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## Eblaite $\bar{u}$ -*MA* and Hebrew *WM*-

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Eblaite  $\bar{u}$ -*ma*, the conjunction followed by enclitic *ma*, occurs sporadically in the Tell Mardikh tablets. Of the materials published so far, it is attested seven times in TM.75.G.2420 and once in TM.75.G.2268.<sup>1</sup> During his visit to New York in February, 1983, A. Archi confirmed that it appears in other texts as well.<sup>2</sup>

In light of these occurrences, it is appropriate to resurrect and reinvestigate the suggestion of F. I. Andersen more than a decade ago that a cognate construction occurs in the Hebrew Bible. Writing in the days before the publication of the Ebla tablets, Andersen already proposed that several seemingly inexplicable *wm*- forms be parsed as conjunctive *waw* with *mem* enclitic. He thought *wmmhr* in Gen 41:32, *wmpl*<sup>p</sup> in Judg 13:19, *wmsrpw* in Amos 6:10, and *wm*<sup>t</sup> in Ruth 4:5 were sure occurrences of *waw* plus *mem* enclitic, and that possible examples of this construction are present in 2 Sam 16:5, Job 6:22, 7:14, 10:14, 19:26, 21:20.<sup>3</sup>

Before progressing to a discussion of these passages, we should commend Andersen for his ingenuity, having isolated Hebrew *wm*- without the impetus of a cognate language. (One need only compare the method by which most recent advances in Hebrew grammar have been made: usually a usage is clarified in another Semitic language, e.g., Ugaritic, and only then is its appearance in Hebrew revealed.) It should be noted, therefore, that the examples to be presented below can stand on internal analysis alone. If I have adduced the Eblaite evidence first and have included Eblaite  $\bar{u}$ -*ma* in the title, it is because (a) these attestations have served as the springboard of my research, and (b) they supply the desired Semitic cognate most often sought by Hebrew linguists.

<sup>1</sup> For TM.75.G.2420, see E. Sollberger, "The So-Called Treaty Between Ebla and 'Ashur,'" *SEb* 3 (1980) 155, for exact references. For TM.75.G.2268, see the few lines transliterated and translated by A. Archi, "I rapporti tra Ebla e Mari," *SEb* 4 (1981) 154.

<sup>2</sup> In the Ebla texts published so far, enclitic *ma* is never affixed to the conjunction *wa*, only to  $\bar{u}$ . The exact differences between the two Eblaite conjunctions are still to be worked out; cf. D. O. Edzard, "Neue Erwägungen zum Brief des Enna-Dagan von Mari (TM.75.G.2367)," *SEb* 4 (1981) 89-90, n 4.

<sup>3</sup> F. I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch* (Nashville, 1970) 48, 124, n 13.

Of the proposed examples, Ruth 4:5 is the most important, for the entire story hinges on this difficult and crucial verse.<sup>4</sup> Andersen suggested that Masoretic  $\hat{u}m\bar{e}^{\text{et}} r\hat{u}t$  should not be read 'from Ruth,' but rather as conjunctive *waw*, enclitic *mem*, the accusative indicator  $\text{et}$ , and then the personal name Ruth. He states that "the field is not to be acquired *from* Ruth as well as from Naomi; rather, when the field is acquired from Naomi, Ruth must be acquired with it, and is the object of the following verb."<sup>5</sup>

C. H. Gordon has recently taken up the problem again, independent of Andersen's work and now with Eblaite  $\hat{u}-ma$  as a Semitic cognate to bolster the proposal for a Hebrew *wm*.<sup>6</sup> Gordon's analysis of *wm<sup>et</sup>* is the same as Andersen's, though whereas the latter implies reading the Qere *qnyt* (2 m.s. perfect), the former accepts the Ketiv *qnyty* (1 s. perfect). Gordon therefore translates the verse, "Boaz said: 'On the day you acquire the field from the hand of Naomi, (well and good); but I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased, to raise the name of the deceased on his estate.'" Boaz is telling Mr. So-and-So that although he (Mr. So-and-So) may redeem the land, he (Boaz) has already obtained Ruth, a fact known to the reader of the story from the secret tryst in 3:6–14. Gordon invokes the Mishnaic law in Qiddushin 1:1 which states that one of the methods of acquiring a bride is sexual intercourse, and thus Boaz is legally correct in claiming to have acquired Ruth already.

Another clear instance of enclitic *mem* following conjunctive *waw* is Amos 6:10:  $\hat{u}n\bar{e}s\bar{a}^{\text{et}} \hat{d}\hat{o}\hat{d}\hat{o} \hat{u}m\bar{e}s\bar{a}r\bar{e}p\hat{o} l\bar{e}h\hat{o}s\bar{i}^{\text{et}} \bar{a}s\bar{a}m\bar{i}m \text{ min } h\bar{a}b\bar{b}a\bar{y}i\bar{t}$ . Commentators have long recognized the difficulties of *wmsrpw*,<sup>7</sup> but the difficulties disappear when the word is parsed as conjunctive *waw*, enclitic *mem*, the root *srp*, and pronominal suffix  $\hat{o}$ . The root *srp* must be a byform of *šrp*, 'burn.'<sup>8</sup> The burning of the deceased's bones, while usually considered a heinous crime in the Bible (see Amos 2:1), can be an honorable act as well (see 1 Sam 31:12–13; cf. *Iliad* 23:208–25, 24:786–87).<sup>9</sup> More important for our present purposes is the observation that Masoretic  $\hat{u}m\bar{e}s\bar{a}r\bar{e}p\hat{o}$  is the only Pi<sup>c</sup>el of *šrp/srp* in the Bible. Elsewhere, this root occurs only in the Qal; in Lev 10:16  $\bar{s}\hat{o}r\bar{a}p$  should be read as passive Qal.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, *wmsrpw* in Amos 6:10 should be revocalized as a Qal, most probably as a perfect parallel to  $\hat{u}n\bar{e}s\bar{a}^{\text{et}} \hat{d}\hat{o}$ , and be read  $\hat{u}m\bar{a}s\bar{e}r\bar{a}p\hat{o}$ . If

<sup>4</sup> For a very thorough analysis of the verse, see J. M. Sasson, *Ruth* (Baltimore, 1979) 119–35.

<sup>5</sup> Andersen, p. 124, n 13. E. F. Campbell, *Ruth* (AB; Garden City, NY, 1975) 146, provisionally accepts Andersen's proposal.

<sup>6</sup> C. H. Gordon, *Forgotten Scripts* (New York, 1982) 169–71; and C. H. Gordon, "The 'Waw Converse': From Eblaite to Hebrew," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 50 (1983) 90.

<sup>7</sup> See H. W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, 1977) 280, n h, for a brief discussion.

<sup>8</sup> So, e.g., W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (ICC; New York, 1910) 158.

<sup>9</sup> See further C. H. Gordon, *The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations* (New York, 1965) 18.

<sup>10</sup> See R. J. Williams, "The Passive Qal Theme in Hebrew," in J. W. Wevers and D. B. Redford, eds., *Essays on the Ancient Semitic World* (Toronto, 1970) 47–48.

this be the case, then Gordon may be correct in analyzing *wmsrpw* as a *waw* conjunctive with the perfect, with *m* interposed, to be translated 'and he shall burn him.'<sup>11</sup>

Andersen's two other primary examples are not as clear, though in one instance there is enough evidence to defend his analysis. Andersen has carefully classified the independent participial clauses of the Pentateuch and notes that  $\dot{u}m\ddot{e}mah\ddot{e}r\ h\ddot{a}^{\circ} \dot{e}l\ddot{o}h\ddot{i}m\ la^{\circ} \dot{a}s\ddot{o}t\ddot{o}$  in Gen 41:32 is the only one which begins with *waw* and participle. Since we expect *hinneh* as an auxiliary predicator, Andersen concludes, "The explanation probably lies in the survival (masquerading as the participle) of *wm-mhr*, that is, the conjunction has enclitic *mem*, and the 'perfect' verb is used as a consecutive future—'and God will hasten to do it.'"<sup>12</sup>

The fourth example deduced by Andersen is the famous crux in Judg 13:19,  $\dot{u}mapl\ddot{i}^{\circ} la^{\circ} \dot{a}s\ddot{o}t$ . His argument that this participle is otherwise unknown is correct per se, but faulty in that enough Hiph<sup>c</sup>il perfects, imperfects, and infinitives of the root *pl*<sup>o</sup> occur to admit the possibility of the form *mapl\ddot{i}^{\circ}*. In other words, while this argumentation may have worked for *wmsrpw* in Amos 6:10, it will not work for *wmpl\ddot{i}^{\circ}* in Judg 13:19. Moreover, G. F. Moore defended the passage on the basis of similar vocabulary in Isa 29:14, Joel 2:26, and 2 Chr 26:15.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps it is best to conclude, then, that the text either should be accepted without difficulty or should be emended according to any number of suggestions.<sup>14</sup>

Turning now to Andersen's secondary list of passages, i.e., where "other examples of enclitic *mem* with *w-* may be present,"<sup>15</sup> only 2 Sam 16:5 deserves serious consideration. The final clause reads  $y\ddot{o}s\ddot{e}^{\circ} y\ddot{a}s\ddot{o}^{\circ} \dot{u}m\ddot{e}qall\ddot{e}l$ . The use of a participle after an infinitive absolute is most extraordinary, for the usual usage calls for a second infinitive absolute or perhaps a finite verb. S. R. Driver commented, "The type is unusual:  $y\ddot{o}s\ddot{e}^{\circ} y\ddot{a}s\ddot{o}^{\circ} w\ddot{e}qall\ddot{e}l$  would be the ordinary one."<sup>16</sup> Both Driver and P. Joüon<sup>17</sup> noted that Jer 41:6  $\dot{h}\ddot{o}l\ddot{e}k\ \dot{h}\ddot{a}l\ddot{o}k\ \dot{u}b\ddot{o}keh$  offers a suitable parallel, but it also must be pointed out that some manuscripts point *wbkh* as the infinitive absolute  $\dot{u}b\ddot{a}k\ddot{o}h$ .<sup>18</sup> It is not good linguistic practice to expunge anomalous forms from the corpus, but in light of variant manuscripts for Jer 41:6, we may wish to admit *wmqll* in 2 Sam 16:5 as another example of conjunctive *waw* and enclitic *mem* and read *qall\ddot{e}l* as infinitive absolute. Of the remainder of Andersen's proposals, all from Job, none is compelling, even though  $\dot{u}mibb\ddot{e}s\ddot{a}r\ddot{i}$  in Job 19:26 has elicited much discussion.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Gordon, "The 'Waw Conversive': From Eblaité to Hebrew," 89. See the next example, Gen 41:32, as well.

<sup>12</sup> Andersen, *Hebrew Verbless Clause*, 48.

<sup>13</sup> G. F. Moore, *Judges* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1895) 324–25.

<sup>14</sup> For different solutions, see C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (London, 1920) 349–59.

<sup>15</sup> Andersen, *Hebrew Verbless Clause*, 124, n 13.

<sup>16</sup> S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford, 1890) 247.

<sup>17</sup> P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'Hébreu biblique* (Rome, 1947) 352, § 123m.

<sup>18</sup> See the apparatus in *BHS*.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, *Job*, vol. 2 (ICC; New York, 1921) 130–32.

But there are still other vocables in the Hebrew Bible which are to be analyzed as conjunctive *waw* with *mem* enclitic. Ps 147:3 reads *hârôpē<sup>3</sup> lišēbûrē lēb ûmēḥabbēš lē<sup>c</sup>aššēbôtām*. The expression *ûmēḥabbēš*, 'and binds,' seems unproblematic at first glance, but since this verb is not used as a Pi<sup>c</sup>el in Hebrew,<sup>20</sup> the pointing is suspect. Indeed, in Hos 6:1 and Isa 30:26 *ḥbš* occurs in the Qal parallel to *rp<sup>3</sup>*, 'heal.' Since these two verbs are also parallel in Ps 147:3, we should read consonantal *wmḥbš* as conjunctive *waw*, enclitic *mem*, and a Qal form of *ḥbš*. Presumably we should read a Qal participle *ḥôbēš*, since *rôpē<sup>3</sup>* appears in the parallel stich.

In actuality, there is an exception to the above statement that *ḥbš* is not used in the Pi<sup>c</sup>el. In addition, there are two instances where the biblical text has *ḥbš* in the Pu<sup>c</sup>al. All three require comment. In Ezek 30:21 *ḥubbēšâh* should be read as passive Qal, especially in light of the Qal infinitive *lēḥobšâh* earlier in the same verse. In Isa 1:6 *ḥubbāšû* should be similarly interpreted as passive Qal. The only other Pi<sup>c</sup>el of this root is *ḥibbēš* in Job 28:11. This word has elicited endless discussion, with all sorts of interpretation being offered. The most common solution is to adduce a *b/p* interchange and to treat the word as akin to *ḥippēš*, 'searches.'<sup>21</sup> Regardless, it seems certain that *ḥibbēš* is not our word 'bind' and therefore we may reaffirm the conclusion that *ḥbš* is only a Qal and should be read as such in Ps 147:3.

Through similar methodology we may recover another *wm*- form. Nah 2:13 reads *aryēh tôrep bēdê gôrôtāw ûmēḥannēq lēlib<sup>3</sup>ôtāw*. Elsewhere in the Bible, the root *ḥnq* 'strangle' occurs in the Qal, or in the case of 2 Sam 17:23, the Niph<sup>c</sup>al. In Job 7:15 the nominal form *maḥānāq* occurs, which also implies a Qal form of the verb (cp. *ma<sup>3</sup>ākāl* from *akl* in the Qal). In the cognate languages, this verbal root appears in the corresponding G-stems; note especially Akkadian *ḥanāqu*<sup>22</sup> and Arabic *ḥanaqa* (the root occurs also in derived conjugations with derived meanings).<sup>23</sup> In light of this cumulative evidence, consonantal *wmḥnq* in Nah 2:13 should not be read as a Pi<sup>c</sup>el participle, but rather as conjunctive *waw*, enclitic *mem*, and a Qal form of *ḥnq*, presumably the participle *ḥônēq* parallel to *tôrēp* in the first stich. Accordingly, in three instances—Amos 6:10, Ps 147:3, Nah 2:13—the received text preserved *wm*-forms followed by Qal verbs, which the Masoretes pointed as Pi<sup>c</sup>el participles.

Still another passage where a *wm*- form may be recognized is Num 23:10, *mî mānāh<sup>c</sup> āpar ya<sup>c</sup>āqōb ûmispār<sup>3</sup> et rôba<sup>c</sup> yisrā<sup>3</sup>ēl*. Exegetes long ago reached

<sup>20</sup> This holds not only for Biblical Hebrew but for Rabbinic Hebrew as well; cf. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York, 1903) 423.

<sup>21</sup> Thus M. H. Pope, *Job* (AB; Garden City, NY, 1973) 203; A. C. M. Blommerde, *Northwest Semitic Grammar and Job* (Rome, 1969) 106–7; and *Textual Notes on the New American Bible* (Paterson, NJ, n.d.) 376. Already the LXX and the Vulgate seem to have interpreted the text in a like fashion. On the entire problem, see L. L. Grabbe, *Comparative Philology and the Text of Job* (Missoula, MT, 1977) 94–98.

<sup>22</sup> CAD H, 77.

<sup>23</sup> H. Wehr and J. M. Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca, NY, 1976) 263.

the consensus that Masoretic *ûmispār* is to be emended to *ûmî sāpar* “in agreement with Sam[aritan] and G[reek], to say nothing of the parallelism” with *mî mānāh* in the first stich.<sup>24</sup> However, in light of Eblaite *û-ma* and with a growing respect for at least the consonantal portion of the Masoretic Text,<sup>25</sup> we may now retain *wmspr* without emendation. This form preserves conjunctive *waw* with enclitic *mem*, followed by the revocalized verb *sāpar*. The meaning of emended *ûmî sāpar* and that of revocalized *ûmāsāpar* are hardly very different, but this example illustrates well how new evidence can always controvert even the most accepted solutions to textual and philological enigmas.

Returning now to prose texts, we may note three *wm-* forms in *wmp<sup>ʔ</sup>t* in Ezek 48:16 and *wm<sup>ʔ</sup>hzt* in Ezek 48:22 (*bis*). The Masoretes pointed these words respectively as *ûmippē<sup>ʔ</sup>at* and *ûmê<sup>ʔ</sup>āhuzzat*, i.e., they treated the *mem* in each instance as the preposition ‘from.’ Most commentators realize the impossibility of this interpretation and simply delete the *mems*; in the first instance, they at least defend their emendation with the textual support of six variant manuscripts.<sup>26</sup> However, the Masoretic Text may once again be reaffirmed if we analyze these forms as conjunctive *waw*, enclitic *mem*, and construct noun.

Another example of a *wm-* form in prose is consonantal *wm<sup>ʔ</sup>t* in Neh 5:11, vocalized *ûmē<sup>ʔ</sup>at* ‘and a hundred of’ by the Masoretes, but surely to be analyzed as conjunctive *waw*, enclitic *mem*, and the accusative marker <sup>ʔ</sup>*et*, exactly as in Ruth 4:6. This passage is treated elsewhere in this volume by C. Wallace,<sup>27</sup> so there is no need to enter into detailed discussion here.

Finally, we come to 1 Kgs 14:14 with what many consider an intrusive *ûmeh*. A typical solution is that adopted by *NAB* which omits the word based on dittography from the preceding *hayyôm* (note the consonants *hywm wmh*).<sup>28</sup> But the received text, even with its problems,<sup>29</sup> may be accepted if we analyze *ûmeh* as *waw* conjunctive and *mem* enclitic. Most enclitic *mems* in the Bible are

<sup>24</sup> W. F. Albright, “The Oracles of Balaam,” *JBL* 63 (1944) 213. Cf. G. B. Gray, *Numbers* (ICC; New York, 1906) 348; J. H. Greenstone, *Numbers* (Philadelphia, 1939) 255; S. Gevitz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Chicago, 1973) 61–63; D. K. Stuart, *Studies in Early Hebrew Meter* (Missoula, MT, 1976) 111; and G. J. Wenham, *Numbers* (TynOT; Leicester, 1981) 174, n 1. It should be noted that C. H. Gordon, “Review of W. von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*,” *Or* 22 (1953) 229, resisted emending *ûmispār* to the “easier reading” *ûmî sāpar*; his patience has now been rewarded by proper elucidation of the verse and an acceptance of at least the consonants of the Masoretic Text. Similarly, E. Y. Kutscher, “Notes to the Biblical Lexicon,” *Leshonenu* 21 (5717) 254–55, rejected the usual emendation and ingeniously explained *mispār* as the Aramaic Pe<sup>c</sup>-al (= Qal) infinitive in the mouth of the Aramean Balaam.

<sup>25</sup> See the fine remarks by D. N. Freedman, “Review of A. R. Ceresko, *Job 29–31 in the Light of Northwest Semitic*,” *JBL* 102 (1983) 138–40.

<sup>26</sup> On Ezek 48:16, see *BHS*; G. A. Cooke, *Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1936) 540; G. Fohrer, *Ezekiel* (Tübingen, 1955) 262; W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969) 1208; and W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia, 1970) 588–90. On Ezek 48:22, see *BHS*; Fohrer, 262; and Zimmerli, 1209.

<sup>27</sup> C. Wallace, “*wm-* in Nehemiah 5:11.”

<sup>28</sup> *Textual Notes on the New American Bible*, 353.

<sup>29</sup> The entire end of the verse is problematic; see the discussion by J. A. Montgomery and H. S. Gehman, *Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1951) 272.

affixed to the preceding word, but occasionally we do have *mh* appearing as enclitic *mem*,<sup>30</sup> *ûmeh* in 1 Kgs 14:14 would be another example.<sup>31</sup>

At this stage it is worthwhile to summarize the evidence, and then to proceed to the question of whether Hebrew *wm-* has any special syntactic function and how it should be translated. Eblaite *û-ma*, the conjunction and enclitic *ma*, has led to the search for cognate forms in the Hebrew Bible. Our investigation has turned up ample passages, in both poetry and prose, where a consonantal *wm-* in the Masoretic Text should be interpreted as conjunctive *waw* and enclitic *mem*. In poetic texts there are four examples, *wmsrpw* in Amos 6:10, *wmḥbš* in Ps 147:3, *wmḥnq* in Nah 2:13, and *wmspr* in Num 23:10. In prose texts there are seven or eight examples, *wm<sup>ʔ</sup>t* in Ruth 4:5, *wmmhr* in Gen 41:32, *wmp<sup>ʔ</sup>t* in Ezek 48:16, *wm<sup>ʔ</sup>hzt* in Ezek 48:22 (*bis*), *wm<sup>ʔ</sup>t* in Neh 5:11, *wmh* in 1 Kgs 14:14, and possibly *wmqll* in 2 Sam 16:5.

That Hebrew *wm-* has a special syntactic function becomes apparent from a closer look at three of the four poetic examples. In the verses below, *wm-* serves to introduce the second of the parallel stichs:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Ps 147:3  | who heals the brokenhearted<br><i>wm-</i> binds their wounds                                       |
| Nah 2:13  | the lion preys for its cubs<br><i>wm-</i> strangles for its lionesses <sup>32</sup>                |
| Num 23:10 | who has counted the dust of Jacob<br><i>wm-</i> has numbered the dustcloud of Israel <sup>33</sup> |

In view of these examples, I am inclined to consider *wm-* as an emphasizing conjunction and translate it, depending on the context, as 'indeed, even, verily, yea.' In other words, *wm-* cannot and does not occur as a simple conjunction. One would not use it, for example, in a merism (e.g., 'heaven and earth'), in a

<sup>30</sup> E.g., in Num 24:22; cf. Albright, 222; and Wenham, 181, n 2. Oddly, this example is missing from the most thorough treatment of enclitic *mem* to date, namely, D. A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, MT, 1972) 79–110. Two other examples of *mh* as enclitic (Ps 21:2, Prov 30:13) are proposed by D. H. Hummel, "Enclitic *Mem* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew," *JBL* 76 (1957) 99, 102, but neither is particularly compelling; see Robertson, 102–3; and M. Dahood, *Psalms I* (AB; Garden City, NY, 1966) 131.

<sup>31</sup> It is possible that another example of "unattached" *wm-* is to be found in *ûmāh* in Mal 2:15. However, since this passage is "one of the most obscure verses in the entire O.T." (thus R. C. Dentan, "Malachi," *IB* 6 [1956] 1136), I refrain from any detailed discussion. See, however, J. M. P. Smith, *Malachi* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1912) 59, who feels that the entire problem may be cleared up by deleting *ûmāh*.

<sup>32</sup> Parenthetically, one may note that the prophet's knowledge of nature is somewhat deficient; it is the lioness who provides food for her mate and cubs, not the lion who hunts prey. On the other hand, since Nahum intends the king of Assyria, the metaphor of *aryēh* is certainly more apropos than *lābī<sup>ʔ</sup>*.

<sup>33</sup> For a complete discussion of *rôba<sup>c</sup>* 'dustcloud' see H. R. Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Missoula, MT, 1978) 37–39 and 60–63, nn 65–87.

hendiadys (e.g., 'love and mercy'), or in a long list of items, unless there was a special desire by the author to stress a particular point.

This understanding of the function of *wm*- also explains the fourth poetic example, Amos 6:10  $\hat{u}n\acute{e}s\bar{a}^{\text{p}}\hat{o} \hat{d}\hat{o}\hat{d}\hat{o} \hat{u}m\acute{a}s\acute{e}r\bar{a}p\hat{o}$  (revocalized *wmsrpw*), 'his kinsman is to carry him, even to burn him.' As discussed earlier, under extraordinary circumstances the burning of the deceased was an honorable act in the biblical world. To accentuate this exceptional situation, the prophet utilizes the emphasizing conjunction *wm*- instead of the simple conjunction *w*-.

We can observe the same syntactic role for *wm*- in the prose texts. In each of the following cases, *wm*- serves to emphasize what follows, coming right after a simple declarative statement or at the end of a lengthy speech.

Ruth 4:5            Boaz said, "Today you acquire the field from the hand of Naomi, *wm*- I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased, to raise the name of the deceased on his estate."

As alluded to earlier, Boaz has set up this climactic scene in the book and has manipulated Elimelech's closer kinsman brilliantly. He saves his revelation till the end, that no matter what happens to the field, his marriage to Ruth is a *fait accompli*. The author's use of *wm*- to introduce Boaz's disclosure is an effective climax to what is by all accounts a masterly-woven tale. Moreover, the Masoretic accentuation is effective too, since *wm*- follows the  $\text{p}atn\bar{a}h$ , where Boaz's declaration comes to a momentary rest. Since the second clause of Ruth 4:5 stands adversatively to the first clause, we may add for *wm*- the meanings 'but, however.'

Gen 41:32            As for Pharaoh having had the same dream twice, it means that the matter has been affirmed by God, *wm*- that God will hasten to carry it out.

In this instance, *wm*- introduces the final clause of Joseph's lengthy interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams<sup>34</sup> and is appropriately used to emphasize the point that the pair of seven-year periods is imminent.

Ezek 48:16            And these are its dimensions: the north side 4500 cubits and the south side 4500 cubits, *wm*- the east side 4500 cubits and the west side 4500 cubits.

Here *wm*- divides the verse, again coming immediately after the  $\text{p}atn\bar{a}h$ . The prophet first lists the northern and southern boundaries, then climactically the eastern and western boundaries. Just as the second lines of parallel poetry are introduced by *wm*-, so too the second halves of parallel prose lines.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph's speech actually continues for four more verses, but the dream interpretation ends here. See the paragraph divisions in *NJPSV* and *NAB*.

Ezek 48:[21-]22(*bis*) The sacred portion and the Temple sanctuary shall be in the middle of it; *wm-* the property of the Levites *wm-* the property of the city shall be in the middle of that belonging to the prince.

There are three areas which were geographically located in the middle of the prince's property according to Ezekiel's description of the land. The last two listed are introduced by *wm-*. Whether the prophet intended some special emphasis here is difficult to determine, but it is not unlikely given other usages of *wm-*, including six verses earlier by the same author. It should also be pointed out that the twofold correlative use of *wm-* is paralleled by *ù-ma . . . ù-ma* in Eblaite (TM.75.G.2420 rev. viii 9 [=line 439]).

Neh 5:11                    Please return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, *wm-* the money, the grain, the wine, and the oil that you have lent them.

Again *wm-* comes after an <sup>2</sup>*atnāḥ* and again it is prefixed to the final clause of a lengthy speech. Nehemiah ends his plaint to the nobles with the plea to return to the plebians what is rightfully theirs and moreover to cancel the debt of owed money and goods. Accordingly, the use of *wm-* here is most appropriate.

1 Kgs 14:14                this day *wm-* even now

Once again *wm-* follows an <sup>2</sup>*atnāḥ*. The author must certainly have wished to emphasize the imminence of Ahijah's statement that the house of Jeroboam would fall. He not only utilized *wm-* but the emphatic particle *gam* as well.<sup>35</sup>

2 Sam 16:5                As King David approached Bahurim, there came a man from Saul's clan named Shimei ben Gera, cursing as he came.

In the discussion on *wmqll* above, we were unsure on morphological grounds whether to admit the presence of a *wm-* form. On syntactic grounds, the evidence is equally ambiguous; however, the author may have used the emphasizing particle *wm-* to stress the severity of Shimei's sin, namely, cursing the king. If this be the case, then the use of *wm-* here is most fitting.

It is evident that Hebrew *wm-* had a specific syntactic function. This morpheme was an additional item in the arsenal of emphasizing particles available to Hebrew writers both of prose and of poetry. Whether or not its Eblaite cognate *ù-ma* had the same or similar function in the Tell Mardikh tablets is hard to determine due to the difficulty of interpreting the texts. But this is a detail which might be investigated as Ebla research progresses. Finally,

<sup>35</sup> For emphatic *gam*, see R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax* (Toronto, 1976) 63.



another avenue of inquiry which might be pursued is the possible if not probable use of *wm*- in other Northwest Semitic literatures, especially Ugaritic.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> M. Dahood, "Additional Notes on the *MRZH* Tablet," in L. R. Fisher, ed., *The Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets* (Rome, 1971) 53, has proposed reading *wm* in RS.1957.702 obv. 6 as conjunctive *waw* plus enclitic *mem*. This suggestion was offered independently of Andersen's proposal for Hebrew and, needless to say, several years before the discovery of the Ebla tablets. Dahood has been followed by B. Halpern, "A Landlord-Tenant Dispute at Ugarit?" *Maarav* 2 (1979-80) 138. However, R. E. Friedman, "The *MRZH* Tablet from Ugarit," *Maarav* 2 (1979-80) 193-96, is correct in rejecting this interpretation and analyzing *wm* as a dialectal form of *hm*, 'they.' As Friedman astutely notes, there are three such instances in RS.1957.702 where *w* occurs for *h*.

It has not escaped the attention of the writer that more than a millennium separates the attestation of this particle in Eblaite and its appearance in Hebrew. Moreover, a good number of the biblical passages cited are late (e.g., Ezekiel, Nehemiah). But this is not unparalleled, for various Late Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew characteristics find their reflexes not in earlier stages of Hebrew or in Aramaic but in earlier Canaanite and Ugaritic usage. See further E. Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem, 1982) 85, 128. The same holds for vocabulary items; cf. B. A. Levine, *Survivals of Ancient Canaanite in the Mishnah*, unpublished dissertation, Brandeis University, 1962.