SOME FALSE LEADS IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF LATE BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXTS:
THE CASES OF GENESIS 24 AND 1 SAMUEL 2:27–36

GARY A. RENDSBURG
gar4@cornell.edu
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-2502

One of the major achievements in the modern study of the Bible and the Hebrew language is the capacity for scholars to distinguish between Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH). Major strides in this direction were made already in the nineteenth century,\(^1\) while more solid philological work in the twentieth century elevated the discussion to even firmer ground.\(^2\)

The identification of late biblical texts is often quite obvious. Books such as Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Esther, Daniel, Qohelet, Haggai, Zechariah, and some others clearly date from the Persian period (or, in the case of Daniel, from the Hellenistic period). Occasionally the evidence is less obvious, but given the strong foundation of the SBH–LBH dichotomy, scholars have sought to expand the size of the late biblical corpus by identifying selected texts elsewhere in the Bible as exilic or postexilic compositions. This paper will have a look at two such attempts, with the hope of demonstrating that the learned authors who have made these specific proposals have been misled by some false leads.

---

\(^1\) GKC, 12–17 §21–v presented a general picture distinguishing the two strata of BH. In addition, many comments may be found in S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), as well as in the entries in BDB.

\(^2\) The leading scholar working in this area is Avi Hurvitz. Among his many publications, the most comprehensive are his monographs *Beyn Lashon le-Lashon* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1972) and *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel* (Paris: Gabalda, 1982).
I. Genesis 24

The first proposal is that of Alexander Rofé, who advocated a Persian period dating for Gen 24.\(^3\) Rofé argued along five independent lines—language, legal background, religious doctrine, literary form, and the moral of the story—which he believed converge to prove his point. I will treat only the first of these approaches, the language issue, for it is on this pillar, I think one may state safely, that the remaining ones rest.

Rofé put forward eight linguistic points, which in his mind have strong parallels in Aramaic and in Mishnaic Hebrew (MH).\(^4\) Since these latter two idioms form the basis for isolating LBH features, one can easily see how Rofé arrived at his conclusion. We will review these items one-by-one, but first let me state my alternative approach. Rofé is not incorrect; there are Aramaisms in Gen 24. But Rofé is wrong in utilizing these features to date the text to the Persian period, for he has not paid attention to the setting of the story. Abraham sends his trusted servant to Aram to procure a proper bride for Isaac. As occurs elsewhere in the Bible, so here: the Aramean setting serves as the catalyst for the inclusion of Aramaisms in the narrative. The best example of this technique occurs only a bit down the road in the book of Genesis, in the story of Jacob and Laban, where the language is filled with Aramaisms.\(^5\) With this in mind, let us look at the individual features noted by Rofé. Generally, Rofé presented the information in skeleton form; I have expanded the discussion to produce a fuller treatment.

---

\(^3\) Rofé has published his study in three versions: “Sippur 3Erusei Rivqa (Bereshit 24): Meḥqar Sifruti-Histori,” *Esheh Beer-Sheva* 1 (1976): 42–67; “La Compilazione di Gen. 24,” *BeO* 23 (1981): 161–65; and “An Enquiry into the Betrothal of Rebekah,” in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte: Festschrift für Rolf Rendtorff zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Blum, C. Macholz, and E. W. Stegemann; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 27–39. Of these, the Italian version is a mere sketch of the fuller treatment found in the Hebrew and English versions. Unfortunately, however, the existence of the larger two articles came to my attention (courtesy of Professor Rofé himself, in fact, during a conversation in December 2001 during a visit of mine to Jerusalem) only after I received the proofs for this article. That is to say, I based the present article on my reading of solely the Italian version. I was able to make some last-minute changes through the good graces of the *JBL* editorial staff, but I apologize for not being able to interact wholly with Professor Rofé’s longer studies. On the other hand, the differences among all three versions are not great.

\(^4\) See in the Hebrew version, pp. 49–52; in the Italian version, pp. 162–63; and in the English version, pp. 28–30. I will refrain from footnoting each individual point raised by Rofé. The entirety of the linguistic treatment may be found on these pages.

1. The expression אָלָלְיָה וֹתְמָה, “God of Heaven,” appears in vv. 3 and 7. This phrase occurs elsewhere in the Bible in Jonah 1:9; Ezra 1:2; Neh 1:4, 5; 2:4, 20; and 2 Chr 36:23, all under the influence of Aramaic אָלָלְיָה וֹתְמָה, attested in Ezra 5:12; 6:9, 10; 7:12, 21; Dan 2:18, 19, 37, 44, as well as in the Elephantine texts (e.g., Cowley 30:2 = TAD A 4.7:2). There is no doubt that it is an Aramaicism in the Hebrew texts in which it occurs.

2. The phrase אַרְשָרֶךָ לָא תָּקָה, “that you not take,” in v. 3, within the imprecation of what the servant must swear not to do, runs counter to the expected Hebrew wording תָּקָה אַרְשָרֶךָ.6 According to Rofé, Gen 24:3 presents a calque on the usual Aramaic wording, a point with which I agree. For example, Gen 21:23 לָא תָּקָה אַרְשָרֶךָ, “that you not deceive me,” is rendered by Tg. Onqelos as תָּקָה אַרְשָרֶךָ וְלָא; and 1 Sam 24:21 לָא תָּקָה אַרְשָרֶךָ וְלָא, “that you will not destroy my seed after me,” is rendered by Tg. Jonathan as תָּקָה אַרְשָרֶךָ וְלָא. In light of these examples, Abraham’s words to the servant אַרְשָרֶךָ לָא תָּקָה (indeed, this is the rendering of Tg. Onqelos).7

3. Rofé’s next example is the use of the verb בִּרְרָה in v. 11 meaning “to kneel,” or in this case, the only הִנְפִּיל of this root in the Bible, “to cause to kneel.” He noted Ps 95:6 and 2 Chr 6:13 as the only other two cases of בִּרְרָה “kneel” in BH (both in the qal), and claimed that both of these texts are late. Clearly, the latter passage dates to the Persian period, but I see no other evidence of LBH in Ps 95.8 Moreover, as Avi Hurvitz has emphasized, it is insufficient merely to demonstrate that a particular lexeme is attested only in late

---

6 Rofé also suggested לָא תָּקָה אַרְשָרֶךָ as an alternative standard Hebrew wording, but I do not believe that such a phrase is attested within oaths. The example in 1 Kgs 18:10, if this is what Rofé had in mind, represents another usage.

7 The only other possible example of this usage in the Bible, as far as I can determine, is 1 Kgs 22:16 לָא תָּקָה אַרְשָרֶךָ, “that you not speak to me,” in the mouth of the king of Israel (most likely Ahab, though he is mentioned by name only once [v. 20] in this story, and even then in a relatively indirect manner) to the prophet Micaiah. This would be an example of an Israeli Hebrew (IH) feature, with an isogloss created between IH and Aramaic. See G. A. Rendsburg, Israeli Hebrew in the Book of Kings (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, forthcoming).

8 I am not sure what has led Rofé, among others, to consider Psalm 95 a late composition. Its inclusion in section 4 of the book of Psalms is clearly insufficient grounds. Note that Hurvitz (Beyn Lashon le-Lashon) did not treat Psalm 95 in his study of the late psalms. In fact, the statement in v. 1, along with most scholars, place the shift from monolatry to monotheism in the exilic period. Accordingly, this passage, with its acceptance of the existence of other gods, suggests a pre-exilic date. For my views on the historical development of ancient Israelite religion, see G. A. Rendsburg, “An Essay on Israelite Religion,” in Approaches to Ancient Judaism (new series, vol. 8; ed. J. Neusner: Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 1–17.
texts. One also must demonstrate the linguistic contrast, that the putative LBH vocabulary item replaces a semantically equivalent SBH word or phrase. Since there is no SBH equivalent to הֵרָכֵב “kneel” (qal), “cause to kneel” (hip’il), 9 one must assume that this usage was attested throughout the history of the Hebrew language, with only a few attestations, but equally distributed throughout the corpus, two preexilic (Gen 24:11; Ps 95:6) and one postexilic (2 Chr 6:13). In short, this example is not relevant to the current discussion.

4. The verb אסֵנֵמ occurs in v. 17 in the hip’il, with the meaning “give drink.” The root occurs elsewhere in the Bible only in Job 39:24, in the pf el, where the meaning is “swallow” in a metaphorical sense, 10 with reference to the horse pummeling the ground. The presence of this root in Job is relevant to our discussion, since Job is another book replete with Aramaisms—though, again, not because it is late necessarily, but because the setting of the book, in the Transjordanian desert fringe, prompts such usages. 11 The broader Aramaic picture provides some further usages of the root אסנֵמ, though in truth one never finds the verb in regular or frequent use. The Samaritan Targum employs the root, in the form אסֵנֵמ, only in our passage, Gen 24:17. 12 Y. ‘Abodah Zarah 2:41c uses the root אסנֵמ to explain the root רָכֵב, “suck,” in m. ‘Abod. Zar. 2:5. 13 A byform occurs

9 The more frequently attested root הֲרָכֵב generally is translated as “bow” (qal), “cause to bow” (hip’il), though clearly it sometimes means the same as the root הֲרָכֵב (e.g., Ezra 9:5). But the root הֲרָכֵב does not replace the root הֵרָכֵב, which continues to be used throughout classical Hebrew, including in late biblical texts (e.g., Ezra 9:5; Esth 3:2, 5) and in postbiblical sources (e.g., 1QM 11:13; m. Yoma 6:2).


13 This is an instance of the later printed editions of the Talmud Yerushalmi preserving a better reading than the earlier witnesses. The Venice edition and the Leiden manuscript both read מִלַּסְמָה as one word (see P. Schäfer and H.-J. Becker, Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi, vol. 4 [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995], 269), whereas the standard printed edition of more recent vintage reads two separate words לו מִלַּסְמָה, “swallow it” (Talmud Yerushalmi [n.pl.: n.p., 1980], 7:29 [of the ‘Abodah Zarah section]). On the latter as the proper reading, see J. N. Epstein, Mavo’ le-Nusah ha-Mishna (2d ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964), 405; and G. A. Wewers, Avoda Zara: Götzdienst (Übersetzung des Talmud Yerushalmi 4/7; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1980), 72 n. 270. Prof. Shamma Friedman informs me that it is common in manuscripts of the Talmud Yerushalmi for two short words to be written as one longer word, that is, without the expected space. Our case of מִלַּסְמָה would be a prime example of this phenomenon.
as the root אֲשֶׁר in other Jewish Aramaic sources and in Syriac. In Tannaitic Hebrew, the form אַשְׁר predominates, but the forms אֲשֶׁר and אַשְׁר also occur; assuming that the root is not part of the standard Hebrew vocabulary, in any of its dialects, we may consider the presence of אֲשֶׁר in Tannaitic Hebrew to be a borrowing from Aramaic. The evidence is slender, but we concur with Rofé that this is an Aramaic lexical element.

5. The next item raised by Rofé is the use of the verb ויודע in v. 20 for “pour (liquids),” the only such case in the Bible. He noted correctly that this usage is typical of MH, e.g., m. 'Abod. Zar. 5:7 and m. Nid. 10:6, and he therefore concluded that the sole biblical usage points to the lateness of Gen 24. However, Rofé did not bring the Aramaic evidence into the picture. In Aramaic, this verb also occurs in the sense of “pour (liquids),” as well as “flow.” Note, for example, Pesiqta de-Rab Kahana 234, "לְֽהַֽעֲשָׂהֻת הַמּוֹשֶׁרֶךְ מַעְּשָׂה, "like the one who pours out a seah” Samaritan Targum to Gen 49:4, "תַּתֵּר הַמָּדִי, "you flow like water” (with metathesis from original מַדִּי), rendering the difficult Hebrew phrase אֵֽלִֽקְוָן, and אֵֽלִֽקְוָן, in Tg. Qohelet to Qoh 11:3, rendering Hebrew רְפֵין, with reference to the clouds emptying themselves of water. In light of these usages, one may assume that the root ושע in Gen 24:20 is another Aramaic feature in the narrative, not simply a sign of LBH. The MH employment of this verb for pouring liquids is most likely a sign of Aramaic influence.

6. The verb וָֽלַֽמִּלְצָה, “gaze, watch,” from the root חָסָה, in v. 21, is a hapax legomenon. Rofé related this word to the MH root חָסָה, meaning “pause, delay, tarry, wait.” The semantics are not perfect, but the connection is possible. However, the MH verb is almost certainly borrowed from Aramaic, as noted by

---

15 For details, see M. Moreshet, Leqsion ha-Po‘al she-Nithadesh bi-Lshon ha-Tanna‘im (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1980), 124. One passage, m. Šabb. 14:4, attests all three forms in different versions! Printed editions and the Yemenite tradition have וָֽלַֽמִּלְצָה; the Kaufman and Parma manuscripts have כְּשָׁה; and the Lowe manuscript and the ‘Arukh have כְּשָׁה (ibid., 124 n. 33).
16 BDB, 788.
17 M. Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1990), 419.
18 Tal, Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic, 2:664.
19 Jastrow 2:1116.
20 Not a pure hapax, of course, since the root כָּשָׁה is attested widely with an altogether different meaning—“ruin, destroy.” See BDB, 980–81. The meaning “gaze” is determined from the context, as well as from the LXX rendering with κατανοοῦν, “observe well, examine closely” (see H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, Greek-English Lexicon [2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1925], 1.900), used elsewhere to translate קָֽצָּה (Gen 34:1; Lev 14:36) and קָֽשָּׂה (Job 35:5) (see HRCS, 739).
M. H. Segal and M. Moreshet. If Rofé is correct in associating the two roots, BH ישת and MH-Aramaic ישת, then we may utilize this evidence as additional fodder for the Aramean coloring of the story. But beyond this, the author of our pericope selected this rare word for the specific purpose of producing alliteration with the roots ישת, “drink,” occurring seven times in the chapter (including nearby in vv. 18, 19, 22), and ישת, “draw (water),” also occurring seven times in the chapter (including nearby in vv. 19 and 20). Note especially the form ישתו in v. 20, which alliterates the most with ישת, following four words later, because of the presence of the 3d feminine singular preformative -ו (the alliteration is completed by the correspondence of the labial consonants bet and mem in these two words).

7. Rofé correctly noted that ישתו occurs in v. 38 with the sense of “but rather,” instead of the standard Hebrew form ישת ר. (Indeed, the Samaritan Pentateuch reads ישת ר.) Rofé related this usage, again correctly, to MH ישת, “but, however, rather, instead.” But once more he neglected to incorporate the Aramaic evidence. The form of MH ישת, vocalized ‘ellâ’, with lâ (and not lâ) as the second syllable, points to an Aramaic origin, as all scholars recognize. Middle Aramaic texts provide extensive evidence of ישת. The source of ישת is ישת קש, earlier Aramaic ישת קז, that is, the conditional particle קז/ק fol-

21 For full treatment, see Moreshet, Leqsiqon, 358 n. 10**. For an earlier reference, see M. H. Segal, A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), 51 = M. Z. Segal, Diqduq Lešhon ha-Mishna (Tel-Aviv: Devir, 1936), 108.

22 Jastrow (2.1527) believed that ישת in b. Hull. 75b means “gaze,” and he may be correct—in which case the semantic link between the two roots is firmer—but the context permits “pause” here too. Recent translations, in fact, understand ישת in this manner; see E. Cashdan, Hullin (London: Soncino, 1980), 150, with the rendering “was waiting”; and J. Neusner, Bacl Tractate Hullin (The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 328, with the rendering “hesitated.”

23 I am preparing a monograph on alliteration in the Bible, not only in poetry, where scholars are more inclined to see the technique in operation, but also in prose. I have delivered a public lecture on several occasions in recent years, entitled “Alliteration as a Compositional Factor in Biblical Hebrew Literature” (Association for Jewish Studies annual meeting, Boston, Mass., December 1997; Leiden University, January 2000; and Johns Hopkins University, February 2000), and I would be happy to supply a copy of the handout to any interested reader. See provisionally G. A. Rendsburg, “Word Play in Biblical Hebrew: An Eclectic Collection,” in Puns and Pandits: Word Play in the Bible and in Near Eastern Literature (ed. S. B. Noegel; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2000) 137–62, esp. 137–38.

24 See already Segal, Grammar, 147 = Segal, Diqduq, 170.

25 Ibid., for example.


27 See, e.g., Sokoloff, Dictionary, 58.
lowed by the negative particle אָלַל, with the meaning “but, however, rather, instead” as in Gen 24:38, is modeled after the Aramaic usage. The only other sure case of אָלַל in the Bible with this sense is Ps 131:2. In Ps 131:2 the expression clearly must mean “but rather,” as the psalmist contrasts the things that he does not do in v. 1 with the things that he does do in v. 2. Possibly Ps 131 is a late psalm, even though I see no glaring LBH features in this short composition, and thus אָלַל in v. 2 can be attributed to Aramaic influence. In addition, however, we also must reckon with a literary purpose. Since the word אָלַל occurs three times in v. 1 (and see also the lamed-aleph combination in the word הַמְּכָרָה, the poet may have opted for אָלַל instead of SBH כ ב thereby to include one additional use of the word אָלַל. Regardless of how we assess Ps 131:2, the bottom line is this: אָלַל in Gen 24:38 is a calque on the Aramaic phrase אָלַל כ (later אָלַל כ, yielding eventually אָלַל כ, which then was borrowed into MH as a regularly occurring feature).

8. The final item identified by Rosé is the noun מָכָרָה, “choice gifts,” in v. 53; elsewhere in the Bible it is attested in Ezra 1:6; 2 Chr 21:3; 32:23. The word מָכָרָה is related to the shorter noun מָכָר, “choice fruit,” attested five times in Deut 33:13–16, the blessing to Joseph, and three times in Song of Songs (4:13, 16; 7:14). This distribution alone points to an IH (= Israeli Hebrew)

28 Three cases of אָלַל כ are attested in Egyptian Aramaic, though the meaning in these passages is “if not, otherwise.” For the passages and bibliography, see DNWSI 1:286 (sub definition 3). See now also T. Muraoka and B. Porten, A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 323. Although the two elements of the phrase retain their individual meanings in these cases, that is, כ = “if” and אָלַל = “no, not,” one can presume that in Old Aramaic אָלַל כ also could mean “but, however, rather, instead,” in line with the sense of the later Aramaic form אָלַל כ. 29 Otherwise אָלַל כ means simply “if such-and-such does not happen” (see previous note). An additional force is present in Ezekiel on a number of occasions, where אָלַל כ is used as an emphatic particle “surely, truly”; see M. Greenberg, Ezekiel 1–20 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 69. This meaning also may be present in Deut 32:30; for a recent treatment of this verse, see P. Sanders, The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32 (OTS 37; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 211. Normally, A. Even-Shoshan is very good about distinguishing the different nuances of words and phrases (Qonqordansya Hadasa [Jerusalem: Qiryat Sepher, 1992]), but in this case he lumps all instances of אָלַל כ together (pp. 80–81). Finally, see BDB, 50.

30 As is well known, many of the psalms numbered 101–150 are dated to the postexilic period. Indeed, all the psalms discussed by Hurvitz, Byn Lashon le-Lashon, are within this span. 31 Alternatively, Ps 131 may be a northern composition. The following two psalms (Pss 132–133) reflect Israeli Hebrew (IH) (see G. A. Rendsburg, Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990], 87–93), and there is a tendency for northern compositions to follow each other in the corpus (Korah psalms, Asaph psalms, Pss 140–141). However, just as there are no other signs of LBH in the short Ps 131, there also are no other signs of IH.

32 Note that the form is written defective as מָכָרָה in Gen 24:53; it appears plene as מָכָרָה in its other biblical occurrences. I will spell it with כָּלָה throughout for the sake of clarity and consistency.
origin for דבר (we will discuss IH further in the second section of this article). The evidence for Song of Songs as a northern composition, including a discussion of דבר, will be presented in S. B. Noegel and G. A. Rendsburg, Studies in Song of Songs (work in progress). I have presented the linguistic data on several occasions, most recently at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in December 2001.

34 In addition to the sources cited in the next two footnotes, see Jastrow 2:726; and C. Brockelmann, Lexicon Syriacum (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1928), 373.

35 For the latter two sources, see Sokoloff, Dictionary, 259.


in an inscription from Tel el-‘Oreme (on the Sea of Galilee) dated to the eighth century: יֶדֶם הַנִּיַּר, “jar of the gate”;39 (b) it occurs very frequently (53 times, to be specific) in MH,40 representing a northern or Galilean dialect of Hebrew in Roman times;41 and (c) cognates occur in Ugaritic and Phoenician.42 But more important for the topic at hand, the word יֶדֶם is also well attested in Aramaic, in diverse dialects.43 Accordingly, as with item 8 above, we may posit a lexical isogloss between IH and Aramaic.

To repeat once more: Rofé was correct to note the presence of Aramaisms in Gen 24. He erred in two ways, however. First, he pushed the MH connection at times without recognizing that the MH evidence in these cases was due to Aramaic influence. And, second and more important, he reached the wrong conclusion regarding the Aramaisms in Gen 24. As I stated above, he neglected to consider the literary setting of this narrative. The Aramaisms in this narrative are not evidence for a late date, but rather are to be explained as the author’s desire to provide an Aramean coloring for a story set in Aram.44 The author even went so far as to place some of these Aramaisms in Abraham’s mouth (items 1 and 2). Abraham is sending one of his servants to Aram to

41 G. A. Rendsburg, “The Galilean Background of Mishnaic Hebrew,” in The Galilee in Late Antiquity (ed. L. I. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1992), 225–40. Since publishing this article, I have done further research, mainly on the lexical end. The main outcome of this research was a public lecture given on several occasions in Israel, most importantly at the workshop entitled “Diqduq Leshon Ḥakhamim u-Millonah,” organized by Moshe Bar-Asher, held at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, August 1996. An abstract of my presentation “Ha-Reqa’ ha-Ge’ografi ve-ha-Histori shel Millon Leshon Ḥakhamim” appears in the workshop publication ʻiyunim bi-Lshon Ḥakhamim (Jerusalem: Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1996), 108–9. I would be happy to send a copy of the abstract (since the volume is not readily available) and the lecture handout to any interested party.
43 See DNWSI I:487–88; Jastrow 1:612; Sokoloff, Dictionary, 250; and Payne Smith, Dictionary, 205 (variant form kēdānā).
procure a bride for Isaac. We know that Abraham brought servants with him from Haran (see Gen 12:5), and no doubt he obtained more servants later (Hagar would be such a person, for example). Most likely the servant that he sent to Haran was from the former group, someone who knew the environs and could speak the language.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, when Abraham addresses the servant, the text produces the conversation in Hebrew, but it includes a sprinkling of Aramaisms among Abraham’s words. When the servant speaks to Rebekah and her family, again the text is in Hebrew, naturally, but the author incorporated three Aramaisms into his speech as well (items 4, 7, and 9). These conversations were in Aramaic (certainly the latter exchanges, and perhaps also Abraham’s exchange with the servant), and the author of Gen 24 attempted to capture that mode of discourse by pepperling the conversations with Aramaic features.\textsuperscript{46} But he goes even further, because the narrative as a whole includes Aramaic features (items 5, 6, 8, and 9), all to give the flavor of the Aramean setting. All of this is present in the story of Jacob and Laban as well, with Aramaisms in both direct speech and third person narration.\textsuperscript{47}

But notwithstanding all of the above, perhaps Rofé is correct. After all, I myself said above that one needs to show linguistic contrast between LBH and SBH before reaching a definitive conclusion. Accordingly, I now turn to additional evidence, specifically, the linguistic evidence that demonstrates that Gen 24 is indeed written in classical Hebrew. My former student Richard M. Wright wrote his doctoral dissertation on the language of the so-called Yahwist source,\textsuperscript{48} to which source critics would attribute all or most of Gen 24. Wright showed that, without exception, whenever a relevant LBH–SBH linguistic contrast occurs in “J,” the SBH form prevails. Examples (not a total list!) relevant to Gen 24 include the following:\textsuperscript{49}

(a) the regular \textit{waw} consecutive in vv. 39, 42, 45, 47, 48 (3x), against no examples of the long \textit{waw} consecutive form prevalent in LBH

\textsuperscript{45}The midrashic tradition, of course, identified the servant with רַמְצִי (see Tg. Ps.-J. at Gen 24:2; b. Ta'an. 4a; b. Yoma 28b; Wayyiqra Rab. 37:4; Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer 16, etc.). Eliezer’s name may indicate that he hailed from Damascus, that is, Aram. Did Abraham obtain him already in Haran? Did he obtain him en route from Haran to Canaan, when he passed through Damascus? Naturally, we do not know the answers to these questions.

\textsuperscript{46}When I state that “we know that Abraham brought servants with him from Haran,” “these conversations were in Aramaic,” and so on, I am not judging the historicity of the patriarchal narratives. Rather, I simply am judging the story on its own terms, that is, the story as a literary creation.


\textsuperscript{48}R. M. Wright, “Linguistic Evidence for the Pre-Exilic Date of the Yahwist Source of the Pentateuch” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1998). In what follows, following Wright, I cite examples only from verses that a consensus (using Driver, Noth, von Rad, and Eissfeldt as the guide) would attribute to “J,” namely, vv. 1–6, 8–9, 11, 18, 21–67.

\textsuperscript{49}Details for these items may be found in Wright, “Linguistic Evidence,” on pp. 40, 71, 89, 98, 105, 123, 140, 178. I use the term “LBH” in the following enumeration, but of course many of these items are attested in postbiblical Hebrew as well (Ben Sira, Qumran, MH, etc.).
(b) the presence of יד וּ in v. 30, against the absence of יד וּ before this form as typical of LBH
(c) the use of הָלֵךְ, "lest," in v. 6, against the LBH form לא לָמֶךְ
(d) the use of ברך, "blessed be the LORD," in v. 27, against either of the LBH phrases בָּרָכֶנּוּ שֶׁיִּהוּ אָבִיָּתָו or בָּרָכֶנּוּ שֶׁיִּהוּ אֶלְּוהִי אָבִיָּתָו
(e) the use of the phrase לֵךְ אָשֶׁר, "to take a wife," in vv. 37, 38, 40, 48, 67, against the LBH expression לָמֶךְ אָשֶׁר
(f) the use of הָרַג, "hurry," in v. 18, against the LBH equivalent בָּהֵל
(g) the use of לֵךְ, "take," in vv. 22, 51, 61, 65, against the LBH equivalent בָּהֵל

To some extent, this evidence amounts to an argumentum e silentio, because one could argue that SBH features can continue in LBH, and indeed that is correct. But the main point of Wright’s work is that if “J” were written in the postexilic period, one would expect at least one feature of LBH to appear within this extremely large source. Or to limit this point to our story, if Gen 24 were written in the postexilic period, one would expect at least one feature of LBH—that is, apart from the Aramaisms discussed above, which serve a stylistic purpose—to appear within this very long chapter (the longest narrative chapter in the Torah [only Num 7 is longer, owing to the repetitive language of the gifts from the tribal leaders]). But none are to be found.

There is still more that one can say to bolster the case for a preexilic date of Gen 24. Frank Polak has recently published several studies of great significance for the dating of biblical prose texts. Polak utilizes a vast array of data in his project, including (a) the ratio of nouns to verbs in a given section, abbreviated NV; and (b) among verbs, the ratio of nominal forms (participle and infinitive construct) to finite forms (suffix conjugation, prefix conjugation, imperative, and infinitive absolute), abbreviated NF. Polak’s statistics show clearly that Persian-period texts have a higher NV and a higher NF, while the classical stratum of biblical prose has a lower NV and a lower NF. For example, the book of Ezra has the highest NV ratio at .772, while the Samson cycle has the lowest NV ratio at .581; the book of Ezra also has the highest NF ratio at .383, while the Jacob story has the lowest NF ratio at .119. In addition, Polak paid attention to the use of some specific verbs within the narrative corpus: he noted that לָמֶךְ, הָלֵךְ, and הָרַג are frequent in earlier compositions, whereas the contrastive terms

50 To be technical, this latter phrase does not occur in the Bible, but it forms the basis of very similar expressions (Ps 72:19; 113:2; 145:1, 21; Job 1:21; Neh 9:5; etc.).
52 Polak, “Oral and the Written,” 70.
and 생גוים, and predominate in postexilic texts. We may utilize these new tools developed by Polak for the present project.

Polak already used the NV and NF ratios to date the Abraham stories as a whole to the classical stratum. The NV ratio of .614 and the NF ratio of .150 are clearly within the bounds of early biblical compositions. The data for Gen 24 specifically, according to my calculations, are as follows: 394 nouns and 263 verbs, for an NV ratio of .600; and 44 nominal verbs and 219 finite verbs, for an NF ratio of .167. Both of these figures place the chapter firmly within the classical stratum.

As to the verbs identified by Polak for the purposes of distinguishing classical narrative from postexilic narrative, note the following statistics for Gen 24, as compared to the overall data for the classical and postexilic strata of biblical narrative (including a third verb for each group, as a control):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>עדים</th>
<th>ידוע</th>
<th>לֶאַה</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>1x Gen 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370x</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>classical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88x</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>postexilic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>עדים</th>
<th>ידוע</th>
<th>לֶאַה</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30x</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>Gen 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>982x</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>classical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184x</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>postexilic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>עדים</th>
<th>ידוע</th>
<th>לֶאַה</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8x</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>Gen 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>396x</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>classical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85x</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>postexilic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54 Polak also developed another, much more complicated tool for analyzing narratives, based on the use of expanded noun phrases, embedded (dependent) clauses, and other syntactic issues (“Oral and the Written,” 76–100). I have not analyzed the material under discussion in this article according to this system. However, Professor Polak kindly sent me his data for a section of Gen 24, namely, vv. 1–20, and the analysis indicates that these verses belong firmly in the classical stratum (e.g., 25.88% embedded clauses, 41.12% expanded clauses [the latter occur at a much higher frequency in Persian-era texts]). I take this opportunity to thank Professor Polak not only for this specific information, but also for a lively e-mail exchange during December 2000.
55 I am aware of the danger in employing statistical analysis in a short section of the Bible, since any number of idiosyncratic usages could skew the data. I am confident in the present instance, however, because (a) as noted above, Gen 24 is the longest narrative chapter in the Bible, and (b) the data for this chapter conform perfectly with the data presented by Polak for the Abraham cycle as a whole.
57 Technically, the root עָדִּים occurs twice, in vv. 63 and 64, but both occur in the expression עָדִּים לָאַה, “lift one’s eyes,” which is not relevant to this analysis.
Obviously, as indicated (see n. 55 above), one must be cautious, given the limited size of Gen 24, especially when comparison is made with the very large corpora presented here. Nevertheless, the data show that with these three lexical discriminants, Gen 24 follows the pattern for the classical stratum, while it diverges from the pattern for the postexilic or Persian-period stratum.

The overwhelming weight of the linguistic testimony, using both Wright's material and Polak's material, demonstrates that Gen 24 belongs to the classical stratum of biblical narrative. Polak further argues, and I agree with him, that this stratum antedates the Mesha Stele, written in the mid-ninth century B.C.E. 58 We are dealing here with texts composed in the early monarchic period. 59 In light of this evidence, the Aramaisms in the chapter are to be explained as a literary device adding local color to the story set in Aram.

II. 1 Samuel 2:27–36

The second proposal is that of Marc Brettler, who in a recent article proposed a four-stage development underlying the final product of 1 Sam 1–2. 60 Brettler posited (a) a Base Text of 1:1–2:11a (minus Hannah's prayer), 2:18–21; (b) 2:12–17 as Addition A, added as a midrashic explication of the sins of Eli's sons; (c) 2:22–25 as Addition B, as an alternative tradition concerning said sins; and (d) 2:27–36 as Addition C, added by an exilic editor interested in legitimating the house of Zadok. The remaining verses, 2:11b and 2:26, function as Wiederaufnahmen reflecting 2:18a and 2:21b, respectively. 61

I have a host of reasons for doubting this schema. Prime among them is the integration of a variety of literary interconnections embedded into the story as a whole, associations that cut across the boundaries of Brettler's hypothesized sources. Brettler himself cited Robert Polzin in this regard, 62 to which may be added the observations of Moshe Garsiel. 63 Along the same lines, Brettler noted that other scholars view the Wiederaufnahme device as an authorial technique, not as a redactional one. 64

61 See the convenient chart, ibid., 612.
64 Such scholars include S. Talmon, B. O. Long, and P. A. Quick, all cited by Brettler, "Composition of 1 Samuel 1–2," 604 n. 14.
In addition, there are language issues that point to the unity of these two chapters (again, excluding Hannah’s prayer, which undoubtedly has been incorporated into the text, though in my estimation this occurred at the authorial level). For example, one may note the alliteration of words with ‘ayin and lamed spanning the latter part of Brettler’s Base Text and his Addition A, that is, 1 Sam 2:11–21: דָּוִד (for expected אָוִד) in vv. 11, 65 דְּוִדֶּל in v. 12, in v. 14, and דְּוִדֶּל in v. 19, all working in conjunction with דְּוִדֶּל, דְּוִדֶּל (‘Eli’) in vv. 11, 12, 20. 66

Furthermore, it should be noted that 1 Sam 2:15–23 includes five instances of the prefix conjugation with paragogic nun (נֵעֲנָּה in v. 15, נֵעֲנָּה in v. 16 in v. 22, נֵעֲנָּה in v. 22, and נֵעֲנָּה in v. 23), bridging Brettler’s Addition A and Addition B. As S. R. Driver noted, this form “sometimes abounds in particular sections (e.g., Gen. 18, 28–32: Joel 2, 4–9).” 67 The present pericope would be another instance; to assign the two attestations in vv. 15–16 to one source and the three occurrences in vv. 22–23 to another source runs counter to Driver’s observation. Moreover, none of these five instances of the paragogic nun appears in pause, though this form occurs in such settings with high frequency. 68 In fact, three of the five are with conjunctive accents (v. 15, v. 16, and the first one in v. 22), and two are with mildly disjunctive accents (second one in v. 22 on pa’sha, v. 23 on tifha). This makes the use of these five cases of paragogic nun even more striking, since they occur in unexpected conditions. 69

In sum, for all the reasons stated here, one should assume a single author for 1 Sam 1–2. I admit that in the scholarly divide between those who assume textual unity until proven otherwise versus those who are receptive to texts being formed by accretion, I side ardently with the former position. But regardless of where one situates oneself in this divide, given the evidence that I have

65 I understand completely that the interchange of אָוִד and דָּוִד is common in the Bible, especially in the book of Samuel (see BDB, 41). But the verb אָוַד almost never governs דָּוִד meaning “to.” See DCH 2:552.
66 The play on דָּוִד and בָּדֵל was noted by M. Garsiel, Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 214.
69 Another example of the paragogic nun, on the rarer 2d feminine singular prefix conjugation, occurs in 1 Sam 1:14, with the 'attah accent. This instance is more distant from the cluster in 2 Sam 2:15–23, and it may not be relevant, but I note it nonetheless.
presented in the preceding paragraphs, I trust the reader will agree that Brettler’s reconstruction must remain in the realm of the theoretical.

But the above is not my main point in this article. Rather, I would like to focus my attention on Brettler’s Addition C, 1 Sam 2:27–36, which he dates to the exilic period, as noted above. Brettler identified three signs of LBH in these ten verses.70 As we did above with Rofé’s list, we shall treat these three items one by one. But once more, let me state my alternative approach first. I will attempt to show that not only this unit of ten verses, but indeed all of 1 Sam 1–2, reflects Israeli Hebrew (IH). The heroes are from the territory of Ephraim, and the action centers on Shiloh in Ephraim, so it would not be surprising to find these chapters composed in the northern dialect of ancient Hebrew.

1. The infinitive absolute רָאָתְנִי, “I chose,” is used in v. 28 in place of the finite verb, continuing the tense of the previous finite verb, in this case, רָאָטַנִי, “I revealed,” in v. 27. But this is not an LBH feature per se. This usage is common in Ugaritic,71 Phoenician,72 and the Amarna letters from Byblos and other northern sites.73 In preexilic biblical texts, this use of the infinitive absolute occurs much more frequently in northern settings than in southern ones.74 Judges 7:19 is part of the Gideon cycle; our passage focuses on Eli the priest at Shiloh; 1 Sam 22:13 concerns Saul of Benjamin;75 1 Kgs 22:30 deals with a northern king (almost undoubtedly Ahab); 2 Kgs 3:16, 4:43 are part of the

73 For Byblos, see W. L. Moran, “The Use of the Canaanite Infinitive Absolute as a Finite Verb in the Amarna Letters from Byblos,” JCS 4 (1950): 169–72 (ten examples are given). Three additional examples, two from the Beqa‘ (EA 173:12, 185:72) and one from Ashtaroth in Bashan (EA 364:21), were adduced by S. Izre’el in an unpublished paper “Ve-shuv ʿal (yqṭl ʿnk u-Maqbilav ba-Leshonot ha-Kenaʿaniyot” (my thanks to Prof. Izre’el for sharing his paper with me).
75 Benjamin represents a border area, between Israel and Judah, and its dialect was most likely a border dialect, with features of both IH and JH (= Judahite Hebrew). See Rendsburg, Psalms, 4 n. 18. Relevant biblical texts are Ps 80:3, which links Benjamin with Ephraim and Manasseh; Judg 5:14, which places Benjamin and Ephraim in parallelism; and 1 Kgs 12:20–21, which suggests that Benjamin was ready to join the northern kingdom of Israel, though ultimately it became part of the southern kingdom of Judah.
Elisha cycle; Amos 4:5 is from a northern prophet; and Prov 12:7; 15:22; 17:12 appear in a northern composition. In addition, 1 Kgs 9:25 is to be explained as the result of Phoenician scribes recording the activities of Solomon’s reign. At first glance, Lev 25:14 would appear to be a southern text (as is almost the entire Torah), and yet nearby one finds two other IH features, the shift of short \( a \) to \( o \) in \( אַלָּמָה \) in v. 16 (in line with Phoenician phonology), and the retention of -\( at \) in \( נָתַן \) in v. 21, suggesting, quite unexpectedly, that the Jubilee pericope is of Israeli origin. The only southern preexilic attestation of the infinitive absolute in place of a finite verb are Exod 8:11; 1 Sam 25:26; Isa 5:5; 37:19. All of this goes to show that this feature is a trait of IH. On the other hand, Brettler is correct that the feature is common in LBH. It occurs in the following passages: Isa 42:20; 59:4; Ezek 23:30, 36, 47; Hag 1:6, 9; Zech 3:4; 7:5; 12:10; Job 15:35; Qoh 4:2; 8:9; 9:11; Esth 2:3; 3:13; 6:9; 8:9; 9:1, 6, 12, 16 (3x), 17 (2x), 18 (2x); Dan 9:5, 11; Neh 7:3; 8:8; 9:8, 13; 1 Chr 5:20; 16:36; 2 Chr 28:19; 31:10. Some of these passages are both late and northern (e.g., Neh 9 and Qoheleth), but the great majority are products of the exilic and postexilic Judahite community. The explanation for the appearance of this northernism in LBH was submitted by C. H. Gordon: it is to be attributed to the influence of IH on JH (= Judahite Hebrew) during the 500s and beyond in the wake of the reunification of northern and southern exiles in Mesopotamia. In short, if an example of this feature appears in 1 Sam 2:28, it is not to be seen as evidence of LBH, but rather of IH. This is especially so given the evidence based on Polak’s work that we will present below.

2. The form \( לֹֽהַרְבִּים \), “to make yourselves fat,” in v. 29 is the only verbal form of the root \( בָּרֵך \) II in the Bible. As Brettler noted, it occurs more commonly in Aramaic and in postbiblical Hebrew. In Aramaic, the corresponding \( אֲפֵל \), with the meaning “strengthen, make well, be healthy,” is widely attested in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, as the following passages indicate: b. Sukkah


78 Note that these chapters include the Phoenician month names Ziv, Bul, and Ethanim, in 1 Kgs 6:1, 37, 38; 8:2. See also the Phoenician-style orthography of \( הָשְׁמוּ \), “I built,” in 1 Kgs 8:48 (Ketiv). There are still other Phoenicianisms in these chapters, and I hope to present them in an article in the future. For the present, see provisionally Rendsburg, Psalms, 29–30.

79 On the former, see Rendsburg, “Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9”; for the latter, see Davila, “Qoheleth and Northern Hebrew,” as noted above, n. 37.

44b; b. Ta’an. 21b; b. Mo‘ed Qat. 3a; b. Yebam. 97a; b. ‘Abod. Zar. 50b; b. Sid. 47b; etc. It also occurs in a few passages in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (y. Sanh. 26c; Eikha Rab. 59:14). Tannaitic Hebrew sources reveal six attestations of the hip’il of אבר, e.g., m. Šabb. 19:5; t. B. Qam. 9:3 (2x). While in Amoraic Hebrew sources, one finds the verb in a few more passages (y. Pe‘ah 17d; b. Hul. 33a; b. Me‘il. 17a). I posit the following. The root אבר, “strengthen, make well, be healthy” (hip’il), was limited to IH. It appears in one place in the Bible, in a story set in Shiloh, and it occurs six times in MH, which, as noted above, represents the dialect of the Galilee in particular or of northern Israel in general during the Roman period. The wider use of this root in Aramaic (in the corresponding אפרל), albeit only in later sources, reveals a lexical isogloss between IH and Aramaic.

3. Brettler opined that אבר, “will come,” occurs in v. 36 in place of the expected converted form אבר. But there is nothing unusual with the phrase אבר בבר, “and it will be, whoever is left in your house will come to prostrate himself to him.” Compare, for example, Gen 4:14 אבר ובר, “and it will be, whoever finds me will kill me.” If anything, since אבר greatly disappears in LBH—there are only five cases in the late narrative books (Neh 6:13; 10:39; 1 Chr 17:11; 2 Chr 13:9; 19:10)—one cannot argue that this syntagma in 1 Sam 2:36 reflects LBH.

Accordingly, of the three linguistic items advanced by Brettler, two are evidence for IH (items 1 and 2) and one is not germane (item 3). As with Rosé, so with Brettler: he was correct to identify an unusual grammatical trait (item 1) and an unusual lexical trait (item 2), but he erred in attributing their presence in the text to a late date for 1 Sam 2:27–36. Just as Rosé failed to consider the Aramean setting of Gen 24, Brettler failed to recognize the Ephraimite setting of 1 Sam 1–2. In light of the geographical location of this narrative, Brettler’s

81 Jastrow 1:192.
82 Sokoloff, Dictionary, 112.
83 See Ma’agarim; and HDHL microfiche 030, plate 5995.
84 Jastrow 1:192.
85 That is, MH1, the language of the Tannaitic sources, when Hebrew was still a living language. MH2 is the language of the Amoraic sources, composed when Hebrew had ceased to be spoken.
86 I have translated rather literally, attempting to capture the use of אבר, but other translations render this passage a bit more smoothly, e.g., RSV “And every one who is left in your house shall come to implore him,” NJV “And all the survivors of your house shall come and bow low to him.”
87 S. R. Driver, A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew (London: Oxford University Press, 1892; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Livonia, MI: Dove, 1998), 147. Though Driver added that the waw consecutive form אברין, “would have been equally idiomatic.”
first two points, along with other items to be identified below, are testimony to
the presence of IH in these chapters.

The additional IH items in 1 Sam 1–2 are the following:

(a) The root רָכָה, “vex,” occurs in 1:6 (in the hip‘il) and again only in Ezek
27:35 (in the qal) with the meaning “be disturbed.”

This distribution suggests

a northern lexiceme. The former focuses on an Ephramite family; the latter

appears in the prophet's oracle to Tyre. We have no evidence for this root in our

meager remains of Phoenician, but the prophets commonly peppered their

speeches to the foreign nations with forms and words distinctive of the lan-

guages of their addressees. The root רָכָה, “be disturbed, vex,” is better

attested in MH and in Aramaic. In postbiblical Hebrew, the verb occurs rela-

tively frequently in Tannaitic texts, in the hitpael form meaning “be disturbed,

be discontented” (see especially Sifre BeMidbar 84–95, with seventeen attesta-

tions), and this usage continues in Amoraic texts, e.g., b. Meg. 6a. Also com-

mon in MH is the noun form רָכָה, “complaint, quarrel, disturbance,” with

eighteen occurrences in Tannaitic texts (e.g., m. B. Meši‘a 4:6; 6:1; t. Soṭah

6:1; Sifra BeHar 3:1), and additional ones in Amoraic texts (e.g., b. Šabb.

56b). In Aramaic, the verb רָכָה (in various conjugations) is used in the Targumim to

translate a series of Hebrew verbs. For examples, see Tg. Onqelos, Tg.

Pseudo-Jonathan, and Tg. Neofiti to Num 14:36; 16:11, rendering רָכָה

(Queri), רָכָה (Qere), respectively, “cause to complain, cause to rebel”;

Tg. Onqelos and Tg. Neofiti to Deut 1:27, rendering רָכָה, “sulk, brood, murrup”; and Tg. Psalms to

Ps 55:3, rendering רָכָה, “vexed, troubled.” Though these few examples do not

80 We do not have to decide whether רָכָה, “vex,” is the same root as רָכָה, “thunder.” Moreover, comparative

Semitic does not allow us to settle the question. Arabic and South Arabian provide the etyma for רָכָה, “vex,” since רָכָה means “force, compel, coerce” in Arabic, “ill will, disfavor, spite” in Sabaic (attested once as a noun form), and “criticize” in Jibbali. In Ge’ez one finds רָכָה, “thunder,” but since רָכָה and רָכָה have merged in Ge’ez, one cannot determine the original middle root consonant of this form. Ugaritic provides two personal names יָרָכִּמ and יָרָכִּמ (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartin, Diccarnario de la lengua ugarítica, 2:387); it is tempting to associate the verbal root רָכִּמ with “thunder,” but one cannot be sure. The attempt by M. Dietrich and O. Loretz (“Die Bannung von Schlangengift [KTU 1.100 und KTU 1.107: 7b–13a.19b–20],” UF 12 [1980]: 157, 161) to relate רָכִּמ in KTU 1.100:61 to רָכָה, “be disturbed,” is tempting, but the divergent third consonant remains to be explained. For an alternative approach, relating רָכִּמ to the root רָכָה, “be green, be verdant,” see E. Lipiński, “La Légende Sacrée de la Conjonction des Morsures de Ser-


82 See Ma’agarim; and HDHL, microfiche 084, plates 17103–04.

83 Jastrow 2:1487.

84 Jastrow 2:1701.
give a full picture of the Aramaic evidence, since ירה is the commonest verb used in the Targumim whenever the Israelites complain or murmur, a common motif in the Torah.\textsuperscript{95} Finally, note that the root occurs regularly in Syriac.\textsuperscript{96} The totality of the evidence demonstrates that Hebrew ירה is an IH lexeme: it is limited in the Bible to the birth story of Samuel and to a prophetic address to Tyre; the verbal root and the noun form ירהמשה are regular in MH, the northern dialect of the Roman period; and the root occurs regularly in Aramaic.

(b) Three times in 1:8 we encounter the use of ירה me\textsuperscript{h} before non-laryngeal consonants, in the form ירה lāme\textsuperscript{h}, “why,” all in the mouth of Elkanah. The distribution of this form in the Bible indicates that it is an IH feature.\textsuperscript{97}

(c) The unusual infinitive construct ירה, “drinking,” occurs in 1:9. While this looks like the infinitive absolute, since it occurs after the preposition ירה, one must assume it to be an infinitive construct.\textsuperscript{98} Similar forms occur in Judg 13:21 and 1 Sam 3:21.\textsuperscript{99} The former occurs in the Samson cycle (and while Dan at this stage is still in the south, the setting is non-Judahite nonetheless), and the latter again concerns Samuel at Shiloh.

(d) The preposition ירה appears for expected ל in 1:10 and in 2:11. I commented on the latter occurrence above, where I noted that alliteration may be at work. I also noted that this interchange is common in the Bible (see n. 65). However, here I should add that the interchange of the prepositions ירה and ל is much more frequent in northern contexts (see, e.g., 1 Kgs 13:29; 17:21, 22; 18:46; 20:43; 2 Kgs 7:7; 8:3 [2x]; 9:3, 6 [3x]).\textsuperscript{100}


\textsuperscript{96} Payne Smith, \textit{Dictionary}, 546.


\textsuperscript{98} See E. Lipiński (\textit{Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar} [OLA 80; Leuven: Peeters, 1997], 510), who states that the infinitive absolute “does not stand in the construct state nor is it governed by a preposition.”

\textsuperscript{99} See Joion-Muraoka 2:421.

\textsuperscript{100} See the detailed treatment in Rendsburg, \textit{Israeli Hebrew in the Book of Kings} (forthcoming).
(e) The noun מִגְדִּים, “pot, kettle, vessel,” in 2:14 is an IH lexeme. The word appears elsewhere in 2 Kgs 10:7 in an Israelian context, and in Ps 81:7, within the Asaph collection of northern psalms.101 In addition, the term occurs three times in the book of Jeremiah, the prophet from Benjamin (24:1, 2 [2x]),102 and once in the book of Job (41:12). The only attestation that cannot be ascribed to a northern setting is 2 Chr 35:13, though here we can offer the explanation of Aramaic influence.103 In Aramaic, the word מִגְדִּים appears more commonly. It occurs in Palmyrene,104 Palestinian Jewish Aramaic,105 Babylonian Jewish Aramaic,106 Syriac,107 and Mandaic.108 As we have seen on other occasions, concerning other words, so in this case: the Targumim frequently use מִגְדִּים to translate a more common Hebrew word, namely, מֵסֶךְ, “pot.” Thus, for example, Tg. Neofiti uses מֵסֶךְ to render מִגְדִּים in Exod 16:3; 27:3; 36:3; Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan does likewise in all three passages (and also introduces מִגְדִּים in two other places: Lev 8:31 and Num 6:18); while Tg. Onqelos uses מֵסֶךְ to render מִגְדִּים only at Exod 16:3 (though it too introduces מִגְדִּים in Num 6:18); and Tg. Jonathan opts for מִגְדִּים as the equivalent of מֵסֶךְ in 2 Kgs 4:38–41 (5x); Zech 14:20–21; etc. In addition, dd is used extensively (over one hundred examples!) in Ugaritic as the common word for “pot, vessel”; as one would expect, it is especially well attested in administrative texts.109 The distribution of מִגְדִּים in the Bible, along with the well-attested Aramaic and Ugaritic cognates, converge to demonstrate that the word is an IH vocable.110

101 Rendsburg, Psalms, 73–81. I neglected to include this feature in my monograph on the northern psalms. I am indebted to my graduate student Colin Smith for bringing this IH feature to my attention.

102 See n. 75 above concerning the Benjaminite dialect.

103 The unusual plural forms attested for מִגְדִּים, namely, the construct form מִגְדֵּי in Jer 24:1 and the absolute form מִגְדֵּי in 2 Chr 35:13, are not relevant to our discussion. I am interested here only in the use of the word מִגְדִּים, in singular or plural, regardless of form. Accordingly, I refrain from commenting upon these irregular plural forms.


105 Sokoloff, Dictionary, 140.

106 Jastrow 1:283.

107 Payne Smith, Dictionary, 85.


110 In the above discussion, I have not distinguished between the two meanings of מִגְדִּים. More frequently it means “cooking pot,” and thus one can note the clear opposition with מִסֶךְ; less common, perhaps only in the Jeremiah passages (24:1–2 [3x]), where figs are contained therein, it means “basket.” In our Samuel passage, it clearly means “cooking pot.”
(f) The verb הָעַשֵׁה occurs in 2:29 (incidentally, within Brettler’s Addition C). This root occurs again only in Deut 32:15. The meaning of the root הָעַשֵׁה has engendered much discussion; indeed some scholars question whether the word means the same in its two attestations.\textsuperscript{111} My approach is to assume the same connotation in both passages, with “kick, trample” as the closest English approximation, though with a pejorative tone, suggesting an extended definition “reject.” Note that the poet of Deut 32:15 collocates the root הָעַשֵׁה with the roots לֶחֶם, “be fat,” מֶשֶׁק, “be thick,” and בְּגַרְגֶּרֶת, “gorge,” just as the author of 1 Sam 2:29 collocates לֶחֶם יִשָּׁמֶשֶׁה with the word הָעַשֵׁה, “to make yourselves fat.” This suggests strongly that we are dealing with the same verb in both cases. More to the point of the present enterprise, note that Deut 32:15 is an Israeliic composition replete with IH features. The northern provenance of Deut 32 was argued most prominently by O. Eissfeldt,\textsuperscript{112} and the linguistic data confirm his supposition.\textsuperscript{113} The appearance of a rare lexeme in two texts with northern affinities leads to the conclusion that הָעַשֵׁה, “kick, trample,” is an IH vocabulary item. This finding is supported by the more common use of הָעַשֵׁה in MH (where it is attested twenty-seven times in Tannaitic texts) and in Aramaic.\textsuperscript{114}

The general picture that emerges from these data is that the story in 1 Sam 1–2 is a northern composition. Most likely it was the tribe of Ephraim that told and preserved the story of Samuel and Eli centered on the cultic site of Shiloh; and the language of these chapters—with eight IH features (two identified by Brettler [albeit unintentionally], six more by me\textsuperscript{115})—confirms this point. Of the eight features enumerated above (I exclude Brettler’s third item as not germane), three items show strong connections to Aramaic (items 2, a, and e), while five items are seen as IH traits on the basis of internal biblical evidence.

\textsuperscript{111} See, e.g., the treatment in DCH 2:236–37.
\textsuperscript{113} A full presentation of the IH features in Deut 32 remains a desideratum. For the nonne one may consult the index of passages in Rendsburg, Psalms, 127. See also the brief discussion in Sanders, The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32, 53. Earlier efforts in the same direction by H. Ewald, A. Dillmann, and S. Oettli are noted by Sanders on pp. 46–47.
\textsuperscript{114} For MH, see Ma‘agarim; and HDHL, microfiche 030, plates 5913–14. For Aramaic, see Jastrow 1:180–81; Sokoloff, Dictionary, 107; and Payne Smith, Dictionary, 50.
\textsuperscript{115} There are other peculiarities in these chapters, but they are isolated items: (a) the form מַעַשְׂתָּן, “your question,” in the mouth of Eli in 1:17, with elision of the יָלֶף; and (b) the difficult form מַעַשְׂתָּן עֵבֶר, “to languish,” in 2:33. On the latter, see F. E. Greenspahn, Hapax Legomena in Biblical Hebrew (SBLDS 74; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 102.
(items 1, b, c, d, f [though the first of these has strong support from the cognate Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Byblos Amarna evidence]). The narrative as a whole reflects Israeli Hebrew, including the pericope that Brettler ascribed to an expilic editor.

Above we utilized a statistical analysis based on Polak’s methodology to demonstrate that Gen 24 belongs to the classical stratum of biblical narrative. We repeat that effort here for 1 Sam 2:27–36, though I must issue two caveats. First, as I noted above (see n. 55) concerning a single chapter of the Bible, *qal va-homer* for a pericope of only ten verses: a statistical analysis of an extremely short section of the Bible could produce skewed data. It is for this reason that I limit my analysis to only the NV and NF ratios; the verb analysis would be inappropriate for an extract of only ten verses. Second, 1 Sam 2:27–36 is not true narrative, but rather a long speech addressed to Eli by the anonymous man of God, albeit embedded in a larger narrative. Therefore, to some extent, we are comparing apples with oranges when we apply Polak’s methodology to this section. Nevertheless, we shall present the data, if only because this analysis is available to us. At the same time, I present Polak’s figures for 1 Sam 1:4–18, the major portion of the Samuel birth tale.

For 1 Sam 1:4–18, Polak counted 97 nouns and 61 verbs, for an NV ratio of .638; among the verbs, 9 are nominal and 52 are finite, for an NF ratio of .148. These figures place the Samuel birth account firmly within the classical stratum. For 1 Sam 2:27–36, I count 86 nouns and 44 verbs, for an NV ratio of .614; among the verbs, 11 are nominal and 33 are finite, for an NF ratio of .250. The former figure places also this pericope decisively within the classical stratum. The latter figure is higher than one would expect for the classical stratum; its closest match is the Jeremiah biographical material, with an NF ratio of .260, close in time to Brettler’s posited exilic editor. But I would not attribute undue significance to this figure, because (a) of the two ratios, the former is much more significant and discriminating (thus Polak consistently presents the data by order of the NV ratios, resulting in scrambled NF ratios in his charts); and (b) as noted, the pericope is both short and not strictly narrative.

116 Some commentators, apparently puzzled by some of these atypical usages, elect the route of emendation, thereby eliminating these crucial pieces of evidence from the text. See, e.g., the manner in which P. K. McCarter (*I Samuel* [AB 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980], 53, 87–88) handled *ם* in 1:9, *תִּשְׁפַּר* in 2:29, and *לָדָךְ* in 2:29.

117 In these ten verses, there are only six total attestations of the nine discriminant verbs: *תָּתֹן* in v. 35, *וּבּ* in vv. 27, 31, 34, 36, and *יָתָם* in v. 28. One glaring point is that *וּבּ* far outproportions *תָּתֹן*, but, as noted, this cannot be statistically relevant.

118 To be found in Polak, “Oral and the Written,” 86.

119 Ibid., 70.
With the possible exception of the NF ratio of 1 Sam 2:27–36, which most likely is a distorted figure for the reasons given, there is no evidence whatsoever to ascribe 1 Sam 2:27–36 to an exilic editor. As I stated at the outset of this section, first of all, both thematic concerns and language issues militate against the suggestion that these verses are an addition to the main narrative. Furthermore, there are no signs of LBH in this section. By contrast, there are three signs of IH within these ten verses, which, when coupled with the five other signs of IH in the preceding sections of the narrative, demonstrate a northern, most likely specifically Ephraimite, origin for 1 Sam 1–2.

III. Conclusion

The trend in biblical scholarship in the last decade or more has been to ascribe much of the narrative corpus to the Persian (and in some cases Hellenistic) period. Most often such suggestions have been based on ideological concerns, with a total neglect of the linguistic evidence. The proponents of the two suggestions treated herein are to be commended for recognizing that such proposals cannot be made without attention to the issue of language.

---

120 To be fair, one should note that Brettler dated 1 Sam 2:27–36 to the elic period, and not to the postexilic period. The difference is crucial, because the Hebrew of elic texts represents a transition period between preexilic SBH and postexilic LBH. One finds elements of postclassical Hebrew in elic period texts (represented best of all by Ezekiel, Second Isaiah, and Lamentations), but not all of the signs of LBH nor with such frequency. Accordingly, one could argue that even without LBH signs in 1 Sam 2:27–36 (especially given that we are talking about only ten verses), it is possible that Brettler still is correct. But the NV ratio of .614, assuming it is relevant to this pericope of technically non-narrative genre, belies that opinion. Furthermore, it was Brettler himself (to his credit, as I have indicated) that raised the issue of LBH features in these verses, and thus I was moved to respond with this alternative approach to the language of 1 Sam 2:27–36 and of 1 Sam 1–2 as a whole. On the elic period as a transitional phase in the history of ancient Hebrew, see Hurvitz, A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel, esp. 161–62; and M. F. Book, Biblical Hebrew in Translation: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel (JSOTSup 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

121 I have in mind the works of, most prominently, Niels Peter Lemche, Philip R. Davies, Thomas L. Thompson, and, less radically, John Van Seters.

122 Though Rofé has not done this consistently. For example, in his book Sefer Bil'am (Jerusalem: Simor, 1980), Rofé posited a sixth-century date for Num 22:22–35, but he did not provide linguistic evidence to bolster his position. Similarly, Brettler (with T. C. Römer) recently advanced the proposal that a few verses in Deut 34 are of Persian-period origin (see T. C. Römer and M. Z. Brettler, “Deuteronomy 34 and the Case for a Persian Hexateuch,” JBL 119 [2000]: 401–19), without presenting any linguistic evidence. Though the authors may be forgiven in this instance because of the very small amount of material under consideration, just a handful of scattered verses in Deut 34, not a sustained pericope of ten verses as in 1 Sam 2:27–36.
There clearly are differences between LBH and SBH, and this crucial issue cannot be ignored.\textsuperscript{123} In the two cases treated above, however, the data that at first glance appear to favor LBH are in fact false leads. In the case of Gen 24, the Aramaisms are evidence for the literary technique of adding foreign flavor to the story set in Aram. In the case of 1 Sam 2:27–36, which in turn is part of the larger narrative of 1 Sam 1–2, the linguistic evidence demonstrates that these chapters are written in IH, consistent with the geographical setting within the tribal territory of Ephraim.\textsuperscript{124}


\textsuperscript{124} These conclusions correspond well to the approach of A. Hurvitz (“The Chronological Significance of ‘Aramaisms’ in Biblical Hebrew,” IEJ 18 [1968]: 234–40), who noted both issues: (a) that northern Hebrew has more in common with Aramaic than does Judahite Hebrew, and (b) that authors employed the stylistic device of adding foreign color to the narrative.