

# Interrupted Syntactical Structures in Biblical Hebrew

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## 1.

Several syntactical structures in Biblical Hebrew can be constructed in two ways. The first and more regular way produces a continuous sequence whose components are bound together uninterruptedly. The second way creates a broken structure which maintains the features of the original one, but is twisted and frequently interrupted by components with other syntactical roles. Although interrupted syntactical structures are less common than continuous ones, their distribution is wide enough to allow their consideration as normal Biblical Hebrew constructions, and they should not be treated as abnormal.

This paper presents, demonstrates and discusses several interrupted syntactical structures in Biblical Hebrew. It seeks to show that the tendency to break syntactical structures by twisting their original structure or by inserting other non-related syntactical components should be regarded as an independent feature in Biblical Hebrew, which deserves linguistic attention. The interrupted syntactical structures in Biblical Hebrew might serve as mere stylistic variants but very often they tend to mark the logical pattern of a phrase or a sentence.

Several representative Bible translations of these structures into Arabic and English are examined in this paper beside the original texts, since they shed interesting light on the topic. Bible translations, early and late, do not always retain the nuance of interrupted structures in the target languages, either because they regard them as abnormal and correct them or because their own syntax does not allow similar structures in the translation.

Interrupted syntactical phrases and sentence types employed extensively in Biblical Hebrew are sentences involving extraposition, sentences involving prolepsis, logical subjects separated from their predicates by adverbials and conjunctions, predicate constituents separated by a subject, object complements separated from their transitive verb and attributes, and appositions and attributive clauses separated from their head. Each of these structures has been noted and examined in Biblical Hebrew studies before, but rarely are they considered as sharing a common syntactical feature, and their similar treatment and frequent rendering by other structures in Bible translations have scarcely won comment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An examination of several patterns of interrupted syntactical structures in Biblical Hebrew appears in Revell 1989:12-22. Revell asserts that the purpose of these patterns „is to allow the insertion... of material more immediately significant for the understanding of the clause,“ and he entitles them „clauses with discontinuous constituents (ibid.:12).“ Revell’s general approach to the topic is followed in this paper.

## 2. Sentences involving extraposition

Extrapositions actually are twisted syntactical structures, deviating from normal syntactical sequences not involving extraposition. Extrapositions appear to be the most prominent case of broken structures formed and accepted as part of normal language syntax. Since extrapositions developed clear syntactical signs by isolating the extraposed sentence part and referring to it with a resumptive pronoun, and since they are so widespread in Biblical Hebrew and other Semitic languages, they became defined as an independent syntactical sentence type. This should not prevent recognition that sentences involving extraposition are the most prominent and most typical case of an interrupted syntactical structure. Many cases of extraposition should be explained as constructed in order to syntactically mark the logical structure of a sentence, but others are mere stylistic variants.

Since extrapositions in Biblical Hebrew have been treated extensively in many studies,<sup>2</sup> only a few instances are presented below. Bible translations maintain extraposition structure only partially. Therefore, the following instances are examined in relation to several Arabic and English translations as representatives of this tendency.

### 2.1 Examples

Genesis 48:7 - *wa'ānī bəḥo'i mippaddān metā 'ālay rāḥel bə'ereṣ kəna'an baddereḳ*. The structure involving extraposition is very well kept in the Arabic Bible translation of Saadya Gaon (= *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon*) and *alkitāb almuqaddas*. In *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, the extraposed pronoun *אני*, is isolated by the Arabic conjunction *fa*: *wa-'anā fa-fi maji'i min fadān mātat 'alayya rāḥil fi balad kan'an fi l-ṭariq*. Again in *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition*, the extraposed pronoun is even more clearly isolated by an Arabic particle specially used for marking an extraposed sentence part, *wa'ammā*... *fa*:<sup>3</sup> *wa-wa'ammā 'anā fa-fi maji'i min fadān mātat 'anī rāḥil fi balad kan'an fi l-ṭariq*, and in *alkitāb almuqaddas* the translation is a little different but the extraposed sentence part is still isolated: *wa-'anā ḥīna ji'tu min fadān mātat 'indī rāḥil fi 'arḍ kan'an fi l-ṭariq*. The structure of extraposition is also clearly kept in the *Authorized King James Version*: „And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way.“ However, for some reason the *JPS* translation prefers to suggest another interpretation in parenthesis instead of extraposition: „I [do this because], when I was returning from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, while I was journeying in the land of Canaan.“ The new interpretation by the *JPS* of the extraposed part should

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Driver 1892:264-274, §196-§201, Kautzsch 1910:457-458, §143, Joüon 1947:477-478, §156, Waltke & O'Connor 1990:76-77, §4.7 and especially Gross 1987 and Khan 1988:67-104. Regarding nominal fronting in verbal clauses see also Gross 1993, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> For the usage of this particle see Wright 1896:292, §367, d, Reckendorf 1921:370-371, §182,6.

probably be rejected. The extraposition is in place here as in many other Biblical passages, and it should not be eliminated or replaced by another suggestion.

Judges 17:5 - *wəhā'is mīkā lō bēt 'ēlohīm*. There is no translation for this verse in *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon*. As for the other translations, the structure involving extraposition is not maintained either in the Arabic translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas* or in both English translations. The Arabic translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas* removes the resumptive pronoun and attaches the possessive particle *li* to *wəhā'is mīkā*. Thus, the verse *wəhā'is mīkā lō bēt 'ēlohīm* is translated: *wa-kāna lil-rajul mīhā bayt lil-'āliha*. *Authorized King James Version* translates the extraposition of this verse into an ordinary English possessive sentence: „And the man Micah had an house of gods,“ and so also does the *JPS*: „Now the man Micah had a house of God.“ The avoidance of transferring the extraposition structure into the translations shows that the translations consider the original Biblical Hebrew structure in this case as a dispensable stylistic variant.

Isaiah 42:3 - *qāne(h) rāsūš lō yišbōr ūfištā kehā lō yaqabbennā*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition*, which is the only edition of Saadya Gaon containing the book of Isaiah, translates both parallel parts of the verse as extrapositions, although the original Biblical Hebrew structure has extraposition only in the second one: *hattā qašaba marḏūda lā yaksiruhā wa-fatīla hāmida lā yuṭfi'uhā*. The Arabic translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas* partially ignores the extraposition by removing the retrospective pronoun. Nevertheless, it keeps the original word order. A sentence which begins with a noun rather than a verb is still considered an extraposition in Arabic. Its translation is: *qašaba marḏūda lā yaqšifu wa-fatīla hāmida lā yuṭfi'u*. *Authorized King James Version* also maintains the original sequence but not the resumptive pronoun: „A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench,“ but the *JPS* ignores the extraposition: „He shall not break even a bruised reed, or snuff out even a dim wick.“ These translations show again that the extraposition is sometimes considered as a non-essential stylistic variant.

### 3. Sentences involving prolepsis

Sentences involving prolepsis are in fact extrapositions in subordinate clauses. Such structure allows the subject of the subordinate clause to move backward as an object complement of the verb in the principal sentence. The subject of the subordinate clause is also a retrospective pronoun which refers to the object of the principal sentence, the latter being its explicit subject. Thus, a syntactical structure involving prolepsis is interrupted firstly by having an extraposed constituent and secondly by having a subordinate particle separating the extraposed part from the following clause. Since prolepsis has already been examined elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> only a few instances

<sup>4</sup> Zewi 1996 and more references there.

are mentioned here. Sentences involving prolepsis are difficult to translate by keeping the original sequence as extrapositions. This is demonstrated in the instances presented below from several of their translations into Arabic and English.

### 3.1 Examples

Genesis 31:5 - *wayyōmer lāhen roʿe(h) ʿānokī ʿet pānē(y) ʿābīkēn kī ʿēnennū ʿelay kiṭāmol šilšom*. - The prolepsis is retained in the translation of *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition: fa-qāla lahunna huwaḍā ʿanā ʿarā wajh ʿabīkunna ʿid laysa huwa maʿī miṭl ʿamsi wa-mā qablahu*. A similar structure is also found in *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition*, containing extraposition after the verb ʿarā, but the prolepsis is obscured, since the separating particle ʿid is eliminated. The prolepsis is found again in the translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas: wa-qāla lahumā ʿanā ʿarā wajh ʿabīkumā ʿannahu laysa naḥwī ka-ʿamsi wa-ʿawwal min ʿamsi*. *Authorized King James Version* maintains the prolepsis: „And said unto them, I see your father’s countenance, that it is not toward me as before.“ However, the *JPS* translation eliminates the prolepsis: „I see that your father’s manner toward me is not as it has been in the past.“

Genesis 40:6 - *wayyābō ʿālēhem yōsef babboqer wayyar(?) ʿotām wəhinnām zoʿāfm*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, eliminates the prolepsis: *fa-daḥala ʿilayhimā yūsuf bil-ḡadā wa-raʿā wujūhahumā kāliḥa*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition* is generally similar. *alkitāb almuqaddas* maintains the original word order: *fa-daḥala yūsuf ʿilayhimā fī l-ṣabāḥ wa-nazarahumā wa-ʿidā humā muḡtammāni*. *Authorized King James Version* also maintains the original sequence: „And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.“ The *JPS* translation, by contrast, eliminates the prolepsis and ignores the additional nuance of *wəhinnē(h)* in the Biblical Hebrew text: „When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were distraught.“

Exodus 32:22 - *ʿattā yādaʿtā ʿet hāʿām kī bəraʿ hū*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition* keeps the prolepsis: *ʿanta ʿālim bil-qawm ʿannahum šarīrūna*, and so does *Derenbourg edition* and *alkitāb almuqaddas*. The *Authorized King James Version* also keeps the prolepsis: „Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.“ The *JPS*, however, in this case too, eliminates the prolepsis: „You know that this people is bent on evil.“

### 4. Logical subjects separated from their predicates by adverbials and conjunctions

The occurrence of adverbials and conjunctions separating logical subjects from their predicates has been observed in many Biblical Hebrew and Semitic studies. An

important work discussing this topic in Biblical Hebrew and Arabic is that by Blau 1977, dealing with sentence adverbials which actually are logical subjects separated from the rest of the sentence.<sup>5</sup> Adverbials and conjunctions separating logical subjects from their predicates are not discussed here, further, but a few representative instances accompanied by interesting Arabic and English translations are given.

#### 4.1 Examples

Genesis 24:45 - *ʔānī ʔerem ʔkālle(h) laḡabber ʔel libbī*. This sequence is followed in both editions of *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon* but *alkitāb almuqaddas* translates: *wa-ʔid kuntu ʔanā lam ʔafraḡ baʕdu min l-kalām fi qalbī* putting the translation of *ʔerem* into Arabic = *baʕdu*, after the verb according to Arabic rules. *Authorized King James Version* translates: „And before I had done speaking in mine heart,“ and the *JPS*: „I had scarcely finished praying in my heart.“ In all these translations there is no sense of a syntactical separation between subject and predicate, which appears in the original Biblical Hebrew passage.

Genesis 42:22 - *wəgam dāmō hinnē(h) niḡrāš*. This clause is translated in both editions of *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon* and in *alkitāb almuqaddas* with a presentative particle before *dāmō*, deviating from the original sequence. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, is: *wa-huwaḡā nahnu muṡālibīna bi-damihi*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition*, is: *wal-ʔān huwaḡānā muṡālibūna bi-damihi*. *alkitāb almuqaddas* translates a little differently: *fa-huwaḡā damuhu yuṡlabu*. *Authorized King James Version* translates: „Therefore, behold, also his blood is required.“ The *JPS* paraphrases the passage: „Now comes the reckoning for his blood.“ None of these translations exhibits the syntactical separation between subject and predicate found in the original passage.

Leviticus 22:11 - *wəkoḡen kī yiqne(h) nefēš qinyan kaspō hū*. The translations of both editions of *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon*, *alkitāb almuqaddas* and *Authorized King James Version* avoid putting the noun initially. The *JPS* paraphrases the passage and turns it into different syntactical construction: „But a person who is a priest’s property by purchase.“ This special very common Biblical Hebrew structure does not show up in these translations either.

The sense of syntactical separation between subject and predicate probably could not be captured by the Arabic and English translations as it would have created ungrammatical structures in these languages.

<sup>5</sup> For discussion of several adverbials and conjunctions in this role and other references see Zewi 1992, 234-240, §4.6.1.8, 242-254, §4.7. For similar separation between an extraposed sentence part and the rest of the sentence see e.g. Khan 1988:69-70, §3.2-§3.4.

## 5. Predicate constituents separated by a subject

Simple nominal sentences presenting predicate-subject word order, in which long predicates are divided by subject components into two parts are common in Biblical Hebrew as variants of predicate-subject sequence whose full predicate precedes its subject. This structure was noted by Biblical Hebrew scholars such as Muraoka and Rosén.<sup>6</sup> Because of a tendency toward an opposite subject-predicate word order in nominal sentences of Arabic and English, where Biblical Hebrew might prefer predicate-subject, the translation is frequently reversed, thus creating continuous predicates following their subject.<sup>7</sup>

### 5.1 Examples

Genesis 32:19 - *wəʾāmartā ləʿabdəkā ləyaʿāqob minhā hī šəlūhā la(ʿ)donī ləʿesāw*. All Arabic and English translations cited below reverse the Biblical Hebrew sequence to subject-predicate. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, translates: *fa-qul li-ʿabdika li-yaʿqūb hiya hadiyya mabʿūta li-sayyidī li-ʿisuwa*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition*, translates similarly. *alkitāb almuqaddas* translates: *taqūlu li-ʿabdika yaʿqūb huwa hadiyya mursala li-sayyidī ʿisuwa*. *Authorized King James Version* translates: „Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob’s; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau.“ The *JPS* translates: „You shall answer, ‘Your servant Jacob’s; they are a gift sent to my lord Esau.’“

Exodus 31:17 - *bēnī ūbēn bənē(y) yiśrāʿel ʾōt hī ləʿolām*. All Arabic and English translations presented below again exhibit a reversed subject-predicate word order. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, translates: *fī mā baynī wa-bayna banī ʿisrāʿil hiya ʿalāma lil-dahr*, and does *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition*. *alkitāb almuqaddas* translates: *huwa baynī wa-bayna banī ʿisrāʿil ʿalāma ʿilā l-ʾabad*. *Authorized King James Version* translates: „It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever.“ The *JPS* translates: „It shall be a sign for all time between me and the people of Israel.“ However this is not always the case. In some instances an attempt is made to retain the original word order, as in the following example.

Isaiah 40:28 - *ʾēlohē(y) ʿolām Yhwh bōrē(?) qəṣōtī hāʾāreš*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, does not contain a translation of Isaiah. *Derenbourg edition* translates: *ʾallāh rabb l-ʿalamīna ḥāliq ʾaqāšī l-ʾarḍ*. Here the word order is reversed, but the original word order is kept in *alkitāb almuqaddas*: *ʾilāhu l-dahr l-rabb ḥāliq ʾaṭrāf l-ʾarḍ*. *Authorized King James Version* manages to maintain the

<sup>6</sup> See Revell 1989:14ff, Muraoka 1985:15, Rosén 1965:169, §2, and Zewi 1992:109, note 16, 1994:155, note 30. This variant of simple nominal sentences is even more frequent in Syriac. For its occurrence in Syriac see e.g. Goldenberg 1983:100-102, §2.

<sup>7</sup> For this tendency in Arabic see Wright 1898:253-254, §115-§117, Reckendorf 1921:8-9, §4. Also see discussion in Zewi 1997:513-514, §3.

original word order by distorting the syntactical structure and changing it from a nominal sentence into a mere apposition: „The everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of earth.“ The *JPS* reverses the word order into subject-predicate: „The Lord is God from of old, creator of the earth from end to end.“

## 6. Object complements separated from their transitive verb

Objects separated from their transitive verb are second objects or more, and they actually are separated from the first object which is immediately preceding or following the transitive verb. Most appearances of this feature, especially in prose, e.g., Judges 18:24 and 1 Samuel 18:4, given below, should be considered much like all other features treated in this paper. This structure should not be deemed abnormal but a variant which is part of regular Biblical Hebrew syntax, one which allows construction of broken structures in order to clarify the logical sentence structure or stylistic variants. Several instances, mainly in poetry, e.g., Isaiah 54:14, given below, should be regarded as elliptic structures and as exhibiting parallelism, which is typical of Biblical Hebrew poetry.<sup>8</sup>

As with many instances so far examined, Arabic and English translations do not successfully cope with objects separated from their subjects, partly because they see them as irregular and partly because of their own syntactical limitations. The translations handle this feature a lot better in cases of parallelism, which is a well recognized structure with its own translation patterns.

### 6.1 Examples

Judges 18:24 - *wayyōmer* <sup>ʔ</sup>ē<sup>ʔ</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>ēlohay <sup>ʔ</sup>āšer <sup>ʕ</sup>āšī<sup>ʔ</sup> ləqahtem wə<sup>ʔ</sup>ē<sup>ʔ</sup> hakkohen watteləkū. There are no translations of Saadya Gaon of this verse. The translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas* solves the problem of the separated double objects firstly by constructing an extraposition. It isolates the first object as an extraposed part being resumed by an object pronoun complement attached to the verb. Moreover, the Hebrew particle <sup>ʔ</sup>ē<sup>ʔ</sup> is translated as a conjunctive particle meaning „with.“ This particle might sometimes acquire this meaning, but probably not here, since the first <sup>ʔ</sup>ē<sup>ʔ</sup> is a particle introducing a direct object. The translation is: <sup>ʔ</sup>āliha<sup>ʔ</sup> llatī <sup>ʕ</sup>amiltu qad <sup>ʔ</sup>ahāqtumūhā ma<sup>ʕ</sup>a l-kāhin wa-dahabtum. *Authorized King James Version* puts the verb before the first object, thereby eliminating the separation between the two objects: „Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away.“ The *JPS* translates similarly, and moreover it transposes the two objects, thus

<sup>8</sup> Parallelism, of course, is not restricted to poetry (see e.g. Berlin 1985:3-17). On the question of elliptic structures and gapping, i.e. the elimination of a sentence part, see e.g. O'Connor 1980:122ff, Waltke & O'Connor 1990:224, §11.4.3.

eliminating even the attributive clause  $\text{ʔāšer } \text{ʕāsīṭī}$  following  $\text{ʔēlohay}$  as a separating element between the two objects. The *JPS* translation is: „He said, „You have taken my priest and the gods that I made, and walked off!“

1 Samuel 18:4 - *wayyitpaššet yaḥōnātān ʔēt hamməʕil ʔāšer ʕālāw wayyittənehū ləqāwiq ūmaddāw wəʕaḏ ḥarbō wəʕaḏ qašṭō wəʕaḏ ḥāgorō*. There are no translations of Saadya Gaon of this verse either. However, *alkitāb almuqaddas* solves the problem in a way that resembles its treatment of the above instance. It translates the conjunctive *wāw* before the second object by a particle meaning „with“: *wa-ḥalaʕa yūnātān l-jubba llatī ʕalayhi wa-ʔaʕṭāhā li-dāwud maʕa ṭiyābihi wa-sayfihi wa-qawsihi wa-minṭaqatihi*. *Authorized King James Version* does not diverge from the original sequence: „And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.“ The *JPS*, however, places *ūmaddāw* immediately after the first object before the verb and adds „together with“ before the other objects, eliminating the separation between the objects in a way similar to the translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas*. Its translation is: „Jonathan took off the cloak and tunic he was wearing and gave them to David, together with his sword, bow, and belt.“

Isaiah 54:14 - *bišəḏāqā tikkōnāni raḥāqī meʕošeḡ kī lō ʕīrāʔī ūmimməḥittā kī lō ṭiqrab ʔelāyik*. As mentioned above, *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, does not have a translation of Isaiah. *Derenbourg edition* translates: *wa-bil-ʕadl tuṭabbatīna tabʕudīna min l-jašam bal lā taḥāfihi wa-min l-ndiqāq fa-ʔinnahu lā yaqrubuki*. The translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas* is: *bil-birr tuṭabbatīna baʕīda ʕan l-ḡulm fa-lā taḥāfīna wa-ʕan l-rtiʕāb fa-lā yadnū minkī*. *Authorized King James Version* translates: „In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.“ The *JPS* translates: „You shall be established through righteousness. You shall be safe from oppression, and shall have no fear; from ruin, and it shall not come near you.“ All four translations do not divert at all from the original sequence. The original word order is undoubtedly maintained, since the structure is not a mere interrupted syntactical structure, but presents a recognized pattern of parallelism involving ellipsis.

## 7. Attributes, appositions, and attributive clauses separated from their head

Attributes, appositions, and attributive clauses separated from their head are treated last, since they seem at first sight the least organized and intentional of all syntactical types reviewed in this paper. The most detailed paper dealing with this feature is Gottstein's (1949), entitled „Afterthought and the Syntax of Relative Clauses in Biblical Hebrew.“ Gottstein considers most appearances of relative clauses separated from their head as afterthought or anacoluthon, but he is not satisfied with this occasional definition and asserts that many instances related to this language usage are intentional and have common origin.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Gottstein 1949:38 speaks about anacoluthon as an insufficient explanation for all occurrences of this



Afterthought or anacoluthon might truly be a good explanation for several appearances of attributes, appositions, and attributive clauses separated from their head. However, afterthought and anacoluthon are generally not regarded as a feature of language rules and characteristics but as deviating from them.<sup>10</sup> The large number of attributes, appositions, and attributive clauses separated from their head in Biblical Hebrew and the fact that all of them are non-restrictive relative clauses<sup>11</sup> suggest that this way is intentionally chosen as a syntactical means for presenting an additional less important piece of information in a clause.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, in most cases the separation between attributes, appositions, and attributive clauses and their head should be considered neither an unintentional afterthought or anacoluthon nor a mark of unorganized spoken language,<sup>13</sup> but a genuine Biblical Hebrew syntactical variant, resembling all other syntactical types discussed above.

The Arabic and English translations presented below show a few difficulties in rendering the true spirit of the original Biblical Hebrew structures, since most Arabic and English translations do not easily tolerate the break in the sequence of a head and its attributes.

### 7.1 Examples

Attribute - Genesis 14:12 - *wayyiqəḥū ʾet lōt wəʾet rəkušō ben ʾāhī ʾābram wayyeleḳū*. *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Ḥasid edition*, keeps the original word order: *wa-ʾaḥaḏū lūt wa-sarḥahu bn ʾaḥī ʾabrām wa-maḏaw*, but *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition*, attaches the attribute to its head: *wa-ʾaḥaḏū lūt bn ʾaḥī ʾabrām wa-sarḥahu wa-maḏaw*. The translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas* also attaches the

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phenomenon but he still speaks about „deviations from the straight path of logical thought,“ and he explains the various examples as different degrees of afterthought. See Gottstein 1949:36ff for instances and discussion.

<sup>10</sup> The term anacoluthon is used here and in Gottstein 1949 in the generally accepted meaning defined by e.g. Crystal 1985:15 as „a syntactical break in the expected grammatical sequence within a sentence“ and by e.g. Bussmann 1996:20 as „sudden change of an originally planned sentence construction to an alternative, inconsistent one during sentence production due to unplanned speech.“ Note that the term anacoluthon is sometimes differently employed as parallel to an intentional extraposition structure, e.g. Reckendorf 1921:366: „Isolierung des natürlichen Subjects (Anakoluth).“

<sup>11</sup> As Gottstein rightly remarks in Gottstein 1949: 39, note 10.

<sup>12</sup> This syntactical variant is frequent, for instance, in appositions of private names e.g. 1 Samuel 4:4, 30:5, 1 Kings 2:32 and Judges 3:9. It is thus more reasonable to regard it as an intentional special syntactical variant than as an afterthought, since it appears not occasionally but in several instances presenting a similar context.

<sup>13</sup> Jespersen claims that „In written and printed language this phenomenon, anakoluthia, is of course much rarer than in speech“ (Jespersen 1924:28). Another term similar to afterthought and anacoluthon and frequently related to spoken language features is „sentence-plus.“ For this term, other references and instances demonstrating „sentence-plus“ in spoken Amharic see Goldenberg 1981:53.

attribute to its head: *wa-ʾaḥaḏū lūt bn ʾaḥī ʾabrām wa-ʾamlākahu wa-maḏaw*. An attachment of the attribute to its head appear in the translations of *Authorized King James Version* and the *JPS* too. *Authorized King James Version* translates: „And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.“<sup>14</sup> The *JPS* translation is: „They also took Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, and his possessions, and departed.“ Most Arabic and English translations could not tolerate the gap between the head and its attribute.

Attributive clause - Joshua 1:15 - *wašaḥtem laʿeres ʾaruššaṭaḱem wirištem ʾotāh ʾāšer nātan lakem moše(h) ʿeḥeḏ Yhwh baʿeḥer hayyarden mizraḥ haššāmeš*. A translation of *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon* is not available. However, *alkitāb almuqaddas* maintains the original sequence: *tumma tarjiʿūna ʾilā ʾarḍ mirāṭikum wa-tamtalikūnahā llatī ʾaʿṭākum mūsā ʿabd l-rabb fi ʿabr l-ʾurdunn nahwa surūq l-šams*. *Authorized King James Version* maintains the original sequence as well: „Then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord’s servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.“ The only translation which organizes the whole sentence differently, eliminating the gap between the head and its attributive clause, is the *JPS*: „Then you may return to the land on the east side of the Jordan, which Moses the servant of the Lord assigned to you as your possessions, and you may possess it.“ The gap between the head and its attributive clause is tolerated at least in two translations, and it is more easily maintained than when a short attribute is employed, as in Genesis 14:12 above, rather than an attributive clause.

Apposition - 2 Kings 10:29 - *raq ḥāṭāʿē(y) ʾarāḥāʿām ben nabāt ʾāšer heḥēṭi ʾel yišrāʾel lō sār yehū meʾaḥāreḥem ʿeglē(y) hazzāhāḥ ʾāšer beṭ ʾel waʾāšer baḏān*. A translation of *Tafsīr Saadya Gaon*, again, is not available. The translation of *alkitāb almuqaddas* adds the particle ʾay = „namely,“ before the apposition,<sup>15</sup> but keeps the original sequence: *wa-lakinna ḥaṭāyā yarubʿām bn nabāt llaḏi jaʿala ʾisrāʾil yuḥṭiʿu lam yajid ʾyāhū ʿanhā ʾay ʿujūl l-ḏahb llatī fi bayṭ ʾiyl wa-llatī fi dān*. *Authorized King James Version* likewise introduces the phrase „to wit“ = „namely“ again before the apposition: „Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Beth-el, and that were in Dan.“ The *JPS*, similarly, adds „namely“ before the apposition: „However, Jehu did not turn away from the sinful objects by which Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to sin, namely, the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan.“ All translations tolerate the gap between the head and its apposition by marking the apposition more clearly.

<sup>14</sup> This translation even introduces the circumstantial clause *wāhū ʾyošeḥ bisādom* before *wāʾel rāḱušō*, and translates it as an attributive clause following the first attribute.

<sup>15</sup> The particle probably has the same origin as a similar phrase in *Authorized King James Version* below.

## 8. Conclusions

This paper sought to show that sentences involving extraposition, sentences involving prolepsis, logical subjects separated from their predicates by adverbials and conjunctions, predicate constituents separated by a subject, object complements separated from their transitive verb, and attributes, appositions, and attributive clauses separated from their head share one common feature typical of Biblical Hebrew syntax. These patterns are all interrupted structures thus constructed to syntactically reflect logical division of phrases or sentences or mere stylistic variants.

Although these patterns are normal constructions of Biblical Hebrew syntax, Bible translations might find difficulties in transferring their special nuance to their own languages. The difficulties arise partly because the translators consider these patterns ungrammatical in Biblical Hebrew and tend to correct them in their translation, and partly because these patterns create ungrammatical constructions in the target languages.

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Abbreviations:

*Authorized King James Version* = Carroll, R. & Prickett, S. eds. 1997. *The Bible, Authorized King James Version*. Oxford.

*alkitāb almuqaddas* = *Arabic Bible Translation. dār l-kitāb l-muqaddas fi l-šarq l-ʿawsaṭ*. 1987.

*JBL* = *Journal of Biblical Literature*

*JPS* = *Tanakh, a New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*. 1985. The Jewish Publication Society. Philadelphia.

*JSS* = *Journal of Semitic Studies*

*Tafsīr Saadya Gaon, Derenbourg edition* = Derenbourg, J. & Others. eds. 1893-1899. *Oeuvres complètes de R. Saadia ben Josef al-Fayyūmī I-II, Version arabe du pentateuque*. Paris. (repr. 1979, Hildesheim & New York)

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*ZAH* = *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*

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*Abstract:*

This paper presents, demonstrates and discusses several structures in Biblical Hebrew which are twisted and frequently interrupted by components with other syntactical roles. These structures generally maintain features of the original unbroken ones, and they might serve as mere stylistic variants, although very often they tend to mark the logical pattern of a phrase or a sentence. The paper also seeks to show that the tendency to break syntactical structures by twisting their original structure or by inserting other non-related syntactical components is wide enough to be regarded as an independent feature in Biblical Hebrew, which deserves linguistic attention.

The corpus of this paper includes the original Biblical Hebrew texts and several Bible translations into Arabic and English. Bible translations, early and late, do not always retain the nuance of interrupted structures in the target languages, either because they regard them as abnormal and correct them or because their own syntax does not allow similar structures in the translation. The variations employed by these translations shed interesting light on the topic.

The types of interrupted syntactical structures discussed in this paper are sentences involving extraposition, sentences involving prolepsis, logical subjects separated from their predicates by adverbials and conjunctions, predicate constituents separated by a subject, object complements separated from their transitive verb and attributes, and appositions and attributive clauses separated from their head.

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