

# EZEKIEL AND THE TYPOLOGY OF BIBLICAL HEBREW

by

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## Introduction

### History of the Diachronic Approach to the Hebrew Bible<sup>1</sup>

The diachronic or historical approach to the study of Biblical Hebrew did not begin until 1815 with the publication of *Geschichte der hebräischen Sprache und Schrift*<sup>2</sup> by Wilhelm Gesenius. In this work Gesenius not only analyzed the language of the biblical books, but frequently drew attention to late linguistic features. This presentation demonstrated that Gesenius was aware of historical linguistic changes *within* the Hebrew Bible.

After Gesenius had made these seminal, diachronic observations virtually nothing was done to continue this investigation until the beginning of the twentieth century when the arguments stemming from the source critical analysis<sup>3</sup> of Graf-Wellhausen were challenging traditional views concerning the authorship and composition of biblical books. Many studies were subsequently undertaken to determine if the conclusions of Graf-Wellhausen could be substantiated along linguistic lines.<sup>4</sup> Particularly noteworthy were the studies by Carlous V. Ryssel, *De Elohistae Pentateuchici Sermone*,<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Holzinger, *Einleitung in*

1. For a fuller treatment of this subject, see Mark F. Rooker, "The Diachronic Study of Biblical Hebrew," *JNSL* 14 (1988): 199-214.

2. Leipzig: Friedrich Christian Wilhelm Vogel.

3. Usually, but perhaps mistakenly, called literary criticism. See Gene M. Tucker, "Editor's Foreword," in *The Old Testament and the Literary Critic*, by David Robertson (Philadelphia, 1977), p. viii.

4. See Matitiahu Tsevat, *A Study of the Language of the Biblical Psalms* (Philadelphia, 1955), p. 1; and James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*,<sup>2</sup> (Winona Lake, 1987), p. 76.

5. Lipsiae, 1878.

den *Hexateuch*,<sup>6</sup> J. Estlin Carpenter and George Harford, *The Composition of the Hexateuch*,<sup>7</sup> and Jonathan Kräutlein, *Die sprachlichen Verschiedenheiten in den Hexateuchquellen*.<sup>8</sup> These studies were the first attempts to analyze Biblical Hebrew against the backdrop of the sweeping conclusions of source critical analysis which were beginning to win the day. At the same time, D. S. Margoliouth, Leo Metmann, and especially S. R. Driver widened the scope of inquiry in observing that Biblical Hebrew contained chronologically distinct linguistic layers. These scholars, in a similar fashion to the work of Gesenius almost a century earlier, observed that books such as Chronicles, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah were linguistically different from earlier books of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>9</sup> Driver, in his *Introduction*, in particular, presented a thorough analysis of the language of each biblical book. Of special interest was his not infrequent manner of describing the language of a late biblical writer as *New Hebrew*.<sup>10</sup>

Though the contributions of these early scholars, particularly Gesenius and Driver, were of great significance, the diachronic study of Hebrew received a greater impetus from Arno Kropat's *Die Syntax des Autors Chronik* in 1909.<sup>11</sup> Kropat's landmark study was devoted to analyzing the linguistic features of the Chronicler. His *modus operandi* was contrasting the books of Chronicles with the parallel passages in Samuel/Kings. Presupposing that the Chronicler had as his source a massoretic prototype of Samuel/Kings, Kropat was able to demonstrate the language of the Chronicler through his linguistic adjustments. This work was an extremely important contribution to the diachronic study of Biblical Hebrew as there now existed a systematic presentation of the features of the post-exilic Book of Chronicles in contrast to the earlier language of Samuel/Kings.

6. Leipzig, 1893.

7. London, 1902.

8. Leipzig, 1908.

9. D. S. Margoliouth, "Language of the Old Testament," in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh, 1900), p. 31; Leo Metmann, *Die Hebräische Sprache. Ihre Geschichte und lexikalische Entwicklung seit Abschluss des Kanons* (Jerusalem, 1904), p. 5; S. R. Driver, *Introduction*, pp. 455, 505, 518, 525, 530–531, 535–540; Driver, *Tenses*, pp. 108, 196; and "On Some Alleged Linguistic Affinities of the Elohist," *Journal of Philology* 11 (1882): 201–236.

10. The same phrase was also used to describe late biblical books by Ewald. See *Lehrbuch*, §3d, p. 25. Equally significant was Driver's description of the earlier BH stratum as "classical." E.g., see Driver, *Introduction*, p. 454, n.

11. BZAW 16. Giessen.

In subsequent years many of the Hebrew Grammarians like Bauer and Leander and Joüon were aware of the differences between pre-exilic and post-exilic Hebrew but gave little attention to the specific features which distinguish these two phases of the language.<sup>12</sup> Later, after the discovery of the Ugaritic tablets the inner diachronic approach to the study of Biblical Hebrew received even less attention as interest naturally turned to the earlier phases of Hebrew poetry.<sup>13</sup> Thus the influence of Gesenius' and Kropat's diachronic studies was negligible as scholars naturally became preoccupied with the great finds at Ras Shamra.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 interest in the diachronic study of Biblical Hebrew was revived. Gesenius' and Kropat's earlier findings were now catapulted into sharper focus. In particular, after the early publications of the literature from Qumran, Abba Bendavid and E. Y. Kutscher resurrected the diachronic study of the Bible back into scholarly consciousness. *The Biblical Language and the Rabbinic Language*, a two volume study by Abba Bendavid, appeared in 1967 and made full use of the linguistic finds of the Dead Sea scrolls in the discussion of the typologies of Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew. Kutscher made full use of the finds from Qumran and his vast contribution to this field can be seen in his *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*<sup>14</sup> and in his posthumous work *A History of the Hebrew Language*.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1970s and 1980s the diachronic study of Hebrew has continued to blossom in Israel, particularly through the efforts of Avi Hurvitz, a former student of Kutscher. Since the completion and publication of Hurvitz's Hebrew University doctoral dissertation, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition—A Study in Post-Exilic Hebrew and its Implications for the Dating of Psalms* in 1972, Hurvitz has continued to exclusively direct his efforts in the study of this field.

Apart from the contribution to this field made by these Israeli scholars, Robert Polzin published an important work on the diachronic

12. See Bauer-Leander, *HG*. §2q, 26; and P. Joüon, *Grammaire*, §3 a,b, pp. 4–6. The apparent reason for this deficiency was the convenience of presenting the language of Biblical Hebrew as a monolithic unity.

13. Chiefly, the studies of W. F. Albright, "The Old Testament and the Canaanite Language and Literature," *CBQ* 7 (1945): 5–31; *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (London, 1968); Frank Cross and David Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Missoula, 1975); David Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, 1972); and Stanley Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel*<sup>2</sup> (Chicago, 1973).

14. Leiden, 1974.

15. Jerusalem, 1982.

study of Biblical Hebrew in 1976. In this work, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward An Historical Typology Of Biblical Hebrew Prose*,<sup>16</sup> Polzin selectively used Kropat's analysis of the Chronicles to establish nineteen features which he argues are the features of Late Biblical Hebrew. Polzin then analyzed samplings from JE, Dtr, as well as the CH of 2 Samuel/1 Kings in light of these criteria and maintains that he can demonstrate that JE, Dtr, and the CH contain features of Classical and pre-exilic Hebrew, while P (which is divided into P<sup>8</sup> and P<sup>9</sup>) shows later features and is thus the link between Classical Hebrew and the language of the Chronicles.

Subsequent to the recent work done by both Hurvitz and Polzin, several dissertations emphasizing the diachronic study of Hebrew have been completed. These include the studies of A. R. Guenther,<sup>17</sup> Ronald Bergey,<sup>18</sup> and Andrew E. Hill.<sup>19</sup> The influence of both Hurvitz and Polzin, remains perceptible, however. Guenther's and Hill's works are based on Polzin's study, while Bergey worked under Hurvitz's supervision.<sup>20</sup>

16. Missoula, 1976.

17. *A Diachronic Study of Biblical Hebrew Prose Syntax: An Analysis of the Verbal Clause in Jeremiah 37-45 and Esther 1-10* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1977).

18. *The Book of Esther—Its Place in the Linguistic Milieu of Post-Exilic Biblical Hebrew Prose. A Study in Late Biblical Hebrew* (Ph.D. dissertation, The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1983.)

19. *The Book of Malachi: Its Place in Post-Exilic Chronology Linguistically Reconsidered* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1981).

20. In addition, see Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, forthcoming). It should be noted that in this survey of the history of the treatment of the diachronic study of the Hebrew Bible, we have only mentioned those works which exclusively dealt with our topic. Other works could be cited which, while not exclusively devoted to the analysis of the history of Biblical Hebrew, are aware of the development of the Hebrew language within the Hebrew canon. Chiefly among these works are those of *BDB*; Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Manuel d'histoire de la langue hébraïque* (Paris, 1976), pp. 97-105; Isaac Avinari, "The Aramaic Influence on Hebrew," *Leshonenu* 3 (1930-31): 273-290, esp. p. 276 [In Hebrew]; M. B. Schneider, "The Literary Hebrew Language," *Leshonenu* 6 (1935): 301 [In Hebrew]; H. Torczyner, "The Influence of Aramaic on Biblical Hebrew" *EM* 1: 593 [In Hebrew]; Walter Baumgartner, "Was wir heute von der hebräischen Sprache und ihrer Geschichte wissen," *Anthropos* 35-36 (1940-41): 609; Jonas Greenfield, *The Lexical Status of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1956), p. xvi; Mary Ellen Chase, *Life and Language in the Old Testament* (New York, 1955), pp. 145-146; and numerous works by Chaim Rabin including *The Syntax of the Language of the Bible* (Jerusalem, p. 1 [In Hebrew]; "Foreign Words," *EM* 4: 1079 [In Hebrew]; "Hebrew," *EM* 6: 52, 69 [In Hebrew]; "Hebrew", in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, Thomas Sebeok, ed. (Moulton, 1970), 6: 316; and "Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century," in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, 2 vols., eds. S. Safrai and M. Stern (Van Gorcum, 1976), 2: 1014-1015.

With this brief history of the historical approach to the study of the Hebrew Bible as background, we shall now analyze the Book of Ezekiel using the criteria put forth by Polzin as a starting base. Our objective is to determine the relative status of the Book of Ezekiel in the continuum of BH as this work is virtually ignored in Polzin's study. These findings will enable us to determine whether or not Ezekiel should be considered as a possible representative of the transitional link between EBH and LBH, a position Polzin claims is best exemplified by the P source.

### Ezekiel and the Typology of Biblical Hebrew

The most comprehensive empirical work to date on the history of Biblical Hebrew has to be Polzin's *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*. In this study Polzin selectively used Kropat's analysis of the Chronicles to establish nineteen features which he argues are the features of LBH. These features are divided between those which are due to natural evolution or change (A), as opposed to those which are attributable to Aramaic influence (B). The following is a comprehensive list of Polzin's LBH characteristics:<sup>21</sup>

- A1. Radically reduced use of תא with pronominal suffix.
- A2. Increased use of תא before noun in the nominative case.
- A3. Expression of possession by prospective pronominal suffix with a following noun, or ל + noun, or לש + noun.
- A4. Collectives are construed as plurals.
- A5. Preference for plural forms of words and phrases which the earlier language used in the singular.
- A6. Less frequent use of the infinitive absolute in immediate connection with a finite verb of the same stem or as a command.
- A7. More frequent use of the infinitive construct with ו and ו not preceded by ויהי(ה).
- A8. Repetition of a singular word=Latin quivis.

21. A word should be mentioned about the methodology employed in the diachronic study of Biblical Hebrew. In order for a language trait to be considered as a feature of LBH it must not only be demonstrated that the feature in question be distinguished from the standard practice of EBH, but in addition, the trait must appear prominently in biblical books considered to be late. These two criteria can be demonstrated in the features listed above by Polzin apart from the ones mentioned in the following discussion. Hence, in the list of traits, references made to a LBH trait occurring more or less frequently should be understood as meaning more or less frequent than the earlier but corresponding trait of EBH. See Avi Hurvitz, "Linguistic Criteria for Dating Problematic Biblical Texts," *Hebrew Abstracts* 14 (1973): 74-79; and Mark F. Rooker, "Methodology," in *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*.

- A9. Merging of the third feminine plural suffix with the third masculine plural suffix.
- A10. Infrequent occurrence of lengthened imperfect or cohortative in first person singular.
- A11. וידי is rare.
- A12. Substantive occurs before the numeral and in the plural.
- A13. Increased use of the infinitive construct with ל.
- B1. Order of material weighed or measured + its weight or measure.
- B2. ל is often the mark of the accusative.
- B3. ך in the preposition מן is often not assimilated before a noun without an article.
- B4. Use of ל emphatic before the last element of a list.
- B5. רבים used attributively before the substantive.
- B6. Use of ל עד.

On the basis of these LBH features Polzin analyzed samplings from JE and Dtr as well as the CH of 2 Samuel/1 Kings. His findings indicated that JE, Dtr, and the CH contain features of Classical or pre-exilic Hebrew, while P (which is divided into P<sup>8</sup> and P<sup>s</sup>) shows later features and is thus the link between Classical Hebrew and the language of the Chronicles.

We should quickly acknowledge that not a few of Polzin's LBH descriptions are valid illustrations of LBH. Some of the other criteria used by Polzin, however, are open to serious question. For example, Polzin claims that one characteristic of LBH has to do with the way the cardinal numbers occur with the substantive (A12): "In appositional relationship, the Chronicler prefers to place the substantive before the numeral and most always puts it in the plural. This is contrary to the older general practice of putting the number first."<sup>22</sup> Whereas P<sup>8</sup> follows the EBH practice of putting the number first, Polzin claims that P<sup>s</sup> follows the later practice preferring the substantive before the number. Thus P<sup>s</sup> would resemble the LBH of the Book of Chronicles. While it is true that within the body of material Polzin has labelled P<sup>s</sup> there is a strong tendency for the substantive to precede the number, it is also true that close to 90%<sup>23</sup> of his examples comes from the list of Numb 7. In long lists, irrespective of the stage of BH, it is customary for the

22. *Hebrew*, p. 58.

23. Moreover, thirty-six of the forty-five attestations can be accounted for in the phrase אילם חמשה עתודים חמשה ככשים בני שנה חמשה. Numb 7:17=Numb 7:23=Numb 7:29=Numb 7:35=Numb 7:41=Numb 7:47=Numb 7:53=Numb 7:59=Numb 7:65=Numb 7:71=Numb 7:77=Numb 7:83.



of P is at least not as strong as Polzin suggests, and probably should be disregarded altogether.

Two other characteristics Polzin claims should be considered as a characteristic of LBH should be dismissed outright for lack of evidence. These criteria include (A13) the increased use of the infinitive construct with the preposition ל, and the use of the emphatic ל before the last element of a list. With regard to the increased use of the infinitive construct with the preposition ל, Polzin's own analysis shows that this tendency occurs with the same frequency in EBH.<sup>28</sup> With regard to the use of the emphatic ל before the last element of a list (B4), Polzin acknowledges that this is not *per se* a late feature and that the feature occurs quite frequently in EBH.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, no linguistic contrast in EBH can be established. There is thus no strong reason for using these phenomena as a basis for analysis in the discussion of the typology of BH.

In addition to these individual problems regarding Polzin's interpretation of the data, other difficulties have recently been raised with respect to his methodology. These include his failing to normalize the length of the text samplings, his method of counting verses of text for statistical analysis, and his failure to explain the chronological distinctions of the data in the terms of linguistic change.<sup>30</sup> The latter deficiency is best illustrated from Polzin's own words: "It is not altogether clear to me how one is to interpret the nature of these non-Aramaic changes in the late language. . . ."<sup>31</sup> In addition to these criticisms could be included his abrupt discussion of the avoidance of the features נא and מרוע in LBH.<sup>32</sup> What is troublesome about citing these two examples is not that the reluctance to employ these terms is characteristic of LBH, but that they were not included as part of the nineteen features of LBH and hence do not enter into any further linguistic discussion. That is, they are not

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Moreover, for the possibility that the suffix of פקדיהם is not in fact prospective, see Hurvitz, *Linguistic Study*, p. 166.

28. *Hebrew*, pp. 60–61.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 67–68.

30. See Zevit, "Converging Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P," p. 496; and especially, Hill, *Malachi*, pp. 39–45. To these criticisms could be added Polzin's disregard for the different types of contexts which might affect language use; particularly as seen in his failure to make an exception for the lists of Numb 1 and Numb 7 above. Perhaps even a better illustration is the classification of 1 Ch 1–9 as part of the Chronicler's prose, without any mention that a genealogical list might influence the type of linguistic features which might have occasion to appear.

31. *Hebrew*, p. 2.

32. See *Hebrew*, pp. 71–72.



invoked to provide a linguistic contrast with EBH material, neither are they part of subsequent charts which incorporate lists of LBH features and their occurrence or non occurrence in biblical sources.<sup>33</sup>

Another problematic technique employed by Polzin is his use of proportion or ratios. Sources which exhibit similar proportional preferences may be typologically linked and thus distinguished from those sources which exhibit different proportions. An example of Polzin's use of this technique may be observed in his discussion of P<sup>s</sup>'s use of the collective plural (A4):<sup>34</sup>

Corpus	Ratio (singular : plural)
JE	7:2
CH	27:23
Dtr	4:3
P <sup>s</sup>	9:10

On the basis of such proportion, P<sup>s</sup> is classified as typologically similar to LBH since the plural verb occurs with the collective noun on ten of nineteen possible occasions. Dtr, on the other hand, which uses the plural verb on three of a possible seven occasions, is typologically different and must be classified as EBH. This distinction is too precise and makes such a typological distinction seem artificial.<sup>35</sup>

Despite these deficiencies Polzin has made an immense contribution to the diachronic study of BH as he did attempt to work on a systematic basis and examined a large cross section of BH in his analysis. He has laid the groundwork for subsequent study, including this work. Hence, we believe it to be legitimate to use his findings as a basis for comparison. In this regard, we will proceed to analyze the language of Ezekiel, using Polzin's proportional method and LBH criteria, apart from the unacceptable features discussed above. But before we begin this task it is imperative that we consider whether or not this is a feasible exercise. Polzin analyzed the linguistic nature of LBH prose; the Book of Ezekiel

33. The opposite is true of the feature A 10. After Polzin lists this feature as a characteristic feature of LBH, he never again returns to discuss the frequency of this characteristic in the biblical sources he is analyzing.

34. *Hebrew*, p. 98.

35. Similarly, see Zevit, "Converging Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P," p. 500. By criticizing Polzin's use of these ratios in this instance we are not insinuating that the use of proportions or statistics is invalid. They are a legitimate linguistic means of measurement for detecting language change. See Bloomfield, *Language* (Chicago, 1983), p. 407; and Antilla, *An Introduction to Historical and Comparative Linguistics* (New York, 1972), p. 187.

is part of the prophetic genre. In view of subsequent studies which have emphasized, with Polzin, the necessity of restricting diachronic analysis to prose,<sup>36</sup> we must determine if it is a meaningful exercise to compare prophetic literature with the results of studies which have been expressly limited to the study of biblical prose.<sup>37</sup>

While recent scholars in the diachronic study of BH have been quick to point out that the subject of their respective inquiries has been limited to prose as opposed to poetry, the compelling reasons why this is the case have not been equally forthcoming. Certainly the rationale for such a restriction is to avoid including those qualities which are purported to be those which characterize poetry—such features as the avoidance of the use of the definite article, the avoidance of the use of **אשר**, and the avoidance of the definite object marker **את**.<sup>38</sup> But is this sufficient basis for making such a sharp generic demarcation?

While the prose/poetry distinction is thought to be universal, the delineation of the actual distinction between the two is problematic.<sup>39</sup> The problem not only entails establishing well defined criteria to distinguish between the two, but framing acceptable definitions for each genre as well. With regard to prose, for example, Carroll states: "Literary criticism today does not have any well and sharply defined set of elements by which a sample of prose may be characterized."<sup>40</sup> In theory, however, prose is believed to be more nearly representative of the actual speech of a designated people while poetry constitutes a literary, but understandable variation of normative speaking habits.<sup>41</sup> Suggested literary devices which are believed to set poetry apart from prose include such phenomena as alliteration, rhyme, meter, terseness, and parallel-

36. E.g. Guenther, *Diachronic Study*; Bergy, *Esther*; Hill, *Malachi*.

37. It should be noted, however, that Polzin frequently cites prophetic passages, in his study, without qualification.

38. See David Noel Freedman, "Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry," *JBL* 96 (1977): 5–26; and Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry* (Sheffield, 1984), p. 54. To these features could possibly be added the distinctive vocabulary that sometimes characterizes poetry.

39. M. O'Conner, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, 1980), p. 66; and John Lotz, "Elements of Versification," in *Versification. Major Language Types*, ed. W. K. Wimsatt (New York, 1972), p. 1.

40. John B. Carroll, "Vectors of Prose Style," in *Style In Language*, ed. Thomas Sebeok (New York, 1960), p. 283.

41. See Michael Riffaterre, "Describing Poetic Structures: Two Approaches to Baudelaire's *les Chats*," in *Structuralism*, ed. Jacques Ehrmann (New York, 1970), p. 188; Jan Mukařovský, "Standard Language And Poetic Language," in *Linguistics and Literary Style*, trans. Paul L. Garvin, ed. Donald C. Freeman (New York, 1970), pp. 46, 52;

ism.<sup>42</sup> With regard to biblical literature, however, the distinction between prose and poetry is particularly difficult to maintain as Kugel states: "The same traits that seem to characterize Hebrew 'poetry' also crop up in what is clearly not poetry."<sup>43</sup> This poetic quality of biblical prose led Eduard Sievers to suggest that most of the Bible was poetry.<sup>44</sup> In view of the distinct nature of the biblical genre Kugel contends that the prose/poetry distinction which has been erected is in fact a Hellenistic imposition upon biblical literature.<sup>45</sup>

In view of the uniqueness of the biblical material, the sharp distinction between poetry and prose should not be maintained in a diachronic study. Even if this distinction is posited there is no apparent reason to treat the two literary genres by separate rules, as it is possible to find linguistic changes in each style.<sup>46</sup> Biblical poetry, for example, does not constitute a different dialect.<sup>47</sup> But even if this prose/poetry distinction is maintained it could still be considered legitimate to compare Polzin's

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Manfred Bierwisch, "Poetics and Linguistics," in *Linguistics and Literary Style*, ed. Donald C. Freeman (New York, 1970), p. 110; Edward Stankiewicz, "Linguistics and the Study of Poetic Language," in *Style In Language* ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (New York, 1980); and Francis Landy, "Poetics and Parallelism: Some Comments on James Kugel's 'The Idea of Biblical Poetry,'" *JSOT* 28 (1984): 69.

42. See Paul Kiparsky, "The Role of Linguistics in a Theory of Poetry," in *Language as a Human Problem*, eds. M. Bloomfield and E. Haugen (New York, 1974), p. 235; Lotz, "Elements of Versification," p. 5; Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (New York, 1960), p. 366. With regards to BH, see Winfred G. E. Watson, "Verse-Patterns in Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Hebrew Poetry," *UF* 7 (1975): 483-492; *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 46-47; Raphael Sappan, *The Typical Features of the Syntax of Biblical Poetry in its Classical Period* (Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University, 1974) [In Hebrew]. Since the work of Lowth, parallelism has in particular been singled out as an inherent feature of biblical poetry. James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, (New Haven, 1981), p. 12; and Perry B. Yoder, "Biblical Hebrew," in *Versification. Major Language Types*, ed. W. K. Wimsatt (New York, 1972), p. 63. It has also been suggested that parallelism is a regular feature of Semitic poetry. G. Douglas Young, "Ugaritic Prosody," *JNES* 9 (1950): 133, n. 31.

43. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, p. 63. For the blurring of the distinction between prose and poetry in Biblical Hebrew see also Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, *Hebrew and Semitic Languages* (Jerusalem, 1964), pp. 15-16 [In Hebrew]; and Hurvitz, *Lashon*, pp. 56-57.

44. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, p. 76.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

46. This is the underlying presupposition of Hurvitz's *Lashon* which is a work dedicated solely to the delineation of late Hebrew features in the Psalms. For a more recent linguistic analysis of LBH in the Psalms, see Elisha Qimron, "The Language of the Second Temple in the Book of Psalms," *BM* 23 (1978): 139-150 [In Hebrew].

47. Hurvitz, *Lashon*, p. 56.

findings on the linguistic nature of LBH prose with the prophetic Book of Ezekiel.

The question of comparing Polzin's conclusions on LBH prose with prophetic material was first broached by Hill in his study of the Book of Malachi. On the basis of Hoftijzer's study of the occurrence of the  $\text{נא}$  syntagmeme,<sup>48</sup> in conjunction with the more recent studies by Andersen and Freedman on the density of the prose particles  $\text{וְאָ}$ ,  $\text{נא}$  and the definite article (the morpheme  $\text{ה}$  only),<sup>49</sup> Hill concluded that Malachi resembled prose rather than poetry. He therefore concluded that comparison with Polzin's results was a valid inquiry. If we apply this same test to the Book of Ezekiel, we find equally compelling reason to consider Ezekiel to be biblical prose. Note Hoftijzer's statement concerning the use of the direct object marker  $\text{נא}$  in Ezekiel: "[In the remaining part of Ezekiel] one comes across a usage of  $\text{?}$  syntagmemes which *qua* density shows similarity with what we have discovered in narrative and legal material."<sup>50</sup> According to Andersen and Freedman's theory, prose particles will compose 5% or less of a poetic genre and roughly 10–15% of prose texts.<sup>51</sup> Using this criteria, Ezekiel also appears to qualify for prose as the prose particles make up 12.3% of the text of Ezekiel—2,298 prose particles out of a possible 18,722 words.<sup>52</sup> This suggestion is apparently consistent with those scholars who maintain that the style of the later prophets is virtually identical to the earlier prose. Thus Gesenius' statement from many years ago with regard to the later prophets, should be understood as applying to Ezekiel:<sup>53</sup>

48. J. Hoftijzer, "Remarks Concerning the use of the Particle 'T' in Classical Hebrew," *Oud Testamentische Studien* 14 (1965): 1–99.

49. Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea Anchor Bible* (New York, 1980), p. 60.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 69. Italics his. The "remaining parts" refers to those sections which are not designated as having a poetic genre, like Ezek 19, 27, 28:12–19, and 32:2–15.

51. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, *ibid.* For the 10% figure see, David Noel Freedman, "Another Look At Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in *Directions in Biblical Poetry*, ed. Elaine R. Follis (Sheffield, 1987), pp. 14, 15, 17.

52. According to our counting, Andersen and Forbes counted 2,403 prose particles in Ezekiel which would constitute 12.8% of the book. See Francis I. Andersen and A. Dean Forbes, "'Prose Particle' Counts in the Hebrew Bible," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth. Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, eds. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Conner (Winona Lake, 1983), pp. 174–175.

53. *GKC*, §2q, p. 14. Similarly, see Chaim Rabin, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century," p. 1014; Joshua Blau, "Thoughts on the Tense System in Biblical Literature," in *Festschrift for I. A. Seeligmann, Studies in Bible and the Ancient World*, eds. I. Zakovich and A. Roše (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 21 [In Hebrew]; Hurvitz, *Lashon*, p. 57; and Bergey,

The prophets, at least the earlier, in language and rhythm are to be regarded almost entirely as poets, except that with them the sentences are often more extended, and the parallelism is less regular and balanced than is the case with the poets properly so called. The language of the later prophets, on the contrary, approaches nearer to prose.

Similarly, Tucker, approaching this question from a different angle noted: "Early prophets uttered brief oracles, while later prophets learned to compose longer speeches. What had begun as poetry became prose as prophets developed from ecstasies to preachers and religious thinkers."<sup>54</sup> The evidence suggests that this is a true description of the Book of Ezekiel.

Thus there is a defensible basis for comparing Polzin's results on the typology of biblical prose with the Book of Ezekiel.<sup>55</sup> The results should prove particularly significant as they will enable us to determine how Ezekiel compares typologically with P, the source which Polzin maintains is the transition link between EBH and LBH.

In the following discussion, Polzin's criteria for LBH, as modified by the above discussion, are listed. Following the LBH characteristics, the results of Polzin's findings for the samplings of JE, CH, Dtr, P<sup>g</sup>, P<sup>s</sup>, Ezra, N<sup>2</sup> are given where they are available. We then compare these with

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*Esther*, p. 19, n. 2. The change in prophetic literature of BH evidently roughly parallels chronologically the poetic mutation around 600 B.C.E. For reference to the latter, see M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, 1980), p. 164.

54. Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1971), p. 56. With respect to Ezekiel's prose style, see M. H. Segal, *Introduction to the Bible*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1964), 1: 412-413 [In Hebrew]; W. O. E. Oesterley and Theodore H. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (New York, 1958), p. 325, n. 1; and Freedman, "Another Look At Biblical Hebrew Poetry," pp. 14-15.

55. While we are maintaining that the bulk of the Book of Ezekiel be considered prose, we still affirm that some of the sections of the book be viewed as poetic, in spite of Kugel's arguments. Poetic passages, including those sections which are introduced as lamentations, include such passages as Ezek 17:1-9; 19; 21; 22:23-31; 26; 27; 28:1-19; 31; and 32. See Hofstijzer, *ibid.*, p. 78; Sappan, *The Typical Features of the Syntax of Biblical Poetry in its Classical Period*, esp. p. 65; and Freedman, "Another Look at Biblical Hebrew Poetry," pp. 17-18. This concession does not however detract from the possibility of comparing Polzin's results with the Book of Ezekiel as no conclusions on how Ezekiel's language compares with other biblical materials will be determined in the final analysis by any portions of Ezekiel which might be considered poetic. Again, as we have noted the supposed poetic/prose distinction only affects linguistically the relative frequency of the particles  $\text{אֵל}$ ,  $\text{וְאֵל}$ , and the definite article. Apart from discussions which deal specifically with these particles, there should be no reason why legitimate comparisons cannot be made.

what we have found in the Book of Ezekiel.<sup>56</sup> Explanation of the data or the results may follow the tables where deemed necessary. Particular attention will then be devoted to the results of the findings from Ezekiel with what is found in the P material, in determining which source of material better functions as a transitional source from EBH to LBH.<sup>57</sup>

### Ezekiel and Polzin's Typology

#### A1. Radically reduced use of תא with the pronominal suffix.

The comparison expressed in the following ratios is the occurrence of the verb with a verbal suffix (left number of the ratio) contrasted with the occurrence of תא with the pronominal suffix (right number of the ratio).

JE	1.81/1	49 vbsf/27 תא
CH	2.00/1	50 vbsf/25 תא
Dtr	1.63/1	67 vbsf/41 תא
P <sup>g</sup>	.46/1	51 vbsf/103 תא
P <sup>s</sup>	.25/1	23 vbsf/91 תא
Ch	10.07/1	141 vbsf/14 תא
Ezr	5.53/1	16 vbsf/3 תא
N <sup>2</sup>	0	23 vbsf/0
N <sup>1</sup>	4.37/1	35 vbsf/8 תא
Ezek	1.53/1	272 vbsf/178 תא

These findings indicate that the verbal suffix is generally preferred over the use of תא with the pronominal suffix in BH. We also see that there is a tendency to use the verbal suffix in later Hebrew in greater proportion than in EBH. Also significant is the fact that both P<sup>s</sup> and P<sup>g</sup> actually prefer the use of the direct object marker תא with the pro-

56. Apart from the data on the Book of Ezekiel, the following information can be found in Andrew E. Hill, "Dating Second Zechariah: A Linguistic Reexamination," *HAR* 6 (1982): 105-134. Following the suggestion of Hill, I am reducing the ratio to the smallest denominator to make the points of comparison more precise. Hill's methodological approach of basing comparison on the basis of occurrence per 1000 verses is used only when the disproportionate sizes of the various sources could possibly distort the results. In a discussion such as A1 where all the ratios are reduced to the denominator of one, this technique no longer becomes necessary. For his methodology see, "Dating Second Zechariah: A Linguistic Reexamination."

57. In this vein, criterion A 10, namely the rare occurrence of the lengthened imperfect or cohortative, will not be analyzed as Polzin provides no data for P<sup>g</sup> or P<sup>s</sup> concerning this feature. Nor does he analyze JE, CH, or Dtr. If this feature were taken into account, Ezekiel's only occurrence of the phenomenon (26:2) would be harmonious with LBH, given the one occurrence of this feature in Chronicles.

nominal suffix. Although this is a distinctive feature of P in contrast to other portions of BH, this evidence should not be dismissed as unique. To do so, as Polzin and Hill do, is to ignore evidence which suggests an association of P with EBH and thus to assume their conclusion that P is late.

#### A2. Increased use of $\text{הא}$ before noun in the nominative case.

JE	0
CH	0
Dtr	0
P <sup>g</sup>	0
P <sup>s</sup>	5.19 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ch	5.84 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>2</sup>	18.16 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezek	8.6 occurrences per 1000 vss

Most of the occurrences of this phenomenon occur in the Book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel demonstrates this feature more than any portion of the Pentateuch and to a greater frequency than the Chronicler, but less than N<sup>2</sup>.

#### A4. Collectives are construed as plurals.

JE	10 out of 47	21.3%
CH	23 out of 50	46%
Dtr	7 out of 16	43.8%
P <sup>g</sup>	10 out of 19	52.6%
P <sup>s</sup>	14 <sup>58</sup> out of 21	66.7%
Ezra	12 out of 13	92.3%
N <sup>2</sup>	11 out of 11	100%
Ch	25 out of 27	92.3%
Ezek	9 out of 10	90%

#### A5. Preference for plural forms of words and phrases which the earlier language used in the singular.

JE	0
CH	0
Dtr	0

58. Polzin lists fifteen occurrences for P<sup>s</sup> but he mistakenly included Numb 16:11 which has a double subject.

P <sup>g</sup>	0
P <sup>s</sup>	0
Ch	28.28 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezra	4.76 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>2</sup>	22.4 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezek	20.41 occurrences per 1000 vss

**A6. Less frequent use of the infinitive absolute in immediate connection with a finite verb of the same stem or as a command.**

JE	64.83 inf ab per 1000 vss
CH	51.36 inf ab per 1000 vss
Dtr	18.55 inf ab per 1000 vss
P <sup>g</sup>	7.35 inf ab per 1000 vss
P <sup>s</sup>	15.57 inf ab per 1000 vss
Ezra	0
Ch	10.71 per 1000 vss
Ezek	26.69 per 1000 vss

**A7. More frequent use of the infinitive construct with ו and ו not preceded by ויהי(ה).**

JE	3 out of 7	42.9%
CH	0 out of 5	0%
Dtr	3 out of 7	42.9%
P <sup>g</sup>	0 out of 3	0%
P <sup>s</sup>	9 out of 9	100%
Ezra	4 out of 4	100%
N <sup>2</sup>	2 out of 2	100%
CH	21 out of 26	80.8%
Ezek	48 out of 54	88.9%

**A8. Repetition of a singular word=Latin quivis.**

JE	0
CH	0
Dtr	0
P <sup>g</sup>	0
P <sup>s</sup>	0
Ezra	4.76 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>2</sup>	0



Ch 16.58 occurrences per 1000 vss

Ezek 0<sup>59</sup>

**A9. Merging of the third feminine plural suffix with the third masculine plural suffix.**

JE	0 out of 3	0%
CH	0 out of 1	0%
P <sup>g</sup>	5 out of 7	71.4%
P <sup>s</sup>	6 out of 15	40%
Ezra	1 out of 1	100%
Ch	9 out of 9	100%
Ezek	80 out of 144	56%

**A11. ויהי is rare.**

JE	97.03 occurrences per 1000 vss
CH	60.99 occurrences per 1000 vss
Dtr	74.21 occurrences per 1000 vss
P <sup>g</sup>	52.92 occurrences per 1000 vss
P <sup>s</sup>	12.11 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ch	33.10 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezra	4.76 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>l</sup>	78.96 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezek	48.67 occurrences per 1000 vss

The use of ויהי is as follows:<sup>60</sup>

Dtr	7.42 occurrences per 1000 vss
P <sup>g</sup>	23.52 occurrences per 1000 vss
P <sup>s</sup>	8.65 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ch	1.95 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezra	0
N <sup>l</sup>	11.33 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezek	1.57 occurrences per 1000 vss

59. It is tempting to list the occurrence of החלונות והחלונות in Ezek 41:16 to illustrate this phenomenon, but we agree with the massoretic accentuation which suggests that the second term introduces a new clause.

60. All the data, apart from Ezekiel, has been taken from Hill, "Dating Second Zechariah: A Linguistic Reexamination," p. 124.

**A12. Substantive occurs before the numeral and in the plural.**

JE	0 out of 10	0%
CH	0 out of 20	0%
Dtr	1 out of 16	6.3%
P <sup>g</sup>	2 out of 152	1.3%
P <sup>s</sup>	9 out of 57	15.8%
Ezra	21 out of 22	95.5%
N <sup>i</sup>	3 out of 9	33.3%
Ch	76 out of 120	63.3%
Ezek	9 out of 141 <sup>61</sup>	6.4%

**B1. Order of material weighed or measured + its weight or measure.<sup>62</sup>**

P <sup>g</sup>	0 out of 3	0%
P <sup>s</sup>	6 out of 18	33.3%
Ezek	9 out of 9	100%

**B2. ם is often the mark of the accusative.**

P <sup>g</sup>	0
P <sup>s</sup>	0
Ezra	28.56 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>2</sup>	8.96 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ch	38.93 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezek	3.14 occurrences per 1000 vss

61. Thus Polzin's repeated assertion that the substantive often precedes the numeral in Ezekiel is not borne out by the facts. See Polzin, *Hebrew*, pp. 58–59.

62. Polzin has no discussion concerning JE, CH, and says that Dtr uses the EBH pattern on two occasions. He does have more discussion about the LBH sources, but only tells us how many times they illustrate the LBH pattern. Hence, we are not able to put the picture into proper perspective. His findings concerning the LBH sources may be demonstrated as follows:

Ezra	19.04 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>1</sup>	5.65 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>2</sup>	26.88 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ch	9.75 occurrences per 1000 vss

**B3. ך in the preposition ך is often not assimilated before a noun without an article.**

Ch 51 occurrences<sup>63</sup>

**B5. ך used attributively before the substantive.**<sup>64</sup>

JE	0
CH	0
Dtr	0
Pg	0
P <sup>s</sup>	0
Ezra	0
N <sup>2</sup>	4.48 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ch	.975 occurrences per 1000 vss <sup>65</sup>
Ezek	0

**B6. Use of ך.**

JE	0
CH	0
Dtr	0
Pg	0
P <sup>s</sup>	0
Ezra	14.28 occurrences per 1000 vss
N <sup>1</sup>	0
N <sup>2</sup>	0
Ch	12.68 occurrences per 1000 vss
Ezek	0

63. Polzin does not specify if these are found in the non-parallel texts only so it is not possible to set a ratio as in the other findings.

64. Hill maintains that this feature is “probably the weakest of all Polzin’s diagnostic categories.” See “Dating Second Zechariah: A Linguistic Reexamination,” p. 127.

65. This feature occurs one other time in BH, in Pr 19:21.

## POLZIN'S LBH FEATURES

LBH Features	JE	CH	Dtr	P <sup>g</sup>	P <sup>s</sup>	Ezek	Ezra	N <sup>2</sup>	Ch
A1							X		X
A2					X	X		X	X
A4						X	X	X	X
A5						X	X	X	X
A6				X			X	X	X
A7					X	X	X	X	X
A8							X	X	X
A9				X		X	X		X
A11					X		X		X
A12							X		X
B1						X			X
B2						X	X	X	X
B3									X
B5								X	X
B6							X		X

## Conclusion

By way of summary, several observations should be made particularly in reference to the breakdown of the above table. First of all, it should be noted that all of these features are extant in Chronicles and absent in material considered to be EBH—JE, CH, and Dtr. These texts demonstrate corresponding, but earlier features. The isolation of later features in Chronicles, in contrast to the earlier, but corresponding traits of EBH, reinforces the suggestion that these features in Chronicles are in fact characteristics of LBH. Next, we should notice that P<sup>g</sup> contains two of the fifteen LBH features and P<sup>s</sup> contains three late characteristics. Hence, they both demonstrate more of a typological affinity with EBH.<sup>66</sup>

66. It should be stressed that these fifteen characteristics of LBH are by no means the exhaustive description of LBH. It is conceivable that another selective arrangement of

This being the case, the likelihood that P is the best representative of the transitional link between EBH and LBH is diminished. Ezekiel, on the other hand, shares seven of the fifteen LBH characteristics found in Chronicles. Thus, on the basis of Polzin's usable criteria, the Book of Ezekiel, a work virtually ignored in Polzin's *Hebrew*, appears to be a superior model of the transition state between EBH and LBH. These findings appear to be harmonious with the conclusions of Hurvitz's study, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel*.<sup>67</sup> In this work, Hurvitz demonstrated conclusively that the morphological and lexical status of the Book of Ezekiel consistently represented language of a later linguistic stratum than language of like content from the material designated as P.

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LBH features might show JE, CH or Dtr as sharing more LBH characteristic features than P, particularly if lexical features could be included in the picture. These fifteen features have been used in this analysis only because they are the features set forth as representative of LBH in Polzin's *Hebrew*.

67. Cahiers de la Revue biblique 20. 1982.

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## JANES

*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of the Columbia University*.

## JBL

*Journal of Biblical Literature*

## JNES

*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

## JNSL

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*JSOT**Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*Polzin, *Hebrew*R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew. Toward An Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*, Missoula, 1976.Segal, *MHG*M. H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, Oxford, 1927.*UF**Ugarit-Forschungen**ZAW**Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

## Other

BH	Biblical Hebrew
EBH	Early Biblical Hebrew
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew
MH	Mishnaic Hebrew

## Biblical

Pr	Proverbs
Ezek	Ezekiel
1-2 Ch	1-2 Chronicles
CH	Court History
Dtr	Deuteronomic passages
JE	Yahwistic and Elohist passages of Pentateuch
N <sup>1</sup>	Nehemiah's memoirs: Neh 1:1-7:5; 12:27-12:31
N <sup>2</sup>	Non-memoir sections of Neh
P	Priestly Work of Pentateuch
P <sup>g</sup>	"Groundwork" of Priestly Work
P <sup>s</sup>	Alleged secondary additions to P <sup>g</sup>