1. The Oral and the Written

The thesis of this study is that a number of features in the prose style of Biblical Hebrew relate to the differences between oral and written language, namely (a) the use of subordinate clauses (hypotaxis), (b) the length of the noun string, (c) the number of explicit syntactic constituents in the clause, and (d) the frequency of reference by means of pronouns and deictic particles. Systematic analysis of these features shows that texts from the Persian era typically contain many subordinated clauses (hypotaxis), long noun strings and explicit syntactic constituents. The same tendencies are revealed by texts that may be ascribed to the Babylonian era (e.g., the prose narratives about Jeremiah) or the seventh century (e.g., the Deuteronomistic history of the Judean kings in 2 Kings 11–22), but to a lesser extent. In contrast, most texts belonging to the tales of the Patriarchs, the rise of the monarchy (Samuel, Saul and David), the Omride dynasty and the northern prophets (Elijah and Elisha), and part of the Exodus narrative, consist of short clauses, containing only a small number of explicit syntactic constituents. In these texts hypotaxis and long noun strings are relatively rare, whereas reference by pronoun and deictic particles is frequent. Hence the distinction between these strata pertains to some of the most basic aspects of language usage. It is our thesis that these differences are rooted in syntactic preferences, which reflect different social and historical conditions. In view of sociolinguistic research, it seems likely that the more complicated style emerged in the scribal chancellery. As we shall try to show in the discussion of our findings, the more a text is rooted in the scribal context, the more complicated its language, in terms of hypotaxis, length of the noun string, and the number of explicit sentence constituents. In contrast, the closer a text is to spoken language and oral literature, the simpler it is, in terms of syntactic structure, reference, and clause length.\(^1\) Narratives composed in such a style seem, then, to reflect a substratum of oral literature. Analysis of these issues can contribute much to our understanding of the development of the ancient Hebrew prose style.

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Since Gunkel the distinction between oral and written literature is one of the
commonplaces of biblical studies. Its basis, however, has always been of a general
nature. Form criticism has always been preoccupied with the original folktale, often
conceived of as Kinder- und Hausmärchen, rather than with authentic oral literature.
Hence its perception of the oral substratum of biblical narrative was mainly based
on the identification of popular motifs and some basic forms of narrative design
(Axel Olrik’s laws). However, since these forms and themes are found in large seg-
ments of world literature, they can hardly provide criteria for the identification of a
presumed oral substratum. In modern literary research the study of oral literature
has been much advanced by the investigations of oral epic poetry in Eastern Europe,
and in particular in Serbia, Bosnia and Albania, and by the discoveries of anthropo-
logical research, in particular in Africa. In our field the results of these studies have
mainly been used to construct an adequate model for the cultural background of bib-
lical literature, and to describe some of its characteristic forms.

The present study, by contrast, seeks to establish linguistic criteria by which to
distinguish between strata that grew entirely in the scribal chancellery, and strata that
are rich in features originating in oral literature. One feature indicating oral sources
is the use of epic formulae, as found in Ugaritic poetry. Single features, however,
are too weak to carry this burden. A wider framework is called for. The present study
makes use of the characterization of the stylistic differences between oral and scribal
texts, as conceived in modern linguistics, in order to describe these strata in biblical

Cliffs, 1965), 131–41. The employment of these features as a criterion for oral composition has been crit-
icized by P. G. Kirkpatrick, The Old Testament and Folklore Study (Sheffield, 1988), 55–64. However,
Kirkpatrick does not pay sufficient attention to the particular character of oral language.

3. This principal weakness has been explicitly acknowledged by J. van Seters, Abraham in History and
Tradition (New Haven, 1976), 158–60, but his endeavor to base the recognition on Olrik’s ‘Laws’ (pp. 160–
61) is no improvement. It has to be taken into account that such pieces of written literature as, e.g., Attic
tragedy and Herodotean history are also based on oral literature.

4. These studies are linked to the names of Wilhelm Radloff, Matija Murko, Milman Parry, and Albert
B. Lord. A history of scholarship in this field is offered by J. M. Foley, Oral-Formulaic Theory and Re-

5. See in particular, R. Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Oxford, 1970); Ilhan Basgöz, “The Tale-
Singer and his Audience,” in D. Ben Amos and K. R. Goldstein, eds., Folklore: Performance and Com-
munication (The Hague-Paris, 1975), 142–203; D. Ben Amos, Sweet Words: Storytelling Events in Benin


7. Some important insights into the formal nature of biblical narrative in light of the advances in the
study of oral literature have been provided by H. Jason, “The Story of David and Goliath: A Folk Epic?,”
Bib. 60 (1979), 36–70; B. O. Long, “Recent Field Studies in Oral Literature and their Bearing on the Old
R. C. Culley, ed., Oral Tradition and Old Testament Studies (= Semeia 5; Missoula, 1976); idem, Themes
and Variations: A Study of Action in Biblical Narrative (Atlanta, 1992); see also idem, ed., Classical Hebrew
Narrative (= Semeia 3; Missoula, 1975); idem, ed., Perspectives on Old Testament Narrative (= Semeia
15; Chico, 1979).

Poswick et al., eds., Actes du Second Colloque International «Bible et Informatique: Méthodes, Outils,

Speaking and Writing,” in D. R. Olson et al., eds., Literacy, Language and Learning: The Nature
narrative. The restriction to narrative is essential, since the stylistic character of poetry is conditioned by poetic prosody, and therefore not apt to change because of scribal background. At the present stage this restriction must also apply to the near-poetic “elevated” language of homiletic discourse, prophecy, and apocalyptic.\textsuperscript{10}

The method of this study is based on a combination of syntactic analysis and statistical tools.\textsuperscript{11} Statistical methods have been applied sparingly in biblical research.\textsuperscript{12} Bee has used the frequency of nouns relative to verbs in order to distinguish between oral and written sources, e.g., in Deuteronomy,\textsuperscript{13} but since his study is based on one criterion only, and proceeds to diachronic analysis without creating any general stylistic framework, it is not of much use. Many parameters appear in Radday’s attempt to analyze the sources of Genesis, but the author does not discuss the linguistic basis of these parameters nor their meaning in context.\textsuperscript{14} Linguistic analysis, then, must precede statistical analysis, in order to ascertain what is being studied, and which phenomena are relevant.\textsuperscript{15} Still, since any in-depth analysis is necessarily restricted to a limited number of pericopes, only statistical study can provide the necessary overview of the entire corpus. Moreover, basic statistical data obtained in pilot studies may indicate where to look for relevant phenomena.

Thus we will open with some primary statistical data in order to construct a general framework. The statistical data will be evaluated with the help of a basic syntactic analysis of a number of pericopes, which is intended to provide the parameters for an in-depth study of a larger number of samples. The latter analysis will allow us to proceed to some broad generalizations concerning the socio-linguistic conditions


10. On the preservation of ancient stylistic and prosodic patterns in late poetic texts, see F. H. Polak, “On Prose and Poetry in the Book of Job,” \textit{JANES} 24 (1996), 61–97, esp. 84–97. In view of these data we are not surprised by the remark of F. H. Cryer that the relative frequency of nouns and verbs in the apocalyptic vision of Daniel 8 is similar to that found in the David narratives: “The Problem of Dating Biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew of Daniel,” in K. Jeppesen et al., eds., \textit{In the Last Days: On Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic and its Period} (Aarhus, 1994), 185–98, esp. 192–98. Given the literary genre, the use of the poetic rhythm is only to be expected.

11. On the style of the Predeuteronomic sources in the Pentateuch see H. Holzinger, \textit{Einleitung in den Pentateuch} (Freiburg i.B.-Leipzig, 1893), 93–108, emphasizing the lexicon of J (terminology, 93–94; general lexicon, 94–106, and such phenomena as rhythm, 108–9, and the use of particles, 109–10). For a discussion of the characteristics of E, see 181–91. These discussions are too fragmentary to be satisfactory. Moreover, they fail to distinguish between the particular idiom of an individual author (the idiolect), and the register of a social group (the sociolect); for this distinction see, e.g., M. A. K. Halliday, “The Users and Uses of Language,” in M. A. K. Halliday, A. McIntosh, and P. D. Strevens, \textit{The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching} (London, 1964), 75–110. The present study deals with the distinction among various sociolects in biblical narrative.


which gave rise to the stylistic differences between classical Hebrew narrative prose, prose from the end of the Judean kingdom and the exilic period, and prose from the Persian era.

With regard to the historical development of the Hebrew language, an excellent point of departure is provided by the insights into the nature of Hebrew from the Persian era (Late Biblical Hebrew) by Hurvitz’ lexical analysis of this language stratum,16 and by the studies of Kropat, Kutscher, and Polzin of its morphosyntactic characteristics.17 A computer aided statistical study of Chronicles, Kings, and Samuel by Verheij shows that the language of Chronicles is characterized by the low frequency of wayyiqtol forms, as against a rising use of qatal forms as the narrative preterite.18 Hence a systemic difference exists between Late Biblical Hebrew (in short LBH) and the pre-exilic classical language (CBH).19 LBH forms a stratum sui generis, conditioned by the domination by the Babylonian and Persian administration and the lack of a royal chancellery in which a uniform lexical, morphological, syntactic and orthographic standard could be maintained.20 Any theory of the history of Biblical literature that ascribes the extensive corpus composed in the classical language to the Babylonian and Persian eras, assumes not only that it would be possible for a postexilic/late exilic author to imitate the classical language

16. The methodological parameters of these distinctions have been established by A. Hurvitz, The Transition Period in Biblical Hebrew: A Study of Postexilic Hebrew and its Implications for the Dating of Psalms (Jerusalem, 1972 [in Hebrew]). Hurvitz recognizes a given lexical element “L” as belonging to the Persian era if it fulfills the two following requirements (a) “L” occurs exclusively (or almost exclusively) in texts originating undoubtedly in the Persian era or in Mishnaic/Qumran Hebrew, (b) “L” has an equivalent counterpart in most parts of the Bible. Thus, the fact that a certain vocable is rare in Biblical Hebrew and occurs in rabbinic literature, in itself does not establish its attribution to the postexilic language. The word תרגם, “letter,” is defined as typically late, because it is opposed to the standard word, סנס / סנס, see now: A. Hurvitz, “The Historical Quest for ‘Ancient Israel’ and the Linguistic Evidence of the Hebrew Bible: Some Methodological Observations,” VT 47 (1997), 301–15, esp. 311–14; idem, “Continuity and Change in Biblical Hebrew—The Case of ‘Semantic Change’ in Postexilic Writings,” in T. Muraoka, ed., Studies in Ancient Hebrew Semantics, Abr-Nahrain Supp. 4 (Leuven, 1995), 1–10; as well as E. Y. Kutscher, “Aramaic Calque in Hebrew (1964),” in E. Y. Kutscher, Hebrew and Aramaic Studies (ed. Z. Ben-Hayyim et al.; Jerusalem, 1977), 374–406 (Hebrew Section); M. F. Rooker, Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel, JSOT Supp. 90 (Sheffield, 1990).


18. A. J. C. Verheij, Verbs and Numbers: a Study of the Frequencies of the Hebrew Verbal Tense Forms in the Books of Samuel, Kings and Numbers (Assen, 1990), 37–38, 92–117, based on studies by Kropat. Verheij bases his conclusions mainly on the synoptic texts (1 Chronicles // 1–2 Samuel; 2 Chronicles // 1–2 Kings), but also makes mention of non-parallel texts. He regards the latter category as more decisive, for here the author was less exposed to the influence of his synoptic sources.

19. The term “Classical Biblical Hebrew” will be used as a general designation of pre-exilic Hebrew. The term “Standard Biblical Hebrew,” which is often used at the present seems less appropriate since this term should also include “Basic Biblical Hebrew,” which continued to exist in the Persian era, and even influenced the text of 1QIsa, as shown by Kutscher, Language of the Isaiah Scroll, 29–44.

20. See Hurvitz, “Historical Quest.”
but also that successful imitation was the rule and that failure, such as in the tales of Job, Jonah, and Esther, was the exception.

2. The Nominal and the Verbal Style: A First Characterization

Books composed in LBH also differ from other literary strata of biblical narrative from a stylistic point of view. Verheij points to some specific differences between the style of Chronicles and Samuel, with the Book of Kings located midway between these poles:

(a) In Chronicles the frequency of nouns (including adjectives, common and proper nouns, numerals, and substantivized participles, e.g., שׁומט) vis-à-vis verbs (the Noun-Verb ratio, NV ratio) is higher than it is in Kings and far higher than it is in Samuel.

(b) The frequency of the nominal forms of the verb (participle and infinitive construct) vis-à-vis the finite verb (perfect, imperfect, imperative, and infinitive absolute when used as finite verb, e.g., Esth. 2:3; 3:13; 8:8; Neh. 8:8; 9:8) is also higher in Chronicles than it is in Kings and Samuel (the Nominal-Finite ratio, NF ratio).

Thus a characteristic clause of Chronicles is rich in nouns and nominal forms of the verb, and contains relatively few finite verbs, while a typical clause in the books of Samuel and Kings contains a relatively large number of verbs and

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22. Verheij, Verbs and Numbers, 32–37, 118–20. Verheij, however, does not distinguish between the late historians of Kings and such ancient units as the Elijah-Elisha cycles (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 10) or the story of Solomon’s ascent to the throne (1 Kings 1–2). Our investigations indicate a decisive difference between these two classes, which, however, only strengthens Verheij’s case. Thus we are able to confirm the basic feeling of Driver (Introduction, 505), who found “slight signs” of LBH in such compositions as “Jer., the latter part of Kings, Ezekiel, II Isaiah, Haggai . . . though not all in the same respects or in the same degree.”

23. Verheij, Verbs and Numbers, 32–35. The relatively high incidence of participles is hardly related to the increased use of puʿal and hofʿal participles (maqṭal and muqṭal), a rare form in Chronicles (26 cases in the count by Accordance 3.0; Gramcord Institute, Vancouver, 1997). M. S. Smith suggests that the active participle was already turning into a narrative tense; The Origins and the Development of the Waw-Consecutive: Northwest Semitic Evidence from Ugarit to Qumran (Atlanta, 1991), 23, 28–29; so also Eshkult, Verbal Aspect and Narrative Technique, 113–14. This analysis certainly holds true for the Nehemiah Memoirs, e.g., Neh. 2:4, 12, 16, 17, 19; 3:34–35; 4:10, 11, 12, 15, 17; 5:2–5, 7, 9–12; 6:2, 6, 8–10, 14, 17; 13:16, 17, 18, 21, 24; see also Esth. 3:2, 3, 5, 6:5; according to D. Marcus, Nehemiah’s Memoirs constitute a Hebrew translation of an Aramaic source text; “Is the Book of Nehemiah a Translation from Aramaic?” in Meir Lubetski et al., eds., Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World. A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon (Sheffield, 1998), 103–10. In the Aramaic Daniel tales the participle functions as a narrative past tense, similarly to the praesens historicum of Greek and Latin “vivid narration.” In contrast, in Chronicles the participle often occurs in nominalized subordinate clauses, e.g., 1 Chr. 4:38, 40; 6:18; 26:16–28, while it is most frequently used for occupational terms as such.

24. In the statistical survey לָאָמָר does not count as an infinitive, when it serves as an introduction to direct speech. The words יָרְפָע and יָרְפָת count as adverbs, לָקֶר צֹאָה as a preposition. In LBH as in Aramaic the periphrastic form of the verb (יֶהֱנֶה with participle, e.g., יָרְפָע צֹאָה, Neh. 1:4) is counted as a single form, indicating a special Aktionsart.

fewer nouns. In the following pages we will first of all illustrate these differences, and show that they are characteristic of entire strata in biblical narrative. The latter part of the argument will relate to statistical data.

The general profile of the chronistic style stands out in the detailed opening of the account of Josiah’s reform (2 Chr. 34:8):

Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joab the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the Lord his God.

This sentence contains one verbal predicate in the main clause (shall), three subordinate clauses with an infinitive as predicate (to purify, to build, to gather), and a large number of nouns, all of them organized in long strings (to purify, to gather, to build).

The corresponding sentence in Kings is much less complicated, since it contains shorter noun strings and less subordinate clauses (2 Kgs. 22:3):

In happened in the eighteenth year of king Josiah that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the Lord, saying...

We count two predicates (shall and will, the latter serving to introduce the temporal adverb, which in Chronicles is included in the main clause), one infinitive for purify, hardly a subordinate clause in the same sense as found in the three clauses in Chronicles), and a number of noun strings that are not as long as those found in the excerpt from Chronicles.

These phenomena occur too often to be explained as a special stylistic trope. They are rooted in the Chronicler’s style in general. In many cases this author brings long noun strings in his own additions to the text as represented by the book of Samuel, e.g.,

1 Chr. 15:27

And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bore the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers; and David had upon him an ephod of linen.

2 Sam. 6:14

And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.

1 Chr. 16:4–6

And David danced before the Lord, saying:

wright the song of the Lord, saying:

And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bore the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers; and David had upon him an ephod of linen.
1 Chr. 16:4–6: And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to celebrate and to thank and praise the Lord, the God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obad-edom, and Jeiel, with psalteries and with harps; and Asaph with cymbals, sounding aloud; and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually, before the ark of the covenant of God.  

A third point of interest is that in Chronicles we find a number of subordinate infinitives where the source text has a finite verb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 Samuel 5</th>
<th>1 Chronicles 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ויבנה בית דוד</td>
<td>ובנהםلغבית בַּיָּתָו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Samuel 24</td>
<td>1 Chronicles 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וישמע את דוד בַּהֲמָה יָאָרָה</td>
<td>וישמע את דוד בַּהֲמָה יָאָרָה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יראמר ולעלה המֶס הָלֶה</td>
<td>יראמר ולעלם המֶס הָלֶה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>והגו אנכי תשאתי</td>
<td>והגו אנכי תשאתי</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The stylistic features found in these examples show that the Chronistic style is not only rich in nouns. One notes a strong preference for (a) long noun strings, and at times extremely long strings; (b) complex sentences in which a single predicate governs a high number of arguments; (c) subordinated clauses.

3. The Extent of the Contrasts: Samples and Statistical Survey

At this juncture additional data seem called for in order to ascertain that we are not dealing with free variation that is simply a matter of chance, or with literary design according to context or ad hoc preferences. A more thorough description of these stylistic profiles requires some typical samples of contrastive texts in a similar literary genre, or involving similar motifs. Thus we will first of all analyze a number of samples exemplifying (1) the battle account, (2) action narrative in a more general sense, and (3) dialogues within narrative. Each postexilic sample, including other books as well, e.g., the Ezra account and the Esther novella, will be compared with a text from the David narrative or similar tales. Samples from the Book of Kings will be analyzed in paragraph (b), while paragraph (c) will present a general statistical survey.

a. Sample passages

For each example we will establish the following statistical data: (a) the ratio of nouns (including common and proper nouns, as well as adjectives and numerals) relative to the number of verbal forms, in short the Noun-Verb ratio (NV); (b) the ratio

26. The fact that this pericope contains a list, does not affect its syntactical character as a clause with a long noun string as direct object.

27. This is the method recommended by N. E. Enkvist, *Linguistic Stylistics* (The Hague-Paris, 1973), 20–25, 52–66. For instance, the characteristic features of the Chronicler’s language stand out in particular in the homiletic speeches, which should not be compared with simple narrative, but rather with the homilies of Deuteronomy 4–11; 30–31.
of nominal verbal forms (participle and infinitive construct) vis-à-vis the finite forms (perfect, imperfect, imperative, as well as the infinitive absolute), in short the Nominal-Finite ratio (NF). These are the data to be used for the general statistical survey. In the course of the discussion the samples will be represented by a few typical clauses, while the figures are given for the complete pericope.

(1) Battle Account

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Fin.</th>
<th>Nom.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Chr. 20:23–30 (23–24, 27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total vv. 23–30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per 100</td>
<td>72.16</td>
<td>27.84</td>
<td>62.96</td>
<td>37.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Action Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Fin.</th>
<th>Nom.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esth. 3:12–15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total vv. 12–15</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per 100</td>
<td>75.71</td>
<td>24.29</td>
<td>47.06</td>
<td>52.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus, the differences between the nominal style of postexilic narrative and the verbal style of the David tales tend to be consistent in all samples, whether found in Chronicles or in other books from the Persian era, whether representing battle accounts, action narrative, or dialogue. In all kinds of postexilic narrative the Noun-Verb ratio ranges between .70-.75, and the Nominal-Finite ratio between .20 and .50. In the David tales, and similar narratives, the Noun-Verb ratio ranges between .54 and .60, while the Nominal-Finite ratio hardly exceeds .15.

b. The Book of Kings

The stylistic profile of the Book of Kings (from 1 Kings 3 onwards) is partly similar to that of postexilic narrative, as shown in many narrative sections, e.g., the tales concerning Solomon and Josiah:
In both pericopes the Noun-Verb rate is slightly higher than .690. However, in the tale of the Queen of Sheba the number of nominal forms of the verb is far smaller, proportionally, than it is in the Josiah narrative. These and similar findings situate the Book of Kings midway between the nominal style of the Persian period and the verbal style of the David cycle and its congeners. The following table presents a statistical overview, including those of the passages that will be analyzed in the following pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battle Account</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>NV Ratio</th>
<th>Finite</th>
<th>Nominal</th>
<th>NF Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Sam. 5:17–25</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian Era</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2 Chr. 20:23–30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Narrative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judg. 14:9–20</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sam. 14:23–24, 28–33</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian Era</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Chr. 32:1–6, 9, 16–23</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esth. 3:12–15</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.757</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 30:1–3, 6, 14–18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sam. 13:3–7, 10–14</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>.568</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian Era</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esth. 7:2–10</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra 10:7–15</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.758</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2 Kings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kgs. 10:1–7</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.691</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.120</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Kgs. 22:3–12</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data indicate that the threefold contrast between Chronicles, Kings, and Samuel pertains to broad strata of biblical literature. Biblical narrative can be di-
vided into three main categories: (1) prose from the Persian era, largely characterized by the complex, nominal style; (2) a corpus that is characterized by a brisk, rhythmic verbal style, by and large the opposite of the style of the first category; and (3) a transitional category, related to the redaction of Kings, and characterized by a mixture of nominal and verbal tendencies.

These findings suggest historical development, since the Book of Kings, at least in large sections of it, originates in the last quarter of the seventh century and the exilic period, and thus is anterior to postexilic narrative. Such narratives as the David tales are related to the ancient sources used by the late redaction of biblical historiography (e.g., the corpora used by the Deuteronomistic redaction). It is the language of this stratum which is mostly contrasted with Late Biblical Hebrew, and is thus best viewed as the classical component of biblical narrative. The three categories which were noted above, seem, thus, to indicate a gradual development from classical biblical narrative to postexilic prose.

c. A statistical survey

Further discussion, to deepen these findings, is dependent first of all on statistical analysis, in order to establish the approximate extent of the different sections. Our analysis is based on the following samples:

(2) Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period: Joshua 22–24; 1 Kings 9; 11; 15; 2 Kings 11–16; 20–25; Jeremiah 26–28; 32; 36:1–43:7;
(3) Classical narrative: Abraham tales (Genesis 12–13; 15–16; 18–22; 24); Jacob tales (Genesis 27–33); Exodus cycle (Exod. 2:1–6:1; 7:14–11:10; 14; 15:22–27; 17–19; 24; 32–33); Samson cycle (Judges 13–16); David-Saul narrative (1 Samuel 16–30); David's court narrative (2 Samuel 7; 11–15; 17–19); Elijah tales (1 Kings 17–22); Elisha tales (2 Kings 2–10).
(4) Some data suggest an additional subclass between the classical and the transitional strata, including at least Genesis 2–4; the Joseph narrative (Genesis 40–45); the heroic tales of the Saviors (Judges 4; 9; 3; 6–8; 11–12); the account of the Danite expedition (Judges 17–18); and parts of Joshua 2–11. In this category the style is more intricate than in the main category of classical narrative, but less so than in the transitional period.

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28. This generalization is true for all divergent theories on the composition and provenance of 1–2 Kings.
29. That is to say, according to the “traditional” analysis as proposed by Wellhausen, Driver, and Noth. The various revisionist models, seeking to relegate extensive parts of this corpus to the Babylonian and the Persian era, cannot hold out against the data provided by diachronic linguistic analysis, which largely confirm the outline of the Driver-Wellhausen model.
Thus we obtain the following figures:\textsuperscript{31}

1. The Persian Era

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>NV ratio</th>
<th>Finite</th>
<th>Nominal</th>
<th>NF ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Chronicles 29–36</td>
<td>2074</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehemiah 8–10</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>.731</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan. 1:1–2:3</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.749</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total/Mean</td>
<td>5629</td>
<td>2062</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>.326</td>
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2. The Late Pre-exilic/Exilic Period

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Nominal</th>
<th>NF ratio</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2 Kings 22–25</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>.736</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>.224</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Kings 11–16</td>
<td>1464</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>.736</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings 9; 11; 15</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>.733</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah Vita</td>
<td>2518</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua 22–24</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>.709</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total/Mean</td>
<td>6707</td>
<td>2457</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>.207</td>
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3. The Classical Stratum

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Finite</th>
<th>Nominal</th>
<th>NF ratio</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Samson</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisha</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1371</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>1127</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>.148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elijah</td>
<td>1405</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>1727</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David-Saul</td>
<td>3139</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>.630</td>
<td>1453</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David court</td>
<td>2382</td>
<td>1386</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>2781</td>
<td>1613</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>1453</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total/Mean</td>
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<td>9631</td>
<td>.612</td>
<td>7974</td>
<td>1521</td>
<td>.154</td>
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</table>

4. Transitional Subclass: Intricate Classical Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>NV ratio</th>
<th>Finite</th>
<th>Nominal</th>
<th>NF ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>1341</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>.640</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Tale (Judges 17–18)</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 2–4</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges 4; 9</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges 3; 6–8; 11–12</td>
<td>1509</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua 2–11</td>
<td>2243</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>.670</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total/Mean</td>
<td>6532</td>
<td>3362</td>
<td>.656</td>
<td>2698</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>.175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Analysis

Statistical analysis of these sections confirms the general division of narrative prose. Both for postexilic and for classical narrative the Noun-Verb ratio (NV) and

\textsuperscript{31} The row of “Total/Mean” states the total number of cases in the given table, and the mean of the various rates.
the Nominal-Finite ratio (NF) are to a large extent homogeneous. In postexilic prose
the NV ratio typically ranges between .71 and .76, with an interval of approximately
0.05 (5%), whereas the NF ratio in general ranges from .30 to .40. Two narratives in
which the NV ratio is far higher (Nehemiah’s Memoirs and the Job tale), are still
characterized by a high NF ratio, though smaller than in the other books from this
period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>NV Ratio</th>
<th>Finite</th>
<th>Nominal</th>
<th>NF Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td>1285</td>
<td>738</td>
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<td>512</td>
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<td>.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the classical stratum (group 3) the NV ratio ranges between .581 and .633, with
an interval of approximately 0.05 (5%). The NF ratio is less stable, as it ranges be-
tween .11 and .19, with an interval of approximately 10%, like the Persian era.

These two groups are separated from one another by an interval of approximately
8% in the NV ratio, and 15% in the NF ratio. This interval is covered by the Late
Pre-exilic/Exilic class (Group 2), which forms the transition between the two main
groups. The character of this transition is shown by the NV ratio of this group, which
is rather close to that of postexilic prose, ranging as it does between .69 and .73, an
area covered for the most part by the group representing the Persian era (Group 1).
The NF ratio, on the other hand, seems closer to that of the Classical stratum, as it
ranges from .172 to .224. It is a notable fact that the Jeremiah Vita (Jeremiah 26–28;
32; 36:1–43:7), in which the NF ratio exceeds this limit (.251), has a lower NV ratio
(.690). Such shifting similarities are consistent with the transitional character of this
class.

The transition from the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic to the Classical stratum is marked
by another group of narratives, in which the classical style appears in a slightly
more intricate form (Group 4). In this group the NV ratio is slightly higher than in
the classical stratum, as it ranges from .64 to .67, thus covering the interval between
Group 3 (.58–.63) and Group 2 (.69–.73). The NF ratio is partly similar to that of
Group 3 (.119, in Judges 4; 9, like the Jacob narratives), and partly higher (.204 in
Joshua 2–11; .234 in the tale of the Conquest of Dan, Judges 17–18). The Joseph
tale is closer to some of the tales in this group than to the classical stratum, even
though its statistical profile is close to that of the David tales.

4. The Nominal versus the Verbal: Some Characteristic Parameters

The statistical data, however important, cannot present a full analysis of the
narratives at hand, and do not indicate the conditions that occasioned the large-scale
shifts in the style of biblical narrative. Obviously, the only way to overcome these
limitations is by a systematic syntactic analysis. But what are the parameters for
such an analysis? In order to answer this question we will now briefly examine the
character of the narratives that have been sampled previously. Postexilic narrative
stands out because of a number of obvious tendencies.

(a) As we saw above, in the Persian era the narrator tends to use long noun
strings, e.g., נאכלה בנות צור (2 Chr. 20:27), Ezra exhorts the Judeans: והברלנו ממתי הארי ממע ת Hyde and Eyre (Ezra 10:11). Many
phrases consist of three or four elements, e.g., (Ezra 10:8), (v. 11). In the Esther tale we note such sequences as: (Esth. 3:12); (7:9) Haman is rhetorically characterized as (v. 11), and the reference to the enemy encampment, (v. 24). In 2 Samuel 14 one notes, e.g., (2 Sam. 14:30). In the Samson tale most noun phrases are limited in the same way, but one notes two extended strings in Samson's address: (Judg. 14:12, 13). The structure of these strings seems related to the rhetorical qualities of the heroic challenge, viz., Samson's attempt at verbal grandiosity. In the samples from the David tales the only instance is (2 Sam. 13:4, in the exposition).

Thus one of the main components of the nominal style is the length of the noun string. In the ensuing stylistic analysis we note all cases of noun strings comprising more than one element. All cases of expansion of the nominal expression into a construct state, an apposition structure, an attribute structure, and a syndetic or asyndetic noun string will be counted as expanded strings.

(b) Prose from the Persian era tends to express the various arguments of the predicate explicitly. Thus one verbal predicate may govern a long series of nominals. The following clauses taken from scenes from the Esther tale include three explicit arguments: (Esth. 3:13), (v. 17), (Esth. 7:8). In the excerpts from the Ezra account we note the following clauses: (Ezra 10:9); (v. 9b). Four arguments are found in the following clauses: (Esth. 7:2), (v. 7).

In such tales as the David narrative, sequences of this kind are rare, but do exist, e.g., the royal proclamation (2 Sam. 5:20). And similarly: (14:28); (v. 30), (v. 31), (v. 33). In the Jacob tale one notes (Gen. 30:16). These constituents, however, consist mostly of one to two words, whereas those found in postexilic narrative are for the most part composed of expanded noun strings.

32. See also Eshkult, Verbal Aspect and Narrative Technique, 117–18.
In such tales as the David narrative reference by pronoun is frequent, in particular when the clause contains more than one argument, e.g., לָכֵן תְּנֵךְ (Gen. 30:15). Also, additional verbal predicates are used to split up the clause, e.g. (Gen. 30:14):

וַיֵּלֶךְ רֹאֵב בְּמִית קֶדֶם הָעָם / וּמֵעָנָה הָדוֹרָא בַּשָּׁה

And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest / and found mandrakes in the field (King James Version)

The first clause presents the agent (Reuben) and the temporal modifier (in the days of wheat harvest), and the second one the object found (the mandrakes) and the locative modifier (in the field). An unified sequence, using one verbal predicate, is actually found in one of the modern translations: “Once, at the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben came upon some mandrakes in the field.”34 We also find: יִרָקֵת וָאֲבָר (2 Sam. 14:23); וַתִּכְבָּא אֶת הָמוּר חַזָּרִים (2 Sam. 13:5); לְיֵלָךְ לֹא אָבְדָי וַעֲלָם (v. 10); אֵלְהַבּות אַשְׁרֵי חָשָׁה יַהֲעַת אֲמַנֶּה הָדוֹרָה (Judg. 14:9); יַרְוַר אֱשָפָקְלָן וַיָּשָׁמֵשׁ יָאָשׁ (v. 19a); וְרָקַחְתֵּת לָמֵי אֲשָׁמֵס (2 Sam. 5:18).

By a similar method the narrator may use the verbal form יָהֳדוּךְ in order to mark the prominent modifier more distinctly, e.g., יַרְוַר אֱשָפָקְלָן / וַיֶּאֶשֶּׁת שְׁמַשְׁתּ (Judg. 14:15),35 as against the use of the temporal adverb as additional argument within the clause, e.g., v. 18.

(c) Postexilic prose is also characterized by the low frequency of verbal predicates that are not accompanied by nominal arguments such as the subject or the direct object. In the account of the cult purification we find one example only: וַיַּחְפֵּלָם הָמַסְכַּת שֶבֶר הָדִיר (2 Chr. 34:4), contrasting with the characteristic sequence of v. 7, with the infinitive construct: וְאָשָׁר יַחְפֵּלָם הָמַסְכַּת הָדִיר. A few examples are found in the scene in the Esther Scroll, such as אָלָל לְעָבַדְתִּים מַכְּנֵר הָדִיר (Esth. 7:4); הָלָהֵל (v. 9). In the Ezra account we meet the phrase וַיָּמְר אֲלֵיהָמ (Ezra 10:10). In contrast, a characteristic sequence of postexilic prose is the string of

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33. As shown by F. J. Golbaum, “Two Hebrew Quasi-Adverbs: לָכֵן and אָכַּנְא,” JNES 23 (1964), 132–35; לָכֵן must count as an emphatic particle, rather than as a causal adverb. Thus it is not a syntactic constituent in the formal sense of the word. The same treatment is applied to יִתְנַח, indicating a transition in the argument.

34. The reduced rendering is offered according to the New JPS. The temporal adverb “once” apparently serves as the functional equivalent for the Hebrew verb. Actually, this rendering would be adequate for the following sentence structure: יִרְחֵי בֵּית בָּטֵשׁ רֹמְאִךְ וּרְאוֹאָבְאָבְאָבְאָבְבָּדָה, a structure to be discussed below.

construct infinitives, e.g., dbalw gwrhl dymçhl (Esth. 7:4); lk ta dbalw grhl dymçhl (v. 13).

On the other hand, clauses consisting of a verbal predicate only, or of a verbal predicate and a pronominal phrase, are characteristic of such narratives as the David tales, e.g., yyn[t la yja la wl rmatw (2 Sam. 13:12), ˚mm yn[nmy al (v. 13); hnm qzjyw hta bkçyw hnyw (v. 14); lkw ˚wlh ˚lyw, lwlkayw µhl ˆtyw (Judg. 14:9); whtqyxh (v. 17). In dialogue one notes such clauses as µhyrja la bsh, hl[t al (2 Sam. 5:23); awbt yla (Gen. 30:16); htdgh al ylw, dyga ˚lw, yntbha alw yntanç qr (Judg. 14:16). Hence, special note should be taken of clauses with the predicate as single constituent, and clauses in which the arguments are expressed by prepositional or adverbial phrases.

(d) The prose of the Persian era is also characterized by a clear predilection for subordination of clauses (embedding, hypotaxis). One notes the frequent use of complicated relative clauses, e.g. (Esth. 7:9):

Behold also, the gallows ˜fty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, stands in the house of Haman (King James Version).

The awkwardness of the doubly nested relative clause is eased by the alternative rendering: “What is more, a stake is standing at Haman’s house . . . which Haman made for Mordecai—the man whose words saved the king” (NJPS). A relative clause may also occur as casus pendens, e.g., tx[k µymyh tçlçl awby al rça lkw wçwkr lk µrjy µynqzhw µyrçh (Ezra 10:8).

The formulation of the popular response to Ezra’s demands includes a double relative clause (רכל אשאר אל עבר שלשה המים הגכים), and an infinitive clause (Ezra 10:14):

An additional way of embedding clauses is by nominalization, in particular by means of participles and infinitive clauses. For instance, the idea that the surrounding nations heard of Jehoshaphat’s victory is expressed in a temporal clause with an infinitive construct, הבש镀⁸⁶. Hence this clause fulfills a task in the sentence (indicating time), but also governs its own object, namely the clause יכ נחלו היהת טע אריבי ישריאל (2 Chr. 20:29):

The terror of God seized all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that the LORD had fought the enemies of Israel (NJPS).

This construction is also used to indicate the content of an announcement or order by way of indirect speech, e.g., יערבי קול ייחודה וירושלם לכל יהודה והגליל (Esth. 7:4); חכו דבדותי לatronול ואובד (Deut. 11:9; 21:12; and similarly 7:13; 10:11; 26:3; 28:11; 31:7; cf. 2:16; 4:5; 6:1; 9:19; 12:1, 11, 21; 13:6; 14:24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2; 27:26; 28:69; 34:11. In the Joseph narrative one notes Gen. 45:27; 46:5.

36. Complex relative clauses as found in Esther are common in Deuteronomy, e.g., ול�והט ארוש ובש (Deut. 11:9, 21; 12; and similarly 7:13; 10:11; 26:3; 28:11; 31:7; cf. 2:16; 4:5; 6:1; 9:19; 12:1, 11, 21; 13:6; 14:24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2; 27:26; 28:69; 34:11. In the Joseph narrative one notes Gen. 45:27; 46:5.
The participle may also be used in order to nominalize embedded clauses. On the face of it such forms could be counted as an attribute, but from a logical point of view they still embody clauses. This syntagm is found in the narrative of Jehoshaphat’s victory: háxra µylpn µyrgp µnhw ˆwmhh la wnpyw (2 Chr. 20:24), that is to say, “they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth” (KJV), or, perhaps more elegantly, “they saw them lying on the ground as corpses” (New JPS). In the account of Ezra’s performance the participle serves to introduce a circumstantial clause (Ezra 10:9): µymçghmw rbdh l[ µydyrm µyhlah tyb bwjrb µh lk wbçyw. A similar structure occurs in the Esther tale (Esth. 3:14): µymg lkl ywlg hnydmw hnydm. Thus embedding is an additional factor to be taken into account for stylistic analysis.

In short, postexilic narrative is characterized by a strong preference for long noun strings, for clauses with a relatively large number of explicit arguments, and for hypotaxis in the form of relative and object clauses, infinitive clauses, and attributively used participles. Pending further analysis, this style can be described as complex-nominal. The style of the classical group may be characterized by the opposite tendency, a preference for short clauses with relatively few explicit arguments, for short noun strings, for reference by pronouns and deictic particles, and for paratactic junction of independent clauses. These preferences result in a crisp, rhythmic style, which is best described as the “rhythmic-verbal” style.

In this style nominal clauses stand out in the exposition, e.g., in the opening of the tales of David’s sons (2 Sam. 13:1, 3):
In this pericope the nominal element prevails, because that the narrator has to convey static information, that is not yet integrated into action sequence or dialogue. Within the narrative additional information is given in independent clauses, para-tactically joined, but logically subordinate, e.g. (1 Sam 9:22): ḫrāyōm ḫrāyōm mishlēsh šay ḫrāyōm ḫrāyōm mishlēsh šay. In such a context, the nominal component is subject to the same preference for short, crisp, rhythmic clauses in parataxis as the verbal element.

5. Stylistic Analysis: A New Method

In order to broaden the basis of these descriptions we will now proceed to a comprehensive and systematic analysis of a large number of pericopes. In view of the previous findings such analysis should contain: (a) a division of the independent clauses into clause types; (b) an indication of expanded noun phrases; (c) of embedded clauses vis-à-vis independent clauses; and (d) of independent clauses in which the additional constituents are expressed by deictic reference only. In the ensuing analysis all clauses will carry a special notation in three columns.

(a) The first column will state the number of explicit arguments, e.g., רֶויֵק יָאֵב, 1 arg; רָכַב (no argument). If all (or most) arguments in the clause consist of pronouns or deictic adverbs, this will be marked as “pron,” e.g., לָמַי החַד לְךָ (Gen. 4:6), 2 pron; but לָמַי נְפַל מָאָר (ibidem), 2 arg.

(b) The second column will mark embedding, e.g., בָּשָׂמַע, emb.; cases of embedding within a subordinate clause (complicated embedding) will be indicated as “cem,” e.g., בָּשָׂמַע (ר יִהְיֶה טֶה אֶרְבִּי גַּרְבָּא), cem.

(c) The third column will state the number of expanded noun strings, e.g., בָּשָׂמַע רָוֶה רַב—2 (expansions).

In our analysis the summation of expanded noun strings counts noun phrases rather than single nouns. For instance, the string אָנָחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל counts as a single phrase. The long string פָּרָת יִשְׂרָאֵל is considered to consist of two phrases, פָּרָת יִשְׂרָאֵל and יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרָת. In consequence, if one noun is expanded by two words, the case is ambiguous. In some cases one of the additional nouns is too small to count, e.g., כָּל, and thus should not be allowed to influence the count: the phrase כָּל מַדְנָאִיתָה is counted as one expanded string. If the phrase consists of long words, it is counted as 1+. For the statistics two such cases add up to three expanded strings. In Ezra 4:1 the construct string יִהְיֶה רַבֶּי שָׁם is a case in point.

Pronominal suffixes appended to the noun are not counted, and in consequence we do not count object suffixes of the verb either, since these elements do not carry enough weight from a prosodic point of view. Thus, the verb with an object suffix counts as a verbal predicate only.

The following verse will illustrate the resulting analysis (1 Kgs. 18:1):

In this verse we note a number of clauses: לְךָ (single predicate), הָרָאָה אֵל אָמַתִּים (one argument), וִיאָהָהָה מַטְרָה (two arguments), and one expanded noun.

39. Sometimes expositional information is embedded in object clauses dependent on a verb of perception, e.g., Gen. 6:5; 18:1.
string, "על פנים האדום" (construct state). In the analytical format these data are represented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>1 Kgs. 18:1</th>
<th>Arg</th>
<th>Emb</th>
<th>Exp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ליל נדה ולאאבה</td>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>יאנתה מנור על עלי האדום</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Embedded elements are counted twice.\(^{40}\) First, they appear as such in the column of subordinate clauses. Secondly, they are viewed as arguments in the clause in which they are embedded, and are indicated in parenthesis, e.g. (2 Kgs. 3:26),

| v. 26 | ירו מלב ממאב (כ"מ) | 2 arg | - | 1 |
|       | ימי מהמד נחלמה | 2 arg | 1 | - |

If the embedded clause is continued by a coordinate clause, which also is embedded, the second clause will count as embedded in itself, even if the embedding is not indicated by a special marking.

Relative clauses will count as subordinated clauses but not as a sentence constituent. The same notation will also be used for participle clauses and infinitives that are dependent on noun strings. The relative particle "אשר" will count as a constituent in the subordinated clause, e.g., "אשר שם", unless its syntactic function is covered by an additional referent (the "כ"א"id").\(^{41}\) Thus we obtain the following analysis of the account of Isaac's birth:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Gen. 21:1–5</th>
<th>Arg</th>
<th>Emb</th>
<th>Exp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 1</td>
<td>ייח אל פןא השמ (כ&quot;ש)</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>כמשול ראור</td>
<td>1 pron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ייעל ייח אלפוד (כ&quot;ש)</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>כמשול ראור</td>
<td>1 pron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 2</td>
<td>התיה</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>חלד שור אברמה כ&quot;ולקוי לטרפ</td>
<td>5 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>אשם דוב אולימ</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 3</td>
<td>יריא אברמה אא שבט (חלדลอ א&quot;ש) זחק</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>חלד גל</td>
<td>1 pron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>אшедш לד שחר</td>
<td>2 pron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 4</td>
<td>יריא אברמה אאיצק כ&quot;כלנשימ (כ&quot;ש)</td>
<td>4 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>כאיש אא שבט אולימ</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 5</td>
<td>אברמה ב&quot;מ מאאנ שמל (כ&quot;חר</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>בחלדullo</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For statistical purposes the data in the various columns are summarized in two columns, independent clauses (0–4 arguments), embedded clauses (emb), and expanded

\(^{40}\) In conditionals the protasis is regarded as an embedded clause if it is marked by "אש" י, or a similar particle. So are circumstantial clauses introduced by יכ.

\(^{41}\) In most syntactic details our decisions turned out to be quite similar to those of F. I Andersen and A. D. Forbes, “On Marking Clause Boundaries,” in R. F. Poswick et al., eds., Actes du Troisième Colloque International «Bible et Informatique: Interprétation, Herméneutique, Compétence Informatique» (Tübingen, 26–30 Août, 1991) (Genève, 1992), 181–202, esp. 185–93. However, in our notation time indications marked by יהיי are always counted as independent clauses, in contrast to Andersen's distinctions (p. 187). Only if the time indication consists of a circumstantial clause with finite verb, the form ירי and the circumstantial clause are counted as two, separate clauses.
noun strings (expand). In addition we offer the percentage of each category in relation to the total number of clauses. In the present study the number of arguments within the embedded clause is not counted, but when necessary it is always possible to take these data into account as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Gen. 21:1–5</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>clauses</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>NV ratio</td>
<td>Finite</td>
<td>nominal</td>
<td>NF ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the statistical summary the data have been concentrated into a few categories, indicating (a) the number of cases in independent clauses containing a predicate and at most one additional constituent, or pronominal constituents only (0–1 arg); (b) two or more constituents (2–5 arg); (c) the number of embedded clauses; (d) the number of expanded noun strings (expand). The second column (%) presents the percentages for each category. The statistical data concerning the NV and the NF ratio indicate where the present unit would fit in from the point of view of the statistical survey.

The data indicate that the sample from Genesis 21 is close to the complex style; it tends to the nominal pole, but expanded noun strings are not as frequent as they are in the complex-nominal style. These findings explain the relatively low NV ratio (.683), and suggest attribution to the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period.

6. *Four Strata of Narrative Style*

This method leads to a more sensitive and balanced description of the textual units, and thus enables us to arrive at a more adequate characterization of the different periods. The following paragraphs present a stylistic analysis of a number of units from the categories established in the above statistical survey and a statistical discussion on the basis of these findings. In each category we present a small number of samples, which will be represented by a few clauses, with the statistical analysis for the whole pericope. Data for additional pericopes are given in outline only.

*a. The Classical stratum: the rhythmic-verbal style*

The discussion of the Classical stratum will be opened by some samples from the Samson tales and the Elisha narratives, since their popular character, and therefore their close connection with oral narrative, is well established in biblical studies. These excerpts will be followed by samples from the patriarchal narratives and the Book of Samuel.

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2 Kgs. 13:14–19

v. 14
ואלישו החל אולחלי
ארא מיניה ב
ירד אללי ווש מלך ישראל
רקרב לעינו
יראת
אב, אבי, רב 쉬ראל ומרשים

2 arg - -
1 arg emb -
2 arg - 1+
1 arg - -
1 arg - -
1 arg - -
2 arg - 2+

v. 15
יראמר לא אלישו
PosY מחות והימים
ירקה אללי קשת הימים
ירואמר לכלaklı ישראל
הרבח יד על השקה
ירבד ויד
ורמס אלישו יד לע ידי המלך

2 arg - -
1 arg - -
2 arg - -
1 arg - -
2 arg - -
1 arg - -
3 arg - -

v. 16
יריאמר
פתוח החתול קדימה
ירמית
יראמר אלישו
יריד
ירוד
יראת
יתן תשudeau הל
יתן תשועה באם
והбит את ארים באמק (וך לכל)
דה לכל
emb -

v. 17
יריאמר
פתוח החתול קדימה
ירמית
יראמר אלישו
יריד
ירוד
יראת
יתן תשudeau הל
יתן תשועה באם
והбит את ארים באמק (וך לכל)
דה לכל
emb -

v. 18
יריאמר
פתוח החתול קדימה
ירמית
יראמר למלך ישראל
ירקףAaron שלשל מוכס
ירקףAaron שלשל מוכס
ירקףAaron שלשל מוכס
יראת
יתן ושועה הל
יתן ושועה באם
והбит את ארים באמק (וך לכל)
דה לכל
emb -

v. 19
יריאמר
פתוח החתול קדימה
ירמית
יריאמר
לחבתח והשקו ושעמע
אוכות את אמרים (וך לכל)
דה לכל
emb -

גנשת שלש פעמים חות אולחלי
3 arg - -

Unit 2 Kgs. 13:14–19 % clauses 37 %
0 arg 10 27.03 2 arg 9 21.62
1 arg 12 29.73 3 arg 3 8.11
pron - - 4–5 arg - -
0–1 arg 22 56.6 2–5 arg 12 32.43
emb 3 8.11 expand 16 43.24

Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio
50 34 0.595 31 3 0.082

2 Kgs. 6:1–7 (vv. 1–2, 6–7)

v. 1
יראמר או הביאו לא אלישו
תת אל המקומ (אשא) רג מכלה
אושרג אלו תושיבים הם למקורים

2 arg - -
2 arg - -
3 pron emb -

v. 2
ל갈ה או דע הרidders
רכהו ושא יקר.or אתים
ונששים לכו עם המקור (לודבש)
לשמש

1 arg - -
3 arg - -
2 pron - -
1 pron emb -
In these two short tales the characteristic features of the rhythmic-verbal style stand out most clearly. Short clauses contain around 60% of all clauses: clauses consisting of a predicate with implied subject cover 26–29% of all clauses, and clauses consisting of a predicate and single argument cover 35–36% of the text. In the tale of Elisha and the axe clauses containing pronominal arguments only (7 cases) include 20% of all clauses. In this tale expanded noun strings (3 instances) occur in less than 10% of all clauses, while in the tale of Joash and the prophet such strings (16 cases) are found in 40% of the clauses. Embedding is extremely rare in both tales.

Judg. 15:9–13 (vv. 9–10, 13)

v. 9
ירעלו מפלשימ
- -
יתirse בולח
- -
v. 10
יראמר אשמית
1 arg - -
ידרשיה עית
- -
v. 13
יראמר ולאמר
2 arg - -
לאמר
emb -
לאמר
- -
יכ ארמ אנסר
- -
וננוך בור
1 arg - -
ודמות לא מיתך
- -
יראשית משנה בעהויה ווחיש
1 arg - 1+
ירעהינהן המ וכפל
1 arg - -
UnitJudg. 15:9–13%clauses33%
0 arg412.122 arg515.15
1 arg1030.303 arg- -
pron56.064–5 arg- -
0–1 arg1957.582–5 arg515.15
emb927.27expand721.12
NounVerbNV ratioFiniteNominalNF ratio23340.4042650.161
In this narrative the rhythmical, verbal style is almost as outstanding as it is in the Elisha tales. Almost 80% of the independent clauses are extremely short (0–1 argument), while expanded noun strings occur in only 15% of the clauses. This impression is confirmed by the NV and NF ratio. Thus the relatively high number of embedded clauses (27%) is surprising, all the more so as we find one case of complex subordination (לעשות ולארשי השמה, v. 10), and one compound embedded clause (לארשי הלכתי, להתרן יד פלשתים, v. 12).43 These data, however, are hardly decisive for the embedded clauses themselves are extremely short and simple, and mainly consist of pronouns, e.g., (v. 10); (v. 12).

In the patriarchal narratives the style is slightly more complicated than it is in the Elisha tales. The present analysis does not indicate notable differences between episodes attributed to J or E, although differences within the “sources” themselves do exist.

Gen. 19:1–10 (vv. 1–3, 8–10; mostly attributed to J)

43. Regarding the syntactic complexity of subordinate clauses, see below on Genesis 4 (p. 89).
Gen. 19:1–10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Gen. 19:1–10</th>
<th>% clauses</th>
<th>51</th>
<th>% 21.57</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29.53</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>62.74</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun| Verb| NV ratio| Finite| Nominal| NF ratio
---|-----|---------|------|--------|---------|
| 54 | 48 | 0.529  | 45   | 3      | 0.625 |

Gen. 21:15–21 (vv. 15–18; typically attributed to E)

v. 15 יכלה תmaj | 2 arg | - |
wštçh | 2 arg | 1 |

v. 16 תורכ | - |

v. 17 יכלה אתא | 2 arg | - |
wštçh לdlyh | 2 arg | 1 |

v. 18 קומ | - |

Unit | Gen. 21:15–21 | % clauses | 32 | % 21.88 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.25</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun| Verb| NV ratio| Finite| Nominal| NF ratio
---|-----|---------|------|--------|---------|
| 42  | 30 | 0.583  | 29   | 1      | 0.033 |

Gen. 25:29–34 (vv. 29–30, 33–34; mostly assigned to J)

v. 29 ידכ pshr | 2 arg | - |

v. 30 יופר pshr | 2 arg | - |

Unit | Gen. 25:29–34 | % clauses | 32 | % 21.88 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.25</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

Noun| Verb| NV ratio| Finite| Nominal| NF ratio
---|-----|---------|------|--------|---------|
| 42  | 30 | 0.583  | 29   | 1      | 0.033 |
v. 33
ירא רמא יעקב 1 arg - -
תשמעו שליחים 2 pron - -
רǚועב 1 pron - -
ירא רמא יעקב 2 arg - -
ירא רמא יעקב 3 arg - 1+
v. 34
ירא רמא יעקב - - -
יתרש - - -
יתפש - - -
יתלח - - -
ירא רמא יעקב 2 arg - -

Unit  
Gen. 25:29–34  
% clauses 23  
%
0 arg 4 17.39 2 arg 7 34.78
1 arg 7 30.43 3 arg 3 13.04
pron 1 4.35 4–5 arg - -
0–1 arg 12 52.17 2–5 arg 10 43.48
emb 1 4.35 expand 3 13.04
Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio
29 21 0.58 19 2 0.095

Gen. 29:2–14, 26, 31–35 (vv. 2–11, 31–33 typically attributed to J)45
v. 2
ירא רמא יעקב - - -
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - -
יתר בא הנם 3 arg - 1+
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - 1
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - 2
v. 3
נאם שמעוणו של השתרועים 2 arg - 1
נאם שמעוणו של השתרועים 2 arg - 1
נאם שמעו�ו של השתרועים 2 arg - 1
v. 4
ירא רמא יעקב 2 arg - -
ירא רמא יעקב 1 arg - -
ירא רמא יעקב - - -
v. 5
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - -
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - -
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - -
v. 9
יתר בא הנם 2 pron - -
יתר בא הנם 2 arg - 1
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - -
v. 10
יתר בא הנם 2 arg - 4
יתר בא הנם 1 arg - -
יתר בא הנם 2 arg - 1
v. 11
יתר בא הנם 2 arg - -

44. In Gen. 25:33 the adverb כִּי is used in the apparently colloquial meaning “first,” as, e.g., 1 Kgs. 1:51; see J. McDonald, “Some Distinctive Characteristics of Israelite Spoken Hebrew,” Bi.Or. 32 (1975), 162–75, esp. 173.

Similar results are obtained for Gen. 31:4–16; 28–45 (mostly attributed to E)\(^{46}\) and the tale of Abraham and Pharaoh (Gen. 12:10–20; typically listed as J):

| Unit | Gen. 29:2–35 | % clauses | 88 | %
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<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>39.77</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
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<tr>
<td>emb</td>
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<td>5.68</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>30</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>124 82 0.602 71 9 0.113</td>
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| Unit | Gen. 31:4–16 | % clauses | 51 | %
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<td>9.80</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26</td>
<td>50.98</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>62.74</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.69</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76 46 0.623 40 6 0.130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar results are obtained for Gen. 31:4–16; 28–45 (mostly attributed to E)\(^{46}\)

\(^{46}\) The attribution to E is according to the joint overlap of the division by Holzinger, *Genesis*, xxvi (Gen. 31:4–16*, 19–21a, 22–24, 26, 28–43, 44a, 45; 44b is considered questionable, J?) and Noth, *Pentateuchal Traditions*, 264–65 (Gen. 31:4–16, 19b, 24–25a, 26, 28–29, 30b, 32–25, 36b–37, 41–45).
According to the findings for these samples, the patriarchal narratives are characterized by a relatively high number of simple clauses (0–1 argument), between 50% and 70%; clauses containing 3 arguments or more are exceedingly rare (between 3% and 13%). Embedded clauses typically account for less than 10% of all clauses (apart from Gen. 12:10–20; 31:28–45). Expanded noun strings occur in less than 40% of all clauses, and are mostly of limited extent. Such variation as may be noted, is not dependent on source distinctions.

The stylistic profile of the samples from the Book of Samuel is slightly more intricate.

### 1 Sam. 4:1b–7, 10–18a (vv. 1b–3, 10–12, 14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
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<td>1 arg</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
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<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46.15</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.95</td>
<td>expand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio
55 35 0.611 32 3 0.086
A similar result is obtained for Samuel’s birth tale:

In the narrative on the message of Absalom’s death (2 Sam. 18:20–19:1) the frequency of short clauses is far higher:

In these tales short clauses form the majority (approximately 50%); about 10% of the clauses contain more than two explicit constituents, and embedding is rare (less than 10% of the clauses). Expanded nouns strings are slightly more frequent than may be found in the samples from the patriarchal narratives, but most nominals are short. In the opening of the tale of Saul’s anointment embedding is somewhat more frequent, but all other data are quite similar to those found in the previous samples:

These data confirm our characterization of the rhythmic-verbal style.

(a) All these narratives contain a high number of short clauses, including a single predicate only, or at most one explicit argument (additional constituent), or pronominal and deictic arguments only (0–1 arg). This class forms almost 80% of all
clauses in 2 Kgs. 6:1–7, 60% or more in Gen. 19:1–10; 29:2–14, 31:25–35; 31:4–16; 2 Sam. 18:20–19:1; and at least 50% in Gen. 21:15–21; 25:29–34; 31:28–45; Judg. 15:9–13 (but in this pericope short clauses form more than 80% of the independent clauses); 1 Sam. 4:1b–10; 10–18; 2 Kgs. 13:14–19. In a few samples short clauses cover less than 50% of the text: Gen. 12:10–20; 1 Sam. 1:4–18; 9:3–17 (but in these sections short clauses form more than 50% of the independent clauses).

(b) In the sample from the Samson tales clauses containing two explicit arguments cover 15% of the text, and clauses presenting more than two such arguments are not found. Similar figures are found for 2 Kgs. 6:1–7 (9 and 6%); and Gen. 31:4–16 (16 and 6%). In the samples from Genesis 12; 19; 21; 2 Samuel 18; and 2 Kings 13 clauses containing two arguments account for around 20% of all clauses, while clauses containing more arguments cover circa 10% of the text; similar data are found in Gen. 31:28–45 (25% and 1.5% respectively), and Genesis 29 (28.4% and 5.6%). In Gen. 25:29–34 clauses containing two arguments account for more than 30% of the text, while clauses containing more than two arguments cover more than 10% of the clauses. In the samples from 1 Samuel 1; 4; and 9 the data for two arguments are in the same range (35%, 36%, and 29% respectively), but clauses of three arguments or more account for less than 10%.

(c) Embedded clauses are relatively rare. Such clauses cover less than 5% of all clauses in Gen. 25:29–34. In most samples (7 out of 14), they account for 5–9% of the text: Gen. 19:1–10; 21:15–21; 29:2–35; 1 Sam. 1:4–18; 4:1–18; 2 Kgs. 6:1–7; 13:14–19. In one case they include between 10–15% of the clauses (2 Samuel 18). One notes four samples in which subordinate clauses cover 15–19% of the clauses (Gen. 12:10–20; 31:4–16, 28–45; 1 Sam. 9:3–17). In Judg. 15:9–13, where embedded clauses occupy 27% of the text, almost half of them consist mainly of pronouns.

(d) Expanded noun strings are rare relative to the number of clauses. In the samples from 2 Kings 6 and Genesis 25 such strings are found in less than 15% of the clauses, while in Judges 15 15% of all clauses contain such strings. In Gen. 19:1–10; 1 Sam. 9:3–17 between 25% and 30% of all clauses contain expanded noun strings. In most sections (8 out of 14) such strings are found in less than 40% of all clauses (Gen. 12:10–20; 21:15–21; 29:2–35; 31:4–16, 28–45; 2 Sam. 18:20–19:1; 1 Sam. 1:4–18; 2 Kgs. 13:14–19). Only in the sample from 1 Samuel 4 do expanded noun strings occur in more than 50% of the clauses. Even in these tales, however, most such strings do not contain more than two elements.

(e) Independent pronouns and deictic particles play a minor role in the present analysis. For instance, the use of deictics sets the clause Walton’s Shim Pharamah (2 Kgs. 6:2) apart from the category of clauses containing three explicit arguments. By the same token one notes the clause לאליה על שונות (Judg. 15:10). From a formal point of view the sentence לниемת לאר.character should count as complex, but the pronouns create a sense of informality.

The style of tales in this class, then, is full of variation with regard to all parameters. However, when a certain narrative is characterized by a relatively high score in one field, this feature is for the most part compensated for by a low score for another feature, e.g., the number of embedded clauses in Judges 15, or the number of long clauses in Genesis 25. Only in the tale of Abraham and Pharaoh (Gen. 12:10–20) and in the samples from 1 Samuel 4 and 9 are a number of scores on the high side.
b. Classical prose: the intricate style

Some narratives preserve the character of the classical style, but go beyond it in a number of respects. For instance, in the Cain and Abel tale (Gen. 4:1–16) most features are in accordance with the classical style, apart from the high NF ratio (0.276). The percentage of short clauses (0–1 arguments) is on the low side (43%), while the frequency of long clauses is on the high side (40%), but these data do not seem critical. Nevertheless, detailed stylistic analysis indicates a number of phenomena that do not fit the classical style.

Gen. 4:1–6, 8–16 (vv. 1–3, 10–12, 14–15; assigned to J)

v. 1

האדרת יזג את הה אשתה
- - 1
تاحו
- - -
ותרל את כה
1 arg - -
אתאמ
- - -
כוה איזא את ההוה
2 arg - -

v. 2

לĩnhא את אדיא את היבל
1 arg emb 1+
היי תלב תוע תאנ
1 arg - 1
 colleague עבד ארופה
1 arg - 1

v. 3

רייח המק ניס
1 arg - 1
רבא כל מפרי האڞהמניה ליזה
4 arg - 1

v. 10

держ תעשת
1 pron - -
כתי ח ואח ענפים עלים ההאڞה
3 arg - 1

v. 11

אשר ח הר אדיא המ האڞה
2 arg - -
אשר פסחא את פה (ל الكريم)
3 arg emb -
ל الكريم את זמ אריך
2 arg cem 1

v. 12

יך עברו את האڞה
1 arg emb -
לא שתף (תת)
2 arg - -
תן מתה ל
2 arg emb -
נע דברת ח바ראין
1 arg - 1

v. 14 

ך חSans תאר חוד מועלום 이루וה
3 arg - 1
ך תפריך זאומ
1 arg - -
uíח ע.presenter באראין
1 arg - 1
ווייח כל (מעא)
1 arg - 1
מינאי
- emb -
רידגון
- - -

v. 15

יראפר ול הדוה
2 arg - -
להנכ (ה☼ר) בשנותיך יקים
2 arg - 1
והיך
1 arg emb -
ירש והכי להן אלח (לךלה)
4 arg - -
ל�חלו מבט אחר כל (מעא)
2 arg emb -
מינאי
- cem -

Unit Gen. 4:1–16 % clauses 55 %
0 arg 6 10.91 2 arg 19 34.55
1 arg 15 27.27 3 arg 2 3.64
pron 1 1.82 4–5 arg 2 3.64
0–1 arg 22 0.00 2–5 arg 23 41.82
emb 10 18.18 expand 21 38.18

47. This clause could also be regarded as the protasis of a conditional sentence.
First, one notes the high percentage of subordinated clauses in the classes of two and three arguments (four out of ten). In the class of three arguments two clauses are independent while one is embedded. Further analysis of some of these clauses suggests a higher degree of syntactical complication than found in the other samples. The indication of divine protection for Cain (Gen. 4:15) contains two subordinate clauses of which one, “anyone who met him” (participle with object), is embedded in the infinitive clause, which is also subordinated:

(1) lest (2) anyone who met him (1) should kill him (NJPS)

The subject of the infinitive clause consists of a participle with suffixed pronoun, indicating its object, in secondary subordination. The participle with suffixed pronoun as subject is also encountered in other clauses concerning the dangers faced by Cain: “whosoever finds me” (לך אתה ונהפך, v. 14), “whosoever slays Cain” (לך אתה ונהפך, v. 15). The curse laid on Cain is motivated by a complex relative clause (4:11):

In this sentence the relative clause (לך אתה ונהפך, “which hath opened its mouth”) is continued by an infinitive clause, indicating the goal of the action (לך אתה ונהפך, “to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand”). An infinitive clause is also used in order to set the scene for the murder (v. 8):

In such cases the classical Hebrew style tends to use a simple nominal clause in parataxis, as found in the Saul tale (1 Samuel 9: e.g., היה חמה ובש ⟨lך אתה ונהפך⟩). The hypothetic construction of Genesis 4 is more intricate than customary in the classical style.

48. Although the Latin has the means to render this sentence by the same syntagms, even the Vulgate uses finite verbs in order to render this sentence: posuitque Dominus Cain signum (1) ut non eum interficeret (2) omnis qui invenisset eum.

49. The degree of syntactic complexity of subordinate clauses as an indication for the level of written language is discussed by K. Perera, *Children's Writing and Reading: Analysing Classroom Language* (Oxford, 1984), 237–39. The examples in Genesis 4 are far more complicated than the case found in the Samson tale, mentioned above (p. 81) since there the embedded clauses do not use the participle, while the infinitive clauses themselves are extremely simple. K. Beaman shows that complex sentences as such are not too rare in spoken language: “Coordination and Subordination Revisited: Syntactic Complexity in Spoken and Written Narrative Discourse,” in Deborah Tannen, ed., *Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse* (Norwood, NJ, 1984), 45–80. Analysis of spoken discourse in biblical narrative shows that in the classical stratum the language of spoken discourse is slightly more complex than that of the action sequence: F. Polak, “Narrator’s Language and Dialogue in Biblical Narrative: An Attempt at Stylistic Analysis,” *Te’uda* 15 (in press; Hebrew with English summary).
The intricate style is also characteristic of the paradise tale (Gen. 2:4b–3:24; attributed to J). The pericope concerning the seduction by the serpent (3:1–7) includes a striking number of subordinated clauses,\footnote{50} including three clauses in complicated embedding.

Gen. 3:1–7 (vv. 1–4, 6)

If the frequency of expanded noun strings had been higher, it would have been easier to assign this pericope to the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period. The intricate style with its complex syntactic structures appears again in the pericope of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, e.g.,\footnote{51}

\footnotesize

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Gen. 3:1–7</th>
<th>% clauses</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>0.592</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.276</td>
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\footnotesize

50. In this pericope the embedded clauses are divided as follows: five clauses contain two arguments, three clauses one argument, and two clauses consist of a predicate only.

51. These findings fail to confirm the analysis of 3:22–24 into two sources of which one would be closer to the ancient folktale and the other of more literary character, as cautiously proposed by H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 3rd ed. (Göttingen, 1910), 25–26.
Among the narratives in the intricate style, the Joseph tale seems most close to the classical style. In fact, this tale contains many pericopes in the rhythmic-verbal style, but in some chapters the style is more intricate.

Unit Gen. 40:4–21 (vv. 4–6, 11–14; assigned to E)

The profile of this pericope fits the intricate style, as the clauses with 0–1 arguments cover less than 45% of the text, while the class of three arguments and more includes almost 16% of all clauses. Expanded noun strings are frequent (almost 54%). On the other hand, the percentage of embedded clauses would fit the classical style (less than 10%).

A similar profile is found in the Joshua narrative (Joshua 2–10). Deuteronomistic influence, then, may be assumed for certain parts of these tales, but can hardly be regarded as the main characteristic.
In this pericope, as in the other samples belonging to this category, the deviations from the crisp, rhythmic, style of classical prose are relatively subtle. The percentage of short clauses is slightly smaller than in classical prose (between 40 and 50%), while one notes a certain preference for explicit arguments (in many cases approximately 40%), embedded clauses, and longer noun strings. In general, then, the stylistic norms are more intricate than found for the samples for classical narrative. The style of the narratives in this group, then, is best characterized as an intricate variant of the classical style.

c. The Transitional period: the complex-nominal style

A different profile is characteristic of the narratives that must be attributed to the Transitional period. In texts belonging to this category less than 40% of the clauses consist of a single predicate, or a predicate with one argument. At times more than 70% of the clauses contains an expanded noun string. The number of embedded clauses is likewise higher than in the previous categories. We will demonstrate these phenomena by means of samples from the Book of Kings, the Jeremiah *Vita*, and sections from the second part of the Book of Joshua.
In this pericope the percentage of short clauses (0–1 arguments) is only slightly above 40%, exactly like the percentage of clauses including two arguments or more. What is particularly important is the percentage of clauses including four arguments or more (13%). In addition, the percentage of expanded noun strings is on the high side (81.82%).

Similar data are obtained for the account of Joash’s enthronement in the Temple (2 Kings 11), although the embedding rate is slightly lower (14%). This profile seems to fit all passages attributable to the transitional period.

2 Kgs. 11:3–20 (vv. 3–4, 9–13)

v. 3
(ורח את בית יהוה)
המתנה אשת עבד
ה rallח מלתת Leben את
v. 4
(ורח את בית יהוה)
ה rallח מלתת Leben את
v. 9
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת
v. 10
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת
v. 11
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת

In this pericope the percentage of short clauses (0–1 arguments) is only slightly above 40%, exactly like the percentage of clauses including two arguments or more. What is particularly important is the percentage of clauses including four arguments or more (13%). In addition, the percentage of expanded noun strings is on the high side (81.82%).

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2 Kgs. 11:3–20 (vv. 3–4, 9–13)

v. 3
(ורח את בית יהוה)
המתנה אשת עבד
ה rallח מלתת Leben את
v. 4
(ורח את בית יהוה)
ה rallח מלתת Leben את
v. 9
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת
v. 10
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת
v. 11
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת

In this pericope the percentage of short clauses (0–1 arguments) is only slightly above 40%, exactly like the percentage of clauses including two arguments or more. What is particularly important is the percentage of clauses including four arguments or more (13%). In addition, the percentage of expanded noun strings is on the high side (81.82%).

Similar data are obtained for the account of Joash’s enthronement in the Temple (2 Kings 11), although the embedding rate is slightly lower (14%). This profile seems to fit all passages attributable to the transitional period.

2 Kgs. 11:3–20 (vv. 3–4, 9–13)

v. 3
(ורח את בית יהוה)
המתנה אשת עבד
ה rallch מלתת Leben את
v. 4
(ורח את בית יהוה)
ה rallch מלתת Leben את
v. 9
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת
v. 10
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה את השם ואת
v. 11
(ורח את בית יהוה)
לשנייה ואת השם ואת

In this pericope the percentage of short clauses (0–1 arguments) is only slightly above 40%, exactly like the percentage of clauses including two arguments or more. What is particularly important is the percentage of clauses including four arguments or more (13%). In addition, the percentage of expanded noun strings is on the high side (81.82%).

Similar data are obtained for the account of Joash’s enthronement in the Temple (2 Kings 11), although the embedding rate is slightly lower (14%). This profile seems to fit all passages attributable to the transitional period.
The samples from the Jeremiah *Vita* reveal a different profile.

**Jer 36:4–7, 10–18 (vv. 4–7, 17–18)**

v. 4

||
|ıyora yrmh | 2 arg |
|poon | 4 arg |

v. 5

||
|yrh wehm bbrk | 3 arg |
|bml-r freq cp | 2 arg |

v. 6

||
|brhm | 5 arg |
|mom hr | 2 arg |

v. 7

||
|brhm lnh cp | 3 arg |
|rybrn hr chrr | 2 arg |

v. 17

||
|brhm sb | 2 arg |
|bml-r freq cp | 1 arg |

v. 18

||
|brhm lnh cp | 3 arg |
|rybrn hr chrr | 3 arg |

Unit Jer 36:4–18 % clauses 46 %

| 0 arg | 2 | 1 |
| 1 arg | 10 | 7 |

Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio

| 163 | 75 | 0.685 | 63 | 12 | 0.191 |
In this pericope the percentage of short clauses is lower than in the other samples in this class, while the percentage of expanded noun phrases is on the high side. Nevertheless, the profile of this tale does not match the findings for the Persian era, for in the samples from that period the figures for embedding are higher. In the tale of Jeremiah in the court of the guard (38:4–16,19–21) the findings are closer to those for the Book of Kings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Jer. 38:4–21</th>
<th>% clauses</th>
<th>75</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30.66</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio
141 64 0.688 53 11 0.172

The style of the concluding pericopes in Joshua (chaps. 22–24) is far from uniform. In some passages the profile is close to that of classical prose:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>v. 16</th>
<th>ירונן עדמ</th>
<th>1 arg - -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יראמר</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>חיללה על (מעב)</td>
<td>2 arg - -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מעוב את תּוֹדַע (לִעֵב)</td>
<td>2 arg emb -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לעֵב עָלָיוֹת האֲחוּ</td>
<td>1 arg cem -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יכ תּוֹדוֹת את (מעב)</td>
<td>1 arg - 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 17</td>
<td>מעְלֹלְתָּאת את אֲבָטֵנָית מָכָרְתָּמִּים בֵּית בּוֹדָר</td>
<td>2 arg emb 2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᴜאֱשֵׁר עָשָּה לְעָתַנָּה את (מעב)</td>
<td>3 arg emb 1+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>רשֵׁפָּרָם בֵּין הָדְרָךְ (אָשָּר)</td>
<td>1 arg emb 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אָשֶׁר הָלָָּלָה</td>
<td>2 pron cem -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אָשֶׁר טֵבָנָה בְּכָרָם</td>
<td>2 arg cem -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 25</td>
<td>וַיַּחְשָׁב בֵּיתָהּ בּוֹדָר</td>
<td>4 arg 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וֹיֵשֵׁר לְהָקָתָמִּים בֹשֵׁמ</td>
<td>3 arg 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 26</td>
<td>וְיֵכַּבְּדָהּ אֵת הָבָרְמוֹת הָאָלָּלָה֙ בְּפֶסְרַּהְרָת הָאָלָּלָה</td>
<td>3 arg 2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ירַקַּבְּרָם</td>
<td>1 arg - 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 27</td>
<td>וְיֵכֵּּבָּדָהּ אֵת הָבָרַּמָּה֙ אֶלָּבָּדָר</td>
<td>2 arg - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ירַקַּבְּרָם</td>
<td>2 arg - 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וְנַהֲקָבָּדָהּ אוֹתַהֲהָהּ בֵּין לָעָלָּדָר</td>
<td>2 arg - 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יכַּהַמְשָׁמָהּ אֵת אֲמִרָהּ</td>
<td>2 arg - 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אָשֶׁר דְּבָרָם</td>
<td>2 pron emb -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וְהָרַיִת בֵּין לָעָלָּדָר</td>
<td>2 arg -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ןַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְנַפְn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 28</td>
<td>וּרֵיחַּת וּרֵיחַּת אֵת אֱנָבַּא נֵלָּדוֹת</td>
<td>4 arg - -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Josh. 24:16–28</th>
<th>% clauses</th>
<th>52</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36.54</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46.15</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio
92 45 0.672 39 11 0.172

In this pericope it is possible to detect some similarity to the intricate classical style, in particular because of the high percentage of short clauses (46.15%). But the percentage of embedded clauses is on the high side (23%); two of these clauses contain...
four arguments, and many clauses occur in complex subordination. Since the percentage of expanded noun strings also seems on the high side for the intricate style, this unit is best viewed as marking the shift from the intricate classical style to that of the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period.

The findings for the tale of the memorial site near the Jordan are of a different character:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Joshua 22:6–34</th>
<th>% clauses</th>
<th>72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.44</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4–5 arg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30.55</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.78</td>
<td>expand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>NV ratio</td>
<td>Finite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings for this pericope are similar to those for the Jeremiah tale (Jer. 36:4–18): in both samples expanded noun strings are extremely frequent. Short clauses (0–1 argument) occupy 30% of the clauses, while embedded causes cover above 20%. Thus the style of these samples is close to prose from the Persian era, even though the percentage for embedding is lower than found in postexilic narrative. Hence these pericopes may serve to mark the transition to the postexilic style, while the tale of the covenant at Shechem (Joshua 24) marks the transition from the intricate classical style to the late pre-exilic/exilic period.

d. The Persian era

Samples from postexilic literature have been culled from the Zerubbabel chronicle (Ezra 1:1–6:23), from Ezra's memoirs (7:1–10:44), and from the Hezekiah account (2 Chronicles 32). These samples, each embodying a different style deriving from a different source,52 are to provide the basic characterization, while additional samples have been taken from the Scroll of Esther.

Ezra 4:1–5 (vv. 1–3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Ezra 4:1–5</th>
<th>clauses</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio
49 18 0.731 9 9 0.50

In this sample the class of embedded clauses is one of the most important categories. Extended noun strings are found in almost every clause. The stylistic profile of the Ezra Memoirs is quite similar.

Ezra 9:1–5; 10:1 (9:2–4; 10:1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Ezra 9:1–5</th>
<th>clauses</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 arg</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 arg</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>3 arg</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–1 arg</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>2–5 arg</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emb</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>expand</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noun Verb NV ratio Finite Nominal NF ratio
49 18 0.731 9 9 0.50

Inconclusive reappraisal of the linguistic analysis has been offered by D. Talshir, “A Reinvestigation of the Linguistic Relationship Between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah,” VT 38 (1988), 165–93. But such a striking phenomenon as the use of three infinitives in succession is found in the scroll of Esther (Esth. 3:13, 7:4, 8:11) and in Chronicles (2 Chr. 5:13, 31:2), but not in the Book of Ezra, not even in descriptions that are similar to Chronicles (Ezra 3:12 as against 2 Chr. 5:13); but note Neh. 8:12.
For a sample from the Josiah account (2 Chr. 34:3–8) the results are similar:
Thus we conclude that postexilic narrative prose is typically characterized not only by a high NV ratio (0.70 or higher) and a high NF ratio (mostly above 0.30, although a rate of 0.20 may also occur, e.g., in 2 Chronicles 32), but also by a strong tendency to use expanded noun strings (around 100% relative to the total number of clauses), and embedded clauses (in most cases above 30% of all clauses, and, at least equalling the number of short clauses [0–1 argument]). Even though the narrators do not refrain from using clauses consisting of a single predicate, there is a clear preference for complex clauses containing at least two additional constituents (more than 50% of all clauses). In the samples analyzed above these tendencies are found all together, even though in some pericopes they are more outstanding than in others.

In the Esther tale the results are slightly different, even though the NV ratio is as high as it is in the other samples from this period (0.707, with a slightly lower NF ratio, 0.205).

---

53. In Nehemiah 12 the rate for expanded noun strings amounts to 145%, while in chap. 8 the rate is 87%.
54. Embedded clauses cover 28% of all clauses in Nehemiah 8, but in chap. 12 they are extremely rare (2 out of 22).
The picture arising from these data generally fits the profile of postexilic prose as found in the samples from 2 Chronicles and Ezra. The data for embedding (34%) and expanded noun strings (104%) are similar to those found in the previous samples. Even though short clauses (0–1 argument) are slightly more frequent, (37% of all clauses), the character of this tale is unmistakable. 35% of the embedded clauses contain two or three additional constituents apart from the predicate (8 cases out of 23); these clauses form more than 40% of all examples of clauses with two or three arguments.

Other chapters in the Esther tale are characterized by a similar constellation, even though expanded noun strings and embedded clauses may be less frequent than in Esther 8. For instance, in the sample from Esther 7 (vv. 2–10) the percentages for embedding and expanded noun strings are on the low side (21.74% and 52.17%, respectively). But an analysis of the embedded clause indicates the distinction: the column of clauses with three additional arguments contains six independent as against four embedded clauses (40% subordinate). Out of ten embedded clauses no less than 40% contain three additional constituents. The level of complication of the embedded clauses stands out in such sequence as מ יהוה וה וא מ יהוה אוש סלמה למשה כב (7:5), in which the infinitive clause מ יהוה כב is embedded in the relative clause למשה כב אוש סלמה למה. These features indicate a strong tendency toward complicated subordination, which is expressed indirectly by the NV and the NF ratio.

7. The Oral and the Written Style: Scribe and Story-teller

What is the background of these differences? Are we dealing with free variation, or should we look for social and historical conditions which could have occasioned such distinctions? The latter alternative is certainly suggested by chronological considerations, since the postexilic narratives and the narratives attributed to the Transitional period are later. Narratives in the classical style can be attributed to a variety of different periods. The David tales, for instance, may be placed in the Exilic period, but when only the subject matter is taken into account, a far earlier date is possible as well, or, at least, cannot be rejected a priori. For the Jeremiah Vita, or the account of Josiah's cultic reform, no such attribution is feasible. From a logical point of view, then, these narratives do not belong to the same category as the David stories, the tales of Elijah and Elisha, or, indeed, any other narrative in the classical style.

Furthermore, comparison of the stylistic features characteristic of the Persian era with those for the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period shows that postexilic narrative contains more subordinated clauses, more clauses including three, four, or more arguments, and more expanded noun strings. That is to say, comparison between postexilic prose and narrative from the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period points to an increase in

55. However, in Esther 7 the NV ratio (0.707) and NF ratio (0.205) match the data for chap. 8.
56. An obvious example, developed even more than in Haman's orders (3:13) presents itself in Mordecai's proclamation in name of the king (8:11–12). The NJPS returns the proclamation to direct speech: “to this effect: The king has permitted the Jews of every city to assemble and fight for their lives.”
those elements in which the contrasts between the periods in general are most striking. This finding certainly suggests diachronic development. Moreover, those stylistic categories that are less frequent in exilic prose than in postexilic narrative, are even rarer in classical narrative. Hence the assumption of diachronic development may also be valid for the relation between classical prose and narrative from the Late Pre-Exilic/exilic period. In view of these considerations, any explanation of the stylistic differences among the various classes on the basis of free variation would be too arbitrary.

From a linguistic point of view, the specific features by which the three main classes differ from one another, are connected to the characterization of written language as against oral discourse. The differences between these two types of language pertain, according to studies by W. L. Chafe and others, to a variety of phenomena, such as syndetic noun pairs and long noun strings; nominalization (use of nouns instead of verbs); increased use of attributes, present participles, and participle clauses; prepositional phrases; object clauses (either as that-clause or in the form of an infinitive); and indirect discourse. The preference for complex syntactic structure and formality is also indicated by other investigations. These characteristics belong to the same categories as do the specific differences which set the language of the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period and the Persian era apart from the style of the classical language.

In our study the use of syndetic noun pairs and long noun strings is represented by the category of expanded noun strings, a category which also includes the increased use of attributes. The increased use of participles, object clauses, and indirect discourse all pertain to hypotaxis and embedding, while the high frequency of prepositional phrases leads to an increase in the number of explicit arguments. Hence the characteristics of narrative prose from the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period and the Persian era belong to the specific features of written language. In contrast, the paratactic usage of short clauses, which was found to be characteristic of classical narrative, is connected to the basic features of spoken language, in which idea units are not integrated into well-structured wholes. One of the characteristics found is the increased use of personal pronouns for reference. Parallelism and rhythmic language are typical as well. Hence the characteristic style of classical biblical narrative is


close to the spoken language, and, by implication, to oral literature. In view of the popular nature of such narratives as the Samson tale and the Elisha narratives, in many respects the most eloquent representatives of the, crisp, rhythmic, verbal style of the classical stratum, this inference is highly plausible. The high extent of structuring of classical biblical narrative, also supports this conclusion.

We conclude, then, that classical narrative in the main adheres to the norms of oral narrative. This thesis is not intended to mean that this corpus itself was oral, only that these narratives were written in the style of oral literature by narrators for whom the norms of literary design were those of oral narrative. Among those norms mention must be made of the frequent use of fixed formulae, as found also in Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Hittite epic poetry. A. B. Lord points to oral poets who also compose written texts. Thus it appears that the gradual increase in the degree of syntactic complication indicates the transition from oral norms to written norms. This transition is gradual, as syntactic complication increases from the last stages of classical narrative, found in the tales of Samuel, Saul and David, through the Joseph tales and the intricate classical style, to the written style of the Late Pre-exilic/Exilic period, and to the characteristic style of the Persian era. With the increased role of the scribe in his urban environment, the oral story-teller presumably turns into a representative of the illiterate subculture. As scribal language becomes prestige language, the scribe gradually turns into the primary exponent of literary culture. By the same token, scribal norms start dictating the literary standard. Our model for a literary person in the time of Josiah is Shaphan the scribe.

It would seem that in the Persian era the awareness of the oral style had almost disappeared. In this period ordinary scribes would write Aramaic. Writing Hebrew

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62. For some subcorpora of ancient Greek literature similar conclusions impose themselves, as shown by S. Lilja, *On the Style of Earliest Greek Prose*, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, Societas Scientiarum Fennica 41 (Helsinki, 1968). S. Trenkner shows that the paratactic “Kai style” is characteristic of sections representing oral discourse, e.g., the litigant’s speech in legal proceedings, or comic dialogue, and of literature that is close to the folktales: *Le style kai dans le récit attique oral* (Assen, 1960).

63. For structuring as a criterion, see Niditch, *Oral World*, 8–38.


66. Analysis of 2 Samuel 18 (see above, p. 86) indicates that the narrator is a master of complex narrative as well as of the simple structures of oral stories.


69. Polak (“Prose and Poetry in Job,” 82–84) points to the long noun strings in the Aramaic Aḥiqar tale.
had become a prerogative of the most learned scribes, such as, e.g., Ben Sira or the anonymous author of Qoheleth. Narrative literature of this period is also characterized by complex plot structure: the Esther scroll has two protagonists, Esther and Mordechai.\(^{70}\)

This thesis is supported by the epigraphic remains from the seventh century B.C.E., that constitute the main representatives of ancient written Hebrew.\(^ {71}\) These documents, as far as they are preserved, all use the complicated scribal language that was found to be characteristic of the Transitional period.\(^ {72}\) The Siloam inscription contains some intricate clauses:

\[
\text{ויבוהי חקקקה הダー השבנ✯ שא לךת מד ו על מדן}\\
\text{And the water streamed from the source to the pond in 1200 cubits,}\\
\text{for there was an upsurge in the rock to the right (the south?);}\\
\text{now, on the day of the breakthrough the stone masons struck one to another, axe on axe.}
\]

The last clause contains one predicate with five arguments. In simple letters we also encounter complicated syntactic structures, e.g.,\(^ {73}\)

\[
\text{ויררש חצבה ניניה בי אנא✎ להכירום}\\
\text{The commander of the host, Koniah son of Elhanan has come down in order to go to Egypt (Lachish 3:14–16; a long noun string referring to an official).}\\
\text{[וירש אבר הילך אלפני שן אשיוה ולמהר מושע 1 שְׁמִין]}\\
\text{[And] now, go to the house of Eliashib son of Josiah and take from there 1 oil (Arad 17:41; the sentence seems simple, as it is broken up into two clauses, but the second clause contains two arguments, while the first one includes a long noun string).}\\
\text{וזרק הניניה על אנא שעפת עם מושע זום תומר}\\
\text{And Hananiah has ordered you to Beersheba with a burden of a span of donkeys (Arad 3:2–5; three arguments and one long noun string).}\\
\text{ורשלותם את רם נגב [בי]ר שלחלקים כרברך}\\
\text{So you must send them to Ramoth Negeb[b] [under the responsibility of Malkiahu son of Qarabor (Arad 24:13–14; three arguments).}\\
\text{ורבקיר름 על אנא אלפרס איניה ברמה כנץ שן זקרך אד ידיר}\\
\text{So you must place them under the orders of Elisha son of Jeremiah in Ramoth Negeb, lest something happen to the town (Arad 24:14–17; three arguments, one expanded noun string, one subordinated clause).}
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These findings indicate that the style of the Transitional period is not only exilic. It is the style of the Judean officials, and many of the biblical narratives in this style obviously represent the scribal culture of this milieu, e.g., the narrative of Joash’s

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70. Cf., e.g., E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible*, 171–72. It is quite possible, however, that the Nehemiah memoirs preserve the tone of oral narrative. One indication favoring this possibility is the increased use of the active participle as predicate, as it were a present tense, as discussed in note 23 above.


72. On the distinction between narrative language and the “official language” of ancient Israel, see I. M. Young, *Diversity in Pre-exilic Hebrew* (Tübingen, 1993), 104–9, 168.

73. Quoted according to Sh. Aḥituv, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions from the Period of the First Commonwealth and the Beginning of the Second Commonwealth* (Jerusalem, 1992) [in Heb.]; translations according to *ANET* with small modifications.
enthronement by the priests, and the discovery of Deuteronomy during the reconstruction of the Temple (2 Kings 11: 22). Such a scribe as Baruch learned his trade under the late monarchy, but continued to write under the Babylonians, during the exile. The same statement seems to hold for Ezekiel: thirty years old in 592, he must have been quite literate when he went into exile under Jehoiachin.

As an illustration of the scribal style in the Persian era we point to the complicated sentences opening the contracts from Elephantine, e.g., 74

On the 25th of Tishrê, that is the 25th of the month of Epiphi, year 31 of Artaxerxes the King, said Ananiah, son of Azariah, priest of Yahu the God in Yeb the fortress, to woman Tamut, his wife, saying:

“I give you the half of the large hall and its room, of the house which I have bought from Uibil the daughter of Satibara and from Bagazushta, Caspians in Yeb the fortress.”

This pericope, which consists of 46 words (including three numbers), contains four clauses, of which two are in hypotaxis (indicated by italics), and a series of expanded noun strings. Admittedly, the legal language of the contract is in no way comparable with the narrative style, but in the present case the comparison is helpful, because it highlights the social and linguistic distinction between the storyteller who is close to oral narrative, and the scribe in his chancellery.

The style of the Moabite stone is in many respects close to the intricate classical style, as indicated by the following summation: 75

This inscription contains many clauses that include more than one argument, e.g., “my father reigned thirty years over Moab, and I reigned after my father,” lines 2–3), ṣebem" 76}


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("and I built this bamah to Chemosh in Qrhh," line 3). Long noun strings are also found, e.g., "יהי והציר ימי ולדה אבני תות" ("his days and half the days of his son," line 8), "את אד שין ואת אש מברית" ("the people of Sharon and the people of Mhrt," lines 13–14). On the other hand, one notes a number of short clauses that seem entirely characteristic of the classical style, e.g., "וְאָלֶחֶם בַּכָּר וְאָלֶחֶם:" ("and I fought against the town and I captured it," l. 11); "כִּי לֹא שָׁמַר חֵן חֵרְמָתָה" ("For I had devoted it to Ashtar-Chemosh," l. 17). The text contains only two subordinated clauses, "וּרְשָׁב הַבָּמָה וְוּרְשָׁב הַבּוֹדְלַחאת יָבִי" ("And he held it under his occupation while he waged war against me," l. 19); "וְאָלֶחֶם לֶפֶת הָעָרֶבּ" ("and I conquered it in order to annex it to Dibon," lines 20–21), both infinitive clauses. The large number of clauses containing two arguments is probably slightly misleading, since many of these clauses include the redundant subject לְאָבֵּר תְלָסְמֹה יָטָב לְרָבָּה ("it was I who built Aroer and it was I who made the highway in the Arnon region," l. 26). In biblical style in general such emphasis on the speaking person is unparalleled, but in royal inscriptions it is conventional. The norms of the classical style are better represented by one of the preceding sentences, אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ תְּלַסָּמֹה אֲמִרֵי לְכלֵי הָעָם לְכָּלֵם אָשׁ בַּכֶּרֶת ("Now, there was no cistern inside the city in Qrhh, so I said to all the people: make yourselves each a cistern in house,'" lines 24–25). The use of the introductory circumstantial, nominal clause and the use of direct speech match the classical style of biblical narrative completely.

Thus the style of the Mesha inscription indicates the transition from oral narrative to written language: the norms are those of oral literature, but the competence is scribal. Therefore the inscription is an excellent representative of the intricate classical style. Classical biblical narrative for the most precedes this period. Stylistic analysis does not enable us to assign precise dates to such narratives as the Abraham cycle, the Jacob tales, and the narratives of the establishment of the monarchy. It does, however, plausibly show that most of these tales antedate the Mesha inscription, or, alternatively, that the stylistic norms they represent are older than this stele. Classical biblical narrative was transmitted by the redactors of the seventh and sixth centuries, but it was formulated much earlier.