

# 1 Kings 1-11: a Handbook on the Hebrew Text

By Shawn C. Madden

## Introduction

One of the most interesting things about studies of the Bible is that after two thousand plus years of concerted effort there are still new and fresh aspects of study available for pursuit. The latest aspect, and one that may prove to be one of the most powerful, to come to light in recent years, is the application of the study of discourse analysis or text linguistics (interchangeable terms) to the text of the Bible. Text linguistics seeks to describe the text under consideration at the clause level and above, to find the relationship of those units as the author has built them in an effort to make the point of his message clear. Robert Longacre, field linguist, missionary, and professor of linguistics, notes that every text “has a germinal idea (or closely related complex of germinal ideas) that acts as an overall plan in the development of the discourse” (2003, 16).

Robert Longacre is most noted for his developed work in discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is distinguished from the more traditional methods of looking at and analyzing a piece of text in that it goes beyond the bounds of the clause and sentence and attempts to view the text within a larger context, that of the whole pericope within a defined genre. It argues that only from that perspective might the use of grammatical forms and their relationship to each other be best understood. Longacre notes that “A piece of text, especially a literary text . . . cannot be understood by myopically inspecting it verse-by-verse without the study of the whole informing the study of the parts” (2003, xii). In his dissertation, Ray Clendenen notes that “Discourse typology has been a major emphasis of Longacre, who argues that it is an essential step in any linguistic analysis of a discourse, ‘Characteristics of individual discourses can be neither described, predicted, nor analyzed without resort to a classification of discourse types. It is pointless to look in a discourse for a feature which is not characteristic of the type to which that discourse belongs. So determinative of detail is the general design of a discourse type that the linguist [or student!] who ignores discourse typology can only come to grief’” (45).

To cut to the chase of Longacre’s position and theory, he begins part 2 of his *Joseph* with a note toward the doing of Hebrew grammar: “Traditionally, within a grammar of a given language all the uses of each tense/aspect or mode of a language are listed and described en bloque in the same section of the grammar” (2003, 57). He presents “a challenge to this time-honored way of describing the functions of the verb forms of a verb system within a language” by positing that “(a) every language has a system of discourse types (e.g., narrative, predictive, hortatory, procedural, expository, and others); (b) each discourse type has its own characteristic constellation of verb forms that figure in that type; (c) the uses of a given tense/aspect/mood form are most surely and concretely described in relation to a given discourse type” (2003, 57).

The discourse that he first evaluates is the narrative. It is one of the most abundant (if not the most abundant) genres in the confines of the Hebrew Bible and thus warrants the closest attention. Moreover it is consistent enough to serve as an introduction to the concept. Regarding the verb forms and the discourse type in which they are found, Longacre points out that “one or more privileged forms constitute the mainline or backbone of each type, while other forms can be shown to encode progressive degrees of departure from the mainline.”(2003, 57). For narrative discourse “the *waw*-consecutive imperfect is seen to be mainline in that it is punctiliar and sequential in function; the perfect is found to be (as a whole) a non-punctiliar and non-sequential kind of past tense in narrative; the imperfect and participles are, respectively, implicitly and ex-

plicitly durative in the framework of the story; *hāyâ* clauses and verbless clauses represent static elements toward the bottom of the scheme; and negated clauses rank lowest.”(2003, 57). Developing this further Longacre notes that “A chain of (necessarily verb-initial) clauses that contain preterites [*wayiqqtols*] is the backbone of any Old Testament story; all other clause types contribute various kinds of supportive, descriptive, and depictive materials. In the cases of clauses that begin with a noun (and therefore cannot contain a verb in the preterite), such background material serves to introduce or highlight something about the noun in question, whether it refers to a participant or to a prop in the story. Clauses that begin with a non-preterite (perfect) verb portray secondary actions; for example, actions what are in some sense subsidiary to the main action, which is described by a following preterite. On occasion, a verb in the perfect (whether or not [the clause] begins with a noun) is repetition or paraphrase of some action already reported as a preterite on the storyline.”

The distinguishing feature of this approach to a biblical text is its focus on the macro-syntactic features of that text, those features and grammatical relationships beyond the word or phrase level, those structures and features that provided a more solid hermeneutical basis from which to discover the author’s intent in his endeavor. As such, discourse analysis recognizes that the text of the Bible is made up of several types of literature or genres and each type, especially in biblical Hebrew, has its own grammatical structures that are employed to develop the author’s theme or intent. As mentioned above, the type that dominates the text of the TaNaK is historical narrative. As such it is paramount for an exegete to understand how the Hebrew text presents historical narrative, not only at the micro or word and clause level but, more importantly, at the macro or discourse level, the level of paragraphs and episodes. The last decade has seen a new direction in the understanding of the linguistic intricacies of the Hebrew language. The study has moved from the word, phrase, and clause level to the discourse level or the level at the paragraph and larger texts. This study has altered the way exegetes understand the dynamics of the Hebrew language, especially concerning the verb and its forms and their employment within the text.

The approach of this handbook follows the work of Robert Longacre with some slight modifications and enhancements from other authors. It is designed for the working exegete—pastors, students, and teachers, and has as its goal simplicity and usability without sacrificing linguistic veracity and theological insight. As with the other offerings in this series it is not a running commentary but rather an exegetical guide that should help exegetes become familiar with and make use of the new theories to their great benefit and the benefit of those they would teach. The approach that follows has been part of several years of teaching introductory and advanced students who have aided materially in the adaptation of discourse analysis theories to an easily accessed and handled working relationship with the text. It is my contention that discourse analysis is the most important tool to approach a text, providing the most effective homiletical evaluation, the most pointed pedagogical technique, and the clearest theological understanding.

There are two concepts to keep in mind when approaching the biblical texts. Baruch Halpern noted that, “. . . it is not legitimate to assume, as has often been done, that the editors were unable to see the contradictions, as we moderns do, that the editors [writers, historians] were, in effect, less sentient than we. This is not just arrogant; on the historical record, it is absurd” (1996, xxiv-v). And, in that vein, Longacre notes that, “. . . variation in a text is not random but motivated. In brief, where the author has a choice in regard to a lexical item or a grammatical construction, his particular choice is motivated by pragmatic concerns or discourse structure” (2003, xv). To put it succinctly, the biblical writers knew what they were doing and what they did they did with purpose and on purpose. Our lesson is to take the text seriously from linguistic, literary, and the-

ological positions and to glean as much as we can from what the author intended to convey and how he intended for it to be used.

Keep in mind, also, the distinction in the text between “editorial omniscience, when the narrator overtly inserts comments about the characters and events into the narrative, and neutral omniscience, when the narrative is allowed to speak for itself” (Bar-Efrat, 23). Recognizing who the speaker is goes a long way to properly understanding the text before us.

### **A Note on the Hebrew Text, Unicode, and the Massoretic Accents**

What follows is a description as to how this study was done on a word processor. It is meant to aid the student in his or her own exegetical work, taking advantage of new software developments.

This work was produced using MS Word on an XP machine with Unicode. Unicode is a more sophisticated way of defining fonts than had previously been employed. Unicode uses a longer address system to encode information describing each character giving a greater range of possibilities in the handling of the fonts. This is particularly important for non-Roman characters, particularly characters that are laid down right to left instead of left to right. The advantages for the Hebrew exegete become readily apparent. Hebrew can be typed as it was meant to be, right to left, and it can easily be used in a Roman character text, as in a paper or essay, book or sermon notes. More importantly, however, whole sections of the Hebrew text may be dealt with as large chunks, not just words. As a text is presented, 1 Kings 1 for instance, the cursor may be moved down the text to a logical or syntactical break and the return key hit with the text wrapping in the correct direction. So too, tabs may be used easily. In my adaptation of Longacre’s method, with a borrowing from Niccacci (1994), separating the text into clauses and sentences and then tabbing them into Longacre’s hierarchical structure becomes very important and very revealing syntactically and, I will argue, theologically, and thus, homiletically. A windows machine with XP or Vista comes ready-loaded with Unicode and adding Hebrew is very easy. The latest versions of Bible programs such as Bibleworks and Logos come with the Hebrew Unicode Bible text built in and it may be easily exported to a word processor. So too the Unicode Hebrew text is easily found online. For the student, having Unicode loaded and the text of Kings in a word processor will allow them to follow the method closely as this handbook proceeds.

Another item that I have discovered to be very useful and important in exegeting the Hebrew text is the accent system used by the Massorettes. Students of the Hebrew text have been using the Massoretic vowel points for centuries while a great deal of the time ignoring the accents. Indeed, many text books do not mention them at all or relegate them to an appendix. It is my position that they should be learned and that they should be taught early and often. I think that it could safely be said that most scholars recognize that the Massorettes were nit pickers in the extreme and they included in their text, to a large extent, anything they could think of to aid themselves or their readers in understanding what they thought the biblical writers were trying to convey. The value of the accents was considered by some rabbis of the utmost importance for a proper theological understanding of the text. Concerning the interpretive value of the accents, Abraham Ibn Ezra (11<sup>th</sup> century distinguished Jewish scholar) wrote, “Any interpretation which is not in accordance with the arrangement of the accents, you shall not consent to it, nor listen to it” (Price, 9). Bruce Waltke also noted that, “So important is the accentuation of the Hebrew grammar for understanding that medieval Jewish sources paid more attention to it than to establishing the correct pronunciation of words . . . . At present it is best to consider the accents as an

early and relatively reliable witness to a correct interpretation of the text” (1989, 25). As with the vowels points in some cases, what the Massoretes left us may be argued against, but the first step in that is to see what they used and how they used it and how they thought that it affected interpretation. This work will include a brief introduction to the accents and their uses and note them throughout the text. I think that the reader will discover that the combination of observance of the Massoretic accents and Discourse Analysis yields a powerful tool in the exegesis of the Hebrew text that will materially ease their evaluation and study of the text.

## **Methodology**

### **Tagmemics: Tagmemes and Syntagmemes**

Tagmemics is a theory devised by Kenneth Pike which Longacre identifies as underlying his own work (2003, 301). The theory posits that for an analysis of a text each item under consideration is an element of a larger item and itself may be composed of other subordinate, constituent items. Pike puts it this way, “The relevant structural inclusion of wheels within wheels, of successive inclusion of parts within a whole, with the whole in its turn becoming one part of a still larger whole . . .” (1982, 70). For instance, from higher to lower, a canon is composed of books, books are composed of episodes, episodes are composed of acts, acts are composed of scenes, scenes are composed of paragraphs, paragraphs are composed of sentences and sentences are composed of phrases.<sup>1</sup> Longacre notes, “Tagmemics has always insisted on the relevance of part-whole relations, of the communication situation . . . and the interplay of the observer with the data that he observes. Specifically, however, three concepts of tagmemics have been and still are crucial to a study such as this: tagmeme, syntagmeme, and hierarchical linguistic structure” (2003, 301). He goes on to point out that “Tagmemes combine to form structured wholes” which he calls syntagmemes. A sentence will be a syntagmeme composed of tagmemes known as words or phrases that fill various functions within that sentence, such as subject, object, predicate, etc., while at a higher level that same sentence will be a tagmeme of the paragraph syntagmeme, it too fulfilling some function such as topic sentence, comment sentence, transition sentence, etc. Recognition of these relationships and the hierarchy within them will help to understand what the author is intending to emphasize and what he sees as important at all levels of the discourse, from the sentence up through the book.

For this work, the main structures evaluated will be the Episode, the Act, the Scene, the Paragraph, and the clause/sentence, each of these being a constituent tagmeme of the higher syntagmeme. The elements will be evaluated as to how they fit into and serve the higher unit. A complete evaluation of tagmemic units can be very complex and detailed—it will be the challenge of this work to stick to the basics and present a method that will be simple enough to be readily used yet employ enough of the theory to bring out the function of the tagmemes within their syntagmeme, the smaller units within their larger unit. The ongoing question will be, “how does this item (tagmeme) fit into the larger item (syntagmeme) and what is its specific function within that syntagmeme as determined by the syntagmeme of which it is a constituent element. For a word or phrase that is part of a sentence we can say that their function within that sentence is determined by the sentence and their role in the sentence, i.e., subject, predicate, object, etc. At

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<sup>1</sup> This structure is a borrowing of the structure of a play or even a screen play. I find it a useful taxonomy for historical narrative, particularly as it fits well within a tagmemic scheme where the importance of the relationship of the whole to its parts and the role of the parts within the whole.

times the distinction between higher elements of the same level, i.e., Episode 1, Episode 2 are distinguished, not so much on the linguistic level but on the literary level with linguistic features serving to help determine the seams or separation points.

**Boundaries (Levinsohn, Discourse Features of New Testament Greek, 271ff.)**

Noting that tagmemics and syntagmemics argue for dividing the text into discrete units of texts the question then is, “How does one go about identifying the boundaries that separate those units or segments (using Blokland’s term)? How does one identify when a new paragraph begins, a new scene, a new act, or a new episode? And are there linguistic (syntactic, semantic, pragmatic) boundary markers for each of those units and if so, what are they and how may they be indentified? First, the means used in determining the boundary markers for each unit has to be decided upon. Should such a search be limited to purely linguistic models or will other considerations be used to help us find those borders, considerations more to be found in the literary field? There are the Massoretic helps, particularly the accents, and there are syntactic markers, semantic markers and pragmatic markers, and there are literary features, changes of characters, location, time, and action. First to be observed is the nuts and bolts of Longacre’s presentation.

**Discourse Analysis/Text Linguistics**

As mentioned above, Longacre noted that, “the constellation of verb forms that figure in a given discourse type are structured so that one or more privileged forms constitute the mainline of backbone of each type, while other forms can be shown to encode progressive degrees of departure from the mainline” (2003, 57). This, in effect, sets up a hierarchy of clauses based on their discourse and the syntactical structure as used in that discourse. He sets up the Narrative Discourse hierarchy in the following chart (2003, 79, chart 3 with nomenclature modifications by Madden):

Verb Rank in Narrative Discourse	
Band Levels	Hebrew Clausal Elements
Band 1: Storyline	1. <i>wayyiqtol</i> : primary <sup>a</sup>
Band 2: Background Actions	2.1. <i>qatal</i> initial (without <i>w-</i> ) 2.2. Noun + <i>qatal</i> (with noun in focus)
Band 3: Background Activities	3.1. הַיְהוּה + participle 3.2. Participle 3.3. Noun + participle
Band 4: Setting	4.1. <i>wayyiqtol</i> of הַיְהוּה , ‘be’ 4.2. <i>qatal</i> of הַיְהוּה, ‘be’ 4.3. Nominal clause (verbless) 4.4. Existential clause with וְיֵשׁ
Band 5: Irrealis	5. Negation of verb clause: irrealis (any band) <sup>b</sup>
<sup>a</sup> 1. demotes to 2.2. by preposing a noun. 1. demotes to 5. by preposing לֹא ‘not’ [ <i>wayyiqtol</i> > <i>qatal</i> ]. <sup>b</sup> “Momentous negation” promotes 5. to 2.1./2.2.	

He notes that, “This rank scheme includes only independent clauses and is applicable only to narrative. Subordinate clauses, whether or not they contain a verb, are closely backgrounded to the main clause” (2003, 79).

Longacre points out that

A chain of (necessarily verb-initial) clauses that contain preterites [*wayyiqtol*s] is the backbone of any Old Testament story; all other clause types contribute various kinds of supportive, descriptive, and depictive materials. In the cases of clauses that begin with a noun (and therefore cannot contain a verb in the preterite), such background material serves to introduce or highlight something about the noun in question, whether it refers to a participant or to a prop in the story. Clauses that begin with a non-preterite (perfect) verb portray secondary actions; for example, actions that are in some sense subsidiary to the main action, which is described by a following preterite. On occasion, a verb in the perfect (whether or not [the clause] begins with a noun) is repetition or paraphrase of some action already reported as a preterite on the storyline.

Related to the morphology of the *wayyiqtol* he states, “Comparative Semitic studies reveal, however, that the preterite [*wawyiqtol*, or the imperfect with *waw* consecutive] is *not* a historical development from the imperfect, but is a separate tense form that has come by convergence to resemble the imperfect” (2003, 63).

He also very importantly notes “The special status of *hāyâ* ‘be’” by writing that “It is immediately necessary, however, to qualify the above hypothesis in one important particular. The verb *hāyâ*, ‘be’, even in its preterite form *wayhî* ‘and it happened’, does not function on the storyline of a narrative. In this respect, the behavior of Hebrew is similar to that of a great many contemporary languages around the world. . . . This is simple [sic] a peculiarity of the verb *be* in many languages past and present” (2003, 64). The failure of other authors to make this observation of *hāyâ* has caused them to fail to see the exception in the *wayyiqtol* of this verb showing that it defines part of the setting of the ongoing narrative—it describes a state, either already in place or recently changed.

This scheme can be nicely illustrated in Hebrew with the use of Unicode in a MS Word document. Take for example the following passage from Genesis 1.

Longacre's Discourse Band Levels	5	4	3	2	1	Discourse Type	Chpt/Vers/Clause
					בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:	N	1.1.1
					וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תֵהוֹ וּבְהוּ	N	1.2.1
					וַחֲשָׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם	N	1.2.2
					וַרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:	N	1.2.3
					וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	N	1.3.1
					יְהִי אֹר	H	1.3.2
					וַיְהִי־אֹר:	N	1.3.3
					וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹר כִּי־טוֹב	N	1.4.1
					וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:	N	1.4.2
					וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאֹר יוֹם	N	1.5.1
					וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה	N	1.5.2

וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב	N	1.5.3
וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר	N	1.5.4
יּוֹם אֶחָד:	N	1.5.5

According to Longacre’s scheme, the syntax of the above verses show that what happens in vss. one and two serve as setting and background information about the state of the earth after it was initially created. These verses are the setup to the mainline discourse that follows. The main event is God creating light as illustrated by the fact that the first *wayyiqtol* verb form is found in verse three. Also note that God speaking is a different discourse type than the surrounding narrative. The narrator of the text introduces the act of God speaking with a discourse marker, וַיֹּאמֶר, אֱלֹהִים, and then tells us what God said. In this case God is speaking in hortatory discourse (to be charted below) wherein any volitional verb form (cohortative, imperative, or jussive) is the main verb form in that type of discourse and where the verb הִיָּה is treated differently. Immediately after God’s speech act the narrator shows that the state of things has changed by use of וַיְהִי־אֹר, light is now part of the setting of the heavens and the earth. Another very interesting and revealing observation in these few passages is what is going on in verse five in the naming of the light and the darkness. The same verb is used in both cases but different forms of the verb are employed. As noted above, Longacre insists that this was on purpose. In his scheme, the *wayyiqtol* verb takes a higher order than the *qatal* form. We see it in this case. As Niccacci (1994, 183) points out, “Its effect is to convey the naming of the darkness as background information to the preceding naming of the light.” There is nothing syntactically necessitated by the verb forms used unless a distinction is purposely meant in the two namings—the specific verb forms are conscientiously employed by the author to give greater prominence to the naming of the light. The same thing happens later in the text of chapter one when it comes to naming the dry land and the water.

Another important aspect of recognizing the function of the different verb forms employed by the biblical author is the density of the verbs used. This is especially evident in the use of the *wayyiqtol* to control the pace or tempo of the narration. A string of *wayyiqtol*s in short clauses make for a fast pace in the depicted action of the text. So too, when the *wayyiqtol*s are spread out and other forms are employed to set up the scenes or backgrounds then the pace slows so that a more detailed view of what is going on may be seen.

This arrangement of sequences of mainline verbs (*wayyiqtol*s for narrative) is labeled in our scheme with the symbol  $ST_1, ST_2, \dots, ST_n$  with the first element in the sequence numbered one and the last one with n. Longacre notes that in narrative or procedural discourse the “mainline of development is via punctiliar, sequence happenings. The sentences in such paragraphs—except for introductory and terminal elements—are labeled *sequence thesis*” (1996, 107).

This method finds itself in the modern instances of plays or movies. If a movie is trying to move the action along at a quick clip then the scenes are cut short and presented rapidly to the audience. In Peter Jackson’s adaptation of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, the display of the battle scenes at Helm’s Deep and Pelenor fields is full of quick cutting, action packed scenes. Conversely, as Bilbo is writing his short piece on Concerning Hobbits the scene is longer, giving an extended view of the background and setting of the Shire. Tempo becomes an important aspect of the action in the scenes in Kings and the author sets the tempo with verb forms and density.

Another aspect that Longacre noted was interpersonal relationships as depicted in the dialogue. This is shown in two ways—first by how the narrator introduces the interlocutors and secondly by how those engaged in the dialogue address each other. The use of titles, personal names and other specific marks of identification denote the importance of the person being introduced or addressed. At the same time, the lack of any of these by the narrator to one of the interlocutors shows at times a low view of the other party of the dialogue. Types of address toward two who are speaking together shows a social dynamic as revealed by the use of names and pronouns. This too will be addressed as the narrative of Kings progresses.

Within the biblical corpus there exists, besides Narrative Discourse, a variety of other discourse types, one of the more common of which is Hortatory Discourse, a type of discourse where “one person tries to influence the conduct of another” (Longacre, 2003, 119). As such, this type of discourse is predominated by verb forms consisting mainly of the modals, or cohortatives, imperatives, and jussives. These verb forms make up, for the most part, the main line level in a Hortatory Discourse structure. Below is Longacre’s chart of the hierarchical relationships of the verb forms and clauses in Hortatory Discourse.

Diagram 6. Verb Rank in Hortatory Discourse <sup>2</sup>	
Band Levels	Hebrew Clausal Elements
Band 1: Primary line of Exhortation	1.1. Imperative (2p) } 1.2. Cohortative (1p) } unranked 1.3. Jussive (3p) <sup>a</sup>
Band 2: Secondary line of Exhortation	2.1. $\text{לִּפְנֵי}$ + jussive/imperfect 2.2. Modal imperfect
Band 3: Results/Consequences (Motivation)	3.1. $\text{וַ$ (consecutive) perfect <sup>b</sup> 3.2. $\text{וַיִּשְׁלַח}$ + imperfect 3.3. (Future) Perfect
Band 4: Setting (Problem)	4.1. Perfect (of past events) 4.2. Participles 4.3. Nominal clauses
<sup>a</sup> 1.3 substitutes for 1.1 in deferential avoidance of 2p. <sup>b</sup> 3.1 may substitute for band 1—but this possibility involves substitutions of the form of predictive discourse.	

## Notional Markers

For many passages there may be recognizable linguistic episode markers (Longacre 2003, 25) in conjunction with literary features such as continuity or changes in time, space, action, or participants.

Stephen Levinsohn (3), in discussing coherence and discontinuities within a text in order to determine boundaries beyond the purely linguistic evaluation, provides the following table. He remarks that, “In narrative, then, the speaker typically begins a new thematic grouping when there is significant discontinuity in at least one of these four dimensions. Within a thematic grouping, there is usually continuity along all four dimensions. One can think of a new thematic

<sup>2</sup>Longacre, 121.

grouping resulting when the speaker leaves one section of the mental representation and moves on to, or perhaps creates, another.”

Dimension	Continuity	Discontinuity
Time	Events separated by at most only small forward gaps	Large forward gaps or events out of order
Space	Same place or (for motion) continuous change	Discrete changes of place
Action	All material of the same type: event, non-event, reported conversation, etc.	Change from one type of material to another
Participants	Same cast and usually same general roles vis-à-vis one another	Discrete changes of cast or change in relative roles.

The recognition of markers both linguistic and literary will materially aid the exegete in recognizing and identifying boundaries for distinctive sections at several levels. Blokland (1995, 1) asks the question, “to what extent it is possible to segment Biblical Hebrew narrative text on some basis of text syntactical data and thereby to provide some sort of check on segmentations based solely or primarily on subject matter?” He then notes that, “there is agreement that only an approach that integrates syntax, semantics, and pragmatics can make any claim to comprehensiveness” (1995, 4). Within the text of Kings several levels of segmentation may be observed. On the analogy of a play I have divided them into episodes, acts, and scenes. Each of these levels contain a level of continuity within the four points (time, space, action, participants) that serves to separate one from another in a hierarchical fashion. Each segment will be identified with a note as to what degree of continuity or discontinuity exists between the segments. In this way there is an integration of the linguistic and the literary tools being brought to bear to determine the author’s intended meaning of his text.

## Methodological Issues

### Accents of the Massoretic Bible

Waltke and O’Connor note that, “. . . it is best to consider the accents as an early and relatively reliable witness to a correct interpretation of the text” (30). James Prices states that, “The accents complement the grammar and syntax of Hebrew, preserving the traditional understanding of the text, an understanding with roots in the deep recesses of antiquity. No serious expositor of Scripture should neglect such important keys to Biblical exposition” (9). Of the four purposes of the accents (1. Marking the syllable for stress, 2. Marking the degree of grammatical separation or connection between adjoining words or phrases much like punctuation marks in English, 3. Marking musical intonation of the words, 4. Marking the poetic structure of the text [Price, 11]) we are most interested in their use to mark the degree of grammatical separation or connection between adjoining words or phrases as a means of determining syntactical relations. Accents in the MT are of two kinds: disjunctive and conjunctive. “Disjunctives . . . mark the length of pauses from full stop to various shades of shorter pauses” (WO, 29). Seow puts it this way, “A disjunctive accent marks a major, intermediate, or minor pause. The disjunctive accents are important because they are intended to indicate the end of each logical [and/or syntactical] unit.” He goes on to say that “conjunctive accents indicate that the word is to be taken with what follows” (Seow, 65). Below is the table on the accents from GKC for all but three of the books of the TaNaK. The Disjunctives give information as to how to break up clauses, whether logically

or syntactically, or both. Blokland (1) notes, “The Massoretic accentuation system serves to demarcate the text . . . It divides it into verses, which are in turn usually divided by ‘atnach or ‘olew<sup>e</sup>jored. The result is divided again until each individual word is either connected to or separated from a neighbor word by a particular accent. This system helps the reader read the text, but it also steers him toward a certain reading of it, a confirmation of the interpretive character of any system of segmentation.” The Conjunctives indicate what words or phrases are meant to be joined as units. When used with a word processing text that has unicode fonts the accents many times serve as places to mark breaks between main clauses and subordinate clauses. Not always but in very many instances they serve very similarly as our punctuation marks. As we go through the text the accents will be delineated more fully and we will take a close look at how they match up with discourse analysis and literary theories.

The below is from GKC §15 (with modifications-may work better in an appendix-I am going to rework this).

Wickes, William. Two Treatises on the Accentuation of the Old Testament טעמי אמ"ת on Palms, Proverbs, and Job. כ"א ספרים. טעמי. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc. 1970. Price, James D. The Syntax of Masoretic Accednts in the Hebrew Bible. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990.

A. DISJUNCTIVE ACCENTS (*Distinctivi* or *Domini*).

1. (◌) סִלּוּק Sillûq (*end*) always with the tone-syllable of the last word before Sôph pāsûq (:) the verse-divider, e.g.: הַאֲרָץ׃.

2. (◌) אֲתַנְחָא 'Atnâh or אֲתַנְחָתָא 'Atnâhtâ' (*rest*), the principal divider within the verse.

3a. (◌) סְגוּלְתָא S<sup>e</sup>gôltâ', *postpositive*, marks the fourth or fifth subordinate division, counting backwards from 'Atnâh (e.g. Gn 1<sup>7,28</sup>).

3 b. (◌) שַׁלְשֵׁלֶת Šalšèlet (i.e. *chain*), as disjunctive, or Great Šalšèleth, distinguished by the following stroke from the conjunctive in the poetic accentuation, is used for S<sup>e</sup>gôltâ (seven times altogether) when this would stand at the head of the sentence; cf. Gn 19<sup>16</sup>, &c.

4 a. (◌) זָקֵף גָּדוֹל Zâqēp gādôl, and

4 b. (◌) זָקֵף קָטוֹן Zâqēp qāṭôn. The names refer to their musical character, As a disjunctive, Little Zâqēph is by nature stronger than Great Zâqēph; but if they stand together, the one which comes first is always the stronger.

5. (◌) טִפְחָא Tiphā' or טַרְחָא Tarhā', a subordinate disjunctive before Sillûq and 'Athnâh, but very often

the principal disjunctive of the whole verse instead of 'Atnâh; always so when the verse consists of only two or three words (e.g. Is 2:13), but also in longer verses (Gn 3:21).

6. (◌) רֵבִיעַ Rebia'. At times it introduces a quotation in dialogue or indicates a pause before a more specific delineation of the item it is found over. (scm)

7. (◌) זַרְקָא Zarqā', *postpositive*.

8a. (◌) פַּשְׁטָא Paštā', *postpositive*; (if the word in question has the tone on the penultima, Paštā is placed over it also, e.g. תְּהוּ).

8b. (◌) יְתִיב Yēṭîb, *prepositive*, and thus different from Mehuppāk. Yēṭîb is used in place of Paštā when the latter would stand on a monosyllable or on a fore-toned word, not preceded by a conjunctive accent.

9. (◌) תְּבִיר Tehîr. An intermediate accent, not as strong as a Rebia nor as weak as a Mēr<sup>e</sup>kā'.

10 a. (◌) גֵּרֶשׁ Gèrēš or טְרֶס Tères, and

10 b. (◌) גְּרָשִׁים G<sup>e</sup>rāšáyim or Double Gèrēš, used for Gèrēš, when the tone rests on the ultima, and 'Azlā does not precede.

11 a. (◌) פַּזֵּר Pâzēr, and

11 b. (◌) פַּזֵּר גָּדוֹל Pâzēr gādôl (Great Pâzēr) or קַרְנֵי קַרְנֵי Qarnê pāhrā (*cow-horns*), only used 16 times, for special emphasis.

12. (◌) תְּלִישָׁא גָּדוֹלָה T<sup>e</sup>lišā' g<sup>e</sup>dôlā or Great T<sup>e</sup>lišā', *prepositive*.

13. (|◌) לְגַרְמָה L<sup>g</sup>armēh, i.e. Mûnah (see below) with a following stroke.

B. CONJUNCTIVE ACCENTS (*Conjunctivi* or *Servi*).

14. (◌◌) מוֹנַח Mûnah.

15. (◌◌) מְהַפָּךְ Mehuppāk or מַהְפָּךְ Mahpāk.

16a. (◌◌) מִירְכָא or מְאִירְכָא Mēr<sup>e</sup>kā’, and

16b. (◌◌) כְּפֹלְהָ ‘מ Mēr<sup>e</sup>kā’ Khepûla or Double Mēr<sup>e</sup>kā’.

17. (◌◌) דַּרְגָּא Dargā’.

18. (◌◌) אֲזֵלָא ‘Azlā’, when associated with Gères (see above) also called Qadmā.

19. (◌◌) תְּלִישָׁא קְטַנָּה T<sup>e</sup>lišā’ q<sup>e</sup>ṭannā or LittleT<sup>e</sup>lišā, *postpositive*.

20. (◌◌) גַּלְגַּל Galgal or יְרָה Yèrah.

21. (◌◌) מְאִילָא M<sup>e</sup>’ayyēlā’ or מַאִילָא Mâyēlā’, a variety of Tiphā, serves to mark the secondary tone in words which have Sillûq or ‘Athnâh, or which are united by Maqqēp with a word so accentuated, e.g. גִּנְיָא־גִּנְיָא Gn 8:18.

In addition to the accents on the text the Massorettes and publishers of BHS provided spacing and paragraph markers within the text to note when new paragraphs started or new episodes or scenes began. It is useful to observe these while going through the text and combine that observation with what is being depicted by discourse analysis.

## Grammatical Labels

The application of discourse analysis to the Hebrew of the TaNaK has brought about a reconsideration of the nomenclature of grammatical constructions. Too often terminology more applicable to the language system of Latin, Greek and the derived or related languages has been attached to Hebrew and other Semitic languages. At times this application has been benign and other times it has been utterly misleading. McFall (20) argues that it “Clearly it would be a non-sequitur to argue that because tenses must be used to translate modern tenseless languages, that therefore these languages must have a tense system comparable to the language used to translate them. In other words, it is a fallacy to argue the verbal system of another language on the basis of translation equivalents.”

## Verbs

For the Hebrew verbal system the use of the Greek nomenclature has been more detrimental than useful and has led to the confusion of countless Hebrew students through the centuries. An extensive examination of the problem may be found in Leslie McFall’s *The Enigma of the Hebrew Verbal System*. It boils down to the idea that the Hebrew verb may be found in two forms traditionally labeled, the Perfect and the Imperfect. This terminology loaded the Hebrew verb system with grammatical thinking from the realm of the Greek and Latin languages. Of late more linguists have come to prefer to give the verbs a morphological description rather than a grammatical one. In this system instead of the term Perfect the term *qatal* is used. Instead of Imperfect *yiqtol* and instead of Imperfect with the waw consecutive you will find *wayyiqtol*. The newer system of *qatal*, *yiqtol*, and *wayyiqtol* does not load the verb forms with any pre-conceived grammatical weight borrowed from other, non-family group languages. According to discourse theory, the grammatical function of the (Hebrew) verb is determined by the discourse (or genre)

type in which the author employs the verb. Once that is determined then matters of translation may be addressed.

Waltke and O'Connor observe, "Most translators, we think it fair to say, fly by the seat of their pants in interpreting the Hebrew conjugations" (WO, 55). I would argue that the solution to this problem is not, "how do we translate the Hebrew perfect/qatal into English or what English verb form best translates what Hebrew verb form" but rather how do you grammatically depict narration (or whatever discourse type) in English. Translation from this perspective is not a word for word concept but a discourse to discourse concept—Hebrew discourse types with its constellations of verb forms and clause types and English (or whatever the target language) and its own constellations of verbs and clauses. At that point the function of the verb form in the discourse structure of the original language will aid in determining the verb form in the receptor language. The emphasis here is the function of the verb form in the discourse. Simply, how does Hebrew handle the verb forms in a particular genre like historical narrative, and then, in translation, how does English handle the same genre as to the verb forms employed for that language. An easy, though somewhat simplified, observation of this is the use of אָרָא in verses 5 and 10 of the first chapter of Genesis. There you find the wayyiqtol form first, followed by the qatal form. In English both forms are rightly translated with the past tense. This handbook will follow the newer nomenclature and note the usage of the various forms in the discourse type in which they are employed.

## **Nouns**

On the following see especially GKC §33. Though it has been pointed out that the Hebrew noun system has no specific forms for what we know as the different cases, nevertheless the words still retain the grammatical case functions. There are subjects, there are objects, there are possessives. Many languages designate these cases as nominative for the subject, accusative for the direct object, genitive for the possessive, etc. Unlike the problem with the Hebrew verb, the use of the case system in Hebrew is useful and is a good point of connection with the Greek and Latin systems. Because the words themselves do not carry the morphological marks of a case system, the noun's case function has to be derived from the syntax of the clause and its place in that clause. This will be observed throughout the delineation of the text.

## **Format of the Handbook**

Many times the narrative text of the Hebrew Bible divides itself into episodes, acts, and scenes. In several cases it has been argued that these segments transcend the published partitioning of the text into the traditional books, chapters, and verses. As Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* was referenced as an example to compare the pace of a text to the pace of a film. So too, as a film or play has different episodes and acts within those episodes a text may be observed to contain the same elements and arrangements. These are set up by various linguistic and literary means and it is exegetically useful to pay close attention to those markers in the text as it is examined and explained. Books contain episodes and episodes contain acts and acts contain scenes. Episodes are introduced, brought to a peak or climax and then concluded or transitioned to the next episode by means of paragraphs and clauses or sentences. These gross structures are important elements used by the author to make his point and to drive the book to its ultimate point or conclusion. This work will be an episode by episode, act by act, scene by scene evaluation of the text.

Each segment of the text will be introduced as to its continuity in the four areas of time, space, action, and participants. Below that will be a columnar presentation of the Hebrew text and a fairly literal English translation with the discourse functions for each clause identified. The English translation will be laid out like the Hebrew to give the sense of the progression and hierarchy of the discourse. Additionally, the English translation will mimic the Hebrew as much as possible to preserve the discourse elements, particularly the word order and the lack of a verb for the verbless nominal clauses. This has been done in many of the modern translation as may be readily seen by checking the word order of the clauses in Genesis 1.5 in the NASB.

For this work the episodes of the book of Kings concerns each king. The acts within those episodes will be different lengthy events within the textual presentation of the life or history of each king and subsequently those episodes will contain within themselves scenes depicting the various events of that particular act. For the book of Kings, some episodes for the kings are very lengthy while for others the episode itself may contain merely one act or scene or even a brief narrative by the author. So too, dispersed within the various episodes may be asides or interludes where the author departs from the historical narrative to give a comment or explanation.

I have found this last exercise to be very helpful to me and to my students. The exegete is working from a lesser known language to a better known language. If in the evaluation of the original language insight might be gained in seeing the discourse structures laid out graphically, then there should be a better tendency when translating into the target language to recognize those structures and note the syntactical hierarchy set up by the author.