HEADLESSNESS AND EXTRAPOSITION: ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SYNTAX OF RVA

ABSTRACT

Typically, grammars analyze the majority of RVA clauses as either relative or complement clauses. However, often grammars, commentaries, and translations also treat RVA as a subordinating conjunction which introduces causal, purpose, result, and conditional clauses. In this paper, I shall propose that the most economical analysis assigns a binary role to RVA: it introduces only relative and complement clauses. A relative clause analysis of all “non-relative, non-complement” occurrences of RVA can be rescued by recognizing and including the syntactic phenomena of headless relatives and extraposed relatives in the analysis of Biblical Hebrew RVA clauses. The exegetical ramifications of this proposal are illustrated on the characterization of Solomon and Yahweh’s blessing in 1 Kgs 3.12-13.

1. INTRODUCTION

Occam’s Razor is the principle that if competing explanations for a set of data exist, the simplest explanation, and if possible the explanation based on known quantities, is preferable. In this paper we shall re-examine the syntax of the Hebrew word RVA in light of Occam’s Razor. With just under 5,500 RVA clauses in the Masoretic Text of B19, there is an average of one RVA for every five verses. The focus of our discussion will be what types of clauses that this basic Hebrew word introduces. Typically, grammars analyze the majority of RVA clauses as either relative or complement clauses. However, often grammars, commentaries, and translations also treat RVA as a subordinating conjunction which introduces causal, purpose, result, and conditional clauses, as in (1), an example to which we will be returning towards the end of our analysis.

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1 This article is a revision of a paper, "RVA: A Generative Syntactic (Re-) Analysis," presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Nashville, Tenn., November 21, 2000. I would like to thank Dr. Cynthia L. Miller, Dr. Michael O’Connor, and John A. Cook for their valuable comments and critique. All errors are mine.
In the following discussion, I shall propose that the most economical analysis assigns a binary role to \( \text{vrb} \): it introduces only relative and complement clauses. Throughout this analysis, my syntactic explanations have been informed by the Principles and Parameters theory of Chomskyan generative linguistics. In particular I am operating within the framework of Chomsky’s Minimalist Program as articulated in Chomsky 1995; however, I will only note crucial points of contact in my study.

2. \( \text{vrb} \) INTRODUCING BH RELATIVE CLAUSES

By far, the most common use for \( \text{vrb} \) is as a relative conjunction. \(^3\) Relative clauses serve a function similar to attributive adjectives: they provide information about the modified noun which enables a listener/reader to distinguish the noun from other possible or real items in the field of discourse. \(^4\) In (2), the English relative clause, \textit{who visited us}, restricts the semantic domain covered by the constituent \textit{friends}, narrowing the referent from any friends to the ones who visited. This semantic restriction is much the same as that of the adjective \textit{black} with regard to the constituent \textit{dog} in (3).

(2) the friends who visited us

(3) the black dog

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\(^2\) See also Keil 1877:42; DeVries (1985:46) takes the \( \text{vrb} \) in v. 12 to refer to \( \text{bl} \) and the \( \text{vrb} \) in v. 13 to refer to \( \text{vrbbl} \); Mulder (1998:148-149) takes the \( \text{vrb} \) in v. 12 to refer to \( \text{bl} \) but the \( \text{vrb} \) in v. 13 as a result clause.

\(^3\) \( \text{vrb} \) can also be considered an operator, a class of words that (in syntax) trigger syntactic movement within a clause, e.g. \textit{Wh}-words have long been considered operators in English due to the difference in the syntax of \textit{you hit the ball} versus \textit{what did you hit}? In semantics, the term operator is reserved for items which affect the polarity or scope of a statement, e.g. negatives are operators because they affect the truth-conditional status of a statement.

\(^4\) This description applies only to restrictive relatives. Non-restrictive relatives do not serve to identify the referent of a constituent; they merely provide additional information concerning an already referential entity.
2.1. Headed (Dependent) ꝳ Relative Clauses

The constituent which is modified is typically referred to as a ‘head’. In the majority of Biblical Hebrew examples, the head is a noun phrase, ranging from bare noun phrases, as in (4), to proper nouns, as in (5). However, ꝳ relatives may also modify entire clauses as illustrated in (6).

(4) Bare (unmodified, indefinite) Noun Phrase 5

\[\text{And they spoke a word in my name, a falsehood which I did not command them}\]

(Jer 29.23)

(5) Proper Noun 6

\[\text{Then he said to him: Yhwh whom I walked before will send his angel with you}\]

(Gen 24.40)

(6) Entire Clause 7

\[\text{And your houses and the houses of all of your servants and the houses of all of Egypt will be filled — which your fathers and your ancestors have never seen from the day you came to exist upon the land until this day.}\]

(Exod 10.6)

Whatever the head of the ꝳ relative is, it can occur in any position within the larger – or matrix – clause. For instance the head, with its

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5 For example, also see Gen 20.9; Exod 21.13; Lev 20.11; Num 19.20; 2 Kgs 23.25; Ps 8.4; Qoh 8.14.

6 For example, also see Isa 49.7; Josh 13.21; Judg 18.29; 1 Sam 29.5; 2 Sam 6.21; 1 Kgs 11.23; Ps 105.25.

7 Although relative clauses with an entire clause as the antecedent is not uncommon cross-linguistically (e.g. English: Adam fell down the stairs—which wasn't a good thing), a relative clause modifying an entire clause is not so common in the Hebrew Bible. In regard to ꝳ, Gaenssle (1915:58) compares this function to Syriac d and Akkadian ụ as well as Latin quale and lists the following verses as examples in the Hebrew Bible: Exod 10.6; Jer 7.31; 32.35; Esth 4.16. I have identified the following as additional examples: Josh 4.23; 2 Sam 4.10; Jer 19.5; 48.8; 2 Chr 3.1. Ps 139.15 is another possible, although more ambiguous, example.
relative clause, may serve as the subject of the verb (7), the object (8), or an adjunct (e.g. within a prepositional phrase) (9).

(7) וַיְהִי עַל קָנָה יָאָלְךָ אֲנָן לְאֹתְרָרֵיהּ
   ‘a people which you do not know shall eat the fruit of your land and all of your produce’ (Deut 28.33)

(8) וַיַּרְא יְהוָה עַל מְאֹד אָלָמָּה עַל בֶּלַי יָהֹוָא יָוָה בַּת יַעֲקֹב
   ‘I have seen the task which God has given to mankind to busy himself with’ (Qoh 3.10)

(9) לֱאַרְמָּה תַּרְשִׁישָם כְּאָבָּא [פָּזְאָא אֲסָר]-טָמָּשָׁה רֹתָה
   ‘Not so, the wicked; rather (they are) like the chaff which a wind blows’ (Ps 1.4)

2.2 Headless (Independent) Relative Clauses

In our present discussion, a crucial property of relative clauses is the fact that they may lack an overt head. These relatives are often referred to as headless relative clauses. The superficial difference between the two types is illustrated by the minimal pair in (10)-(11).

(10) וַיִּשָּׁהְּ [חֵקֹר אֶשְׁרֵינָה הָרוּ] בֵּיטֵי יָהוָה
     ‘And the thing which David did was wicked in the eyes of Yhwh’ (2 Sam 11.27)

(11) וַיִּשָּׁהְּ [חֵקֹר אֶשְׁרֵינָא מִשָּׁה] (e)
     ‘And (e) what he did was wicked in the eyes of Yhwh’ (Gen 38.10)

The prototypical relative in (10) has a head, חֵקֹר, whereas the similar relative in (11) does not. I have indicated the covert head with the notation e, to indicate a syntactically present but phonologically empty head.

Like headed relative clauses, headless relatives can occur in any position within the matrix clause. For instance, the headless relative in (12) serves as the object of the imperative verb.

(12) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלִי בֵּית אָבֶד [אֲשָׁר אֲשָׁר-תַּמָּשָּה] (e)
     ‘And he said to me: Son of Man, eat (e) what you find’ (Ezek 3.1)

In summary, the most significant feature which we have seen in our brief overview of relative relatives is that they may or may not have an overt head. Let us now examine the basic properties of complement clauses.
3. AS A COMPLEMENTIZER

The second most common use of rvא is to mark the clausal complement of a verb.\(^8\) As a complementizer marking an object clause, rvא operates much like the Hebrew word יִהְיֶה when יִהְיֶה introduces an object clause. The following is a minimal pair using the same verb + complementizer combination: (13) presents rvא introducing an object clause and (14) presents יִהְיֶה introducing an object clause.\(^9\)

(13) יְהַלְּכווּ הָרָעָֹת אֶת הָרָעָֹת לִשְׁנֵהַ יִיהְיֵהוּ וּלְבָנָם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

‘And in the wilderness where you saw that Yahweh, your god, carried you’ (Deut 1.31)

(14) יְהַלְּכווּ הָרָעָֹת אֶת הָרָעָֹת לִשְׁנֵהַ יִיהְיֵהוּ וּלְבָנָם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

‘Then they said: We saw clearly that Yahweh is with you’ (Gen 26.28)

We cannot understand rvא as a relative in (13). With rvא relatives there is a position inside the relative clause which corresponds to the head (whether the head is overt or covert). Often in Biblical Hebrew that position is marked by a resumptive pronoun or resumptive adverb (such as the Hebrew word יָשָׁר); however, the position may also be left as a gap within the relative clause. What is significantly different about rvא complement clauses, like (13), is that there is no such open or resumed position within the clause.

4. NON-RELATIVE, NON-COMPLEMENT USES OF rvא

Up to this point, we have briefly covered the basic characteristics of rvא relative and rvא complement clauses. Now we must consider the categories which act collectively as a wastebasket for the apparently non-relative and non-complement occurrences of rvא. The most popular English grammars of Biblical Hebrew (GKC, WOC, JM, and Van der

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\(^8\) rvא complement clauses should not be confused with rvא clauses preceded by the particle יִהְיֶה, often thought to mark the accusative case. The latter type of clause is more accurately a headless relative which stands in the object position; this is distinct from the use of rvא to introduce an object clause.

\(^9\) The following is a complete list of rvא complement clauses which I have uncovered in my study of rvא in the entire Hebrew Bible: Gen 24.3; Exod 11.7; Lev 5.5; 26.40; Num 32.23; Deut 1.31; 3.24; Josh 4.7; 1 Sam 15.20; 18.15; 24.19; 2 Sam 1.4; 2.4; 14.15; 1 Kgs 22.16; Isa 37.21; 38.7; Jer 28.9; Ezek 20.26; Zech 8.20; 8.23; Ps 10.6; 89.52 (2x); Job 9.5; Qoh 3.22; 5.4, 17; 6.10; 7.18; 7.22, 29; 8.3, 12, 14; 9.1; Esth 1.19; 2.10; 3.4; 4.11; 6.2; 8.11; Dan 1.8; Ezra 2.5, 63; Neh 2.10; 7.65; 8.14-15; 10.31; 13.1, 19, 22; 1 Chr 21.8; 2 Chr 2.7; 18.15.
Merwe, Naudé, & Kroeze) as well as the lexicon of Brown-Driver-Briggs list a combined sixty-four examples of ruva used in a non-relative and non-complement manner.

4.1. Causal\textsuperscript{10}

Contextually some ruva clauses appear to provide the cause for the preceding event, as in (15).

\[\text{‘During the night this woman’s son died because she lay on him’ (1Kgs 3.19 NIV)}\]

4.2. Purpose\textsuperscript{11}

Alternatively, some ruva clauses seem to contribute the purpose of the preceding event (16).

\[\text{‘You shall not go up by steps to my altar, so that your nakedness may not be exposed on it’ (Exod 20.26 NRSV)}\]

4.3. Result\textsuperscript{12}

Other ruva clauses seem to provide the result of the circumstances described in the preceding clause, as in (17).

\[\text{‘I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted’ (Gen 13.16 NRSV)}\]

\textsuperscript{10} Cf. Gen 30.18; 31.49; 34.13, 27; 42.21; Num 20.13; Deut 3.24; Josh 4.7, 23; 22.31; Judg 9.17; 1 Sam 2.23; 15.15; 20.42; 25.26, 26.23; 2 Sam 2.5; 1 Kgs 3.19; 15.5; 2 Kgs 12.3; 17.4; 23.26; Jer 16.13; Job 34.27; Qoh 8.11, 12; Dan 1.10.

\textsuperscript{11} See also Gen 11.7; 24.3; Ex 20.26; Deut 4.10, 40; 6.3 (2x); 32.46; Josh 3.7; 1 Kgs 22.16; Neh 8.14f.

\textsuperscript{12} See also Gen 13.16; 22.14; Deut 28.27, 35, 51; 1 Kgs 3.8, 12, 13; 2 Kgs 9.37; Mal 3.19.
4.4. Conditional\textsuperscript{13}

Finally, many grammarians have noted that אַעְרָה occasionally introduces a conditional clause, as in (18)-(19), serving to mark the protasis in a manner similar to the Hebrew words אֵל and בְּ.

(18)וְאַעְרָה אֶלֶּה נַתֵּן לְפָנֵיכֶם חֵי הַמֵּרֶשֶׁם נַחַלָּה אָכָל הַמֵּרֶשֶׁם (Deut 11.26)

(19)וְאַעְרָה אָמַר אֶלֶּה לַאֲבוֹן (Josh 4.21; see GKC §159cc)

These last four functions of אַעְרָה beg the question: How many functions can one function word fulfill? Are all cases when אַעְרָה is assigned a causal, purpose, result, or conditional function syntactically justifiable? Or are some perhaps motivated by translation technique and the target language, or even by exegesis? Clearly, אַעְרָה marks both relative and complement clauses, and the two are syntactically distinct and relatively simple to distinguish from one another. The problematic cases are those in which the אַעְרָה does not appear to introduce a relative clause, but also does not appear to introduce a complement clause, as in (18). However, such cases are truly rare.

\textsuperscript{13}See also Lev 4.22; 25.33; Num 5.29; Deut 11.26-28; 18.22; Josh 4.21; 1 Sam 16.7; 1 Kgs 8.31, 33; Isa 31.4.
5. ALTERNATIVES TO NON-RELATIVE/NON-COMPLEMENT ANALYSES OF \(rva\)

I suggest that the vast majority of the examples listed in the previous section under causal, purpose, result, or conditional should be treated as the relative use of \(rva\). Some of them, like the examples in (16)-(17) can simply be reanalyzed as typical relative clauses modifying the nearest antecedent, repeated in (20)-(21); there is no syntactic justification for an alternate analysis.

(20)

\[
\text{‘You shall not go up by steps to my altar which your nakedness may not be exposed on it’ (Exod 20.26)}
\]

(21)

\[
\text{‘I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth which if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted’ (Gen 13.16)}
\]

Other examples are more problematic – those with no realistic antecedent immediately preceding the \(rva\) clause. However, we may maintain a relative analysis if we reanalyze these examples in light of the following two filters: 1) headless relative clauses; and 2) the extraposition of relative clauses.

5.1. Headless Relatives (Again)

Unlike the exceptional case of (18) most of the so-called conditional uses of \(rva\) can, and should, be analyzed as \(rva\) headless relative clauses. In the case of the example in (22), it is not that the \(rva\) introduces a conditional; rather, the \(rva\) introduces a relative without an overt antecedent – it is a headless relative. A headed \(rva\) relative clause which is similar to the example in (22) is given in (23) for comparison.

(22)

\[
\text{‘Then he said to the Israelites, “[e] When your children ask their fathers (in the) future: What are these stones?”’ (Josh 4.21)}
\]

(23)

\[
\text{‘(On the) day, when, you stood before Yhwh, your god, at Horeb... you drew near and you stood at the foot of the mountain’ (Deut 4.10-11)}
\]
In (23) the noun phrase נָעַם serves as the head of the relative and the head and its relative as a whole functions as a temporal modifier for the main clause in Deut 4.11. Likewise, in (22) the headless relative functions as a temporal modifier to the verb “ask.” In fact, the covert head noun phrase (represented by the e for phonologically empty) is resumed by the adverb וְצְרַד within the רֽוֹאָה clause, supporting a relative analysis. The clearest explanation of (22) is achieved by comparing a non-relativized version with the relativized version that we have: Your children shall ask you tomorrow/in the future vs. Tomorrow when your children ask you (tomorrow/in the future). While the resumption in the relative clause is not acceptable in English, it is a well-known phenomenon in Biblical Hebrew (e.g. it is syntactically analogous to the BH constructions in which we find phrases such as the place which he put his tent there).

Now that we have discussed one solution for maintaining a relative analysis of רֽוֹאָה clauses, let us move on to the second, and in many ways, the more significant proposal: extraposition.

5.2. Extraposition

Before we move into our discussion of extraposition and רֽוֹאָה clauses, a note on terminology is in order. There was a time in the field of linguistics when the term extraposition was used for the general movement of constituents, either towards the front or the rear of a clause. However, the time when the term could be used with such variability has long since passed; it was linguistic convention throughout the eighties and early nineties to reserve extraposition to describe the movement of a constituent towards the end of a clause (Ouhalla 1999:87; Crystal 1997:146; cf. Haegeman 1994:60-3). The English examples in (24)-(25)

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14 See Num 16.5; 33.55; and Mic 3.5 for headless relatives with a resumptive element.

15 For example, see Gen 3.23; Num 35.26; Jer 16.15.

16 It is possible that the broad definition of extraposition can be assigned to Jespersen, who defines extraposition as the case in which "a word, or a group of words, is placed, as it were, outside of the sentence as if it had nothing to do there" (1969:35; cf. 1964:95; 1949(3):72, 357; 1949(7):223). Also see Mallinson (1986) for a survey of usage of the term extraposition in linguistics leading up to the mid-1980s. Within the field of Biblical Hebrew linguistics, current linguistic conventions have often been overlooked and the older usage of extraposition has been adopted (see Khan 1988 and Zewi 1996a, 1996b), a move which has resulted in much terminological confusion.
serve to illustrate the placement of constituents at the end of a clause; the
extraposed clause is in brackets and its “normal” position is marked with a
coindexed $t(race)$:

(24) [A man who was wearing a red suit] entered the room
(25) [A man $t_i$] entered the room [who was wearing a red suit],

In (24), the relative clause modifies the noun phrase a man and, according
to the typical relative clause construction in English, it follows
immediately after the modified noun phrase. However, (25) exhibits
discontinuity between the head a man and its relative who was wearing a red suit: a verb phrase intervenes.

In the analysis of extraposition which was standard in generative
grammar until the early nineties (and continues to be defended), extraposition was considered to be an example of rightward movement, or
movement towards the front of the clause. By movement, I am referring
to the generative notion that constituents are taken from one position (the
‘deep-structure’ position in which the constituents were inserted from the
lexicon) and moved to another position (the ‘surface-structure’ position
which produces the shape of a clause when we hear or read it). (26)-(27)
present examples of extraposition from the subject and object positions
respectively. In each example, the initial, or deep-structure, extraction site
is marked by a coindexed $t(race)$ and the arrows are used to indicate the
landing site of the extraposed material.18

(26) A man $t_i$ entered the room [who was wearing a red suit],

17 For an early Government and Binding analysis, see Baltin 1984; for a current
rightward analysis, see Büring and Hartmann 1997.

18 In the tree diagrams, the notations are as follows: CP = complementizer
phrase; IP = inflectional phrase; VP = verb phrase; NP = noun phrase; and PP = prepositional phrase.
We met a man \( t \) on the street [who was wearing a yellow suit].

With two seminal works in the early nineties in Chomskyan generative linguistics, Richard Kayne’s *Antisymmetry of Syntax* (1994) and Noam Chomsky’s *The Minimalist Program* (1995), the study of extraposition shifted to a leftward movement analysis since both works prohibit rightward movement altogether. Since these two approaches, in some form or another, have dominated generative linguistic discourse in the last several years, the analysis of extraposition has accordingly been revised. Thus, a possible leftward account for extraposition may look something like (28).

19 Kayne’s *Linear Correspondence Axiom* prohibits rightward movement outright and Chomsky’s *Checking Theory* only provides syntactic motivation for movement up the clause structure, i.e. leftward movement.
5.2.1. Biblical Hebrew Extraposition

When we return to the Biblical Hebrew נָאָס clause, we see that the data, represented by (29)-(31), exhibit the same type of movement as the English examples given in (24)-(28) (I have positioned the traces in each example in accordance with a leftward movement analysis).20

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(29) represents a case of נָאָס relative clause extraposition with an intervening verbless clause; (30) is an example of נָאָס relative clause extraposition with an intervening participial modifier; and (31) illustrates נָאָס relative clause extraposition with an intervening finite temporal clause.

20 The following is a representative (not quite comprehensive) list of BH relative clause extraposition: Gen 1.11; 22.14; 30.2; 33.18; 34.13; 35.14; 48.9, 22; Exod 1.8; 4.17; 5.21; 13.5; 20.2; 29.42; 32.4; Lev 1.5; Deut 4.19; 8.16; 11.10(2x); 19.9; 23.16; Josh 1.15; 6.26; Judg 9.17; 10.4; 18.16; 21.19; 1 Sam 3.11; 10.16; 14.21, 45; 15.2; 24.20; 2 Sam 2.5, 6; 3.8; 7.12, 23; 1 Kgs 5.21; 6.12; 8.24, 33; 10.3, 9, 10; 12.31; 13.14; 15.13; 2 Kgs 9.36, 37; 10.10; 12.3; 17.4; 21.12; Isa 28.4; 29.22; 30.24; 31.4; 54.9; 56.5; 63.7; 65.7; Jer 5.22; 13.25; 19.3; 24.3; 29.19; 37.1; 42.14; 43.1; Ezek 5.16; 6.9; 11.12; 12.2; 14.5; 16.17, 45; 17.16; 20.11, 13, 21, 32; 47.14, 22; Mal 3.19; Ps 1.3; 26.9-10; 55.20; 58.5-6; 71.19; 78.5; 84.4; 119.49, 158; 132.2; 139.20; 140.3, 5; Ruth 4.1; Job 6.4; 12.10; 22.15; 30.1; 34.19; 36.28; 38.23; 39.6; Ruth 4.15; Qoh 2.3; 4.9; 7.20, 22; 29; 8.13; 10.15; Lam 1.10; 4.20; Esth 1.19; 2.6; 4.5, 6; Dan 9.1, 8; Ezra 2.2; 9.11; Neh 2.8; 6.11; 9.26; 1 Chr 16.16; 21.17; 2 Chr 1.6; 9.2, 8; 15.16; 22.9; 36.13.
5.2.2. Reanalyzing the Causal, Purpose, Result, and Conditional Clauses

Recognizing that the concept of extraposition allows us to extend the relative analysis of many clauses, let us look at two in particular: (32), which I introduced above as a causal clause in (15), and (33) which I presented in the introduction and is typically treated as a result clause. Such conclusions may seem warranted upon first glance; neither clause is adjacent to an available antecedent. However, it would be more economical to analyze each clause as extraposition—it resorts to a type of movement which is well-attested in Biblical Hebrew (as illustrated in (29)-(31)) and cross-linguistically and it preserves the basic two-fold function of clause as well.

(32) נִקְחֵה [וֹיָל; מְלֹא] הָאָשֶׁר יְָשֶׁבְתָּהוּ לְלִי
wayyōmot [ben], hāʾēṣšā hazzōônica layāla [t, šēr šāqābā ‘ālīywa]
‘Then [the son], of this woman died at night, [t, who she laid upon him]’ (1 Kgs 3.19)

(33) אֶחָֽדָּרָֽה לְאַֽרְחָֽה יֵבַשֵּׁמְשָׁה לְעָֽנָֽיָֽהִֽו לָאָשֶׁר יְָשֶׁבְתָּהוּ לְלִי
hinnē nāṭṭiti [lōkā], lēb hākām wānāhōn [t, šēr kāmōkā lō’ hayālapānēkā
wōḥārēkā lō’ yāqūm kāmōkā]
‘Look, I give [to you], a wise and discerning mind, [t, who there has been none like
you before you and after you none will rise like you]’ (1 Kgs 3.12)

In (32), the head that the extraposed relative modifies is the noun phrase son. The extraposed relative appears to be non-restrictively modifying the head in that it provided additional information which is unnecessary for identifying the referent of son (the head noun phrase son is already identified by virtue of the construct relationship with this woman). The relative clause is in fact providing the cause of death; the point is, however, that syntactically it is more economical to analyze the clause as a relative even if we render it as a causal clause in translation. The second example, (33), is not so ambiguous. Though it is often categorized as a result clause, the clause should be understood as an extraposed relative non-restrictively modifying the 2ms object of the preposition in the phrase to you.

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21 For example, see Bayer (1997) who presents extraposition data from Bengali, Marathi, Hindi, Italian, and German.

22 The extraposition from a prepositional phrase in which the preposition and the head are both moved up, stranding the remaining material, also occurs in English, e.g. I was talking to a woman yesterday in the store who had red hair.
6. EXEGETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The grammatical implications of re-analyzing problematic רוזא relative clauses are clear: we preserve the economy of the function of רוזא, and we are left with only a handful of examples which remain truly exceptional. The exegetical implications are also forthcoming. Let us return to the description of Solomon in 1 Kgs 3.12-13, provided in full in (34).

(34)

הנה שמעתי ודעתי הוה יתת לך לְל לוֹכֹה וְהָיָה כְּמֹדֶל לאִיצָהו
לְלֹשַׁה אַלְִכַּהָו הָיָה כְּמֹדֶל דְּוָאָה לְלַשְׁהָאָהו
יַכְַמֶּדלוּ אַלְִכַּהָו כְּמֹדֶל אַלְִכַּהָו אוֹלְיָהו

12hinne ṣašiti kidharēka hinnē nāṭatti lōkā,lēh ḥăkām wonāhōn [t, šer kāmōkā lō’ ḥāyâ lōpānēkā wō’ahērēkā lō’ yāqūm kāmōkāl] 13wōgam šer lō’ ša’altā nāṭatti lāk, gam ōser gam kāḇōd [t, šer lō’ ḥāyâ kāmōkā ʾēḇ bamməlaḵīm kol yāmēkā]

12Behold, I am acting according to your words; behold, I am giving to you, a wise and understanding heart, [t, who there was none like you before you and there will be none like you after you]. 13Even what you have not requested I am giving to you—even riches and honor— [t, who there was no man like you among the kings all your days]. (1 Kgs 3.12-13)

If the bracketed רוזא clauses in verses 12 and 13 are understood as result clauses, the passage indicates that Solomon becomes unique only after God endows him with a wise and discerning mind, i.e. God is about to give Solomon wisdom and riches with the result that he will become unique.

Semantically, there is nothing inherently wrong with this analysis. However, if the רוזא clauses are, as I propose, to be correctly understood as extraposed relative clauses, then we would interpret the verse to mean that God already considered Solomon unique among men, i.e. Solomon alone has shown himself, by his humble request, worthy among kings and God is in the process of blessing him for the character he has demonstrated. The difference between the two interpretations, based upon differing syntactic analyses, is subtle yet significant.
In this paper I have argued, using the principle of Occam’s razor, that the function of RVA is essentially binary: to mark a relative clause, or to mark a complement clause. A relative analysis of the RVA clauses in (15)-(19) can be preserved by using the two following filters: headlessness or extraposition. These two concepts allows us to avoid a more complex analysis of RVA where we add four additional functions to this single functional word: causal, purpose, result, and conditional. Any English rendering other than a relative or complement analysis is better understood as a reflex of translation technique and English grammar, not as the structure of Biblical Hebrew. Thus, using current linguistics, we can confirm Goshen-Gottstein’s (1949) acute observation from fifty years ago that RVA clauses like those in (32)-(34) are displaced relative clauses.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


