī m^enasse 'adōnāy 'elohēkem 'etkem lāda'at h^ayeškem 'ōh^abīm 'et 'adōnāy . . .*³⁸.

This use of *yēš* is limited to conditional and interrogative clauses, i.e. the five examples cited. In the light of this fact I propose to connect the construction under discussion with the negative clauses of the structure *'ēn*-Su-Ptcp, e.g. Exod 5:10 *'ēnennī nōtēn lākem teben*. If this connection is legitimate we may present it schematically as follows:

negative of Su-Ptcp: *'ēn*-Su-Ptcp³⁹

conditional of Su-Ptcp: *'im -yēš*-Su-Ptcp

interrogative of Su-Ptcp: *h^a-yēš*-Su-Ptcp.

Negative, conditional and interrogative clauses are of course similar in several aspects⁴⁰.

1.2.6. *lō*

Example: Job 12:3 *lō nōpēl 'ānōkī mikkem*.

Job 12:3 (= Job 13:2) is really the only example of a predicative participle clause

³⁷ It is not easy to point out the concrete difference between actual and factual present in conditional clauses; the difference is likely to be stylistic rather than grammatical. The construction in Gen 24:42 probably intends a nuance of politeness. Eliezer would be rude to put God before the choice "If you make my way successful (but you may not)." Rather, he prays "If you make my way successful right now (and I do not doubt your fundamental intentions)." This line of explanation is applicable to Gen 24:49 and Jud 6:36 as well. In Gen 43:4 the construction is a way to insist on the fulfilling of the condition here and now: "If you are sending our brother with us at this very moment we will (immediately) go down to buy food for you."

³⁸ The construction insists on the actuality: "to know, not whether or not you love, but that you are actually engaged in loving YHWH . . ."

³⁹ Maybe *'ēn* was analysed as *lō yēš* (compare Aramaic *layt < lā ū*).

⁴⁰ Compare for Biblical Hebrew the verb *'bh* which is only used in negative (Josh 24:10 and many), conditional (Isa 1:19) and interrogative clauses (Job 39:9).

negated by *lō*⁴¹. The sequence is Ptcp-Su and this is in accord with our thesis: *lō* negates a fact, not the actuality of an action.

It is a bit strange, though, that there is only one case, and that in the book of Job in an apparently idiomatic expression. This is due to the fact that, as will be shown in the section on *'ēn* (2.3.), the syntagm *'ēn*-Su-Ptcp provides the negative for all clauses with a predicative participle. The opposition actual present versus factual present, which must have been less clear with negative clauses anyway, is not expressed (is neutralised) in negative clauses.

1.2.7. *kī*

Among the clauses introduced by *kī* there are almost 40 cases of clauses with the sequence Ptcp-Su (out of 110 cases of this sequence in total). Since *kī*-clauses count quite a few instances of the opposite sequence as well one would expect to find oppositions which show the difference in function between the two sequences. However, *kī* has more than one function. Considering four different functions of *kī* it will become clear that in general a specific function selects one of the two sequences only. The only clear case of opposition occurs with the object clauses introduced by *kī* (1.2.7.1.).

1.2.7.1. *kī* introducing an object clause.

17 times *kī* introduces a clause with a predicative participle which functions as a direct object to one of the verbs: *bīn*, *yāda'*, *higgīd*, *rā'ā*, *sāma'*. In 13 cases the sequence is Ptcp-Su⁴², in 4 cases we find the sequence Su-Ptcp⁴³. The opposition of two examples with the verb *rā'ā* will illustrate the functional difference between the sequences:

A 2 Sam 12:19 *wayyar dāwīd kī 'abādāw mitlah^ašīm*,

B Ruth 1:18 *wattēre kī mit'ammeset hī lāleket 'ittāh*.

Examining the main clauses we can observe that in A *rā'ā* means 'to see' (as a passive process), whereas in B it can be translated 'to realise'. As to the object clauses, in A it expresses an ongoing present relatively to the time of the main clause⁴⁴: at the moment of David's seeing the servants *are whispering*. In B the object clause has the value of an English present perfect: Naomi saw, not that Ruth was making an effort but, that Ruth was (is, see note 44) determined to go with her. In 2 Sam 12:19 the actions of seeing and whispering are co-extensive, and this co-extensiveness is expressed by means of the sequence Su-Ptcp, the sequence of he actual present. In Ruth 1:18 the object clause presents Ruth's determination as a fact with regard to Naomi's 'seeing'; this factuality is expressed by the sequence Ptcp-Su. Cases like this, where the sequences Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-

⁴¹ There is one example with an indefinite subject, Zeph 3:5; examples with a purely nominal participle: Gen 42:34; Num 35:23; Josh 20:5.

⁴² Gen 31:20; 42:23; Jud 15:11; 20:34, 1 Sam 3:13, 13; 20:30; 22:17; 23:10; 25:4; 2 Kings 5:7; Jer 44:15, 29; Ruth 1:18.

⁴³ 1 Sam 3:8; 2 Sam 12:19; Neh 3:33; 1 Chron 29:17.

⁴⁴ In Biblical Hebrew there is no *consecutio temporum*. As in classical Greek, the tense of the object clause is not influenced by the tense of the main clause. Translating literally, 2 Sam 12:19 is "And David saw that his servants *are whispering*."

Su can be opposed in identical syntactic situations, are what comes closest to concrete proof of the thesis proposed in this paper. Unfortunately they are very rare.

The analysis of the examples 2 Sam 12:19 und Ruth 1:18 is valid for all the cases of the sequence Ptcp-Su. The 3 remaining cases of the sequences Su-Ptcp are not equally convincing, and some may have to be explained differently from their respective contexts⁴⁵.

1.2.7.2. *kī* introducing a causal clause.

Clauses with a predicative participle after causal *kī* fall into three groups. Both sequences are attested but there are no clear instances of opposition.

kī-Ptcp-Su.

Example: Gen 19:14 *qūmū š^e’ū min hammāqōm hazze kī mašhūt ^adōnāy ’et hā’īr.*

There are 23 cases of the sequence Ptcp-Su after causal *kī*⁴⁶. This is the expected sequence according to our thesis: an action which constitutes the reason for something else is viewed as a fact. In reality the action may be ongoing or imminent as in Gen 19:14 quoted above, but the speaker does not present it as such. In Gen 19:14 what is of prime interest to Lot is *that* YHWH will destroy the city, not that this action is imminent (or already going on).

As with *’im* and *h^a*- the sequence Ptcp-Su is used only when it follows the particle immediately. In case another element follows *kī* the force of the particle falls on this word and the sequence Su-Ptcp is used. E.g. Jer 27:16 *’al tišm^e’ū ’el dibrē n^ebī’ekem ... kī šeḡer hēmā nibb^e’im lākem* “Don’t listen to the words of your prophets ... because it is falsehood they are prophesying to you”⁴⁷.

kī-hinnē-Su-Ptcp.

Example: Zech 2:14 *rānnī w^ešimhī bat šiyyōn kī hin^enī bā w^ešākantī b^etōkēk.*

This syntagm occurs 18 times⁴⁸. It is used, it seems, when the speaker wants to introduce the notion of the actual present in a causal clause. As we can see from the example, the *kī*-clause relates a fact important in its own right, it is not merely the motive for the preceding imperatives.

The combining of *kī* with *hinnē* in order to preserve the sequence Su-Ptcp with its function, recalls the combination of *’im* and *h^a*- with *yēš* (section 1.2.5.).

kī-Su-Ptcp.

Example: 2 Kings 9:16 *wayyirkab yēhū wayyēlek yizr^eelā kī yōrām šōkēb šāmmā.*

⁴⁵ The reason there are not more examples like 2 Sam 12:19 is that usually another construction is used, e.g. Num 24:2 *wayyar ’et yiśrā’ēl šōkēn lišbātāw* (other examples of this construction: 1 Sam 19:20; 2 Sam 6:16; 1 Chron 21:16). The Peshitta and the Vulgate translate 2 Sam 12:19 as if their Hebrew Vorlage had *wayyar dāwīd ’et ^abādāw mitlaḥ^ašīm*.

⁴⁶ Gen 3:5; 19:13,14; 41:32; Num 22:22; 25:18; Deut 13:4; Jud 15:3; 1 Sam 3:9,10; 2 Sam 17:10; 2 Kings 18:26; Isa 36:11; Jer 1:12; Jonah 1:12; Psalm 1:6; 149:4; Ruth 3:11; Eccl 8:12; 12:5; Neh 8:9; 1 Chron 28:9; 2 Chron 13:11.

⁴⁷ Other examples of *kī*-X-Su-Ptcp: Exod 9:14; 10:11; Lev 21:6; 25:16; 1 Sam 23:9; 1 Kings 20:7.

⁴⁸ Isa 26:21; 65:17,18; Jer 1:15; 8:17; 30:10; 45:5; 46:27; 50:9; Amos 6:11,14; 9:9; Mic 1:3; Hab 1:6; Zech 2:13,14; 3:8; 11:16. Just like the construction with *yēš* (section 1.2.5.) the use of the present construction seems to be a matter of style rather than grammar; note that all the cases are in prophetic books.

In 6 cases causal *kī* is followed by the sequence Su-Ptcp⁴⁹. In all these clauses (as in the example quoted) the participle gives background information to an event in the past⁵⁰. In other words, these clauses are causal circumstantial clauses, comparable in function and structure to the circumstantial clauses introduced by *w^e*. The sequences Su-Ptcp in 2 Kings 9:16 etc. is not the sequence of the actual present but the sequence of the circumstantial clause.

1.2.7.3. *kī* = when, introducing a temporal clause.

Example: Deut 18:9 *kī attā bā ʿel hā ʾāreṣ ʾāšer ʾadōnāy nōtēn lʾkā lō tilmad la ʾāšōt k^etō ʾabōt haggōyīm hāhēm*.

6 times *kī* introduces a temporal clause with a predicative participle⁵¹. The sequence is always Su-Ptcp.

1.2.7.4. *kī* introducing an apodosis after an interrogative clause.

Example: Mal 3:8 *h^aʾyiqba ʾādām ʾelōhīm kī attem qōb^e ʾim ʾōtī*.

This syntagm is attested 6 times in the Old Testament⁵². The sequence is always Su-Ptcp.

1.2.8. *h^alō*

It has often been remarked that, although *h^alō* seems to be composed of *h^a-* and *lō*, in fact the particle often has a presentative function approaching that of *hinnē*⁵³. It is, therefore, not surprising to find *h^alō* with the sequence Su-Ptcp 5 times⁵⁴. E.g. Gen 37:13 *h^alō ʾaḥekā rō ʾim biškem*.

The only example of *h^alō* with the opposite sequence is Prov 26:19 *kēn ʾiš rimmā ʾet rē ʾehū w^e ʾāmār h^alō m^ešahēq ʾānī*. On the basis of more examples we might have been able to conclude that the sequence Ptcp-Su is used if *h^alō* functions indeed as the combination of *h^a-* and *lō*. In any case the particle is not a presentative in Prov 26:19, "I am joking" is the interpretation of a fact, not an ongoing action.

2. A description of the functions of the sequences Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su.

2.1. Su-Ptcp.

Su-Ptcp (the actual present) is in Biblical Hebrew the normal sequence. Statistically it is about four times as frequent as Ptcp-Su⁵⁵. As to its function, the

⁴⁹ 1 Kings 5:4; 8:7; 2 Kings 9:16; Jonah 1:11,13; Ezra 3:13.

⁵⁰ Of the other clauses with predicative participle following causal *kī* only Neh 8:9 relates a fact belonging to the past (see section 2.2.3.). In Num 22:22 the clause should be taken together with the object clauses, it is therefore in the present tense (see note 44). "But God's anger was kindled that he goes."

⁵¹ Num 33:51; 34:2; 35:10; Deut 11:31; 18:9; Jer 44:19.

⁵² Jud 14:3; 1 Kings 18:9; 2 Kings 5:7; Jer 22:15; Ezek 24:19; Mal 3:8.

⁵³ See, for instance, H. A. Brongers, Some Remarks on the Biblical Particle *h^alō*. OTS 21 (1981) 177-89.

⁵⁴ Gen 37:13; 1 Sam 23:19; 26:1; Psalm 54:2; 2 Chron 32:11.

⁵⁵ This figure is based on a count in the following stretches of text: Genesis, Exodus 1-19, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 2 Kings; I counted 159 cases of Su-Ptcp (excluding circumstantial and relative clauses) and 39 cases of Ptcp-Su.

present tense is naturally conceived of as ongoing because the present is not a fixed point in time⁵⁶.

The main, or basic, function of Su-Ptcp is the expression of the actual present (section 2.1.1.). Secondary functions are: the historic present (2.1.2.), the *futurum instans* (2.1.3.) and the extended present (2.1.4.). These functions can be viewed as applications of the actual present: the sequence Su-Ptcp expresses the actual present but the context or the situation show that in reality the action is past, future etc.

With these categories it is possible to describe effectively the functioning of Su-Ptcp in the texts. In 1 Samuel, for example, we find 13 cases of the actual present⁵⁷, 8 of the historical present⁵⁸, 5 of the *futurum instans*⁵⁹, and 8 of the extended present⁶⁰. Only one case, 1 Sam 15:12, cannot be analysed according to our thesis⁶¹.

2.1.1. The actual present.

The main function of the sequence Su-Ptcp is the representation of an action as ongoing at the moment of speaking. This function, the actual present, is naturally limited to direct speech; this implies that 1st and 2nd person subjects are relatively numerous. Because of this the subject is very often a pronoun.

2.1.1.1. Su-Ptcp at the head of the clause.

Su-Ptcp functioning as actual present may take the first position in the clause. At the head of the clause the sequence is often introduced by *hinnē*, but this particle is not necessary. The use of this particle with the actual present is certainly rarer than with the historic present and the *futurum instans*. With the actual present it seems that it merely adds a touch of vivacity.

Examples: 1st person subject

Jer 38:19 *ʾanī dōʿēg ʾet hayyehūdīm ʾašer nāpʿlū ʾel hakkašdīm* “I’m worrying about the Judeans who have deserted to the Chaldeans”.

Gen 25:32 *hinnē ʾanōkī hōlēk lāmūt wʿlammā ze lī bʿkōrā* “Behold, I’m going to die, of what use is a birthright to me?”

1 Kings 22:3 *haydaʿtem kī lānū rāmōt gilʿād waʾaḥnū maḥšīm miqqaḥat ʾotāh* “Do you know that Ramot-Gilead belongs to us, and we’re keeping quiet and do not take it.”

2nd person subject

Jer 32:24 *waʾašer dibbartā hāyā wʿhinnēkā rōʿe* “And what you spoke has come to pass and behold, you see it.”

Neh 2:17 *ʾatem rōʾim hārāʾa ʾašer ʾaḥnū bāh* “You see the trouble we’re in.”

⁵⁶ “The grammatical present includes the moment of speaking and may be arbitrarily extended both to the left (into the physical past) and to the right (into the physical future) being thus by its nature always linear, i.e. imperfective.” J. Kuryłowicz, *Verbal Aspect in Semitic*, *Orientalia* 42 (1973) 114.

⁵⁷ 7:3; 8:8; 14:11, 33; 16:1, 11; 17:43, 45; 23:19; 24:14; 25:19; 26:1; 28:9.

⁵⁸ 1:13; 4:13; 5:3; 9:14; 11:5; 17:23; 25:20; 26:7.

⁵⁹ 3:11; 10:8; 14:8; 23:4; 24:4.

⁶⁰ 2:6, 7; 3:8; 12:2; 18:15; 23:17; 24:9; 26:18.

⁶¹ In the same book there 39 cases of Su-Ptcp in a circumstantial clause and 7 cases of Su-Ptcp in a relative clause.

3d person subject

Gen 27:42 *hinnē ʿēšāw ʾāhīkā mitnaḥēm lʿkā lʿhārgēkā* “Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself by planning to kill you.”

Num 11:27 *ʿeldād umēdād mitnabbʿīm bammaḥʿne* “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”⁶²

2.1.1.2. X-Su-Ptcp.

Since the action described by the actual present is going on in the present it is usually apparent to everyone in the speech situation. Most often, therefore, the main information in actual-present clauses does not pertain to the action itself but to some other element. This element is then fronted. Examples:

2 Sam 3:13 *ʾak dābār ʿeḥād ʾānōkī šōʿel mēʾittʿkā* “Just one thing I’m asking of you.”

Jud 9:36 *ʿet šēl hehārīm ʾattā rōʿe kaʿnāšīm* “It is the shadow of the mountains you see as if they were men.”

1 Sam 8:8 *kʿkāl hammaʿāšīm ʿāšer ʿāsū... kēn hēm mā ʿōšīm gam lāk* “... so they are also doing to you.”⁶³

Interrogatives are always fronted in this way. Examples:

Jud 18:18 *mā ʾattem ʿōšīm,*

1 Sam 24:14 *ʾaḥʿrē mī ʾattā rōdēp,*

2 Kings 8:12 *maddūaʿ ʿadōnī bōke.*

2.1.2. The historic present⁶⁴.

The historic present is a phenomenon which occurs in many languages, though not in every language under the same circumstances nor with the same frequency. The following remarks pertain to the use of the historic present in Biblical Hebrew only.

In a narrative the narrator may at a certain moment become so involved in his story that he forgets, or ignores, the lapse of time which separates the events he is recounting from the speaking situation. The distance (time-wise) between the ‘then’ of the story and the ‘now’ of the speaking situation is obliterated, and the narrator presents an event from his story as if it were actually happening ‘now’, in his own present time. This happens especially at important moments of the story.

The use of the historic present is, in the main, limited to some few contextual situations (2.1.2.1., 2. and 3.); only rarely is it used freely (2.1.2.4.).

2.1.2.1. Historic present after a verb of seeing.

The historic present is used after a verb of visual perception to report the scene which is the object of the seeing. Example: 2 Kings 11:14 *wattēre wʿhinnē*

⁶² Additional examples of Su-Ptcp expressing the actual present in first position, without *hinnē*: Gen 33:13; Exod 18:6; Jud 17:9; 2 Sam 18:27; 1 Kings 2:2; Ezek 21:5; 36:17; 47:8; Amos 7:16; Zech 5:2; Psalm 89:10; 2 Chron 28:10. With *hinnē*: Gen 29:6; 45:12; Jud 9:31; 1 Sam 14:33; 16:11; 2 Sam 16:11; 19:2; 2 Chron 20:11.

⁶³ Additional examples of X-Su-Ptcp expressing the actual present: Gen 16:8; 37:16; Exod 2:14; 10:11; Jud 19:18; 2 Sam 13:4; 24:12; 2 Kings 4:13; 7:9; 9:17.

⁶⁴ It would be more correct to speak of the ‘historic actual present’, since this is clearly a secondary function of the actual present. We have graciously been spared an ‘historic factual present’, the only possible case being Jud 8:4, where the text may not be in order.

hammelek 'ōmēd 'al ha'ammūd kammišpāt “And she saw and behold, the king is standing by the pillar according to the custom.”

When Athaliah sees king Joash standing in the temple, crowned and acclaimed by the people, she realises that her time is up and that all her killing has been in vain. This verse contains the climax of the story. The narrator does not, at this moment, continue to recount the events but he represents the scene perceived by Athaliah as if he himself (and his audience) sees it happening⁶⁵.

A special case is the report of a dream. The historic present is very appropriate to relate the actions perceived in a dream. It may be used even without a verb of seeing. Example: Gen 41:17 *baḥ'āmōmī hin'ēnī 'ōmēd 'al š'epat hay'ōr* “In my dream, behold, I'm standing on the banks of the Nile.”⁶⁶

2.1.2.2. Historic present after a verb of motion.

After a verb of motion the historic present is used to present a situation the subject(s) saw or found. Example: Jud 11:34 *wayyābō yiptaḥ hammišpā 'el bētō w'ḥinnē bittō yōšēt liqrātō b'e'tuppīm ubimḥōlōt* “And Jephthah came to his home in Mizpah and behold, his daughter is coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dances.”

Of course the narrator could have written here: “And Jephthah came ... and he saw his daughter coming out ...”. But, at this dramatic moment in the story (cp. the vow of Jephthah, Jud 11:31), he does not recount what Jephthah saw; *he himself* sees, through the eyes of Jephthah, the girl coming out of the house. And it is this image he communicates to his audience⁶⁷.

2.1.2.3. Historic present expressing motion.

Much like the situation described in 2.1.2.2. are the cases where the participle itself is a verb of motion. In these cases the historic present is used to describe, in a vivid way, a movement which presents itself to a static situation. Example: Gen 24:15 *wayhī hū ṭerem killā l'e'dabbēr w'ḥinnē ribqā yōšēt ...* “He hadn't yet finished speaking when behold, Rebekah comes out ...”

While Eliezer is still praying that God would help him to find a maiden for his master's son, the girl in question comes out of the city gates. At this point the narrator shifts to the historic present to describe the action as it was perceived by Eliezer⁶⁸.

2.1.2.4. The free use of the historic present.

The use of the historic present outside these specific contextual situations is extremely rare. The only examples—they are not irrefutable—which have come to my attention are the following:

⁶⁵ Additional examples of historic present after a verb of seeing. Gen 26:8; 37:15; Exod 3:2; 14:10; Jud 9:43.

⁶⁶ Additional example of historic present in the report of a dream: Gen 37:9.

⁶⁷ Additional examples of historic present after a verb of motion : Jud 19:27; 1 Sam 4:13; 5:3; 9:14; 25:20; 26:7; 2 Kings 1:9; 9:5.

⁶⁸ Additional examples of historic present expressing motion: Jud 4:22; 1 Sam 11:5; 17:23; 2 Sam 19:42; 1 Kings 19:11; 2 Kings 6:33.

1 Sam 1:13 *w^eḥannā hī m^edabberet 'al libbāh raq s^epātehā nā'ōt w^eqōlāh lō yiššāmēa* "And Hannah, she is speaking in her heart, only her lips are moving but her voice is not heard."⁶⁹

This could be analysed as a circumstantial clause, but then we would expect *w^eḥannā m^edabberet* without the resumptive pronoun. Also, and this is the main argument, the dramatic force of the clause is appropriately expressed by the historic present: the narrator describes Hannah's prayer, this deepfelt expression of faith in YHWH, as if it is going on before his, and our, eyes.

2 Kings 2:11–12 *wayya'al 'ēliyyāhū bas^e'ārā haššāmāyim we'^elīšā' rō'e w^ehū m^eša'ēq 'ābī 'ābī rekeb yišrā'el upārāšāw* "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven while Elisha saw it, and he cries out 'My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen'."

Again the resumptive pronoun shows that *w^ehū m^eša'ēq* is not a circumstantial clause. And again this clause describes a dramatic moment in the story. The narrator does not tell us about Elisha shouting, no: Elisha cries out in our ears!

Excepting the two clauses 1 Sam 1:13 and 2 Kings 2:12 (the free use of the historic present), the historic present is always introduced by *hinnē*. This particle stresses the visual character of the historic present which was very obvious in 2.1.2.1.–3.

In addition, there may be a more technical reason for the constant use of *hinnē*, namely the need to distinguish the historic present from the circumstantial clause. A clause like **wayyābō yiptāh 'el bētō ubittō yōšēt* ... would necessarily be interpreted as "And Jephthah came home while his daughter was coming out ...", and this would of course spoil the effect. By adding *hinnē* the narrator marked the clause unambiguously as an historic present. Remark that in the two clauses of 2.1.2.4. which do not employ *hinnē* the clause was marked as non-circumstantial in another way (the use of the resumptive pronoun).

2.1.3. The use of Su-Ptcp to describe actions in the future.

2.1.3.1. The *futurum instans*⁷⁰.

In Biblical Hebrew, as in many other languages, the verb form of the present tense may be used to describe actions which will be performed in the immediate future. In fact, the action is represented as already going on.

The *futurum instans* is usually introduced by *hinnē*, but this particle is not a mark of the *futurum instans*, nor is its use necessary with the *futurum instans*. Examples: Gen 6:17 *wa'^anī hin^enī mēbī 'et hammabbūl mayim 'al hā'āreš* "And I behold, I'm bringing a flood of waters upon earth."

Deut 2:4 *'attem 'ōbe'rīm bigbūl 'ahēkem b^enē 'ēšāw* "You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers, the sons of Esau."⁷¹

2.1.3.2. With a specification of time.

Normally the temporal reference of the *futurum instans* is to the present: the action is represented as already going on or about to happen at the moment of

⁶⁹ Note that in the two positive clauses the predicative participle is used, while the negative clause has in the same function the PC. Compare section 3.2.2. and note 107.

⁷⁰ More correctly: the *futurum instans* on the basis of the actual present. Compare note 64.

⁷¹ Additional examples: Gen 9:9; 15:3; Exod 7:17; 8:17; 16:4; 19:9; Jud 6:37; 7:17; 1 Sam 3:11; 14:8; 24:4; 2 Sam 12:11; 2 Kings 19:7; 21:12.

speaking. As soon as a specification of time is added, the reference is no longer to the present. Examples:

Hag 2:6 *'ōd 'aḥat m'e'aṭ hī wa'^anī mar'īs 'et haššamayim w'e'et hā'āreš . . .*,

Deut 2:18 *'attā 'ōbēr hayyōm 'et g'e'būl mō'āb 'et 'ār.*

Once it was possible to define the time as 'in a little while' and 'today', Su-Ptcp could be combined also with 'tomorrow' (Exod 9:18), 'next week' (Gen 7:4) or even 'next year': 2 Kings 4:16 *lammō'ed hazze kā'et hayyā 'att hōbeqet bēn.*

At this point the term *futurum instans* becomes well nigh meaningless. The sequence Su-Ptcp is used simply to describe a future action⁷². Compare the following example without specification of time:

Gen 17:19 *'abāl sārā 'iš't'kā yōledet l'kā bēn* "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son."⁷³

2.1.3.3. The 'fictional present'

The sequence Su-Ptcp may be used to describe a scene which will be perceived in the future; as a historic present (see section 2.1.2.) in the future so to say. Example: Jud 9:33 *w'e'hāyā babboqer kizrōaḥ haššemes taškīm upāšattā 'al hā'ir w'e'hinnē hū w'e'hā'am 'ašer 'ittō yōš'e'im 'elēkā* "In the morning, as soon as the sun is up, you will rise and rush upon the city, and behold, he and the men that are with him *are coming out* to you."

This 'fictional present' was probably modelled after the historic present. It occurs very rarely⁷⁴.

2.1.4. The extended present.

Whereas the historic present and the *futurum instans* are specific uses of the sequence Su-Ptcp, the extended present is a somewhat banal phenomenon. Sometimes a speaker may describe an action as present even though it is not actually going on at the moment of speaking. The opposition of two examples, one with the actual and one with the extended present will clarify this function:

Jud 18:18 *mā 'attem 'ōšim* "What are you doing?" The clause is the reaction of Micah's priest to the Danites' robbing of the sanctuary which is going on before his eyes. Su-Ptcp expresses the actual present.

Jud 18:3 *mā 'attā 'ōše bāze* "What are you doing here?" The Danite spies are amazed to find a priest in a private home in Ephraim. They do not ask the priest what he is doing 'right now', but what he is doing there in general. Su-Ptcp stands here for the extended present⁷⁵.

Occasionally the extended present is used with reference to repeated actions, which have been done in the past and will be in the future. Example: Exod 16:29 *r'e'ū kī 'a'dōnāy nātan lākem haššabbāt 'al kēn hū nōtēn lākem bayyōm haššisī lehem yōmāyim.* Although Su-Ptcp functions here as an iterative it does not *express*

⁷² This use of Su-Ptcp in future tense clauses is certainly a later development. The difference between Su-Ptcp and PC in future tense clauses is probably stylistic; it seems that Su-Ptcp is used especially to announce a certain future.

⁷³ Similar clauses are rather rare, compared maybe Deut 9:4, 5.

⁷⁴ Additional examples: Exod 7:15; 1 Sam 10:8; 2 Chron 20:16.

⁷⁵ It is not always easy to determine whether the extended or the actual present is meant. Certain examples of the extended present are: Exod 13:15; 1 Sam 12:2; 2 Kings 6:22; 17:34.

iterativity. In fact, what is expressed is the actual, ongoing present, and it is only from the context that we learn that the extended present is meant.

2.2. Ptcp-Su.

The factual present (Ptcp-Su) of Biblical Hebrew is, from the point of view of general linguistics, a peculiar phenomenon. And in many languages this grammatical function is not expressed by a specific verbal form or construction⁷⁶. In Biblical Hebrew itself the syntagm is relatively rare. There are 110 cases, almost all of them in direct speech or similar contexts which allow the use of the present tense⁷⁷. The syntagm is attested in almost every book of the OT. If in some books it is more numerous than in others this cannot be attributed to diachronic factors, the books in which it is found most often are Genesis, Judges, Jeremiah, Psalms and Ecclesiastes.

The basic function of Ptcp-Su is the factual present; secondary functions are applications of the basic function in specific contextual situations. Because of the peculiar nature of the factual present, the material will be ordered according to the factors which lead to the use of the factual present⁷⁸. These factors are of two kinds. On the one hand there are factors which belong to *la langue* (de Saussure), the language system. This means that in certain clauses the speaker *has to* use the sequence Ptcp-Su (as opposed to Su-Ptcp) because of the semantic and syntactic structures of Biblical Hebrew. These *langue*-factors will be evaluated in section 2.2.1.

On the other hand there are factors which depend on *la parole*, the concrete utterance. This means that in certain contexts the speaker *may* use the sequence Ptcp-Su (as opposed to Su-Ptcp) in order to give the clause a certain character or nuance. The use of the factual present is in this case a stylistic device. *Parole*-factors will be discussed in section 2.2.2. The few cases which defy analysis according to our theory are discussed in section 2.2.3.

2.2.1. Factors which belong to the language system.

Langue-factors which lead to the use of the factual present can easily be divided into 1) lexical factors: the meaning of the verb selects the factual present. 2)

⁷⁶ The opposition actual versus factual present does not exist in the other Semitic languages. In modern Greek the factual present is expressed, at least for some verbs, by the aorist indicative (originally a past tense), see A. Mirambel, *Grammaire du Grec moderne* (Paris 1949), 173-74. An opposition between actual and factual present exists in the national language of Rwanda, Kinyarwanda, see A. Coupey, *Abrégé de grammaire Rwanda*, tome 2 (Butare 1980), 392. For examples see note 101 in the present paper. The opposition in contemporary English between simple present and present continuous is not wholly comparable because the present continuous is clearly a younger form, which renewed a certain function of the older form, the simple present.

⁷⁷ The preponderant use of Ptcp-Su in direct speech accounts for the large proportion of pronominal subjects in this sequence.

⁷⁸ The term 'factors' is meant to be more inclusive than the term 'functions'. The arrangement according to factors allows a more detailed description of the factual present, so that the syntax of Ptcp-Su could be treated exhaustively. Secondary functions of Ptcp-Su are the factors discussed in sections 2.2.1.2.2., 3. and 4.

grammatical factors: because of the grammatical structure of Biblical Hebrew the factual present (and not the actual present) has to be used in certain clauses.

2.2.1.1. Lexical factors.

There are two groups of verbs which select the factual present, stative verbs and verbs which describe an activity of the inner person.

2.2.1.1.1. Stative verbs⁷⁹.

Stative verbs do not describe an activity which can be represented as ongoing. If, therefore, a speaker wants to indicate that the verbal content is relevant at the moment of speaking (i.e. present), he naturally represents it as a fact, not as an ongoing action. Examples:

2 Sam 15:19 *kī nākrī 'attā w^egam gōle 'attā limqōmekā,*

Cant 2:9 *dōme dōdī lišbī,*

1 Sam 19:14 *wattōmer ḥōle hū⁸⁰,*

Psalm 34:8 *ḥōne mal'ak 'adōnāy sābīb līrē'āw wayḥall^ešēm,*

Jer 48:11 *ša'anān mō'āb minnē'ūrāw w^ešōqēṭ hū 'el š^emārāw.*

Of course, with these verbs the suffix-conjugation may be used in a present tense statement. Example: Cant 7:8 *zōt qōmātek dām^etā l'tāmār.* But whereas Ptcp-Su expresses the present tense, the SC leaves the time-reference open.

To hold that with stative verbs the normal sequence is Ptcp-Su, is not to say that Su-Ptcp is excluded. Su-Ptcp may be used in specific syntactic situations (especially after *hinnē*) and with a special function. Example: Zech 1:11 *w^ehinnē kāl hā'āreš yōšebet w^ešōqāṭet.* Here *šqṭ* does not express activity anymore than in Jer 48:11, but the character of the clause is different. In Jer 48:11 Moab's being at rest is represented as a fact, in Zech 1:11 the clause describes the situation as it is 'being viewed' by the speaker⁸¹.

2.2.1.1.2. Verbs describing an activity of the inner person.

Verbs which describe an activity of the will, the mind or the feelings express actions which cannot really be observed. If a speaker wants to represent such an action as present he will normally use the factual present, rather than to describe it as an actually ongoing action. Examples⁸²:

Psalm 87:2 *'ohēb 'adōnāy ša'arē šiyyōn mikkōl miškenōt ya'aqōb,*

Psalm 147:11 *rōše 'adōnāy 'et y^erē'āw,*

Psalm 119:162 *šās 'ānōkī 'al 'imrātekā k^emōšē šālāl rāb,*

Amos 6:8 *m^etā'ēb 'ānōkī 'et g^e'ōn ya'aqōb w^e'arm^enōtāw sānētū.*

Some verbs have a derived function of describing an activity of the inner person. Examples:

1 Sam 19:2 *m^ebaqqēš šā'ul 'ābī lah^mmitekā.* Here *bqš* does not have its primary meaning 'to search'. "Saul seeks to kill you" means "Saul *wants* to kill you".

This derived meaning of *bqš* is even clearer in the following example: 1 Sam 23:10

⁷⁹ Some verbs listed in this section (e.g. *glh*, *hnh*) are stative in their participle but not necessarily in other forms.

⁸⁰ Other examples of Ptcp-Su with *hlh*: 1 Kings 14:5; 2 Kings 8:29; 2 Chron 22:6.

⁸¹ Additional example of Su-Ptcp with a stative verb: Gen 48:1.

⁸² The verbs *r'h*, *šm'*, and *yd'*, which select the sequence Ptcp-Su when expressing an activity of the mind, have been discussed in section 1.1.1.

šāmōa' šāma' 'abd^ekā kī m^ebaqqēš šā'ul lābō 'el q^eilā l^ešahēt lā'ir ba^abūrī. Saul knows, of course, the way to Keilah, he does not have to search to go there. What David heard is that “Saul *wants* to come to Keilah”⁸³.

Eccl 7:26 *umōše 'anī mar mim māwet 'et hā'isšā ...* “I find” should not be taken literally, but in the sense of intellectual discovery. *mš'* describes here an activity of the mind.

As with the stative verbs, the sequence Su-Ptcp is not excluded with the verbs describing an activity of the inner person. It may be used, with a special function and in certain syntactic situations. Examples:

2 Sam 13:4 *'et tāmār 'ahōt 'abšālōm 'āhī 'anī 'ōhēb* “I’m suffering from being in love with Tamar ...”

1 Kings 11:22 *kī mā 'attā hāsēr 'immi w^ehinn^ekā m^ebaqqēš lāleket 'el 'aršekā* “What have you lacked with me that you are now seeking (i.e. you want) to go to your own country.”

2.2.1.2. Grammatical factors.

There are 4 grammatical functions⁸⁴ which require the use of the factual present⁸⁵: 1) following the particles *'im*, *h^a*- and, in specific cases, *kī*. 2) to express a condition without particle. 3) to represent an action as present when in fact the decisive part of the action lies in the immediate past. 4) to express the extratemporal or general present.

2.2.1.2.1. Ptcp-Su with particles.

The factual present is selected by the particles *'im*, *h^a*- and *kī*. With *'im* and *h^a*- Ptcp-Su is the only sequence attested, unless another element comes between the particle and the sequence. If a speaker wants to use the actual present after *'im* or *h^a*- he has to use the construction with *yēš'*: *'im/h^a*-*yēš'*-Su-Ptcp.

With *kī* the use of Ptcp-Su is less exclusive but the use of different sequences following *kī* corresponds to a difference in the function of *kī* or of the *kī*-clause. In other words, the selection of the sequence of the sequence is grammatically determined.

The theory of Ptc-Su with these particles has been exposed, with examples, in sections 1.2.3., 1.2.4., 1.2.5. and 1.2.7. It is not necessary to repeat what has been said there.

2.2.1.2.2. Ptcp-Su expressing a condition.

In some very few instances Ptcp-Su functions as a conditional without particle. This is clearly an application of the factual-present function: the action is envisaged as a potentiality, not as actually going on. Examples:

Isa 48:13 *'ap yādī yās^edā 'eres wīmīnī ṭipp^ehā šāmāyīm qōrē 'anī 'alēhem ya'amdū yaḥdāw* “My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together.”

⁸³ With its primary meaning ‘to search, to seek’ the verb is often found in the sequence Su-Ptcp, e.g. 1 Sam 24:9; 2 Sam 16:11; Isa 41:17.

⁸⁴ If we count the use of Ptcp-Su after particles as one function.

⁸⁵ I.e. they require the factual present as opposed to the actual present. In many cases other verb forms other than Ptcp-Su could have been used (especially SC), with only a minimal difference in meaning; however, Su-Ptcp is usually excluded.

Job 15:23 *nōdēd hū lallehem ʿayyē yādaʿ kī nākōn bʿyādō yōm hošek* “When he wanders abroad for bread (saying) ‘Where (is it)?’, he knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand.” This verse is difficult, and both the Septuagint and the Peshitta seem to have read something quite different. The Vulgate supports our interpretation: *Cum se moverit ad quaerendum panem novit quod paratus sit in manu eius tenebrarum dies.*

2.2.1.2.3. Ptcp-Su expressing the immediate past.

The sequence Ptcp-Su serves to present an action just performed, as a fact relevant to the present. The action (or at least the decisive part of the action) is past, but viewed as a fact it is still present. Examples⁸⁶:

In the first example the action is still going on though the decisive part of it is past:

Exod 36:5 *marbīm hāʿām lʿhābī middē haʿbōdā lammʿlākā ʿāšer šiwwā ʿadōnāy laʿšōt ʾōtāh.* When the able men say this, the people are still bringing offerings, but the decisive part of the action, i.e. the moment the offerings exceeded the required amount, is past. Because it is this decisive moment which interests the speakers they represent the action as a fact, using the factual present, rather than to pay attention to the ongoing action.

Not the action but the state which results from it persists unto the present in the two following examples:

Isa 46:1 *kāraʿ bēl qōrēs nʿbō* “Bel has bowed down, Nebo stoops over.”

Job 6:4 *kī hiššē šadday ʿimmādī ʿāšer hʿmātām šōtā rūhī* “For the arrows of the Almighty are in me, my spirit has drunk their poison.”

In the following example the action as a whole is past but it is represented as a fact relevant to the present: Jer 38:26 *mappīl ʿanī tʿhinnātī lipnē hammelek lʿbiltī hʿšibēnī bēt yʿhōnātān lāmūt šām.* When Jeremiah will say this the action will be past. But it is relevant to the present: it explains Jeremiah’s presence at the court.

2.2.1.2.4. Ptcp-Su expressing the general present.

The sequence Ptcp-Su is used as a general, eternal present. Because the speaker is not interested whether the action is actually going on at the moment of speaking he presents it as a fact, and uses the factual present. Examples:

Nah 1:2 *nōqēm ʿadōnāy lʿšārāw wʿnōṭēr hū lʿʾoyʿbāw,*

Psalm 19:2 *haššamayim mʿsappʿrīm kʿbōd ʿel uma ʿāšē yādāw maggīd hārāqāʿ,*

Psalm 31:24 *ʿemūnīm nōšēr ʿadōnāy,*

Psalm 34:23 *pōde ʿadōnāy nepēs ʿabādāw,*

Psalm 145:20 *šōmēr ʿadōnāy ʿet kāl ʾōhʿbāw,*

Eccl 1:5 *wʿzārah haššemeš ubā haššameš wʿel mʿqōmō šōʿep zōrēah hū šām.*

In Psalm 19:2 the general present Ptcp-Su is in parallelism with the actual present Su-Ptcp. This amounts to a kind of grammatical *merismus* for which Biblical Hebrew is otherwise famous⁸⁷.

⁸⁶ The examples with the verbs of motion have been discussed in section 1.1.2. They select the sequence Ptcp-Su when, though the motion is still going on, the moment the motion started (which lies in the immediate past) is considered essential.

⁸⁷ So we find *wayyiqtol* in parallel with *qatal* (Gen 1:5), *qiqtol* with *weqatal* (Isa 5:17), Ptcp-Su with *qatal* (Isa 46:1; Psalm 45:2).

2.2.2. Factors which depend on the concrete utterance.

Factors which depend on the concrete utterance and bring about the use of the factual present are 1) the speaker wants to indicate that the clause is the interpretation of an action. 2) the speaker wants to indicate that the utterance interprets itself.

2.2.2.1. Ptcp-Su indicates interpretation.

In a sense every utterance is an interpretation of an event or a fact. But it may happen that a speaker consciously describes an action not as it presents itself but as he sees it. In this case he may employ the factual present to express: "Whatever seems to be going on, the fact is that ...". Examples:

Jer 23:16 *'al tišm^e'ū 'al dibrē hann^ebī'im hannibb^e'im lākem mahbilim hēmmā 'etkem*. In reality the prophets are prophecying, but God interprets this action differently: "They are filling you with vain hopes" (if that is the meaning of *mahbilim*). To indicate that this is indeed an interpretation, the factual present is used: "Whatever can be observed to be going on, the fact is that they are filling you with vain hopes."

Jud 19:18 *'ob^erīm 'aⁿahnū mibbēt lehem y^ehūdā 'ad yark^etē har 'eprayim miššām 'ānōkī*. Again this clause interprets the present situation. The old man can easily observe that the Levite, his servant and his concubine are travelling; but what the Levite wants to point out to him is that they are passing, i.e. they come from and are going to a definite place—"Don't be afraid we'll want to stay"⁸⁸. Because it is the fact that they are passing that matters, and not whatever action is going on, he uses the factual present, Ptcp-Su.

Jud 3:24 *'ak mēsik hū 'et raglāw bah^adar hamm^eqērā*. Here the interpretative function of the clause is particularly clear because Eglon's servants cannot observe what he is doing. The utterance does not describe an ongoing action but a (supposed) fact.

2 Sam 14:13 *w^elāmmā hāšabtā kāzōt 'al 'am 'elōhīm umiddabbēr hammelek haddābār hazze k^e'āšēm l^ebiltī hāšīb hammelek 'et nidd^ehō*. "... for in giving this decision the king convicts himself, inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again" (RSV); this is not a literal translation but it probably renders the sense well⁸⁹. "The king speaks this word as one who is guilty" is an interpretation of the present situation. To mark the utterance as an interpretation, the Tekoite woman uses the factual present: "You are judging my case, but in fact you pass the sentence as a guilty man."

2.2.2.2. The utterance interprets itself.

Some clauses are remarkable in that they describe themselves: the utterance is at

⁸⁸ In translation the same message can be communicated by emphasising the predicate: "We are *passing* ..." (or by contrasting: "We're *only* passing ..."). The Peshitta has chosen this way of rendering the sense and employs the tautological infinitive: *me'bar 'ābrin (h)nan* (the Peshitta translates Ptcp-Su similarly in 2 Sam 10:3; Prov 26:19). The Hebrew syntagm, however, does not express emphasis (or contrast).

⁸⁹ Some analyse *middabbēr* as *min* + infinitive piel, but this leaves *k^e'āšēm* without syntactical connection. There is no necessity to doubt the text if we take *middabbēr* as participle hithpael.

the same time an action and the description of that action. This phenomenon is by its nature limited to clauses with a 1st person subject.

The utterance is, at the moment of speaking, ongoing, but what is relevant is the action which is performed. This action is viewed as a fact and therefore the factual present is used. Examples:

1 Chron 29:13 *w^eattā ’elōhēnū mōdīm ’aḥmu lāk*. “We thank you” performs the action of thanking and informs about this performance. Though the utterance is ongoing, the action is viewed as a fact and therefore the factual present is used.

Psalm 45:2 *rāhaš libbī dābār ṭōb ’ōmēr ’ānī ma’āsay l’melek* “My heart overflows with a goodly theme; I address my verses to the king.”

Ezek 2:3 *ben ’ādām šōlēaḥ ’anī ’ōt’kā ’el b’nē yiśrā’el* “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel”⁹⁰.

Jer 38:14 *šō’el ’anī ’ōt’kā dābār ’al t’kaḥēd mimmenī dābār*. Although “I ask you a question” is not the question asked, this clause probably belongs in this section. Alternatively, the factual present may be taken as a conditional (see section 2.2.1.2.2.): “If I ask you something, don’t hide anything from me.”

The following clause may belong in this section as well: Gen 15:14 *w^egam ’et haggōy ’āšer ya’ābōdū dān ’ānōkī*. Because the execution of the judgment on Egypt is still over 400 years away this clause has often been taken as a future: “I will bring judgment ...” In view of the present-tense character of the predicative participle, I propose to translate rather: “And also the nation which they will serve *I judge*”. “I judge” is God’s sentence which is pronounced centuries before its execution⁹¹.

Quite often several of the factors discussed above are combined in one clause. Selected examples:

Num 11:29 *ham^eqannē ’attā lī*. The verb used describes an activity of the inner person (2.2.1.1.2.) and the sequence follows interrogative *h^a-* (1.2.4.). Both factors select the factual present. Of course it is precisely because the action is going on inside Joshua that Moses has to ask about it.

1 Sam 20:30 *h^alō yāda’ī kī bōḥēr ’attā l’ben yišay*. A verb of activity of the inner person (2.2.1.1.2.), the main part of the action lies in the past (2.2.1.2.3.) and the clause functions as the object of *yd’* (1.2.7.1.).

Prov 26:19 *kēn ’īs rimmā ’et rē’ehū w^eāmār h^alō m^ešahēq ’ānī*. The action lies in the immediate past (2.2.1.2.3.) and the clause is an interpretation (2.2.2.1.): “Obviously I’ve just deceived you, but in fact I’m only joking.”

2 Sam 10:3 *ham^ekabbēd dāwīd ’et ’ābūkā b^e’ēnēkā kī šālah l’kā m^enaḥ^mmīm*. The sequence follows *h^a-* (1.2.4.) and the clause is (asks about) an interpretation (2.2.2.1.): “David sent comforters, do you interpret this as an honouring of your father?”

2.2.3. Difficult cases.

The thesis that Ptcp-Su expresses the factual present is supported by 106 out of a total of 110 cases. The remaining 4 cases are somewhat problematic.

Isa 33:9 *hāyā haššārōn ka’rābā w^enō’ēr bāsān w^ekarmel*. Perhaps the participle may be taken as perfective: “Bashan and Carmel are shaken out (i.e. leafless)”. If so, this clause would come in section 2.2.1.1.1. (Ptcp-Su with stative verbs). Note

⁹⁰ In Ezek 2:4, where the clause is not a description of itself anymore, the sequence Su-Ptcp is used.

⁹¹ Compare *šōpēṭ ’anī* 1 Sam 3:13.

that in this interpretation the clause forms a better parallel than “Bashan and Carmel are shaking of (their leaves).”

Jer 4:19 *mē'ay mē'ay 'oḥilā qirōt libbī hōme lī libbī lō 'aḥ^arīš*. This verse offers some textual problems. Taking it as it stands I see no economical way to interpret *hōmē lī libbī* as a factual present.

The following two cases are the only cases from the book of Nehemiah. Both clauses are quite straightforward and neither supports our thesis. These cases may show that in the latest stage of Biblical Hebrew the opposition actual versus factual present was breaking down.

Neh 6:17 *gam bayyāmūm hāhēm marbūm ḥorē y^ehūdā 'igg^erōtēhem hōl^ekōt 'al tō-biyyā,*

Neh 8:9 *kī bōkīm kāl hā'am k^ešām'am 'et dibrē hattōrā.*

2.3. The negation of the predicative participle.

The predicative participle is negated by 'ēn, or, to put it more correctly, a clause with a predicative participle is negated with the syntagm 'ēn-Su-Ptcp. In this construction Su may be a noun, a separate pronoun or a pronominal suffix attached to 'ēn⁹².

This syntagm serves as the negative for both sequences Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su⁹³, as will be shown in this section. Note, however, that from the formal point of view it is the negation of the sequence Su-Ptcp. In fact, the peculiar construction was probably designed especially to express “X is actually not doing action Y”⁹⁴.

2.3.1. 'ēn-Su-Ptcp negation of Su-Ptcp.

It is quite remarkable that Biblical Hebrew should have developed a syntagm to negate the actual present. Still, this seems to be proper function of 'ēn-Su-Ptcp. Examples:

Ezek 8:12 *'ēn 'aḏōnāy rō'e 'ōtānū* “The LORD does not see us”, now while we are doing something in the dark.

2 Kings 12:8 *maddūa' 'ēn^ekem m^eḥazz^eqīm 'et bedeq habbāyit* “Why are you not repairing the house?”

'ēn-Su-Ptcp is used also to negate the secondary functions of Su-Ptcp, historic present, *futurum instans* and extended present. Examples:

Jud 3:25 *wayyāḥilū 'ad bōš w^ehinnē 'ēnennū pōtēaḥ daltōt ha'^aliyyā* “And they waited till they were utterly at a loss, and behold, he doesn't open the doors . . .”

Deut 4:22 *kī 'ānōkī mēt bā'areš hazzot 'ēnenni 'ōbēr 'et hayyardēn* “I will die in this land, I'm not going over the Jordan.”

Jer 14:12 *kī yāšūmū 'ēnenni šōmēa' 'el rinnātām* “When they fast I don't hear their cry.”

2.3.2. 'ēn-Su-Ptcp negation of Ptcp-Su.

Although the syntagm 'ēn-Su-Ptcp was designed for a specific function it came to

⁹² The cases where the subject is a noun are: Gen 39:23; Exod 33:15; Lev 14:21; Ezek 8:12; Ezek 9:9; Esth 2:20; 3:5; 7:4; the subject is a separate pronoun only once, Neh 4:17.

⁹³ Twice Ptcp-Su is negated by *lō*, see section 1.2.6. Once we find 'ēn-Ptcp-Su, Eccl 9:11.

⁹⁴ The original function of 'ēn as a negation is to negate the existence of an indefinite noun phrase. In any other type of clause the normal negation is *lō*.

be used as the negation of all clauses with a participle as predicate. That it negates also clauses which in their positive form would have Ptcp-Su appears clearly from the following facts.

'ēn-Su-Ptcp is used in conditional clauses. Example: Exod 33:15 *'im 'ēn pānekā hōl^ekīm 'al ta^alēnū mizze*.

As we have seen in section 1.2.3. conditional clauses select the sequence Ptcp-Su. One may claim that *'im-'ēn*-Su-Ptcp is the negative of *'im-yēš*-Su-Ptcp (1.2.5.), but whereas with *yēš* the construction is rare, with *'ēn* it is the only construction attested⁹⁵.

The syntagm is also used in *h^a*-clauses, and here we are fortunate to find the following opposition:

Jer 7:17 *ha'ēn^ekā rō'e mā hēm^{mā} 'ōšīm*,

Ezek 8:6 *h^arō'e 'attā' mā hēm 'ōšīm*.

The two clauses express more or less the same meaning, but one employs a negative, the other a positive form. In the positive clause the sequence is Ptcp-Su, in the negative clause we find *'ēn*-Su-Ptcp.

Consider finally the following example, *'ēn*-Su-Ptcp in an object clause:

Jud 12:3 *wa'er'e kī 'ēn^ekā mōšā'*.

r'h has here the meaning 'to realise, to come to the conclusion', and the participle clause describes the fact which is the object of the realisation. The situation is the one we found in Ruth 1:18 (see section 1.2.7.1.), the positive sequence would have been Ptcp-Su.

3. Conclusions and perspectives.

3.1. Conclusions.

3.1.1. Su-Ptcp versus Ptcp-Su, an opposition of aspect.

The opposition between Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su is not an opposition between a normal sequence (Su-Ptcp) and a sequence expressing emphasis or contrast (Ptcp-Su). See notes 9 and 88.

The opposition between Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su does not express a difference in tense or time reference. Both sequences represent actions as contemporary with the moment of speaking.

The opposition is not one expressing 'durative action' versus 'punctual action'⁹⁶. Su-Ptcp may be used to describe punctual actions (see sections 2.1.2. the historic present and 2.1.3. the *futurum instans*), Ptcp-Su is often used to describe actions which have a certain duration.

The opposition is not one expressing 'action' versus 'state'. Su-Ptcp may be used to describe states (see section 2.2.2.1.1. remark), Ptcp-Su is often used with actional (fientic) verbs.

⁹⁵ *'im-'ēn*-Su-Ptcp is found in Gen 20:7; 43:5; Exod 8:17; 33:15; 1 Sam 19:11; Ezek 20:39.

⁹⁶ The opposition 'durative action' versus 'punctual action' is an opposition of *Aktionsart*, i.e. it describes objective characteristics of the action. The category of aspect, which will be discussed below, concerns the subjective representation of an action. A clear distinction of *Aktionsart* and aspect was reached only in the 1920s, by H. Jakobsohn and E. Hermann. See for the whole question and its history: A. L. Lloyd, *Anatomy of the Verb* (Amsterdam 1979), 8ff.

But, as was briefly indicated in section 0.3., the functional opposition between *Su-Ptcp* and *Ptcp-Su* is an opposition of aspect. *Su-Ptcp* expresses the linear or cursive present, in which an action which is going on at the moment of speaking⁹⁷ is followed in its course. *Ptcp-Su* expresses the punctual or constative present, in which an action which is going on at the moment of speaking⁹⁸ is summarized in a point, or: represented as a fact. In order to create a clear and expedient terminology I coined the terms actual present and factual present for these respective functions.

Thus the opposition ${}^{\text{a}}n\bar{i} r\bar{o}'e - r\bar{o}'e {}^{\text{a}}n\bar{i}$ is comparable (isomorphic) to the opposition $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\omicron}\rho\acute{\omega}\nu - \acute{\epsilon}\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\nu$ of classical Greek and *je voyais - je vis* of literary French, with this difference, that the Greek and French oppositions are localized in the past whereas the Hebrew opposition plays in the present.

3.1.2. Tense and aspect in Semitic.

The use of the term aspect to describe verbal functions in the study of the Semitic languages has been criticised in an eminently competent way by J. Kuryłowicz. In his article "Verbal Aspect in Semitic"⁹⁹ he shows how the category of aspect presupposes the category of tense. In fact, a language needs to have more than one verbal form expressing the same tense before we can attribute to it the category of aspect. In classical Greek, for instance, we observe that the past tense is expressed by several verbal forms (marked by the augment); within this past tense, then, there exists the aspectual opposition imperfect indicative versus aorist indicative. Both $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\rho\alpha\phi\epsilon$ and $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\rho\alpha\psi\epsilon$ are past tense, they are opposed to each other in the way they subjectively represent the action, either as a line or as a point.

The case is different for the Semitic languages. Taking Arabic as his example, Kuryłowicz holds that, to begin with, this language does not express tense. *qatala* does not express simultaneity with a moment of the past but anteriority to the present¹⁰⁰, in opposition to *yaqtulu* which expresses simultaneity with the present. What is more important is that *qatala* is not opposed to any other verbal form expressing the past tense. Because of this we cannot ascribe the expression of aspect to the Arabic verbal system, though of course aspectual nuances may be expressed (through the use of *ḥal*-clauses, for instance).

In view of the perpetual confusion (since the days of Ewald) in Semitic studies with regard to the term and the concept of aspect, we should be grateful to Kuryłowicz for his lucid contribution. And, though the whole problem deserves a fuller discussion, in the framework of this paper we can accept his claims as a basis for sound linguistic description of our Biblical Hebrew material¹⁰¹.

⁹⁷ Or, if the action is not going on at the moment of speaking, it is represented as such.

⁹⁸ See note 97.

⁹⁹ *Orientalia* 42 (1973) 114–120. I am much indebted to these few pages.

¹⁰⁰ To clarify the distinction we can say that *qatala* has as main function the function of 'he has killed' (present perfect). Its use as a past tense, 'he killed', is a secondary function.

¹⁰¹ I wish to disagree however, with regard to a matter of detail. Kuryłowicz discusses aspect in the past tense and in the future tense, but with regard to the present tense he merely remarks that it is naturally linear, i.e. imperfective (see the quote in note 56; compare also R. Bartelmus [see note 6], 38f.). This seems to me to be an undue inference from the situation in the Slavic languages. If there is no aspectual opposition in the present tense in Slavic,

3.1.3. Tense and aspect in Biblical Hebrew.

Though the Biblical Hebrew verbal system certainly offers its own problems, which cannot be discussed here, we can agree that it doesn't anymore than Arabic know a past (or a future) tense. But, as this paper has tried to show, Biblical Hebrew does have a present tense¹⁰². Moreover, the present tense is expressed by not one but two distinct verbal forms (or rather, syntagms): the sequences Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su. This means that the formal conditions for the existence of aspect are met. More than one verbal form is used to refer to the same time-frame, so that, at least theoretically, the possibility exists that the forms express an opposition of aspect.

That the two syntagms do express an aspectual opposition in the present tense is the thesis which was formulated at the outset of this paper. In section 1. a demonstration of this opposition was attempted. Section 2. has offered a more or less detailed illustration of how these aspects function in the Biblical Hebrew idiom. In the present conclusion I feel confident to affirm that the theory defended in this paper is in accord with the facts and effectively deepens our understanding of Biblical Hebrew syntax.

3.1.4. The aspectual opposition in the present tense.

Thus the aspectual opposition in the present tense, expressed by Su-Ptcp versus Ptcp-Su, is something which doesn't exist in aspect languages like classical Greek and literary French¹⁰³.

This is most obvious for the factual present (constative aspect). When, for instance, Gen 31:5 is translated "Je vois que le visage de votre père n'est plus envers moi comme précédemment" (Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible) this is entirely correct. But it does not express the nuance, contained in *rō'e 'ānōkī*, that "I see" is considered by Jacob as a fact, and that he doesn't allude to an ongoing action (though the factuality of the clause appears more or less from the context). If, on the other hand, it is rendered: "Je remarque que le visage de votre père n'est plus envers moi comme auparavant" (Nouvelle version Segond révisée), the nuance is expressed, but at the cost of a faithful rendering of the lexeme *r'h*.

where aspect was first discovered and adequately described, this does not imply that such an opposition could not exist in a language with a different structure.

During the years I taught at the 'École de théologie' in Butare, Rwanda, I studied the national language, Kinyarwanda, and learnt that it has an opposition imperfective–perfective in the present tense (compare note 76). Examples: *araguhamagara* (imperfective present) "he's calling you" (we hear him calling), *araguhamagaye* (perfective present) "he's calling you" (ie. he told me to fetch you); *araza* (imperf. pres.) "he's coming" (I see him coming), *araje* (perf. pres.) "he's coming" (he'll be here in a minute). The Kinyarwanda verbal system is enormously complicated so that the opposition imperfective present–perfective present is not completely parallel to the Hebrew opposition, but the basic category seems to be the same.

¹⁰² Since this 'present tense' is not opposed to a past or a future tense it should be designated by another term. In spite of this I have maintained the term 'present tense' because it is more expedient than 'the expression of simultaneity with the moment of speaking'.

¹⁰³ The English opposition present continuous–simple present probably is of a different nature, see note 76. Still I will use French in the following examples because it makes the point more clearly.

Though this is less obvious, also the actual present (cursive aspect) is a phenomenon unknown to these languages. Je vois, j'écris, je fais, ὄρω, γράφω, ποιῶ etc. are not opposed to factual-present forms so that they cannot express the actual present. All these forms are aspectually neutral, whether the cursive or constative aspect is intended is left to be inferred from the context. A clear example is the rendering of 2 Sam 13:4 "J'aime Tamar, sœur de mon frère Absalom" (Nouvelle version Segond révisée); again this translation is irreproachable, but it doesn't express, as does ^anī 'ōhēb, that Amnon describes his love as an ongoing action (or rather, passion).

3.2. Perspectives.

Leaving the synchronic point of view, which has dominated this paper up to this point, for the language-historical point of view, the following observations may be made.

3.2.1. The predicative participle as present tense: a young form.

The use of the predicative participle as a tense form in Biblical Hebrew (BH) is a relatively young phenomenon. On this point the comparison with other languages of the Canaanite branch, and with the developments in the Aramaic and Arabic dialects, leaves no room for doubt. The participle began its career as a verbal noun (*nomen agentis*), in the conjugational system it is a newcomer.

This 'new' form entered the conjugational system with a new function. Or rather, it renewed an existing function, rendering it more expressively. One can imagine that at the beginning of the development the new form *might* be used in this specific function, for expressivity. Later it became the usual form and consequently *had to* be used to express the same function.

As this paper has tried to show, we should not, with regard to BH, speak about a verbal form (*in casu* the participle) but about a verbal construction consisting of the participle and its subject¹⁰⁴. Moreover, this verbal construction has two basic variants, the sequence Su-Ptcp and Ptcp-Su, which express a functional opposition. The participial construction renewed the function 'present tense' (simultaneity with the moment of speaking), which function was from the outset further divided into actual present (expressed by Su-Ptcp) and factual present (expressed by Ptcp-Su).

3.2.2. Traces of the present-tense functions of PC and SC.

If the participle is a newcomer in the Hebrew conjugational system, then we can postulate a stage of proto-Hebrew in which the participial construction was not used as a tense form. In this stage of proto-Hebrew, present-tense statements were formed with either PC or SC¹⁰⁵. Of the present tense functions of PC and SC traces can still be found in BH.

The PC is used as a general present in proverbs and similar expressions, e.g. Prov 26:14 *haddelet tissōb 'al širāh w'e'āšēl 'al miṭṭātō* "As a door turns on its hinges, so

¹⁰⁴ The participle as such, not being a finite verb form, could not compete with PC and SC, see section 0.2.

¹⁰⁵ This is a somewhat simplistic picture. We have to presuppose two PCs, **yaqtulu* and **yaqtul* for proto-Hebrew, and the SC may have had variant forms as well.

does a sluggard on his bed”; and occasionally as a habitual present, e.g. Num 12:8 *pe ’el pe ’adabber bō* “With him I speak mouth to mouth”¹⁰⁶. Really referring to an action going on at the moment of speaking it is used only in specific types of clauses, especially questions. When, for instance, the man asks Joseph what he is looking for, he can say (Gen 37:15) *mā t’baqqēš*, using the PC to refer to the present; but Joseph, in the positive answer, has to use the participle to refer to the same present: *’et ’ahay ’ānōkī m’baqqēš*¹⁰⁷.

The SC is used in present tense statements with stative verbs (e.g. *qāṭontī* Gen 32:11) and with verbs describing an activity of the inner person (e.g. *qaṣṭī* Gen 27:46). It has a present tense function also in expressions like *nātattī* “I give (hereby)”, *nišba’ī* “I swear”, which have justly been termed performative because the action described is accomplished in the utterance (compare section 2.2.2.2.). Occasionally SC is used as a general present, e.g. Prov 14:6 *biqqeš lēy hākmā wā’āyin* “A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain.”

These present-tense uses of PC and SC are traces of an earlier stage of the language. It is not possible to reconstruct the former present tense functions of PC and SC in any detail, but it should be noted that the function of PC seems to have been akin to the actual present, while the function of SC shows affinities to the factual present¹⁰⁸.

3.2.3. Su-Ptcp and PC, Ptcp-Su and SC.

At a certain moment in the history of the Hebrew language the present tense function was renewed through the use of the predicative participle. At that moment, or rather, in that process, PC and SC lost their present-tense functions almost completely. We may say that the participial construction ‘pushed’ PC and SC out of the present tense¹⁰⁹. The SC was pushed to one side to become a past tense (more exactly: a form expressing anteriority to the moment of speaking), the PC moved over to the other side to become a form expressing modality¹¹⁰.

There is a more or less striking relationship between the former present-tense function of PC and the BH function of Su-Ptcp, as well as between the former present-tense function of SC and the BH function of Ptcp-Su¹¹¹. As to the first pair, we can observe that PC may be used with the same function as Su-Ptcp in questions: *’ānā tēlēk* (Gen 32:18) expresses exactly the same meaning as *’ānā ’attā*

¹⁰⁶ Additional examples: Exod 18:15; Num 17:19; 2 Kings 6:12.

¹⁰⁷ The fact that questions using PC to refer to the present tend to be answered with a predicative participle was noted by W. Gross (see note 1), 46 and D. Cohen (see note 6), 306. Other examples are Gen 16:8; Jud 19:18. PC is used as a present tense in a negative clause: Gen 19:19; Job 9:2; in a conditional clause: Isa 1:18. Perhaps PC is used as an actual present freely in ancient poetry, e.g. Num 23:9.

¹⁰⁸ This idea has, of course, been enounced long ago by eminent Semitists such as H. Bauer and Fr. Rüdigen: it is reached here in a new way.

¹⁰⁹ It would be equally right to say that as PC and SC lost their present-tense functions, they ‘pulled’ the predicative participle into the conjugational system.

¹¹⁰ Again the reality is more complex, see note 105.

¹¹¹ Still it seems to me that the two sequences entered the language together, in the same process; the use of one sequence presupposes the possibility to invert it and so create the opposite sequence.

hōlēk (Zech 2:6); compare also *mē'ayin tābō* (Jud 17:9) with *h^alō midderek 'attā bā* (2 Sam 11:10); *mā ta^aše* (Isa 45:9) with *mā 'attem 'ošīm* (Jud 18:18); in the same syntactical situation: *mālākem t^edakk^eū 'ammī* (Isa 3:15) and *mā lākem 'attem mōš^elīm 'et hammāšāl hazze* (Ezek 18:2).

For SC and Ptcp-Su we can cite the following examples of expressions which are formed with SC and Ptcp-Su in the same function: compare *ša^qfa* (Isa 14:7) with *šōqēl hū* (Jer 48:11) *šaštī* (Psalm 119:14) with *šās 'ānōkī* (Psalm 119:162); *h^arā'ūtā* (Ezek 8:12) with *h^arō'e 'attā* (Ezek 8:6); *'āmartī* (Job 9:22) with *'ōmēr 'anī* (Psalm 45:2); *pāqadtī* (1 Sam 15:2) with *pōqēd 'anī* (Jer 44:29); *hōdīnu l^ekā* (Psalm 75:2) with *mōdīm 'aⁿahnū lāk* (1 Chron 29:13).

Thus we may formulate the hypothesis that the sequence Su-Ptcp renewed the present tense function of the PC, whereas Ptcp-Su renewed the present tense function of the SC. It is certainly no accident that the order of predicate and subject is the same in *'attā qōtēl* and *ti-qtōl* as well as in *qōtēl 'attā* and *qatal-tā*.

Appendix: The cases of Ptcp-Su

Gen 3:5; 15:14; 18:17; 19:13,14; 27:46; 31:5,20; 41:32; 42:23.

Exod 7:27, 9:2; 10:4; 36:5.

Num 10:29; 11:29; 22:22; 25:18.

Deut 5:22; 13:4.

Josh (8:6 according to the versions¹¹²).

Jud 2:22; 3:24; 8:4; 11:9; 15:3,11; 19:18; 20:34.

1 Sam 3:9,10,13,13; (6:3 versions¹¹³); 19:2, 14; 20:30; 22:17; 23:10; 25:4.

2 Sam 10:3; 14:13; 15:19; 17:10; 20:17.

1 Kings 14:15.

2 Kings 5:7; 8:29; 18:26.

Isa 33:9; 36:11; 46:1; 48:13.

Jer 1:12; 3:6; 4:19,29; 23:16; 26:15; 38:14,21,26; 42:13; 44:15,29; 48:11.

Ezek 2:3; 9:8; 39:11.

Twelve: Hos 4:15; Joel 4:4; Amos 6:8; Jonah 1:12; Nah 1:2,2.

Psalms 1:6; 19:2; 31:24; 34:8,23; 37:18; 45:2; 87:2; 119:162; 145:20; 147:11; 149:4.

Prov 17:17; 26:19.

Job 6:4; 12:3; 13:2; 15:23.

Cant 2:9; Ruth 1:18; 3:11; Eccl 1:5,6; 3:21,21; 7:26; 8:12; 9:1; 12:5.

Neh 6:17.

1 Chron 19:3; 28:9; 29:13.

2 Chron 13:11; 22:6.

¹¹² Septuagint and Peshitta leave little room for doubt that they read *nāsīm hēm*. The clause would come in section 2.2.1.2.3.: "They are fleeing" i.e. "They have started to flee, they have taken flight" (compare *brh* section 1.1.2.1.).

¹¹³ If indeed, as the versions indicate, *'attem* has dropped out of the text, then the clause would come in section 1.2.3., Ptcp-Su after *'im*.

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Abstract

An important verbal function, the expression of the present tense, is assumed in Biblical Hebrew by the participle. The predicative participle is therefore to be regarded as an integral part of the verbal system, functioning side by side with the prefix conjugation (PC) and the suffix conjugation (SC). However, whereas PC and SC contain in one form subject and predicate, the participle provides only the predicate. In order to form a clause, the participle requires the subject (Su) to be mentioned explicitly. The order of these two elements, Su and participle, may be either Su-Ptcp or Ptcp-Su.

The main thesis defended in the present paper is that the two sequences express two aspects of the present tense. The sequence *Su-Ptcp* expresses the cursive or actual present: the action is represented as actually going on at the moment of speaking. The sequence *Ptcp-Su* expresses the constative or factual present: the action is regarded as a fact contemporary with the moment of speaking. This functional opposition between the two sequences can be demonstrated by opposing the sequences with the same verb and by studying the use of the sequences with particles.

The thesis proposed is applicable to the overwhelming majority of cases of the predicative participle. Thus it deepens our understanding of Biblical Hebrew syntax. In addition to this, the thesis has some interesting implications for the history of the Hebrew verbal system.

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