Most of the papers in this volume originated as presentations at the conference Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew: New Perspectives in Philology and Linguistics, which was held at the University of Cambridge, 8–10th July, 2019. The aim of the conference was to build bridges between various strands of research in the field of Hebrew language studies that rarely meet, namely philologists working on Biblical Hebrew, philologists working on Rabbinic Hebrew and theoretical linguists.

The volume is the published outcome of this initiative. It contains peer-reviewed papers in the fields of Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew that advance the field by the philological investigation of primary sources and the application of cutting-edge linguistic theory. These include contributions by established scholars and by students and early career researchers.

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Cover image: Genizah fragment of the Hebrew Bible with Babylonian vocalisation (Num. 18:27-28, Cambridge University Library T-S A38.12; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Genizah fragment of the Mishnah (Ḥallah 1, Cambridge University Library MS Add.470.1; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Linguistic analysis of Ps. 1:1 (Elizabeth Robar). Images selected by Estara Arrant.

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THE BIBLICAL HEBREW SHORT YIQṬOL
AND THE ‘CONSECUTIVE TENSES’

Bo Isaksson

It is commonly held in the theory of ‘consecutive tenses’ that way-yiqṭol in the synchronic state of Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) stands in temporal, aspectual, and modal opposition to ‘waw-less’ yiqṭol, and that the ‘consecutive waw’ in wayyiqṭol has certain semantic, pragmatic, or discourse-conditioned notions in contrast to usual ‘copulative waw’. The semantics of the ‘consecutive waw’ are described as one of (temporal or logical) sequentiality or foregrounding. This article examines the linguistic reality behind these assumptions.

1.0. The Status of the Short yiqṭol as a Separate
Verbal Morpheme in SBH

Comparative research uniformly testifies that the short yiqṭol in Biblical Hebrew has its historical background in an old short prefix conjugation yaqtul with perfective meaning.¹

¹ Huehnergard (2005; 2019, 62); Kouwenberg (2010, 126ff.); Hackett (2012); Hasselbach (2013, 329); Kossmann and Suchard (2018, 47, 52). Baranowski (2016b, 1) writes: “If there is anything absolutely certain in the historical understanding of the Semitic verbal system, it is the reconstruction of a short prefixed form with the perfective meaning,
The freestanding short *yiqtol* form is attested with two basic meanings in archaic Biblical Hebrew poetry, indicative (past) and jussive (Notarius 2013, 305, 307, 313).² In classical prose the indicative meanings of short *yiqtol* are restricted by word order to the *wayyiqtol* syntagm. In comparison with the relatively free usage of short *yaqtul* in Amarna Canaanite, the indicative short *yiqtol* in SBH has been replaced by *qatal* in most positions and functions; the only exception to this replacement is the *wayyiqtol* syntagm (Baranowski 2016a, §4.2). By contrast, the jussive short *yiqtol* is retained in SBH, including in freestanding form (see Table 1).³

Table 1: Short *yiqtol* past and jussive meanings (Tiberian vocalisation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>indicative (past)</th>
<th>jussive⁴</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archaic Hebrew poetry⁵</td>
<td>Ø-<em>yiqtol</em>, <em>wayyiqtol</em></td>
<td>Ø-<em>yiqtol</em>, ω-<em>yiqtol</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical prose</td>
<td><em>wayyiqtol</em></td>
<td>Ø-<em>yiqtol</em>, ω-<em>yiqtol</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

used typically as the past tense in the indicative and as the directive-volitive form.”

² Since the theme of the present article is the short *yiqtol* in relation to the ‘consecutive tenses’, the jussive short *yiqtol* is only peripherally treated in the discussion below and no examples are given.

³ “It thus happens fairly frequently that perfective categories may have non-past reference in non-indicative moods or (which is the same thing) certain non-assertive contexts” (Bybee and Dahl 1989, 84). See also Palmer (2001, ch. 8).

⁴ The restriction to first position in the clause indicated in the table holds for affirmative jussive clauses. Clauses negated by ʾal exhibit a relatively free word order in SBH.

⁵ In the archaic phase of the language, the initial position of the verb is a tendency for which there are some possible exceptions: on Deut. 32.18, see Waltke and O’Connor (1990, 558); Joosten (2012, 417); Notarius (2013, 78, 307; 2015, 240).
The wayiqtol clause-type plays a major role in the system of consecutive tenses and has been the subject of an immense body of scholarly literature. Especially problematic is the nature of the waw conjunction in wayiqtol. Scholarly positions are illustrated in a surprising way by debate about the Aramaic Tel Dan inscription. Dated to the second half of the 9th century BCE, this old Aramaic text is approximately contemporary with the SBH period. The text type can be characterised as a retrospective report:

3 and my father lay down (and) went to [his ancestors.] Now the king of 4 Israel had formerly entered in my father’s land. [But] Hadad made me king. 5 And Hadad went before me, [and] I departed from seven[ ... ] 6 of my kingdom. And I killed seve[nty ki]ngs, who harnessed thou[sands of cha] 7 riots and thousands of horsemen. [And I killed Jo]ram, son of [Ahab,] 8 king of Israel, and [I] killed [Ahazi]yahu, son of [Joram, kin] 9 g of the house of David; and I
set [... and I overthrew] (KAI⁵ 310.3–9; Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995)⁶

This early Aramaic inscription aroused intense debate on the conjunction waw in wayyiqtol in Biblical Hebrew. The reason was that the inscription contains a number of verbal forms that are semantically and syntactically similar to the SBH wayyiqtol: יישבע, אֹאְשֵׁה, אֱכֶל, יְהַמָלך, יִעֲל. The scholarly discussion came to focus on the waw preceding the five (or possibly seven) narrative prefix forms. In Biblical Hebrew grammar such a waw would have been considered ‘consecutive’ or ‘conversive’, and thus a central feature in the system of ‘consecutive tenses’. But Takamitsu Muraoka (1995a; 1995b; 1998; with Rogland 1998; also Kottsieper 1999, 62, 71 fn. 67) took the position that Biblical Hebrew was unique on this point:

‘inversive waw’ is a unique innovation in Biblical Hebrew;

two different types of conjunction -ִ existed only in Biblical Hebrew;
the conjunction in Aramaic can only be a normal -ִ, so -ִ in the Tel Dan w-yqtl forms must be ‘simple waw’;
there is no need to assume a ‘conversion’ of yqtl in Aramaic.

The majority of scholars, however, have disagreed with Muraoka and argue that:⁷

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⁶ The w-yqtl forms are underlined in the Aramaic text and are set in boldface type in the translation.

w-yqtl in the Aramaic of Tel Dan has the same function and meaning as wayyiqtol in Biblical Hebrew; the conjunction -א in Tel Dan’s w-yqtl forms must be a ‘conversive’ or ‘consecutive waw’; there were two different types of conjunction -א in both early Aramaic and Biblical Hebrew.

It is striking that, in the wake of this discussion, practically no scholar has adopted the view that for both early Aramaic and SBH there was only one ‘natural language connective’ -א ‘and’.  

The traditional system of consecutive tenses in Biblical Hebrew has three hallmarks: 

1. The syntactic distributional opposition between clause-initial waw-consecutive forms and the corresponding non-initial waw-less forms. This means that wayyiqtol and ə-qatol are clause-initial, while long yiqtol forms and qatol forms must be non-initial.

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10 An important element of Biblical Hebrew syntax is the understanding that the conjunction -א is not reckoned as the first element in the clause, which would otherwise render the verb form itself non-clause-initial. This also holds for jussive ə-yiqtol clauses, in which -א is regarded as ‘copulative’, as in יִפְקְדֶּה פְקֶדֶּים 'and he should appoint supervisors’ (Gen. 41.34). All other conjunctions (such as ָ) render a following verb non-initial.
11 The latter is certainly a false rule of thumb. It is roughly valid only in the known corpus of narrative prose, but does not hold in other types of text, such as direct speech, report, and poetry (see Revell 1989, 33,
2. The explicit opposition in temporal, aspectual, and modal semantics between two pairs of constructions: way-yiqṭol / qāṭal and wa-qāṭal / long yiqṭol.\(^{12}\) In summary: way-yiqṭol ‘equals’ qāṭal (past meaning), and wa-qāṭal ‘equals’ long yiqṭol (present/future meaning).\(^{13}\) In such presentations it is usually ignored that -ו functions as a conjunction; rather, the -ו is considered an intrinsic part of the verb form.

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12 Irrealis (jussive) wa-yiqṭol is not accounted for in this opposition, as is noted by Hornkohl (2018, 33). See also the criticism in Notarius (2013, 17).

13 Second point in Hornkohl (2018, 33). This is what Blau (2010, 190) calls “a double set of tenses, because of the existence of the so-called converted tenses, opening with the so-called conversive waw” (Blau’s emphasis). Blau prefers, however, the term ‘preserving waw’, because,
3. Certain semantic, pragmatic, or discourse-conditioned notions associated with the ‘waw-consecutive’ constructions *wayyiqtol* and *wa-qaṭal*, in contrast to their ‘waw-less’ counterparts *qaṭal* and long *yiqṭol*. The difference between the pairs is usually described as one of (temporal or logical) sequentiality or foregrounding pertaining to the waw-consecutive clauses, in contrast to the non-consecutive verb forms.

in his view “after waw the archaic usage of the tenses has been preserved.” This terminology contains a nucleus of truth, because *wayyiqtol* (except the gemination) is a retention from Proto-Semitic, and *wa-qaṭal* has developed from early, possibly prototypical meanings of the perfective *qaṭal* formation inherited from West-Semitic (Bergsträsser 1929, §3g). But Blau’s statement fails to account for the obvious imperfective meanings of *wa-qaṭal* in its interaction with the long *yiqṭol* grammatical morpheme in SBH. Many scholars also argue that the *wa-qaṭal* was formed by “the paradigmatic pressure of the waw with the prefix-tense to establish a parallel feature in the suffix-tense” (Blau 2010, 198; similarly, Bergsträsser 1929, §3g). According to this view, -י in *wayyiqtol* was synchronically interpreted as conversive in SBH, and this conver- sive tense inspired the formation of another converive tense *wa-qaṭal* with a converive -י.

14 With the terminology ‘forms without waw’ or ‘waw-less forms’ (as in Hornkohl 2018, 33, 54), it generally goes unacknowledged that in a Biblical Hebrew text ‘forms without waw’ commonly occur in clauses with initial -י, only that the verb form does not follow directly after the conjunction. There are certainly also clauses that are joined asyndetically, and they deserve to be recognised, but most clauses are linked with -י in SBH prose. The problem with, and legacy of, the terminology ‘waw-less form’ is an unfruitful focus on the single verb form to the detriment of the corresponding clause.
This is a bewildering complex of suppositions about the Biblical Hebrew verb system. Hornkohl concludes that the observations contained in the traditional description of the SBH verbal system “have little explanatory value,” and that there is redundancy in the system of forms, which “demands an explanation” (2018, 33). At the heart of the matter stands the role of word order in a conspicuous alternation of clauses with initial verb (type wa-VX) and clauses with non-initial verb (usually type wa-XV). SBH grammars describe an alternation of ‘forms’ in double pairs: wayyiqtol alternates with its ‘equivalent’ qatal, and w-qatal alternates with its ‘equivalent’ long yiqtol. The grammars state that the connection between the -ו and the verb in the ‘consecutive tenses’ is ‘fixed’: if an element X is to be inserted for topicalisation before the verb, the ‘equivalent’ in the pairs must be used: X-qatal and X-long yiqtol respectively (Blau 2010, 190).

15 In the second reprint of the second edition (with corrections 2009), the prestigious grammar of Joüon and Muraoka (2006) still assigns the formation “wayyiqtol” the value “inverted future” (§118a) and “w-qatalalt” is called “inverted perfect” (§119a).

16 According to many scholars this alternation is to be interpreted as a “grammatical encoding of temporal sequence, presumably by means of the waw-consecutive tenses ויקטל and ווקטל” (Notarius 2013, 21). But temporal sequence is far too narrow an interpretation of -ו in the clause-types wayyiqtol and w-qatal (Hornkohl 2018, 34, 46).

17 Blau (2010, 190) argues that it is possible to explain the alternation as triggered by syntactic ‘possibility’: when “it is possible to apply connective waw” (i.e., a proclitic -ו directly before a verb form), the forms with ‘conversive’ waw are used (Blau uses double quotation marks around the term ‘conversive’). But this is not “a satisfactory explanation for this alternation.” The realis wayyiqtol is a vestige of a much wider
Tropper (1996; 1998), Van de Sande (2008, 206–39), and Cook (2012, 315) have all argued for a single conjunction -\( \text{ו} \) in Biblical Hebrew. But since they have been unable to account for a system of ‘consecutive tenses’ with only one conjunction -\( \text{ו} \), they have met with little response.

usage (thus also Blau 2010, 195), and q\( \text{ṭ} \)al is an upstart and usurper in the field of application of the old Semitic perfective *yaqtul; and the specific imperfective application of wo-q\( \text{ṭ} \)al is an internal SBH development, a replacement of long yiqtol when the latter could no longer be used in initial (w-VX) position.

The position of Bergsträsser (1929, §§2b, 5e) is quite different. The -\( \text{ו} \) in “Imperf. cons.” is surely a reflex of Proto-Semitic *wa ‘and’. But the gemination “ist entstanden als Vortonverdoppelung,” a phonological phenomenon that must have taken place in Proto-Hebrew. In Biblical Hebrew, possibly with the exception of some archaic poetic texts (§7h), the -\( \text{ו} \) with gemination before the “Imperf.” has become a sign of conversion of the ‘imperfect’. Residues of “die alte präteritale Bedeutung des Imperf.” were “vom Sprachbewußtsein nicht mehr verstanden” (§7g). Thus, from a synchronic perspective of SBH, there were in Bergsträsser’s view two different types of conjunction -\( \text{ו} \). The -\( \text{ו} \) that retained full vowel a + gemination of the prefix consonant was a distinctive signal of preterite meaning (“einem Merkmal der Form,” Knudtzon 1892, 52 fn. 1, to whom Bergsträsser refers). This -\( \text{ו} \) Bergsträsser calls “\( \text{ו} \) consecutivum.” In addition a -\( \text{ו} \) without gemination is called “\( \text{ו} \) copulativum” (§5e). “Nach \( \text{ו} \) „und“ (vor dem Imperf. \( \text{ו} \)) — sog. \( \text{ו} \) consecutivum — kehren sich die Tempusbedeutungen um” (§2b). By analogy the -\( \text{ו} \) in wo-q\( \text{ṭ} \)al is called “\( \text{ו} \) consecutivum” (§9) (though it exhibits no gemination). In contrast to Bergsträsser, the position of Tropper, Van de Sande, Cook, and the present author is that, synchronically, SBH had just one conjunction -\( \text{ו} \) ‘and’.

Van de Sande’s (2008) main contributions to the question are (1) that there is only one -\( \text{ו} \) in Biblical Hebrew (with normal coordinating
It is my thesis that the basic supposition of Tropper, Van de Sande, and Cook accords with the linguistic reality in the SBH texts: there was no distinction between way-and wa-. There was only one conjunction wa ‘and’. To prove this assumption, I argue that SBH text-linguistics must be able to account for the following issues:

function) and (2) that the difference in pronunciation between waC- and wa- is a Masoretic innovation. Both Van de Sande and Tropper lack a text-linguistic perspective and fail to explain how their three-part verbal system (short yiqtol, long yiqtol, qatal) is related to the ‘consecutive tenses’. Tropper (1998; cf. also 1996) does not show how and why the wa-qatal syntagm in Biblical Hebrew could acquire the meanings typical of the imperfective long yiqtol. Tropper’s short sketch on this point (1998, 184–86) is insufficient. Another weakness is a lack of acquaintance with cross-linguistic grammaticalisation theory, as is found, for example, in Bybee et al. (1994) and Dahl (2000). This leaves him unable to explain how a perfective formation (e.g., the Akkadian iprus) can have all the meanings he discusses (Tropper 1998, 158ff.). Tropper’s argumentation for a secondary lengthening of short yiqtol forms in III-y/w verbs in SBH is unconvincing, since most examples of such lengthening are found outside the corpus Genesis to Judges, a fact that is clearly shown in Stipp (1987), and he also fails to recognise that other Northwest Semitic languages exhibit similarly shortened forms (Tropper 1998, 167). Tropper draws no diachronic distinction between text examples, and treats poetry side-by-side with prose. Archaic Biblical Hebrew texts should be held apart, and SBH examples apart from LBH. Instead, all examples are given without discrimination (as in Tropper 1998, 170ff.). For such reasons his argumentation, although comparative in perspective, has seemed unconvincing to Hebrew scholarship. The strengths of Cook’s work (2012) are the methodological chapters and his critical assessment of current research, but his own treatment of the verbal system fails to convince.
1. the status of short *yiqṭol* (with both past and jussive meanings) as a separate verbal morpheme distinct from long *yiqṭol*;
2. why *wa*- has two formal variants (*wa*- and *way*- ) in the Masoretic Text;
3. the linguistic reality behind *wa*- in the ‘consecutive tenses’;
4. how long *yiqṭol* was distinguished from short *yiqṭol*;
5. why *qāṭal* came to alternate with *wayyiqṭol*;
6. why *wa*-qāṭal acquired imperfective meanings and came to alternate with the inherited long *yiqṭol* (< *yaqtulu*).20

I have already discussed in brief the status of the short *yiqṭol*. In the following I touch upon numbers 2 and 3. I begin with the differentiation of the conjunction *wa*-. After that, I continue with the linguistic reality behind *wa*- in the ‘consecutive tenses’. Finally, some text examples are given.

My paper is based on:

a *corpus* of SBH texts: the Pentateuch and the book of Judges;

a *database* of classified syntactic samples from the corpus (6200 records).

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20 The SBH long *yiqṭol* formation was inherited from at least as far back as Central Semitic (Huehnergard 2005, 157–65; Kogan 2015, 131, 158–66). Some scholars even argue that *yaqtulu* is Proto-Semitic (Kouwenberg 2010, 103).
In the following I use the term ‘Classical Hebrew’ (CH) for this corpus. It is intentionally restricted to secure a reasonably consistent synchronic representation of SBH.\(^{21}\)

**2.0. Why wa Has Two Formal Variants (wə- and way-) in the Masoretic Text**

The vowel signs were created by the Masoretes in Tiberias for the purpose of preserving in writing the reading tradition of the biblical text. The reading tradition had roots as far back as the Second Temple Period. The problem for us later scholars is that competence in the Tiberian reading tradition and in the phonetic realisation of its written signs fell into oblivion during the Middle Ages. The Tiberian sign system that is transmitted to us in various editions of *Biblia Hebraica* can be considered a fossil of this tradition. We have two main sources to achieve knowledge about the meaning of the signs (Khan 2018, 324):

Karaite Arabic transcriptions of the Hebrew Bible from the 10th and 11th centuries;

Masoretic treatises on the Tiberian pronunciation from the early 11th century.

The sources show that in the Tiberian reading tradition the basic realisation of *shewa mobile* was as a short vowel with the same quality as *pataḥ* (Khan 2013a, 98; 2013b). This means that the two variants *wə-* (written with *shewa mobile*) and *way-* (written with *pataḥ* and *dagesh forte*) were read with the same vowel quality:

\(^{21}\) For SBH/CH, see Lam and Pardee (2016).
וְיִקְטֹל was read *wa*-yiqṭōl ‘and let him kill’

וַיִקְטֹל was read *way*-yiqṭōl ‘and he killed’

The difference in the reading of the two types of clauses is restricted to gemination because the vowel quality of the conjunction was the same for both variants of the conjunction *wa*- (Khan 1991, 241 fn. 17; 2013a, 98; 2013b).

We must now scrutinise the gemination in *wayyiqtol*. There is a dot in the *yod* called *dagesh forte*: וַיִּקְטֹל. Gemination (marked with *dagesh forte*) was sometimes utilised in the Tiberian reading tradition (and even more frequently in the Babylonian reading tradition) in order to distinguish between otherwise homophonous words (Khan 2018, 340ff.). For example:

וֹֹֽ עַל־רִֵ֥יב לֹֹֽא־ל

[‘al-риːv lloː loː] ‘concerning a quarrel not his’

(Prov. 26.17)

In the example the two final words *lō* are at risk of being confused in the reading and are therefore distinguished by means of gemination of *lamed* in the negation *lō*. The two words were already distinct in *written form*, but the problem was that they were homophones in *the reading*. This danger of ambiguity was remedied in the reading tradition during the Second Temple Period via lengthening of *lamed*, marked with *dagesh forte* (Yeivin 1980, 49, 294; Khan 2018, 341, 344)²². This effort to avoid homophony is a type of ‘orthoepic’ strategy. According to Khan, the Masoretes

²² This strategy to distinguish semantic differences in cases of homophony is also found in the Babylonian reading tradition, Rabbinic Hebrew, the Samaritan reading of the Pentateuch, as well as in the living oral Aramaic tradition among Yemenite Jews (Khan 2018, 343–45).
standardised a distinction that had already arisen in Second Temple times (Yeivin 1980, 49, 294; Khan 2018, 341, 344).

The gemination is fairly old, but it was not a feature of CH. Rather, in CH the inherited homophony between jussive short yiqṭol and indicative short yiqṭol persisted (Khan 2020, I:534):

\[\text{וַיִּקְטֶל} wa-yiqṭol \quad [\text{wa-jiq\textsuperscript{t}o\textperiodcentered}] \quad \text{‘and let him kill’}\]

Thus, in order to avoid confusion and achieve clarity, the reading tradition introduced gemination of the prefix consonant in the reading of the text:

\[\text{וַיִּקְטֶל} wa-yiqṭol \quad [\text{wa-jiq\textsuperscript{t}o\textperiodcentered}] \quad \text{‘and he killed’}\]

For CH it is reasonable to reckon with homophony between an indicative narrative wa-yiqṭol and a jussive wa-yiqṭol, both expressing discourse continuity, but in different domains.

To sum up: speakers and writers of CH made no distinction between two different wa- conjunctions. Such a distinction occurred in the reading tradition after the classical period, probably already in the Second Temple period.

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23 This conclusion, based on Khan’s studies of the Masoretic Text, has received additional support by an investigation of Greek and Latin transcriptions, recently published by Kantor (2020, 95, 99, 104, 116).

24 I follow here the transcription system of Khan (2020).

25 For the term ‘discourse continuity’, see below in this paper. For ‘domain’, see Cohen (2014).
3.0. The Linguistic Reality behind \textit{wa} in the ‘Consecutive Tenses’

It is one of the cornerstones of Biblical Hebrew text-linguistics that two of the principal verb forms in the central verbal system are ‘consecutive’. One of them is \textit{wayyiqtol}, the other is \textit{wə-qațal}. The consecutive verb forms typically build series of main-line consecutive clauses. Clauses that break the main-line pattern are ‘non-consecutive’. Hebrew text-linguistics is concerned with the nature of the consecution, and the function of the non-consecutive clauses. This can be summarised in a table displaying the essence of Biblical Hebrew text-linguistics:

Table 2: The essence of Biblical Hebrew text-linguistics (focusing on Tiberian vocalisation of the conjunction \textit{wa}- before \textit{yiqtol})—affirmative clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Consecutive clauses</th>
<th>Non-consecutive clauses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative &amp; report</td>
<td>\textit{way}-\textit{yiqtol}</td>
<td>\textit{(wə)-X-qațal}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction &amp; forecasting</td>
<td>\textit{wə-qațal}</td>
<td>\textit{(wə)-X-yiqtol}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristic features of consecutive clauses are:

1. The initial ‘consecutive \textit{waw}’ (bold type in the table).
2. The initial position of the (finite) verb.

It is usually held that a non-consecutive clause is characterised by having a clausal constituent (\textit{X}) before the verb. The alternation between the two clause-types can be summarised as what I
call “Tenet 1* of Biblical Hebrew text-linguistics,”26 where ‘*’ indicates a preliminary formulation:

Tenet 1*. A series of wa-VX clauses is interrupted by a clause with (wa)-XV pattern.27

This formula subsumes the labour of generations of Biblical Hebrew scholars, and is the legacy of the system of ‘consecutive tenses’. It contains the germ of a clause-linking approach to the verbal system.28

Non-consecutive clauses more often than not start with a wa-, but can also be asyndetic. Some oft-recognised alternatives in CH text-linguistics are:

Tenet 1a*. A series of wa-VX is interrupted by a clause with wa-XV pattern.29

Tenet 1b*. A series of wa-VX is interrupted by a clause with Ø-XV pattern.30

26 Tenet 1 and Tenet 2 are quoted from a forthcoming book.
27 With terminological inspiration from Buth (1995) and Hornkohl (2018, 48ff.).
28 For a history of research, see McFall (1982), Van de Sande (2008, 23–200), and, sharpest of all, the sustained critical survey by Cook (2012, 77–175). For a clause-linking approach, see Isaksson (2014; 2015a; 2017).
29 For example, Niccacci (1990, 63).
30 Niccacci (1990, 64): “WAYYIQTOL \(\rightarrow\) (WAW-)x-QATAL (note that the WAW can be omitted).”
Tenet 1c*. A series of \textit{wa-VX} is interrupted by a verbless clause.\textsuperscript{31}

The boldface \textit{wa-} in the formula indicates the common assumption in Hebrew grammars that the \textit{wa-} before a consecutive clause has a special nature: it is a ‘consecutive \textit{waw}’. This is the term adopted by most scholars, though some use ‘conversive’, ‘inversive’, ‘energic’, or another distinguishing term.

But as already indicated above, the main arguments in favour of a special ‘consecutive’ \textit{wa-} must be refuted:

1. The differences in vocalisation represent an innovative feature of the reading tradition.\textsuperscript{32}
2. The impression of a ‘conversion’ is just an impression, caused by a diachronic retention, i.e., \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} with short \textit{yiqtol}, and a diachronic semantic innovation, i.e., in \textit{wa-qat\textit{a}l}.\textsuperscript{33}
3. The range of meanings exhibited by ‘consecutive \textit{waw}’ has the same semantic complexity as that of ‘copulative

\textsuperscript{31} For example, Niccacci (1990, 65): “simple nominal clause, usually preceded by WAW.”

\textsuperscript{32} In consequence of this, and from now on, I will make use of more pertinent terminology, \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} and \textit{wa-qat\textit{a}l}, for the traditional ‘consecutive’ clauses. The ‘(y)’ in \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} is meant to indicate that the gemination was pronounced in the reading traditions (and is thus represented in the \textit{dagesh forte} written in standard Hebrew Bibles), but that it was not a feature of CH.

\textsuperscript{33} Pardee (2012, 290) proposes the term “\textit{w}-retentive forms” for both \textit{wayyiqtol} and \textit{wa-qat\textit{a}l}. ‘Symmetry’ has been adduced as a driving force behind the development of consecutive \textit{wa-qat\textit{a}l}, but symmetry is not a feature that must be expected in a living language (Cook 2012, 104).
waw. Both can express temporal succession, logical result, elaboration, simultaneity, etc.\textsuperscript{34} The impression of a special sort of ‘consecution’ is due to its use in the frequent discourse continuity clause-types \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} (in narrative and report) and \textit{wa-qat\={a}l} (in instruction and legal discourse).\textsuperscript{35}

It is also necessary to update the terminology in the traditional ‘system of consecutive tenses’. It is not so much a question of ‘tenses’, but of ‘clauses’. And ‘consecutive’ is a vague and narrow description of the variety of clausal relations that are displayed in continuity linkings with \textit{wa}-.

It is a thesis of the present paper that the Old Semitic \textit{wa} had only one reflex (\textit{wa}-) in CH. The \textit{wa}- was a ‘natural language connective’ in the sense described by Van Dijk (1977, 58).\textsuperscript{36} Its meaning was ambiguous and pragmatically determined.

This \textit{wa}- deserves brief elaboration. Like the English connective \textit{and}, \textit{wa}- could express readings such as ‘(and) at the same time’, ‘(and) there’, ‘(and) therefore’, ‘(and) then’, ‘(and) so’, ‘[if]

\textsuperscript{34} Garr (1998, lxxxvi). See, further, the chapter on the Proto-Semitic conjunction \textit{wa} in CH in my forthcoming book.

\textsuperscript{35} I am fully aware that this enumeration of possible discourse types is not exhaustive. For a critical discussion of discourse types, see Notarius (2008, 57–59; 2013, 10–11, 51–53).

\textsuperscript{36} The conjunction \textit{wa} has been used in all Semitic languages, even Akkadian (early Sargonic time, Kienast 2001, 395, 438; Kogan 2014, 42). It was a monosyllabic proclitic particle \textit{*wa}- in the earliest Semitic stage (Huehnergard 2008, 241ff.). This \textit{wa} has been retained in living usage in all West Semitic languages, and the Tiberian reading variants (\textit{w\={a}-, way}-, etc.) represent the same morpheme in CH.
... then’. Consider the following examples taken from Traugott (1986, 147) and Schiffrin (1986, 45 fn. 1; emphasis added):

Annie is in the kitchen **and** (there) she is making doughnuts. [location]
Annie fell into a deep sleep **and** (during this time) her facial color returned. [simultaneity]
The window was open **and** (coming from it) there was a draft. [source]
Peter married Annie **and** (after that) she had a baby. [temporal succession]
Paul pounded on the stone **and** (thereby) he shattered it. [cause]
Give me your picture **and** I’ll give you mine. (If you give me your picture, I’ll give you mine.) [conditionality]
The number 5 is a prime number **and** (therefore) it is divisible only by 1 and itself. [conclusion]

These more specific meanings are primarily derived from the context (which includes the whole paragraph).\(^37\) As a natural language connective, **wa**- sets a clause in a certain relation to a previous clause:

\[
\text{Pattern: } (\text{wa})-\text{Clause}_1 \text{ wa-Clause}_2
\]

\(^{37}\) Garr (1998, lxxii–lxxiii). In a similar way Müller (1991, 156) compares **wa** with the German **und**. Tropper (1996, 635) defines the meaning in Biblical Hebrew and Old Aramaic as “**und** (dann)”.
The pattern shows the simplest linking of two clauses. Clause₂ is linked to Clause₁. The conjunction wa- puts Clause₂ into a relationship with Clause₁. The order of the clauses is fundamental. It is Clause₂ that relates to Clause₁. In many cases, the second clause (wa-Clause₂) can be said to be ‘dependent’ on the first clause, which Khan (1991, 240) formulates as: “[t]he proposition of the second clause is to be interpreted in the ‘world’ which is determined by the first clause.”

In traditional Biblical Hebrew grammars, the syntax of wa- stands out as an extremely complex affair. They assign opposite roles to the wa- conjunction, distinguishing at least two functions, namely, ‘copulative’ wa- and ‘consecutive’ wa-. “This standard treatment is problematic and unsatisfactory,” because it places “too much semantic weight on the waw conjunction” (Cook 2012, 313ff.).

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38 The “(wa-)” before Clause₁ indicates a possible connection backward to a previous clause or clauses, as is often the case.

39 For further discussions of clause-combining with wa- (and all its allomorphs) in Semitic, see Isaksson (2009); Isaksson and Persson (2015). I am aware that Khan in this instance writes specifically about clauses connected in a relation of temporal sequentiality in narrative: “This dependency relation is typically associated with a series of verbs with perfective aspect” (Khan 1991, 240). Cf. also Waltke and O’Connor’s (1990, 477) recognition of the ‘waw-resultative’ as representing “a situation subordinate to that of the preceding clause.” Waltke and O’Connor regard this as a special feature of ‘waw-relative’ (1990, §32.1.1).

40 Cook’s conclusion that wa- has “no meaning at all” is premature. When Cook goes on to explain clause linking in Biblical Hebrew texts, he disregards the presence of wa- as a linking connective (Cook 2012, 313–38). Kottsieper (1999, 71) also disregards the function of wa- in w-
It is more apposite to regard the linking with *wa(y)-yiqṭol* and *wa-qātal* as an expression of *pragmatic discourse continuity*.\(^{41}\) A *wa-V(X)* clause signals *pragmatic continuity*, and may, according to context, express *thematic continuity*, *action continuity* and *topic continuity* (cf. Hornkohl 2018, 48; see also Givón 1983, 7; Buth 1995, 97–99). *Wa(y)-yiqṭol*, with short *yiqṭol* and normal *wa-*, is one of the typical clause-types that signal discourse continuity in CH.

A typical ‘discontinuous’ type of clause, *(wa)-XV*, may signal the beginning of a literary unit, topicalisation of *X* or focus thereon, anteriority, simultaneity, background, and elaboration. “[D]iscontinuity seems a particular apt concept for uniting them under a single, explanatory heading” (Hornkohl 2018, 49). My conclusion is that Tenet 1 of Biblical Hebrew text-linguistics should be reformulated in terms of continuity and discontinuity and without the assumption of a special ‘consecutive *waw*’.

Tenet 1 (updated): Pragmatic discourse continuity // discontinuity in affirmative clauses (prose texts):

Tenet 1a. *wa-VX // wa-XV.*\(^{42}\)

---


42 Here ‘//’ means ‘is interrupted by’. The ‘*X*’ in a discontinuous clause (type ‘*XV*’) cannot be a simple negation such as *lō*. The issue of negated clauses is not treated in the present paper.

43 This is the most frequent type of discontinuous linking in my corpus. I have registered 117 discontinuous clauses of the Ø-*X-qātal* type and 355 of the *wa-X-qātal* type. Similarly, I count 76 discontinuous clauses
Tenet 1b. *wa-VX // Ø-XV*.\(^4^4\)

Tenet 1c. *wa-VX // (wa)-XØ*. Linking with a verbless clause.\(^4^5\)

In the updated Tenet 1 formula there is no boldface *wa*-.

As can be concluded from the formula, the traditional assumption of a special ‘consecutive’ *wa-* would imply a *redundancy* in the signalling of pragmatic continuity (cf. Hornkohl 2018, 33). The fundamental alternation between discourse continuity and discourse discontinuity already *has* a signal: the switch from a *wa-VX* clause-type to one with *XV* (or *XØ*) word order.\(^4^6\) The hypothesis of the type *Ø-X-yiqtol* with long *yiqtol*, but 171 of the type *wa-X-yiqtol* with long *yiqtol*. Cf. Pardee (2012, 292 fn. 37): “many, probably most, disjunctive clauses are introduced by a conjunction.” I disregard in this paper the (more trivial) case of discontinuous clauses introduced by conjunctions other than *wa-*.

\(^4^4\) There are also a few cases of *Ø-qatal* clauses that serve special discontinuity purposes, like expressing simultaneity or elaboration or the beginning of a new unit, usually in direct speech: Gen. 18.11; 30.6; 31.41; 42.30; 48.14; Exod. 14.3; 32.8; Num. 17.11; Deut. 3.19; 9.16; Judg. 2.17 (elaboration in narrative); 20.31 (simultaneity in narrative). An example outside the corpus is Josh. 11.12 (narrative).

\(^4^5\) To achieve consistent and intuitive terminology, I designate verbless clauses ‘*XØ*’, where *X* stands for any first constituent in the clause and ‘*Ø*’ the absence of a verb. Tenet 1c indicates that verbless clauses, with or without initial *wa-* may also signal discourse discontinuity. In my corpus there are 164 circumstantial or backgrounding examples of *wa-XØ* and 86 such examples of *Ø-XØ*.

\(^4^6\) For an evaluation of recent approaches in Biblical Hebrew text-linguistics, see Hornkohl (2018). I am indebted to Hornkohl as well as
of a special ‘consecutive’ \textit{wa}- is unwarranted for the synchronic state of CH. A simple assumption of one ‘natural language connective’ \textit{wa}- is fully sufficient to clarify the linguistic reality behind \textit{wa}- in the ‘system of consecutive tenses’.

The discontinuous clause can also be the first in a series of clauses. A formulation of Tenet 1 must allow for the possibility that a discontinuous clause (Ø-XV or \textit{wa}-XV) starts a new literary unit, in which case it also signals a break with the preceding clause(s).\footnote{For a discussion of several pragmatic functions of the XV word order, see Hornkohl (2018, 52–53 fn. 79).} The semantic functions of this type of macro-syntactic marking of a new literary unit (often with a topicalised element), are pragmatically determined. This kind of discontinuity may either signal a connection with the preceding context (\textit{wa}-XV) or the absence of such a connection (Ø-XV).

\textbf{Tenet 1d.} // \textit{wa}-XV + [(wa)-XV or (wa)-XØ] + \textit{wa}-VX. Topic/focus and a new literary unit. With signal of backward connection.\footnote{Buth (1995) for clarifying the pragmatic dimension of discourse discontinuity and its signalling by XV word order. Pardee (2012, 292) also observes that “the sentence beginning with something other than a \textit{w}-retentive form... serves to set up contrast on many possible levels.”}

\footnote{There are 85 examples in my corpus in which a \textit{wa}-\textit{X-qətəl} clause begins a new literary unit (affirmative clause). The following examples are taken from Genesis (for many of them see Hornkohl 2018, 49, 52): 3.1 (topic and start of episode); 4.1; 7.6; 13.5, 14; 14.18; 18.17; 19.15; 21.1; 24.35 (direct speech).}
Tenet 1e. // Ø-XV + [(wa)-XV or (wa)-XØ] + wa-VX. Topic/focus and a new literary unit. Without signal of backward connection.\(^49\)

The initial ‘/’ in 1d and 1e indicates that the discontinuity is signalled in relation to the clauses (if any) that precede the new unit.

The clauses within brackets, [(wa)-XV or (wa)-XØ], in 1d and 1e indicate that one or more of the typical discontinuity clauses (1a, 1b, 1c) can be inserted before the main-line is resumed by a continuity clause (wa-VX) in the new literary unit.\(^50\)

In 1d and 1e the initial (wa)-XV can be a main-line clause in spite of its discontinuity signal.\(^51\) In other pragmatic contexts the initial (wa)-XV can be a background clause.\(^52\) In some shorter paragraphs, especially in direct speech, there is no continuity clause

\(^{49}\) 26 examples in the corpus exhibit a Ø-X-qātāl pattern beginning a new literary unit (affirmative clause). Some of them are: Gen. 1.1 (see example below); 7.13; 10.11; 15.1; 19.23; 34.27; 41.10 (Hornkohl 2018, 49); 43.20; 44.19 (Hornkohl 2018, 49); 46.31 (Hornkohl 2018, 49); 47.5 (Hornkohl 2018, 49).

\(^{50}\) I define ‘main-line clause’ as a foregrounded clause. It often, but not always, signals discourse continuity. The concept of a foreground-background distinction is recognized by almost all linguists as a language universal. The distinction is psycholinguistic, and related to the processing of discourse. Whether events are foreground or background depends of their relative saliency (Hopper and Thompson 1980, 280, 283, 294; Cook 2012, 283–288).


\(^{52}\) Examples: Gen. 6.9; 13.5; 19.15, 23; Exod. 3.1; 19.1; Judg. 1.16.
(wa-VX), which means that at least one discontinuity clause alone forms a main-line.

As Tenet 1 in all these cases (a–e) indicates, the normal wa- with immediately following verb is the decisive signal of discourse continuity in affirmative clauses. This observation enables us to formulate another tenet.

Tenet 2 of Biblical Hebrew text-linguistics (prose texts):
The clause-type wa-V(X) is necessary and sufficient for pragmatic discourse continuity in affirmative clauses.

In Tenet 2, wa- is necessary and V is necessary. No clausal constituent can be inserted between wa- and V, because this would make the clause signal discontinuity. In this text-linguistic sense, it is pertinent to speak of an ‘inseparable union’ between wa- and the verb in discourse continuity clauses. The ‘inseparable union’ in the syntagms wa(y)-yiqṭol and wa-qṭal results from their functions as markers of discourse continuity and was a reality on the textual level in CH (but not on the morphological level). Specifically, wa(y)-yiqṭol is not a ‘tense’; it is a clause-type.

4.0. Examples: With Special Emphasis on
Indicative Short yiqṭol, i.e., wa(y)-yiqṭol

(1) is an example of a series of continuous wa-VX clauses interrupted by a discontinuous wa-clause (wa-XV):

(1) wa-VX + wa-VX + wa-XV (= Tenet 1a)\textsuperscript{53}

\[\text{םָלְכַּשׂ יִתְּכַּנּוּ מקַּם יִתְּכַּנּוֹ וְאַתְּכַּנּוּ לְפִי תְּכַנּוֹ וְאַתְּכַּנּוּ לְפִי תְּכַנּוֹ} \]

\(\text{משֶפֶחְתִּים שֶלָּחַה:}\)

\textsuperscript{53} The first line in the examples displays the linking pattern.
‘So he showed them the way into the city, and they put the city to the sword but spared the man and his whole family.’

(Judg. 1.25)

The example illustrates the frequent linking when a series of wa(y)-yiqtol clauses is interrupted by a discontinuous clause of the type wa-X-qatal (where X in this case stands for two direct objects). The pragmatic context indicates (1) that the objects in the discontinuous clause (אֲחַר הָאִישׁ וְאֶת כָּלָ֖מֶשֶׁת הוּ֗ם, ‘the man and his whole family’) are contrasted to the object in the preceding clause (אֶת הֵָ֖יר, ‘the city’), a topicalisation, and (2) that the same clause lacks the default continuity signal of sequentiality in narrative (does not fulfil Tenet 2).54

Example (2) shows two asyndetically attached discontinuous clauses (Ø-XV):

(2) wa-VX + Ø-XV + Ø-XV (= Tenet 1b)

וַיִבְרַא אֱלֹהִים| אֲחַר הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמָוֶֽהָ בְּצֵלֶ֥ם אֱלֹהִּ֖ים בָּרָא| אֹתָוֹ זָכָֽר| וּנְק בִּֽה| בָּרֵא| אֹתָוֹ מֵהָֽם׃

‘God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.’

(Gen. 1.27, NET)

The two discontinuous Ø-X-qatal clauses in example (2) supply further detail about the action described in the first (continuous) clause. They express perfective past and function as elaborations

54 For narrative examples of wa-VX + wa-X see also Gen. 2.22 and 42.8, among many. Concerning the default temporal interpretation of narrative texts with iconicity of temporal succession, see Cook (2012, 276, 285) and Hornkohl (2018, 51).
in relation to the initial (also past perfective) \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} clause.\footnote{Other examples of \textit{\textendash}-\textit{XØ} after a \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} clause in narrative: Gen. 7.21–22 (elaboration); 13.12 (elaboration); 34.28 (elaboration); 41.48; 46.6–7; 49.28; 50.8 (background). For a definition of ‘elaboration’, see Dixon (2009, 27).}

Example (3) illustrates the discontinuous function of a verbless clause (either \textit{wa-XØ} or \textit{\textendash}-\textit{XØ}, in this case the former) after \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} clauses in narrative:

\begin{align*}
\text{(3) } \text{wa-}VX + \text{wa-}VX + \text{wa-}XØ &= \text{ (\textit{Tenet 1c})} \\
'\text{So Abram left, just as the \textsc{Lord} had told him to do, and Lot went with him. (Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.)' (Gen. 12.4, NET) } \\
\end{align*}

In (3) a series of two continuous \textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} clauses is interrupted by a verbless clause functioning as a circumstantial parenthesis.\footnote{Such verbless clauses in narrative usually express circumstantial information or are possible glosses from an editor. Other examples: Gen. 12.6 (\textit{wa-XØ}, background), 8 (\textit{wa(y)-yiqtol} + \textit{\textendash}-\textit{XØ} + \textit{wa-XØ}); 19.38; 24.10a (circumstantial state); 25.26 (background), 29 (circumstantial state); 29.31 (circumstantial); 36.32 (circumstantial); 37.24; 38.1; 43.33a; 44.14; and many others.}

An example of a discontinuous clause signalling a new literary unit (with marking of backward connection) is found in (4):

\begin{align*}
\text{(4) } \text{wa-}XV + \text{wa-}V + \text{wa-}VX + \text{wa-}VX &= \text{ (\textit{Tenet 1d})} \\
\end{align*}
Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.”” (Gen. 4.1, NIV)

The first clause with its XV word order signals discontinuity and the beginning of a new literary unit or paragraph (about Cain and Abel). The initial wa- in the first clause signals that there is a certain connection to the previous context (the story of Adam and Eve). The next three clauses conform to the continuity linking pattern wa-V(X) (Tenet 2). In one of the continuity clauses there is no X (וַתַּר), in the other two X is, respectively, a direct object (∼אֶת-קִיֵּן) and a complement clause (the quotation).

The following example (5) illustrates in an instructional text how a discontinuous clause with topicalised element X (∼אֶת-כָּל-חֶלְבָּה ‘all the fat’) starts a new series of continuous clauses of the wa-qatal type. It also illustrates the breadth of meanings that are possible with the natural language connective wa-. The verse begins by describing a sacrificial ritual procedure (wa-X-yiqtol [long] + wa-qatal). These two clauses constitute the ‘world’ that is tacitly presupposed in the wa-qatal + wa-qatal clauses:

\[
\text{(5) } \text{wa-XV} + \text{wa-VX} + \text{wa-VX} + \text{wa-VX} (= \text{Tenet 1d})
\]

57 The syntax of the first clause in (4) illustrates that qatal in CH has taken over (from short yiqtol) the role of past indicative verb in discontinuous clauses (cf. Cook 2012, 96). In Archaic Biblical Hebrew poetry the instances of past indicative XV clauses with short yiqtol are extremely few (Notarius 2013, 89, 281), and none is attested in CH.
They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar on top of the food offerings presented to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.’ (Lev. 4.35, NIV, my emphasis; cf. Milgrom 1991, 228)

In the example there is first a clause with long yiqtol (יָסִָ֗יר) followed by a wa-qatal clause (וְהִקְטִֶ֨יר), and the discontinuity structure of the long yiqtol clause in this case signals a topicalised direct object. These two clauses describe the ritual procedure of a sacrifice. The two succeeding wa-qatal clauses must be interpreted within the framework of the previous ritual procedure. The clause starting with כִֶפֶ֨ר is not just one more action to be performed by the priest, and it is not a subordinate clause. Rather, כִֶפֶ֨ר presupposes the procedure in the foregoing clauses and concludes: in the way that is already described the priest brings atonement for him. כִֶפֶ֨ר must be read within the framework of the world that has been described in the preceding clauses.58

58 Milgrom (1991, 228): ‘Thus the priest shall effect purgation...’. Other examples are: Gen. 17.13; 39.9; 45.19; Exod. 13.15–16; 17.5; 19.23b; 20.25b (future anterior); 23.25 (within protasis); 28.43; 31.6; Lev. 4.26, 31; 5.6, 10, 12–13a; 12.7a; 14.18, 20, 36; 15.15, 30, 31; 16.2, 6, 11, 19; 19.12, 29; 20.2b–3a; 22.2; Num. 4.19 (cf. Garr 1998, lxxxiii, who assigns the wa-qatal a result value, “and [as a result] they will live,” which
An example of **pragmatic discontinuity** signalling a new literary unit without signal of backward connection is found in example (6) below:

(6)  \(\emptyset-XV\) (= Tenet 1e, initial clause)

\begin{center}
בראשית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמִים וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ׃
\end{center}

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’

(Gen. 1.1)

According to Tenet 2, this is a clause that cannot express discourse continuity. There is no initial \(wa\)- and a non-verbal clausal constituent is placed before the verb. The pragmatics of the clause makes it a signal of a new literary unit and the start of a narrative main-line (Tenet 1e). There is nothing before this clause to connect to, so the clause is asyndetic (lacking the connective \(wa\)-). The fronted constituent \(X\) (בראשית) contains the first focus of the clause, and sets up the topic, which orients the reader/listener concerning the following sentences. The second focus is the predication, which has broad non-contrastive focus, and supplies the value of the act of creating the heavens and the earth.\(^{59}\)

In this way a simple, but fundamental coding of discontinuity (\(\emptyset-XV\)) can fulfil a double function in the text: to signal focus and topic, and to mark a new literary unit.\(^{60}\) The example also illustrates that a clause that marks discontinuity can be, and often is, a foregrounded clause.

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59 Khan and Van der Merwe (2020, 370–75).

60 “Language users evidently made use of a single multi-functional structure, the XV order, effectively to halt forward progress of the default
An example of discourse discontinuity clauses coding a background complex is found in (7):

(7)  \( \text{wa-XV} + \text{wa-X}\text{Ø} + \text{wa-XV} \) (= Tenet 1e, continued)

וְהָאָָ֗רֶץ הָיְתֵָ֥ה תֹ הוּ וָבִֹ֔הוּ וְחִֶ֖שֶׁךְ עַל־פְנֵי ﻿

וְר֣וּחַ אֱלֹהִִ֔ים מְרַחִֶ֖פֶת עַל־פְנ ֣י הַמָֹּֽֽיִם׃

‘Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.’ (Gen. 1.2, NIV)

Example (7) is built up of three clauses, all introduced by \( \text{wa-} \):
\( \text{wa-X-qat\text{al}}, \text{wa-X}\text{Ø}, \) and \( \text{wa-X-qot\text{el}} \) (active participle). The three clauses signal ‘action discontinuity’ and are descriptions of the state that was the result of the creational act in example (6). Gen. 1.2 is background in relation to both 1.1 and 1.3.

The next example shows two clauses that signal discourse continuity; they resume the main-line:

(8)  \( \text{wa-VX} + \text{wa-VX} \) (= Tenet 1e continued, Tenet 2)

וַֽיֵ֥אמֶר אֱלֹהִֵ֖ים יְהִ֣י אָ֑וֹר וַַֹּֽֽיְהִי־אֹֽוֹר׃

‘Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.’ (Gen. 1.3, Wenham 1987, 2, 18)

In Gen. 1.3 there appear for the first time in the Hebrew Bible clauses of the pattern \( \text{wa-VX} \) that fulfil the requirements of Tenet 2 and thus express action continuity. The two \( \text{wa(y)-yiqtol} \) clauses express temporal sequentiality in relation to the main-line action discourse continuity iconically communicated by the \( \text{waw-consecutive} \) forms for purposes of specially marking both genuine topics and whole clauses” (Hornkohl 2018, 51).
clause in Gen. 1.1, and temporal or logical sequentiality in relation to the background clauses in 1.2.⁶¹

5.0. Summary

I have discussed the CH short *yiqtol* within the framework of the ‘consecutive tenses’. I have concluded:

1. The short *yiqtol* is a separate verbal morpheme in CH (< Proto-Semitic *yaqtul*). It has two basic meanings: past perfective and jussive. Though past perfective short *yiqtol* is attested in freestanding form in Amarna Canaanite and Archaic Hebrew, such meanings of short *yiqtol* are found in CH only in the *wa(y)-yiqtol* clause-type.

2. There was only one conjunction *wa-* in CH. The gemination in *wa(y)-yiqtol* was introduced in the reading tradition after the classical period to distinguish two homophones in the reading: indicative perfective *wa-yiqtol* and jussive *wa-yiqtol*. The *wa-* in these clauses is a normal ‘natural language connective’ *wa-* ‘and’. The gemination was not a feature of CH. Speakers and writers of CH did not distinguish between two different *wa*-conjunctions.

3. The ‘system of consecutive tenses’ needs to be updated with only one *wa-* and the concept of *pragmatic discourse continuity*. A *wa-* immediately before a finite verb (*wa-VX*) signals in itself ‘discourse continuity’. Thus defined, the concept of ‘discourse continuity’ has no use of a special *wa-*

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⁶¹ In this interpretation of Gen. 1.1–3 I follow the majority view among the commentators, represented by Westermann (1976, 130–56). For Gen. 1.3 see also Wenham (1987, 2, 15–16, 18).
conjunction, and the traditional assumption of a ‘consecutive waw’ emerges as unwarranted for the synchronic description of CH. A simple assumption of one ‘natural language connective’ wa- is sufficient to clarify the linguistic reality behind the conjunction wa- in the ‘system of consecutive tenses’. Specifically, wa(y)-yiqṭol in CH is a discourse continuity clause-type—not a ‘tense’—with normal wa- and short yiqṭol. Discourse discontinuity is signalled by clauses with an initial clausal constituent (X): (wa)-XV, or (wa)-XØ (where XØ is a verbless clause).

I have not discussed:

4. How long yiqṭol (< *yaqtulu) was distinguished from short yiqṭol in CH.\textsuperscript{62}
5. Why qatał came to alternate with wa(y)-yiqṭol.
6. Why wa-qatał acquired imperfective meanings and came to alternate with the inherited long yiqṭol.

References


\footnote{62 But cf. Isaksson (2015b).}


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