



## ABSTRACT

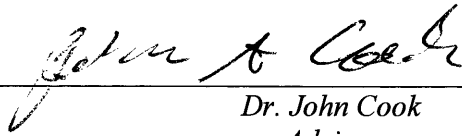
Valency analysis is a relatively new field of linguistic studies. Although it has been explored in many modern languages, it is relatively underdeveloped in Biblical Hebrew linguistics, with some exceptions in the past five years. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the field of Biblical Hebrew valency studies by analyzing the Qal binyan of עבר. I propose that this root is primarily bivalent, though it occurs with limited frequency in monovalent and trivalent frames. In this paper I discuss the difference between valency and transitivity and explain the basic elements of a valency frame. I discuss the obligatoriness of subject noun phrases in Biblical Hebrew, methods for distinguishing between complements and adjuncts in valency frames of two or more constituents, and propose a methodology for distinguishing between complement and adjunct prepositional phrases in particular. I also present the results of my valency analysis and discuss the lexical and grammatical implications of this information.

**KEYWORDS:** Valency, Complementation, Linguistics, Biblical Hebrew, Complement, Adjunct, Transitivity, Monovalent, Bivalent, Trivalent

APPROVAL SHEET

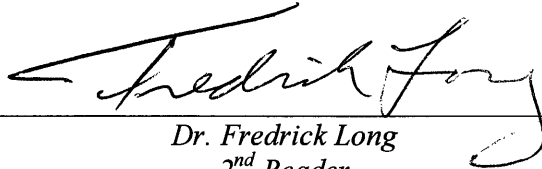
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VERBAL VALENCY IN BIBLICAL HEBREW:  
An Analysis of the Valency of עבר

by

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## ABBREVIATIONS

*	Marks ungrammatical/nonsensical phrases
A1	First Adjunct
A2	Second Adjunct
ADJ	Adjective
ADV	Adverb
BH	Biblical Hebrew
C1	First Complement
C2	Second Complement
C3	Third Complement
HB	Hebrew Bible
INF	Infinitive
N	Noun
NP	Noun Phrase
PP	Prepositional Phrase
<i>pro</i>	Pronoun
V	Verb
VP	Verb Phrase

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## INTRODUCTION

Valency, also known as complementation, is a relatively new concept in linguistic studies. Valency theory originated with the French structuralist Lucien Tesnière, who utilized it within his theory of dependency grammar.<sup>1</sup> It gained wider recognition after 1968, when the first valency dictionary of German verbs, *Wörterbuch zur Valenz und Distribution deutscher Verben*, was introduced by the German linguists Gerhard Helbig and Elmar Schenkel. Since that time, as a testament to the growing recognition and value of valency theory, valency dictionaries have been published for several languages including French, Romanian, Latin, and English.<sup>2</sup> Valency theory was adapted for English linguistics via Emons 1974, Allerton 1982, Herbst 1983, Leech 1981, Matthews 1981, and Somers 1984.<sup>3</sup> In this short history of valency theory, analysis of Biblical Hebrew is an underdeveloped discipline. It was recognized in the last 30 years or so (i.e. by Muraoka 1979, Walke and O'Connor 2002, and Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze 1999) and has recently gained wider acceptance thanks to Cook 2012, Dyk 2013, and Holmstedt 2009 and 2013, though it has recently been questioned by Andersen and Forbes 2012.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the burgeoning field of BH valency studies by analyzing the Qal binyan of עָבַר. Specifically, I propose that עָבַר (Qal) is a primarily bivalent

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Herbst, "English Valency Structures: A First Sketch," *Erfurt Electronic Studies in English* 6 (1999): 3.

<sup>2</sup> With the growing recognition of valency theory among scholars and students of the Greek New Testament and Hebrew Bible, it is likely that valency dictionaries will also develop in those fields in the near future.

<sup>3</sup> Emons 1974, Allerton 1982, Herbst 1983, Leech 1981, Matthews 1981, and Somers 1984 as cited in Herbst, "English Valency Structures: A First Sketch."

<sup>4</sup> Takamitsu Muraoka, "On Verb Complementation in Biblical Hebrew," *Vetus Testamentum* 29, no. 4 (1979): 425–35; Bruce K. Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1990); also Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze 1999, Dyk 2013, and Andersen and Forbes 2012 as cited in John Cook, "Valency: The Intersection of Syntax and Semantics," in *Malta and Chicago 2012 Colloquia* (ed. Alison Salvesen and Tim Lewis; Perspectives in Linguistics and Ancient Languages 5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, forthcoming); Robert Holmstedt, "Pro-Drop," *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, n.d.; Robert Holmstedt, "So-called First-conjunct Agreement in Biblical Hebrew," in *Afroasiatic Studies in Memory of Robert Hetzron: Proceedings of the 35th Annual Meeting of the North American Conference on Afroasiatic Linguistics* (ed. C. Häberl; 35; Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009); cf. Dean Forbes and Nicolai Winther-Nielsen, who also presented papers on valency in BH at the 2012 Chicago Colloquium.

lexeme.<sup>5</sup> In the following chapters I establish the value of valency studies, discuss methodologies that relate specifically to valency analysis of עבר (Qal), and present the results of my analysis. Specifically, in chapter 1, I discuss the difference between valency and transitivity and explain the basic elements of a valency frame. In chapter 2, I discuss the obligatoriness of subject NPs in BH, methods for distinguishing between complements and adjuncts in valency frames of two or more constituents, and propose a methodology for distinguishing between complement and adjunct PPs in particular. In chapter 3, I present the results of my valency analysis, namely monovalent, bivalent, and trivalent frames of עבר, exceptions to the analysis, and idiomatic uses of עבר.

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<sup>5</sup> The valency frames of עבר include: monovalent (10.78%), bivalent (87.72%), and trivalent (1.29%). Aline Villavicencio, "Learning to Distinguish PP Arguments from Adjuncts," *Proceedings of the 6th Conference on Natural Language Learning* 20 (2002): 5; based on the criterion of a minimum frequency of 80% for statistical identification of valency, and the disparity between the frequency of the bivalent frame and the others, it is virtually indisputable that the verb is predominantly bivalent.

## CHAPTER 1

### DISTINCTIONS IN BASIC TERMINOLOGY AND CATEGORIZATION

In this chapter I introduce the basic grammatical terms, concepts, and methodologies which underlie valency analysis in general. First, I explain the term “valency” and how it relates to the grammatical concept of transitivity. Second, I discuss the relationship between syntax and semantics in verbal valency analysis, and how these relate specifically to complement and adjunct constituents of a predicate. Third, I discuss four tests that are used by linguists to distinguish between complements and adjuncts in modern languages. Fourth, I introduce Blake’s set of semantic labels, which contribute to the distinction between complements and adjuncts of עבר in chapter 2.2, and aid in the categorization of complements in chapter 3.<sup>6</sup>

#### 1.1 Transitivity v. Valency<sup>7</sup>

The term “transitivity” refers specifically to the propensity of a verb to be modified by a direct object. Verbs which are only accompanied by a subject are referred to as “intransitive,” those which are accompanied by a subject and a direct object are referred to as “transitive,” and those which are accompanied by a subject, direct object, and indirect object are referred to as “ditransitive.” Valency addresses similar concepts, but is more comprehensive in scope. Rather than focusing exclusively on the ability of a verb to be modified by a direct object and/or indirect object, (verbal) valency theory focuses on all constituents in a clause and their relationship with the head of the VP (i.e. the predicate). Specifically, similar to the notion of atomic valence, “the

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<sup>6</sup> Barry J. Blake, *Case* (2nd ed.; Cambridge textbooks in linguistics; Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> This discussion of valency will refer exclusively to the valency of verbs, rather than that of lexical units in general, cf. Thomas Herbst and Katrin Götz-Votteler, eds., *Valency: Theoretical, Descriptive and Cognitive Issues* (Trends in linguistics 187; Berlin ; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 16; Thomas Herbst, ed., *A Valency Dictionary of English: a Corpus-based Analysis of the Complementation Patterns of English Verbs, Nouns, and Adjectives* (Topics in English linguistics 40; Berlin ; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), xxv.

basic assumption of valency theory is that the verb occupies a central position in the sentence because the verb determines how many other elements have to occur in order to form a grammatical sentence.”<sup>8</sup> The “other elements” which Herbst refers to are any constituents in a clause (i.e. NPs, PPs, subordinate VPs, ADV, ADJ, etc.). Because not all constituents of a clause are necessarily syntactically or semantically required by the verb, a further effort of valency theory is to identify constituents that are part of the valency frame of a word and those that are not.<sup>9</sup> The former are referred to as complements of the verb, and the latter are referred to as adjuncts.<sup>10</sup> The “valency frame” refers to the number of complements required syntactically and semantically by the verb.<sup>11</sup> In BH the valency frame typically manifests as monovalent (i.e. one complement), bivalent (i.e. two complements), or trivalent (i.e. three complements).<sup>12</sup> While a verbal lexeme may occur in all three frames, one is often more dominant than the rest. Ideally, a verb will have a frequency of at least 80% in its dominant frame, thus allowing the verb to be labelled with confidence as monovalent, bivalent, or trivalent.<sup>13</sup> To determine the valency frame of a verb (i.e. those constituents which are complements and adjuncts) the syntax and semantics of constituents must be analyzed in relation to the verb.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, vii, xxiv.

<sup>9</sup> Herbst, “English Valency Structures: A First Sketch,” 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*; Early terminology varies. The contemporary term “complement” was *actant* in Lucien Tesnière, *Éléments de Syntaxe Structurale* (Paris: Éditions Kinksiack, 1959), *Ergänzungen* in German terminology, and *elaborator* in Allerton, *Valency and the English Verb*; The contemporary term “adjunct” was *circonant* in Tesnière, *Angaben* in German terminology, and *peripheral element* in Matthews, *Syntax*.

<sup>11</sup> Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, xxiv.

<sup>12</sup> Avalent verbs (i.e. no complement) are possible in some languages, but are extremely limited in BH, the only observed occurrences so far being Ps 68:9 “(it) rained at the presence of God” (though “heavens” may be the subject here), and Ruth 4:4 “for (there) is not except you.”

<sup>13</sup> Villavicencio, “Learning to Distinguish PP Arguments from Adjuncts,” 5.

<sup>14</sup> Herbst, “English Valency Structures: A First Sketch,” 4–5; Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, xxv.

## 1.2 Syntax and Semantics, Complements and Adjuncts

With respect to syntax, complements are clause constituents which fulfill the syntactic requirements of the verb head, and which, if removed, would render the clause ungrammatical.<sup>15</sup> Complements are therefore often referred to as “obligatory.”<sup>16</sup> With respect to semantics, complements are clause constituents which complete the meaning of the verb head, and which if removed would render the clause ungrammatical or marginally grammatical.<sup>17</sup> Complements may be categorized as either primary or secondary according to syntax and semantics. Primary complements are obligatory, while secondary complements are not necessarily required by the verb.<sup>18</sup> In this regard they form a gradient of obscurity between primary complements and adjuncts which often makes it difficult to distinguish between the two.<sup>19</sup> In the following chapter I discuss specific difficulties related to the identification of complements and adjuncts and how these may be overcome to produce an accurate valency analysis.

By contrast with complements, adjuncts are clause constituents which neither fulfill the syntactic requirements of the predicate nor complete the meaning of the predicate. They may therefore be freely added, removed, or replaced without affecting the grammaticality or semantics of the clause.<sup>20</sup> This distinction between complements and adjuncts which characterizes valency theory may seem like an excessively complex alternative to simply distinguishing the transitivity of a verb, but the results of valency theory are worth the effort involved. Consider the following explanation by Dowty:

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<sup>15</sup> Herbst, “English Valency Structures: A First Sketch,” 4–5.

<sup>16</sup> David Dowty, “The Dual Analysis of Adjuncts/Complements in Categorical Grammar,” in *Modifying Adjuncts* (ed. Ewald Lang, Claudia Maienborn, and Catherine Fabricius-Hansen; De Gruyter, 2003), 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* The semantic roles of clause constituents will be discussed below in 1.4.

<sup>18</sup> Herbst and Götz-Votteler, *Valency*, 15. Secondary complements may also be referred to as “optional complements.”

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*; Villavicencio, “Learning to Distinguish PP Arguments from Adjuncts,” 5; it is particularly difficult to discern whether locative PPs are complements or adjuncts.

<sup>20</sup> Herbst, “English Valency Structures: A First Sketch,” 4; Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, xxiv.

If we focus on the effort required from the learner of a language, then an adjunct analysis offers the advantage of yielding more quasi-multi-place predications at a lesser load on lexical memory —because they are semantically compositional. Suppose the lexicon of a language has  $n$  different intransitive verbs (say, 100 verbs) and  $m$  different prepositions that can form adjuncts (say 10 prepositions), then compositional syntactic and semantic rules automatically produce  $(nm)$  different two-place predications (= 1000 in this case), all of which have distinct meanings. By contrast, if the learner had to express all these two-place predications by learning individual transitive verbs, she would need to learn 1000 different lexical items. But adjunct analyses achieve this advantage at the cost of a limitation on the range of meanings that can be expressed.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, unlike transitivity, valency analysis simplifies both the range of meanings for lexical items and the process of language acquisition.

### 1.3 Distinguishing Complements from Adjuncts

There are several tests that can be utilized to aid in the distinction between complements and adjuncts in modern languages, but the four that I have found more useful and prominent are: The Do-So Test, the Pseudo-Cleft Test, the Wh-Test, and the Preposition Stranding Test. A common feature of these tests is that they rely upon the intuition of a native speaker to discern the grammaticality of a phrase. When a phrase is composed according to these tests and can be identified as grammatical in its native language, it is said to have passed the test. However, when a phrase is composed and identified as ungrammatical in its native language, it is said to have failed the test. As valuable as these tests are for valency analysis of modern languages, they tend to be inadequate for analysis of ancient languages due to the lack of native speakers. One can translate a phrase from the HB into a modern language (i.e. English), but any test of the grammaticality of this phrase is ultimately a test of the English translation, rather than the Hebrew original. In analyzing ancient languages, the results of these tests must be deemed questionable at best. I proceed with an explanation of the four tests below, but I will supplement

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<sup>21</sup> Dowty, “The Dual Analysis of Adjuncts/Complements in Categorical Grammar,” 11. Emphasis added.



this discussion in chapter 2 with other methods of distinguishing between complements and adjuncts.

### 1.3.1 The Do-So Test

The do-so test may be used to distinguish between primary complements and secondary complements and adjuncts.<sup>22</sup> In this test the sentence in question is written out, followed by a new subject, the phrase “do-so” in place of the sequence of words being tested, and possibly a PP. If the material after “do-so” is grammatical, it could be an adjunct or a secondary complement, but not a primary complement. The following examples should suffice:<sup>23</sup>

(1) John<sub>(NP1)</sub> put<sub>(V)</sub> **the toys<sub>(NP2)</sub> in the box<sub>(PP1)</sub> before dinner<sub>(PP2)</sub>**, and Sue did so (too).<sup>24</sup>

(2) John<sub>(NP1)</sub> put<sub>(V)</sub> the toys<sub>(NP2)</sub> **in the box<sub>(PP1)</sub>** before dinner<sub>(PP2)</sub>, and Sue did so just after breakfast.<sup>25</sup>

(3) \*John<sub>(NP1)</sub> put<sub>(V)</sub> **the toys<sub>(NP2)</sub> in the box<sub>(PP1)</sub>** before dinner<sub>(PP2)</sub>, and Sue did so on the table just after breakfast.<sup>26</sup>

The do-so test works well for distinguishing overt subject and object NPs as complements, but is incapable of accommodating a dropped subject and/or object NP unless one is aware of the phenomenon of *pro*-drop, which is discussed below in 2.1. The test is also incapable of

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<sup>22</sup> DeArmond and Hedberg, “On Complements and Adjuncts,” 3; by DeArmond’s definition on p.1, primary complements are unquestionably complements of the verb and fulfill the role of theme, patient, goal, source, or experiencer. Secondary complements are not so certain and fulfill the role of instrument, agent, benefactive, or possibly purpose. Adjuncts are not required by the verb at all and fulfill the role of time, location, manner, and possibly reason.

<sup>23</sup> I found these examples more helpful than DeArmond and Hedberg, 3. They can be found at [www.ling.umd.edu](http://www.ling.umd.edu). Bold words are those NPs or PPs being tested as complements or adjuncts, and I have added basic tagging of NPs and PPs to aid the analysis.

<sup>24</sup> This sentence is grammatical and shows that the PP2 is either a secondary complement or adjunct.

<sup>25</sup> This sentence is grammatical and shows that the PP1 is either a secondary complement or adjunct.

<sup>26</sup> This sentence is marginally grammatical and shows that the NP2 is a primary complement.

distinguishing between complements and adjuncts when the object position is occupied by certain types of PPs.<sup>27</sup>

### 1.3.2 The Pseudo-Cleft Test

The pseudo-cleft test is also used to distinguish secondary complements and adjuncts from primary complements.<sup>28</sup> In this test the sentence in question with word order (S V O PP) is written and rephrased as “What \_\_\_ did...was...” and different word order (S PP V O). If the sentence is grammatical, the constituent after “what \_\_\_ did” is a secondary complement or adjunct, if not it is a primary complement. Consider the following examples:<sup>29</sup>

- (1) Original – Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> read a book<sub>(NP2)</sub> with<sub>(PP1)</sub> a flashlight.
- (2) Test – What Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> did with<sub>(PP1)</sub> a flashlight was read a book<sub>(NP2)</sub>.<sup>30</sup>
- (3) Original – Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> put a book<sub>(NP2)</sub> on<sub>(PP1)</sub> the desk in<sub>(PP2)</sub> his room.
- (4) Test – What Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> did in<sub>(PP2)</sub> his room was put a book<sub>(NP2)</sub> on<sub>(PP1)</sub> the desk.<sup>31</sup>
- (5) Original – Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> read a book<sub>(NP2)</sub>.
- (6) Test – \*What Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> did a book<sub>(NP2)</sub> was to read.<sup>32</sup>
- (7) Original – Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> went to<sub>(PP1)</sub> the store
- (8) Test – \*What Kim<sub>(NP1)</sub> did to<sub>(PP1)</sub> the store was go.<sup>33</sup>

The pseudo-cleft test is useful for distinguishing between primary complements and adjuncts. It is also more effective in indicating whether a PP in the object position is a primary complement (#7-8) or a secondary complement or adjunct when a NP does not occupy the object position and is overt. However, this only holds true for verbs like “go” which require a PP object. In other

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<sup>27</sup> I am referring specifically to situations when the object NP is completely lacking and has no contextual antecedent, which is a different situation from *pro*-drop.

<sup>28</sup> DeArmond and Hedberg, “On Complements and Adjuncts,” 3.

<sup>29</sup> Examples from DeArmond and Hedberg, 3. I have added basic tagging of NPs and PPs to aid the analysis.

<sup>30</sup> This sentence is grammatical and shows that the PP1 is a secondary complement or adjunct.

<sup>31</sup> This sentence is grammatical and shows that the PP2 is secondary complement or adjunct.

<sup>32</sup> This sentence is marginally grammatical and shows that the NP2 is a primary complement.

<sup>33</sup> This sentence is marginally grammatical and shows that the PP1 is a primary complement.

words, the test only distinguishes the PP as a primary complement because of semantic requirements which necessitate certain syntax. The pseudo-cleft test, like the do-so test, is incapable of distinguishing between secondary complements and adjuncts.

### 1.3.3 WH-word Conjunction Test

The WH-word conjunction test is useful for distinguishing between primary or secondary complements and adjuncts. In this test two “wh” words (i.e. the relative pronouns who, what, when, where, why, etc.) are used with a test sentence. If the two wh-words refer to primary or secondary complements with different roles, they cannot be conjoined grammatically, but if they refer to two adjuncts, they can:<sup>34</sup>

- (1) Test – \*Who and what did John give to? (Complement)
- (2) Test – \*With what and for whom did John paint the hallway? (Complement)<sup>35</sup>
- (3) Test – When and how did you find your missing ring? (Adjunct)

The wh-word conjunction test is useful for distinguishing complements from adjuncts, but can still be complicated by directional PPs. It also has difficulty with *pro*-drop and the problems that arise from it.

### 1.3.4 Preposition Stranding Test

The preposition stranding test is useful for distinguishing between complements and adjuncts.<sup>36</sup> Prepositions that are still grammatical when stranded after the word they modify (rather than preceding it) are complements, otherwise they are adjuncts:<sup>37</sup>

- (1) Original – Kim put a book on the desk in his room.

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<sup>34</sup> Examples from DeArmond and Hedberg, “On Complements and Adjuncts,” 1–2. “Roles” refers to the semantic role of a given constituent as discussed in De Armond p.1 (i.e. theme, patient, goal, source, path, experiencer, instrument, agent, benefactive, purpose, time, location, manner, and reason). Number 2 can be considered grammatical, though DeArmond and Hedberg have classified it otherwise.

<sup>35</sup> Admittedly, this sentence could be considered grammatical, though DeArmond has marked it as “complement.”

<sup>36</sup> DeArmond and Hedberg, “On Complements and Adjuncts,” 2.

<sup>37</sup> Examples from DeArmond and Hedberg, 2.

(2) Adjunct – \*It was his room that Kim put a book on the desk in.

(3) Original – Kim went to the store.

(4) Complement – It was the store that Kim went to.

As useful as this test is for distinguishing between complements and adjuncts, an exception to the test is directional adjunct PPs, which may still be grammatical after the stranding (i.e. ‘It was our kitchen that Mary cooked in’). Additionally, DeArmond notes that in English “the peculiar behavior of directional PPs is that directional PPs are in a state of transition from adjunct status to secondary complement status.”<sup>38</sup> This illustrates the inadequacy of this test for analysis of directional PPs and the difficulty of directional PPs in general.

To summarize, although these tests are useful in distinguishing between complements and adjuncts in modern languages and they are at times helpful in analyzing BH, they must be applied to BH with caution. Additionally, these tests are unable to reliably analyze directional PPs in ancient and modern languages. Because עבר is a BH verb of motion, and therefore semantically necessitates directional PPs, in chapter 2 I will discuss other methods for analyzing עבר.

#### 1.4 Semantic Labels

The terminology for semantic relations is complicated. The roles that constituents play in a clause are referred to variously as: semantic roles, case roles, thematic roles, and theta roles.<sup>39</sup> Even within these terms, “there are no agreed criteria and there is certainly no consensus on the universal inventory” of semantic roles.<sup>40</sup> Some inventories feature as few roles as possible, while others are exhaustive. For this reason, Blake proposes a functional list of 14 semantic roles:

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<sup>38</sup> DeArmond and Hedberg, “On Complements and Adjuncts,” 2.

<sup>39</sup> Blake, *Case*, 63. DeArmond and Hedberg, “On Complements and Adjuncts,” 1. The roles that primary and secondary complements are said to fulfill are nuanced by different linguists.

<sup>40</sup> Blake, *Case*, 66.

1. Patient – The entity which exists in a state or undergoes change; the entity which is located or moving; or the entity which is affected or effected by an entity.<sup>41</sup>
2. Agent – The entity that performs an activity or brings about a change of state.<sup>42</sup>
3. Instrument – The means by which an activity or state is accomplished.
4. Experiencer – The entity which experiences an emotion or perception.
5. Location – The position of an entity in time and/or space.
6. Source – The point from which an entity moves or derives.
7. Path – The course over which an entity moves.
8. Destination – The point toward which an entity moves or is oriented.<sup>43</sup>
9. Recipient – A sentient destination.
10. Purpose – The reason for an activity.
11. Beneficiary – The animate entity on whose behalf an activity is accomplished.
12. Manner – The way in which an activity is done or the way a change of state takes place.
13. Extent – The distance, area, or time over which an activity is done or a state exists.
14. Possessor – The entity that possesses another entity.

These roles tend to be aligned with grammatical case relations (i.e. subject, direct object, indirect object, and oblique) according to a hierarchy. Although hierarchies vary from language to language, Blake proposes the general hierarchy of: Agent, patient, recipient, beneficiary, instrument, location, and temporal. With respect to verbal valency analysis, semantic roles and hierarchies are helpful because they aid in the identification of complements and adjuncts. Since the meaning of a given verbal lexeme tends to be completed by certain semantic roles,

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 67. Patient is the role that has the closest semantic relationship with the predicate.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 69.

constituents which match those roles may be labelled complements, while those which do not may be labelled adjuncts. To illustrate this consider the following sentences:

(1.1) Bill crossed the street.

(1.2) Bill quickly crossed the street.

In sentence 1.1, “Bill” is the agent and “the street” is either the location or path of Bill’s crossing. Logically, the verb “cross” necessitates a location, path, or object that must be crossed, so the semantic requirements of the verb are fulfilled by “the street.”<sup>44</sup> This is upheld by the do-so test:

(1.3) \*Bill crossed the street and Tom did so the bridge.

In sentence 1.2, the adverb “quickly,” is added, which functions semantically as the manner of Bill’s crossing. Because manner is not a semantic role that is required to complete the meaning of “cross,” it can be considered an adjunct. This is also supported by the do-so test:

(1.4) Bill crossed the street quickly and Tom did so slowly.

Identification of semantic roles is therefore essential for analysis of the semantics of a verbal lexeme, and is indispensable for verbal valency analysis in general.

### 1.5 The Value of Valency Analysis

The methodology of valency analysis, namely, creating quantifiable data based on the syntactic and semantic relationships between a predicate and its constituents, yields several benefits for linguists. First, recognizing certain constituents as obligatory and others as superfluous allows for a more precise understanding of the syntactic and semantic requirements of a verbal lexeme, and provides a degree of grammatical analysis that extends beyond transitivity. Second, valency theory shows that it is problematic for lexicons to list numerous

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<sup>44</sup> One could argue that “Bill crossed” is grammatical, which possibly calls into question whether “the street” is truly required to complete the meaning of the verb. I will discuss this sort of complication in some detail below in 2.2 and will illustrate it with עבר in 3.2.

glosses for a verbal lexeme based on its occurrence with various adjunct constituents. By analyzing the constituents of a clause according to whether they are syntactically and semantically required by the predicate, lexicons could refine the glosses of verbal lexemes significantly. Third, valency analysis is adaptable to all languages, ancient and modern. In this capacity, valency analysis of BH may be used to resolve ungrammatical or marginally grammatical constructions in the HB. Also, because valency analysis is concerned with the syntax of clauses and the types of constituents that are associated with a verb, it is able to contribute to discussions of textual corruption.<sup>45</sup> Finally, verbal ellipsis may be more easily identified based on divergence from standard valency frames.<sup>46</sup> These are just a few ways in which valency analysis of BH is able to illumine a variety of problematic textual issues.

### 1.6 Summary

In summary, first, I have discussed the difference between transitivity and valency. The former explaining the propensity of a predicate to be accompanied by one or two objects, the latter explaining the function of all constituents of a clause and their relationship with the verb as either syntactically and semantically obligatory (i.e. complements) or superfluous (i.e. adjuncts). The number of complements required by a verb may vary between monovalent, bivalent, or trivalent frames, but one frame will ideally show a frequency of at least 80%. The use of valency analysis thus simplifies the range of meanings for lexical items and the process of language acquisition. Second, I discussed four tests (i.e. the do-so, pseudo-cleft, wh-, and preposition stranding tests) which linguists utilize to distinguish between complements and adjuncts in modern language analysis. Because of their dependence on the intuition of native speakers to discern the grammaticality of a phrase, these tests can be problematic for use in ancient language

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<sup>45</sup> As in the use of עבר (Hiphil), when עבר (Hiphil) may be more appropriate.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Isa 28:19 and Prov 24:30.

analysis. They should be used with caution and only with other methods of valency analysis that are suited for the ancient language in question. Third, I discussed the various semantic labels used to describe the semantic function of clause constituents, and the difficulties associated with this variegated topic. I adopted the approach of Barry Blake, who proposes a functional list of 14 semantic roles. Using these roles it is easier to identify complements and adjuncts based on the degree to which a constituent completes the meaning of the predicate. Finally, I discussed the value of valency analysis to linguistics in general, and BH in particular. I highlighted its ability to resolve grammatically questionable constructions in the HB, to contribute to discussions of textual corruption, and to easily identify ellipsis. In the following chapter I discuss the different methods by which I analyzed the valency of עבר, with particular emphasis on how the subject and object complements may be identified in BH.



## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGIES OF VALENCY ANALYSIS

In this chapter I discuss the theories and methods by which I have analyzed the valency of עבר (Qal). First, I address the obligatoriness of the subject NP as the first complement of a verb and the relevance of the *pro*-drop phenomenon for understanding why the subject NP is not always extant. Second, I address the frequent lack of an overt object complement of עבר, and suggest that this phenomenon may be explained primarily by *pro*-drop, secondarily by implicit indefinite objects, and tertiarily by monovalency. Third, I will discuss a hierarchical method for evaluating PPs and suggest that directional PPs should be considered complements of motion verbs.

#### 2.1 The Subject Complement

Within valency theory obligatory complements are those which are syntactically required by the verb in order to form a grammatical sentence.<sup>47</sup> In English the subject of the verb usually qualifies as a syntactically and semantically required complement with overt morphology and phonology because without the subject the clause may be ungrammatical (i.e. \*‘crossed the river’ v. ‘David crossed the river’).<sup>48</sup> However, in BH the obligatory nature of the subject requires greater explanation because the subject is often omitted.<sup>49</sup> This phenomenon, referred to in generative linguistics as “pronoun dropping” or “*pro*-drop” for short, is present in some languages that do not require an overt subject complement in the clause.<sup>50</sup> In such cases the dropped pronoun is considered a null category, lacking phonology and morphology, but

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<sup>47</sup> Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, xi, xxxi.

<sup>48</sup> The English imperative “(you) cross the river,” is one exception to this.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia Biblica 14/1-14/2; Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblio, 1991), 541.

<sup>50</sup> Holmstedt, “Pro-Drop,” 265.

functioning syntactically as a real pronoun.<sup>51</sup> Within BH the verbal inflections help identify a missing *pro*, but they may not necessarily agree morphologically with the dropped pronoun (specifically in ‘number’).<sup>52</sup> Therefore, whether a clause evinces a null subject or null object, the only way of identifying the dropped *pro* is to search for its antecedent in a nearby clause.<sup>53</sup> In short, understanding *pro*-drop lends clarity to valency analysis of BH by explaining why the subject NP is always an obligatory complement, even if it is not overt.

Another phenomenon encountered in BH generally, and my analysis of עבר specifically, is a lack of agreement between a typically plural compound subject (i.e. Moses and Aaron), and a predicate with singular inflection.<sup>54</sup> A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that one constituent of the subject NP has an antecedent in the context, while the other(s) is adjunct.<sup>55</sup> However, a simpler explanation is that the singular verb agrees with a singular dropped *pro*, which has an antecedent in the context, and to which the constituents of the subject NP are each appositionally related. The clause is therefore grammatically singular. With these phenomena relating to the subject NP in mind, it is also necessary to discuss the methods employed for distinguishing between complements and adjuncts.

## 2.2 Identifying the Object Complement

Identifying the object complement of a verb in BH can be challenging in two ways. First, like the subject NP, the object complement may not be overt. Although the subject is obligatory, even

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 267; Holmstedt, “So-called First-conjunct Agreement in Biblical Hebrew,” 38. Holmstedt, “Pro-Drop,” 266, observes that *Pro*-drop is syntactically allowed in three categories of languages: those which allow it in restricted circumstances (i.e. English), those which allow it only in the subject position (i.e. Italian and Spanish), and those which allow it in the subject and object positions (i.e. Chinese, Japanese, Biblical Hebrew, and Modern Hebrew).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 267; Herbst and Götz-Votteler, *Valency*, 206; this is consistent with Chinese and Japanese.

<sup>53</sup> Holmstedt, “Pro-Drop,” 267; Holmstedt, “So-called First-conjunct Agreement in Biblical Hebrew,” 39; but also Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1985), 364, states “the pronominal object is very frequently omitted, when it can be easily supplied from the context.”

<sup>54</sup> With respect to עבר these include: Deut 24:5; Josh 4:11; Judg 8:4; 1 Sam 27:2; 2 Kgs 8:21; and Ezek 5:17. However, some occurrences of עבר which feature multiple subject NPs are appropriately represented by the verb’s plural inflection, such as: Num 32:27; 32:29; and Josh 4:12.

<sup>55</sup> Holmstedt, “So-called First-conjunct Agreement in Biblical Hebrew,” 41. However, through personal conversation with John Cook I have learned that Holmstedt has reversed his view on this particular issue.

when morphologically and phonologically absent (i.e. because of *pro*-drop), such is not the case with the object. For proper analysis of the verb's valency, it is necessary to determine why the object position is empty and whether or not a *pro* is occupying it. Second, there is much debate over the status of PPs, specifically directional PPs, as complements or adjuncts. Without a proper methodology for analyzing directional PPs, it is difficult to distinguish between monovalent and bivalent frames and bivalent and trivalent frames in various situations. In this section I will briefly discuss how an empty object complement position may be explained by use of *pro*-drop, implicit indefinite constituents, or may be monovalent and truly lacking an object complement. I will then propose a method of analyzing PPs associated עבר as complements or adjuncts according to the semantic roles outlined in 1.4.

### 2.2.1 *Pro*-drop and implicit indefinite object complements v. monovalency

In the HB עבר occurs with an overt object complement 291x and without an overt object complement 164x. Although one explanation for the lack of an object complement could be that such cases are monovalent, there are two preferable explanations. First, the phenomenon of *pro*-drop is the best explanation for the majority of these null object complements. As mentioned above, *pro*-drop in BH applies to subject and object NPs, which may be morphologically and phonologically dropped as long as an antecedent can be inferred from the context.<sup>56</sup> This is the case for 114 of the 164 occurrences of עבר without an object complement. In chapter 3 I use the terminology of Holmstedt in referring to a *pro*-dropped object as a “null complement,” though other terminology including “implied complement” and “contextually optional complement” are also used by linguists.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Although I propose that the referent does not necessarily need to precede the *pro*, but could follow it and still function as a referent, though not an antecedent obviously.

<sup>57</sup> Admittedly there is a range of flexibility in meaning of these expressions. Some linguists use them synonymously, others use them with a degree of variance. Holmstedt, “Pro-Drop”; Brendan Gillon, “Implicit Complements: A

For the majority of the remaining 50 occurrences, the use of an implicit indefinite object complement is another explanation. This follows the premise that certain verbs may occur without an object complement but an indefinite type of complement may be inferred from the syntax and semantics of the verb and from the general context in which the verb is used.<sup>58</sup> The use of an implicit indefinite complement can be expressed in translation by supplying a “general indefinite expression such as someone or something.”<sup>59</sup> For example, in English “to read,” is a verb which may occur with an overt object complement (i.e. sentence 2.1 below) but an indefinite object complement may be implied when an overt complement is absent (i.e. sentence 2.2 below):

(2.1) Bill read a book.

(2.2) Bill read (something).

In fact, because of the semantic scope of the verb “to read,” an overt object complement is not necessary unless the object diverges from what one expects to be read.<sup>60</sup>

(2.3) Bill read my mind.

(2.4) Bill read his palm.

(2.5) Bill can read my face like a book.

An object complement may also be overt in order to distinguish it from other possible objects which may be read:

(2.6) Bill read a book.

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Dilemma for Model Theoretic Semantics,” *Linguistics & Philosophy* 35, no. 4 (2012): 314, speaks of implicit complements, though Cook uses this term more broadly; Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, xxxi, refers to contextually optional complements.

<sup>58</sup> Brendan Gillon, “Implicit Complements: A Dilemma for Model Theoretic Semantics,” *Linguistics & Philosophy* 35, no. 4 (2012): 330, 340-341.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 314. Although a general indefinite expression is all that can be syntactically or semantically inferred, it may also be possible to infer more details from the context by other means such as: knowledge about the geography of the crossing, reference to the speaker or audience as a possible object, and other context clues. These types of contextual observations, while valid in general, are not obtained through the methods of valency analysis.

<sup>60</sup> Such cases are idiomatic.

(2.7) Bill read a magazine.

(2.8) Bill read the sign.

Returning to the discussion of עבר, in 35 of the 50 occurrences of a null object complement it is likely that the verb utilizes an implicit indefinite object complement. For the other 15 occurrences of עבר without an object complement (all of which are idiomatic), the only remaining explanation is that they are monovalent. I will discuss this issue further with examples from the HB in 3.2 below.

### 2.2.2 The Role of PPs

Among linguists the understanding of how PPs should be analyzed is an ongoing development.<sup>61</sup> Within this debate is additional speculation regarding how directional PPs should be treated, since they often seem to be the exception to complement/adjunct tests like those in 1.3 above.<sup>62</sup> For this study I have adopted the approach of John Cook, which has been used in the syntactic tagging of the HB for Accordance software.<sup>63</sup> This methodology approaches PPs from the perspective of a semantic role hierarchy which consists of three tiers.<sup>64</sup> The first tier relates to

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Seungho Nam, "Directional Locatives in Event Structure: Asymmetry Between Goal and Source," *Linguistics* 43 (1995): 85–117; Marcus Kracht, "On the Semantics of Locatives," *Linguistics & Philosophy* 25 (2002): 157–232; Muraoka, "On Verb Complementation in Biblical Hebrew"; Nancy Hedberg and Richard DeArmond, "On the Argument Structure of Primary Complements," *Proceedings of the 2002 Annual Conference of the Canadian Linguistics Association* (2002); DeArmond and Hedberg, "On Complements and Adjuncts"; Richard DeArmond and Nancy Hedberg, "The Configuration of Primary and Secondary Complements," *Proceedings of the 2000 Annual Conference of the Canadian Linguistics Association* (2000); E. Hajičová et al., "Meaning, Sense and Valency," *Folia Linguistica* 14, no. 1-2 (1980): 57–64; Herbst and Götz-Votteler, *Valency*; Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*; Villavicencio, "Learning to Distinguish PP Arguments from Adjuncts."

<sup>62</sup> Those who deal with directional PPs include: Nam, "Directional Locatives in Event Structure: Asymmetry Between Goal and Source"; Kracht, "On the Semantics of Locatives"; Hedberg and DeArmond, "On the Argument Structure of Primary Complements"; DeArmond and Hedberg, "On Complements and Adjuncts"; Villavicencio, "Learning to Distinguish PP Arguments from Adjuncts." I use the term "Directional PPs" to refer to those which fulfill the semantic roles of location, source, path, destination, and extent.

<sup>63</sup> Their approach is essentially a synthesis of Nam, "Directional Locatives in Event Structure: Asymmetry Between Goal and Source"; Kracht, "On the Semantics of Locatives."

<sup>64</sup> Cook, "Valency: The Intersection of Syntax and Semantics." In addition to this hierarchy, word order can also be a useful tool in distinguishing complements from adjuncts, with complements appearing closer to the verb. Recall that the 14 semantic roles outlined by Blake, *Case*, 66–69 are: patient, agent, instrument, experiencer, location, source, path, destination, recipient, purpose, beneficiary, manner, extent, and possessor. Recall also the hierarchy of roles proposed by Blake, 91 are: Agent, patient, recipient, beneficiary, instrument, location, temporal.

constituents that are always complements and which function as agent/subject, patient/object, and effect/source. The second tier relates to constituents that are ambiguous in their status as complement or adjunct, and which function as recipient/addressee and indirect object/destination (i.e. to/from). The third tier relates to constituents that are always adjuncts and which function as location, extent, manner, and final (purpose/result) constituents. The directional PPs of the second and third tier are the most problematic for tagging. On the one hand these PPs are often highly semantically related to the verbs they modify and therefore are semantically required. On the other hand they evince a high degree of statistical variance from one *shoresh* to another, and on these grounds are optional.<sup>65</sup> This matter is further complicated by the variant glosses among HB PPs.<sup>66</sup> In my analysis I have been sensitive to these complications by tagging each occurrence of a PP according to its function in the clause. Because עבר is a verb denoting motion, and therefore more likely than non-motion verbs to be complemented by directional PPs, I have also tagged all directional PPs as complements, and any non-directional PPs I have tagged as adjuncts.

In summary, although BH deviates from English in its frequent lack of an overt subject, I have shown that the *pro*-drop phenomenon is nevertheless common in other languages, and especially so in BH. I have also discussed the frequent lack of an overt object complement for עבר, and suggested that this may be explained primarily by *pro*-drop, secondarily by implicit indefinite objects, and tertiarily by monovalency. Finally, I discussed Cook's hierarchical method of evaluating PPs and suggested that although directional PPs rank in the second and

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<sup>65</sup> With respect to עבר, כּ, and על are by far the most frequently used PPs, but a variety of others are also used. This will be discussed in chapter 3 with more detail.

<sup>66</sup> Ludwig Köhler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (1st English ed.; Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), suggests that the כּ PP alone may be translated "in; among; within which; upon; at, on within; in (a state), in spite of; according to; into; by (i.e. day by day); with, against; away from; (circumstantial); by means of; cost, price; from (material); because of; (as object marker); and when."

third tiers of this hierarchy, their semantic roles require that they be elevated to obligatory complements of the motion-verb עבר. In the following chapter I will show the results of my approach to valency analysis of עבר (Qal) in the Hebrew Bible.

## CHAPTER 3

### VALENCY FRAMES OF עבר<sup>67</sup>

In this chapter I discuss the results of my valency analysis of עבר (Qal) in six sections: 3.1) Glosses of עבר, 3.2) Bivalent frames of עבר, 3.3) Monovalent frames of עבר, 3.4) Trivalent frames of עבר, 3.5) Exceptions and 3.6) Idiomatic uses of עבר.<sup>68</sup> Section 3.1 is a brief discussion of the gloss of עבר in other reference works, which will function as a basis for comparison with the nuanced glosses I propose below. Sections 3.2-3.4 feature brief discussions of the valency frames, including nuanced glosses, complements and adjuncts associated with the frame, and several examples. Section 3.2 is also sub-divided according to the types of object complements utilized (i.e. NP, null NP, or PP). Section 3.5 features the three exceptions to my analysis of עבר, one of which is 2 Sam 17:16, which is an occurrence of the Adverbial Infinitive (Infinitive Absolute), and two of which are Prov 24:30 and Isa 28:19, which are occurrences of verbal ellipsis. Section 3.6 features a discussion of 8 idiomatic functions of עבר, which are included in the data of the general valency analysis of sections 3.2-3.4, but merit additional explanation.

#### 3.1 – Glosses of עבר

The basic gloss of עבר is generally consistent across major reference works, but varies somewhat in nuanced meanings, which can be numerous. The following chart displays 6 major reference works and their entries:

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<sup>67</sup> See Appendix for a complete dictionary entry for the valency of עבר.

<sup>68</sup> The verb occurs 464x, and there is one exception to this that is an Adverbial Infinitive form. Since it is a non-predicate use of the verb, it does not qualify for verbal valency analysis.



Table 1. Glosses of עבר in Common Reference Materials

	BDB	Holladay	HALOT	TDOT <sup>69</sup>	TLOT <sup>70</sup>	TWOT <sup>71</sup>
Basic Gloss	Pass over, through, by; pass on	Pass from one side (or end) to the other	None provided	None provided	Walk over, cross over, pass over	None provided
Gloss 1	Pass over (w/ על, אָל, לְ)	Go through, pass through	Pull along, go one's way, move through <sup>72</sup>	Go on one's way	Walk over, pass through (w/ acc. obj.)	Go beyond / further
Gloss 2	Pass beyond (w/ אָל)	Pass by, go on past (w/ על)	Pass over (w/ בָּ or על)	Go/come over (or beyond) someone or something	Pass over toward, extend toward (w/ acc. of direction)	Pass over / into / through; traverse a land
Gloss 3	Pass through, traverse (w/ בָּ)	Pass by, slip away, disappear	Pass by, into, in front of (w/ על)	Go over, hither, cross over, continue on	Travel the path (w/ דָּרַךְ)	Idiomatic
Gloss 4	Pass along (w/ על)	Go over, across, pass over, cross	Pass over, by	Go further, overtake, precede, go ahead, follow behind, pass under something	Overtake (w/ person as obj.)	Transgress

<sup>69</sup> G. Johannes, Ringgren, Helmer Botterweck and Heinz-Josef Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 413. Although it provides no basic gloss, TDOT suggests that עבר refers generally to a purposeful/goal-oriented change in location or position, which is nuanced in meaning by various affixes, prepositions, and objects.

<sup>70</sup> Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 833. Various English translations are possible depending on the context and the PP used.

<sup>71</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 641. The verb connotes movement, typically of one thing in relation to some other object which is stationary, moving, or motivating. It means more than simply "to pass."

<sup>72</sup> With various nuances based on the preposition used.

Gloss 5	Pass on, go on <sup>73</sup>	Go beyond (w/ acc.)	Go over, pass over (w/ ךָ or אֶל)	Go (over) to (w/o D.O.)	w/ ךָ	
Gloss 6	Pass away (w/ מִן or ךָ)		Changes of position <sup>74</sup>		Cross/pass by/cross over (to) someone / something (w/ עַל)	
Gloss 7			Overstep, contravene (idiomatic)		Pass before someone/something (w/ לִפְנֵי)	
Gloss 8			Miscellaneous <sup>75</sup>		Follow after (w/ אַחֵר)	
Gloss 9					Avoid, escape (w/ מִן)	

The basic gloss with which I operate in this study is “X passed/crossed (over) Y,” which may be paraphrased as “X traversed a landmark.” This gloss is supported by the data, which shows that 59% of the bivalent occurrences of עבר are complemented with an overt object NP, null object NP, or implicit indefinite object NP. Of the remaining bivalent and trivalent occurrences (all of which use PP object complements), 62% occur with the PPs ךָ and עַל, which are almost exclusively translated “over” or “through.”<sup>76</sup> Although it is possible to identify many other nuances of meaning based on the use of PPs, as the above resources have done, the data indicates that these are in the minority (approximately 15%).<sup>77</sup> This portion of my analysis therefore

<sup>73</sup> With several prepositions: מִן, אֶל, ךָ, לִפְנֵי.

<sup>74</sup> With various PPs: מִן, אַחֵר, לִפְנֵי.

<sup>75</sup> This category appears to be a mix of glosses without any clear organization to each gloss or why one gloss is distinguished from the other (i.e. based on PP nuance).

<sup>76</sup> The total percentage of occurrences of עבר (including the monovalent frame) that can accurately be glossed simply as “X crossed over Y” is 81.68%.

<sup>77</sup> In spite of this minority, I will still provide a gloss for each type of PP object complement in an effort to be comprehensive.

supports my assertion in chapter 1 that one contribution of valency analysis is the simplification of lexical glosses.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.2 – Bivalent Frames of עבר

The majority of occurrences of the root are bivalent, with a frequency of 442 times (95.26%). This valency frame may be found with four types of object complements: NP complement, Null NP complement, implicit indefinite complement, and PP complement. This frame also occurs with several adjuncts: NP (1x),<sup>79</sup> VP (23x),<sup>80</sup> ADJ (4x),<sup>81</sup> ADV (2x),<sup>82</sup> אָל (11x),<sup>83</sup> אָצַל (1x),<sup>84</sup> אֶת (7x),<sup>85</sup> בָּ (17x),<sup>86</sup> הָ (10x),<sup>87</sup> כִּי (5x),<sup>88</sup> לְ (10x),<sup>89</sup> לְפָנַי (16x),<sup>90</sup> מוֹל (1x),<sup>91</sup> מִן (9x),<sup>92</sup> נֶגְד (1x),<sup>93</sup> עַד (3x),<sup>94</sup> עַל (3x),<sup>95</sup> עִם (5x),<sup>96</sup> תַּחַת (1x).<sup>97</sup> As mentioned above, an appropriate gloss for the bivalent frame of עבר is “X crossed/passed Y;” or to paraphrase “X traversed a landmark.” Given this basic gloss, when the landmark (i.e. the object complement) is a NP, null NP, or implicit indefinite complement, the ‘dummy’ English PP “over” should be supplied to complete the

<sup>78</sup> It must be noted that there is no problem with providing several nuanced glosses of עבר for the sake of comprehensiveness (as that is exactly what I intend to do). The problem is in providing these glosses without statistical data to show how rare they are compared to the majority gloss. Accuracy in translation depends in part upon such information.

<sup>79</sup> Isa 8:21.

<sup>80</sup> Exod 12:23; Num 13:32; 14:7; 2 Sam 19:19; 19:32; 20:13; 1 Kgs 22:24; 22:36; Deut 4:14; 4:26; 6:1; 9:1; 11:8; 11:11; 11:31; 30:18; 31:13; 32:47; Josh 1:11; Judg 10:9; 11:32; 12:1; 2 Chr 18:23.

<sup>81</sup> Num 32:32; Deut 3:18; Josh 1:14; 2 Sam 16:1.

<sup>82</sup> 2 Kgs 4:9; Ps 48:5.

<sup>83</sup> Gen 31:52 (x2); Num 32:7; 33:51; Deut 2:29; 27:2; 30:13; Josh 1:2; 1 Sam 14:1; 14:6; 14:8.

<sup>84</sup> Prov 7:8.

<sup>85</sup> Num 32:29; Num 32:30; 2 Sam 15:33; 19:32; 19:34; 19:37; 19:39.

<sup>86</sup> Gen 32:11; Num 20:19; Deut 2:28; Josh 3:17; 4:22; Judg 9:25; 1 Sam 29:2; 2 Sam 2:15; 19:32; 2 Kgs 2:8; Isa 28:19; 45:14; Ps 42:5; 66:6; Neh 9:11; 1 Chr 12:16.

<sup>87</sup> Num 33:8; 35:10; Deut 3:21; 4:26; 31:13; 32:47; Josh 15:10; 18:18; 2 Sam 19:41; 20:14.

<sup>88</sup> Isa 23:10; Hos 6:7; Job 6:15; 30:15; Song 3:4.

<sup>89</sup> Gen 31:52; Exod 32:27; Num 32:29; Deut 2:13; 30:13; Josh 4:13; 22:19; 1 Sam 29:2; Mic 1:11; 2 Chr 30:10.

<sup>90</sup> Num 32:21; 32:27; 32:29; 32:32; Deut 3:28; 9:3; 31:3 (x2); Josh 1:14; 3:6; 3:11; 4:5; 4:11; 4:12; 4:13; 2 Kgs 4:31.

<sup>91</sup> Josh 18:18.

<sup>92</sup> Exod 32:27; Deut 2:8; Josh 15:6; 15:10; 16:6; 2 Sam 15:24; Ezek 14:15; Ruth 2:8; 2 Chr 30:10.

<sup>93</sup> Josh 3:16.

<sup>94</sup> Gen 12:6; Judg 11:19; 2 Chr 30:10.

<sup>95</sup> 1 Sam 14:4; 2 Sam 15:23; 24:20.

<sup>96</sup> 1 Sam 29:2; 19:38; 19:41; 2 Kgs 8:21; 2 Chr 21:9.

<sup>97</sup> Lev 27:32.

default semantic requirements of עבר.<sup>98</sup> However, when the object complement is a PP (typically a PP besides על or ב), it can be inferred that the function of the PP is to add a nuance to the dominant gloss, indicating the source, path, destination, or extent of the crossing.<sup>99</sup> In this way a Hebrew author was able to subtly adapt the verb עבר to a variety of traversable landmarks while remaining grammatical. As I show below in 3.2.4, עבר may be accompanied by one of a variety of PPs, so I will suggest an appropriate nuanced gloss for each in turn.

### 3.2.1 – עבר with NP Complement

With a NP complement the root occurs 114 times, nearly half of which are unmarked (43x),<sup>100</sup> and slightly more which are marked by the direct object particle את (71x).<sup>101</sup> Unmarked NPs are fairly evenly distributed throughout the canon, but display a greater frequency in Isaiah (11x), Jeremiah (7x), and the Psalms (5x). Likewise, the marked NPs are also evenly distributed throughout the canon, but display a greater frequency in Deuteronomy (20x), Joshua (11x), and 2 Samuel (10x). As noted above, an appropriate gloss of עבר with a NP complement is “X crossed/passed over Y.” Examples of clauses with unmarked NP object complements include:

(1) וַנַּעֲבֹר דֶרֶךְ מִדְבַּר מוֹאָב: (Deut 2:8)

*(We)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed by the road<sub>(C2)</sub> of the wilderness of Moab.*

(2) וַעֲבַרְהָהּ הַעֲבָרָה לְעֵבִיר אֶת־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינָיו (2 Sam 19:19)

<sup>98</sup> Sometimes the ‘dummy’ prepositions “by” or “through” are more suitable for English translation.

<sup>99</sup> This is essentially the function of the PP in English. For example, one can nuance the act of crossing a river by using the PP “over” or “through.” Each of these nuances the way in which one crosses the river. The former implies crossing a river in some craft so as to avoid getting wet, while the latter implies crossing a river in such a way that one is sure to get wet. So the function of different PPs to nuance the action of the verb is an understood phenomenon.

<sup>100</sup> Num 20:17; 21:22; Deut 2:8; 17:2; 1 Sam 26:13; 2 Sam 17:20; 19:19; 19:32; 2 Kgs 6:9; 12:5; Isa 10:29; 16:8; 23:10; 23:2; 23:12; 24:5; 33:8; 33:21; 35:8; 41:3; 47:2; Jer 2:10; 5:22 (x2); 5:28; 8:13; 23:9; 48:32; Ezek 39:11; 48:14; Hos 8:1; Amos 5:5; 6:2; Mic 2:13; Ps 8:9; 38:5; 73:7; 80:13; 89:42; Prov 8:29; Lam 1:12; 2:15; 1 Chr 19:17.

<sup>101</sup> Gen 31:21; 31:52 (x2); 32:11; 32:23; 32:32; Num 14:41; 22:18; 24:13; 32:21; 32:29; 33:51; 35:10; Deut 2:13 (x2); 2:14; 2:18; 2:24; 2:29; 3:27; 4:21; 4:22; 4:26; 9:1; 11:31; 12:10; 27:2; 27:4; 27:12; 30:18; 31:2; 31:13; 32:47; Josh 1:2; 1:11; 3:14; 3:17; 4:1; 4:22; 7:11; 7:15; 16:6; 23:16; 24:11; Judg 2:20; 3:26; 10:9; 11:29 (x2); 1 Sam 13:7; 14:23; 15:24; 30:10; 2 Sam 2:29; 10:17; 17:21; 17:22 (x2); 17:24; 18:23; 19:37; 19:40; 24:5; 1 Kgs 2:37; 2 Kgs 18:12; Jer 34:18; Hos 6:7; Esth 3:3; Dan 9:11; 1 Chr 12:16; 2 Chr 24:20.

*(She)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed through the pass<sub>(C2)</sub> in order to make the household of the king cross<sub>(A1)</sub> over and in order to do<sub>(A2)</sub> what was good in his eyes.<sup>102</sup>*

(3) עָבְרוּ מֵעֲבָרָה (Isa 10:29)

*(They)<sub>(C1)</sub> pass through the pass<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

(4) וְלֹא יַעֲבֹרָנָהּ (Jer 5:22)

*...so that (it)<sub>(C1)</sub> cannot cross over it<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

(5) כָּל־עֹבְרֵי גֵרְוֹ (Ps 89:42)

*All<sub>(C1)</sub> (who) pass by the way<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

Examples of clauses with marked (אָת) NP object complements include:

(1) וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת־הַנָּהָר (Gen 31:21)

*(He)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed over the river<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

(2) כִּי אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְבֹא לְרִשֵּׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נֹתֵן לָכֶם (Deut 11:31)

*For you all<sub>(C1)</sub> are crossing over the Jordan<sub>(C2)</sub> in order to enter<sub>(A1)</sub> to possess<sub>(A2)</sub> the land which the Lord your God is giving to you.*

(3) לַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן (Josh 3:14)

*...in order (for them)<sub>(C1)</sub> to cross over the Jordan<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

(4) וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת־הַכּוּשִׁי: (2 Sam 18:23)

*(He)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed by the Cushite<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

(5) וְעָבְרָתָּ אֶת־נַחַל קִדְרוֹן (1 Kgs 2:37)

*...and (you)<sub>(C1)</sub> shall cross over the brook<sub>(C2)</sub> Kidron.*

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<sup>102</sup> Using the do-so test shows “the pass” to be correctly marked as the object complement: \*She crossed the pass, and you did so the river. However, applying the do-so test to #1 above, which utilizes a ‘dummy’ pronoun in English, implies that the object complement is actually an adjunct: “we crossed by the road, and you did so by the bridge.” This again shows the complications that arise when the complement adjunct tests are applied to languages of different grammar and syntax.

### 3.2.2 – עבר with Null NP Complement

With a null NP complement the root occurs 114 times.<sup>103</sup> In such situations the verb occurs without an overt object complement, causing it to resemble a monovalent frame. However, I have marked these as bivalent because of the presence of a contextual referent for the null constituent, which qualifies it as a case of *pro*-drop, or what Herbst refers to as a “contextually optional complement.”<sup>104</sup> Bivalent null NP complement frames are distributed fairly evenly throughout the canon, but occur with greater frequency in Deuteronomy (11x), Joshua (12x), 2 Samuel (10x), Isaiah (10x), and Ezekiel (11x) than elsewhere. As noted above, an appropriate gloss of עבר with a NP complement is “X crossed/passed over Y.” Examples of null object complement clauses include:<sup>105</sup>

(1) אַעְבְּרָה־נָא (Deut 3:25)

*Let (me)<sub>(C1)</sub> cross over (pro: this Jordan)<sub>(C2)</sub>*

אַת־תִּירָגֵן הַיַּרְדֵּן (Deut 3:27)

*this Jordan.*

(2) וַיַּעְבֵּר אֲרוֹן־יְהוָה (Josh 4:11)

*The ark<sub>(C1)</sub> of the Lord crossed over (pro: the Jordan)<sub>(C2)</sub>*

הַיַּרְדֵּן (Josh 4:10)

*the Jordan*

<sup>103</sup> Gen 18:5; 37:28; Exod 12:23; Num 20:19; 20:20; 22:26; 32:7; 32:27; 32:30; 32:32; Deut 2:28; 3:21; 3:25; 3:28; 4:22; 9:3; 27:3; 29:15; 30:13; 31:3 (x2); Josh 1:14; 3:1; 3:6; 3:16; 3:17; 4:10; 4:11 (x2); 4:12; 4:23 (x2); 5:1; Judg 3:28; 8:4; 12:5; 1 Sam 9:27; 14:1; 14:4; 14:6; 14:8; 15:12; 26:22; 2 Sam 15:22 (x2); 15:23 (x2); 15:24; 15:33; 17:16; 19:34; 19:38; 19:39; 19:40; 19:41 (x2); 24:20; 1 Kgs 19:11; 2 Kgs 2:8; 2:9; 2:14; 4:8; 4:31; 14:9; Isa 8:8; 26:20; 28:15; 28:18; 28:19; 51:10; 51:23 (x2); 60:15; 62:10; Jer 9:9; 9:11; Ezek 5:14; 14:15; 16:15; 16:25; 33:28; 35:7; 36:34; 39:11; 39:14; 39:15; 47:5; Mic 2:8; 5:7; Nah 1:8; Hab 1:11; Zeph 3:6; Zech 7:14; 9:8; Ps 17:3; 48:5; 57:2; 104:9; 141:10; Prov 4:15; 9:15; 26:10; Job 6:15; 14:5; 19:8; 30:15; 37:21; Ruth 2:8; 4:1; Lam 3:44; Esth 1:19; Dan 11:10; 11:40; 2 Chr 25:18.

<sup>104</sup> Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, xi, xxxi; Gillon, “Implicit Complements: A Dilemma for Model Theoretic Semantics,” 314.

<sup>105</sup> For each example of the null object complement frame I have also provided the referent of the *pro*.

(3) וְכָל־הָעָם עָבְרוּ (2 Sam 15:23)

*All*<sub>(C1)</sub> *the people crossed over (pro: the brook Kidron)*<sub>(C2)</sub>

בְּנַחַל קִדְרוֹן (2 Sam 15:23)

*the brook Kidron*

(4) וְאֵין עֹבֵר (Isa 60:15)

*(It)*<sub>(C1)</sub> *will not pass over (pro: the city of the Lord, Zion)*<sub>(C2)</sub>

עִיר יְהוָה צִיּוֹן (Isa 60:14)

*the city of the Lord, Zion*

(5) מִמָּוֶי עִבֵּר (Ezek 35:7)

*From the one*<sub>(C1)</sub> *crossing over (pro: Mount Seir)*<sub>(C2)</sub>

אֶת־הַר שֵׁעִיר (Ezek 35:7)

*Mount Seir*

### 3.2.3 – עבר with Implicit Indefinite Complement

With an implicit indefinite complement the root occurs 35 times.<sup>106</sup> In such situations the verb occurs with no overt object complement, and although it is not a case of *pro*-drop, the indefinite “something” can still be inferred from the context. Bivalent implicit indefinite complement frames are distributed throughout the canon, but are more frequent in poetic literature.<sup>107</sup> An appropriate gloss of עבר with an implicit indefinite complement is “X crossed/passed over something.” Examples of implicit indefinite object complement clauses include:

(1) עַד־יַעֲבֹר עִמָּךָ יְהוָה (Exod 15:16)

<sup>106</sup> Exod 15:16 (x2); 33:22; Lev 27:32; Josh 2:23; 6:7; Judg 6:33; 12:1; 19:14; 1 Sam 29:2 (x2); 2 Sam 2:15; 16:9; 18:9; 1 Kgs 13:25; 20:39; Isa 28:19; 29:5; 45:14; Jer 13:24; Amos 8:5; Mic 1:11; Hab 3:10; Ps 42:5; 129:8; 144:4; Prov 10:25; 22:3; 27:12; Job 11:16; 21:29; Song 5:5; 5:6; 5:13; Esth 4:17; Neh 2:14; 2 Chr 21:9.

<sup>107</sup> Since poetic literature is characterized by economy of language and ellipsis, it is not surprising that implicit indefinite object complements are prevalent here.

*Until your*<sub>(C1)</sub> *people pass over (something).*

(2) וַיַּעֲבְרוּ (Josh 2:23)

*(They)*<sub>(C1)</sub> *crossed over (something).*<sup>108</sup>

(3) מִדֵּי עָבְרוֹ (Isa 28:19)

*Whenever it*<sub>(C1)</sub> *passes over (something).*

(4) כַּמַּיִם עֹבְרוֹ (Job 11:16)

*Like waters*<sub>(C1)</sub> *pass over (something).*

(5) כִּי אֶעְבְּרוּ בַסֶּדֶךְ (Ps 42:5)

*For (I)*<sub>(C1)</sub> *would pass by (something) with*<sub>(A1)</sub> *the throng.*<sup>109</sup>

### 3.2.4 – עבר with PP Complement

With a PP complement the root occurs 177 times, the highest frequency of the bivalent frames of עבר. The root occurs with several PPs. Those which I treat as complement include: כּ “through, in,” על “over; by; to,” הַ “to(ward),” אֶל “(in)to,” מִן “from,” לְפָנַי “in front of; ahead of; before,” לְ “to,” בֵּין “between,” עַד “as far as,” אַחַר “after;” as well as the compound PPs מן+על “from beside” and מן+את “from with.”<sup>110</sup> Of course, the variable semantics of some of these PPs (i.e. מן, לְ, הַ, עַל) requires that any PP which deviates from a directional gloss of location, source,

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<sup>108</sup> #2 shows *pro*-drop of the subject NP, but there is no overt object. Although knowledge of the geographical setting of this narrative suggests that “the Jordan” is implied as the object of the verb, there is no explicit reference to “the Jordan” in this context. Therefore, while the location may be inferred, it is not based on any syntactic clues, and cannot be considered a null complement as understood above in 2.3.

<sup>109</sup> To illustrate why “with the throng” is adjunct I employ the do-so test: I passed over with the throng, and you did so with the animals. Because the second half of the sentence is still grammatical, the test shows that the PP “with the throng” is adjunct. However, using the preposition stranding test, the adjunct phrase passes as a complement: “It was the throng that I passed over with.” This variance in test results shows the difficulty of applying tests that have been designed for a modern language with an open corpus (i.e. English) to an ancient language with a closed corpus and potentially different grammar (i.e. BH).

<sup>110</sup> The directional *heh* is actually not a PP, but is referred to in Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 278, as a paragogic vowel; Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 185, refers to it as an adverbial suffix; and Bill T. Arnold, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (New York, N.Y: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18 as an adverbial accusative. I have included it here for the sake of simplicity and because it functions like a PP.



path, destination, or extent be treated as adjunct.<sup>111</sup> In addition to these locative PPs there are others, namely עם “with,” and את “with,” which occur with עבר, but have been considered adjunct due primarily to their deviation from the basic semantic requirements of the root and their relative infrequency.<sup>112</sup> The use of bivalent עבר with directional PPs is fairly evenly distributed throughout the canon, with the exception of אל, which occurs more than half of the time in Joshua (8x). As noted above, each PP nuances the gloss of עבר, so I proceed with a brief discussion, nuanced gloss, and set of examples for each type of PP functioning as an object complement.

a. ב-PP complement

The ב PP is used as an object complement more than any other PP (68x) and occasionally nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *through/in* Y.”<sup>113</sup> Thus it indicates the path of the action of the verb. Examples of object complements marked with the ב PP include:

(1) וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה (Exod 12:12)

*(I)<sub>(C1)</sub> will pass through the land<sub>(C2)</sub> of Egypt on<sub>(A1)</sub> this night.*<sup>114</sup>

(2) אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים בְּגְבוּל־אֶחָיְכֶם בְּנֵי־עֵשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשֵׁעִיר (Deut 2:4)

*You<sub>(C1)</sub> are crossing through the border<sub>(C2)</sub> of your brothers, the sons<sub>(C2)</sub> of Esau who dwell in Seir.*<sup>115</sup>

(3) וְעָבַר בָּהּ נִקְשָׁה וְרָעַב (Isa 8:21)

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Isa 31:9: וְסִלְעוֹ מִמְּגוֹר יִעָבֹר “His rock<sub>(C1)</sub> will pass away because of<sub>(A1)</sub> panic.”

<sup>112</sup> “With” denotes accompaniment, which is not exactly a sub category of direction. The total frequency of these PPs for all occurrences of עבר are: עם occurs 6x and את occurs 7x.

<sup>113</sup> Gen 12:6; 30:32; 41:46; Exod 12:12; 32:27; Lev 26:6; Num 13:32; 14:7; 20:17 (x2); 20:18; 20:21; 21:22; 21:23; 33:8; Deut 2:4; 2:27; 29:11; 29:15; Josh 1:11; 3:2; 3:4; 3:11; 4:7; 18:9; 24:17; Judg 9:26; 11:17; 11:19; 11:20; 1 Sam 9:4 (x4); 2 Sam 15:23; 19:19; 20:14; 1 Kgs 18:6; 22:36; Isa 8:21; 10:28; 34:10; 43:2; 62:10; Jer 2:6; 51:43; Ezek 5:17; 9:4; 9:5; 14:17; 29:11 (x2); 39:14; 39:15; Joel 4:17; Amos 5:17; Nah 2:1; Zech 10:11; Ps 66:6; 84:7; 103:16; Prov 4:15; 7:8; Job 15:19; 33:18; 33:28; Neh 9:11; 2 Chr 30:10.

<sup>114</sup> Using the do-so test is again problematic when dealing with PPs in BH: “I will pass through the land of Egypt, and you will do so through China.”

<sup>115</sup> The second C2 phrase “the sons of Esau who dwell in Seir” is in apposition with part of the first C2 phrase “your brothers.”

*(He)<sub>(C1)</sub> will pass through it<sub>(C2)</sub> dejected<sub>(A1)</sub> and famished<sub>(A2)</sub>.*

(4) בְּנָהַר יַעֲבְרוּ בְּרִגְלָהּ (Ps 66:6)

*(They)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed through the river<sub>(C2)</sub> on foot<sub>(A1)</sub>.*

(5) וְזָרִים לֹא יַעֲבְרוּ בָּהּ עוֹד: (Joel 4:17)

*Strangers<sub>(C1)</sub> will not pass through it<sub>(C2)</sub> anymore<sub>(A1)</sub>.*

#### b. על-PP complement

The על PP is used as an object complement nearly as often as the בּ PP (46x) and slightly nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed over/by/to Y.”<sup>116</sup> Thus it typically indicates the path of the action of the verb. Examples of object complements marked with the על PP include:

(1) עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל-עַבְדְּכֶם (Gen 18:5)

*(You)<sub>(C1)</sub> have passed by your servant<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

(2) וְעָבַר עָלָיו רֵיחַ-קִנְאָה (Num 5:14)

*And (if) a spirit<sub>(C1)</sub> of jealousy passes over him<sub>(C2)</sub>...*

(3) מֵעֶבֶר מִיַּנַּח עוֹד עַל-הָאָרֶץ (Isa 54:9)

*...the waters<sub>(C1)</sub> of Noah would not pass over the earth<sub>(C2)</sub> again<sub>(A1)</sub>.*

(4) כָּל עוֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ (Jer 18:16)

*All<sub>(C1)</sub> who pass by it<sub>(C2)</sub>...*

(5) כָּל-מִשְׁבְּרֵיהָ וְגַלְיֵיהָ עָלַי עָבְרוּ: (Ps 42:8)

*All<sub>(C1)</sub> of your breakers and your waves<sub>(C1)</sub> have passed over me<sub>(C2)</sub>.*<sup>117</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Gen 18:5; 32:22; Exod 30:13; 30:14; 33:22; 34:6; 38:26; Num 5:14 (x2); 5:30; 6:5; Deut 24:5; Judg 9:25; 2 Sam 15:18 (x2); 1 Kgs 9:8; 2 Kgs 4:9; 6:26; 6:30; Isa 45:14; 54:9; Jer 18:16; 19:8; 22:8; 33:13; 49:17; 50:13; Ezek 16:6; 16:8; Hos 10:11; Jonah 2:4; Mic 7:18; Nah 3:19; Zeph 2:15; Zech 9:8; Ps 42:8; 88:17; 124:4; 124:5; Prov 19:11; 24:30; Job 9:11; 13:13; Lam 4:21; 1 Chr 29:30; 2 Chr 7:21.

<sup>117</sup> “Your breakers” and “your waves” are in apposition.

c. הַ post position complement

The post-position הַ is used as an object complement infrequently (15x) and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *to(ward)* Y.”<sup>118</sup> Thus it indicates the destination of the action of the verb. Examples of object complements marked with the הַ post-position include:

(1) וְעָבַר לְזִנָּה (Num 34:4)

...and (it)<sub>(C1)</sub> shall cross over to<sub>(C2)</sub> Zin.

(2) אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: (Deut 11:8)

...you<sub>(C1)</sub> are crossing over to<sub>(C2)</sub> there in order to possess<sub>(A1)</sub> it.

(3) וְעָבַר עַצְמוֹנָה (Josh 15:4)

And (it)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed over to<sub>(C2)</sub> Azmon.

(4) וַיַּעְבֵּר צָפוֹנָה (Judg 12:1)

...and (he/they)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed over to<sub>(C2)</sub> Zaphon.

(5) עֲבְרוּ תַרְשִׁישָׁה (Isa 23:6)

(You)<sub>(C1)</sub> pass over to<sub>(C2)</sub> Tarshish.

d. אֶל-PP complement

The אֶל PP is used as an object complement as infrequently as הַ (15x) and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *(in)to* Y.”<sup>119</sup> Thus it indicates the destination of the action of the verb. Examples of object complements marked with the אֶל PP include:

(1) וְעָבַר אֶל-גְּבוּל הָאַרְכִּי עֲטָרוֹת: (Josh 16:2)

...and (it)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed to<sub>(C2)</sub> the border of the Archites of Ataroth.

<sup>118</sup> Num 34:4 (x2); Deut 4:14; 6:1; 11:8; 11:11; 34:4; Josh 15:3 (x2); 15:4; 15:10; 15:11; Judg 12:1; 2 Kgs 8:21; Isa 23:6.

<sup>119</sup> Josh 4:5; 4:13; 15:7; 15:10; 16:2; 18:18; 18:19; 22:19; Judg 11:32; 12:3; 1 Sam 27:2; 1 Kgs 19:19; 2 Kgs 4:8; Jer 41:10; Neh 2:14.

(2) וַאֲעָבְרָה אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן (Judg 12:3)

...and (I)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed over to<sub>(C2)</sub> the sons of Ammon.

(3) וַיָּקָם דָּוִד וַיַּעֲבֹר הוּא וְשֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ אֶל־אַחִישׁ בְּרַם־עוֹד מֶלֶךְ גַּת: (1 Sam 27:2)

David stood and (he)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed over, he<sub>(C1)</sub> and the six<sub>(C1)</sub> hundred men who were with him, to<sub>(C2)</sub> Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath.<sup>120</sup>

(4) וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶלְיָהוּ אֵלָיו (1 Kgs 19:19)

Elijah<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed over to<sub>(C2)</sub> him.

(5) וַיֵּלֶךְ לַעֲבֹר אֶל־בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: (Jer 41:10)

And he went (for him)<sub>(C1)</sub> to cross over to<sub>(C2)</sub> the sons of Ammon.

#### e. מן-PP complement

The מן PP is used as an object complement infrequently (11x) and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed from Y.”<sup>121</sup> Thus it indicates the source of the action of the verb.

Examples of object complements marked with the מן PP include:

(1) וּמִמְצַפָּה גִלְעָד עָבַר בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: (Judg 11:29)

And (it)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed over from<sub>(C2)</sub> Mizpah of Gilead (to) the sons of Ammon.

(2) וַדָּוִד עָבַר מֵעַט מִהַרְאֵשׁ (2 Sam 16:1)

David<sub>(C1)</sub> had passed a little<sub>(A1)</sub> from<sub>(C2)</sub> the summit.

(3) מִנְּגִה לְגִדּוֹ עָבְרוּ עֵבְרָיו (Psalm 18:13)

His<sub>(C1)</sub> thick clouds passed over from<sub>(C2)</sub> the brightness before him.<sup>122</sup>

(4) כַּפָּיִו מִדִּיד תַּעֲבֹרְנָה (Psalm 81:7)

His<sub>(C1)</sub> hands passed over from<sub>(C2)</sub> the basket.

<sup>120</sup> “He” and “the six hundred men who were with him” are in apposition.

<sup>121</sup> Deut 26:13; Judg 11:29; 18:13; 2 Sam 16:1; 1 Kgs 22:24; Isa 40:27; Ps 18:13; 81:7; Song 3:4; Esth 9:28; 2 Chr 18:23.

<sup>122</sup> The מן here could possibly be taken as “by means of the brightness...”

(5) כִּמְעַט שָׁעֲבַרְתִּי מֵהֶם (Song of Solomon 3:4)

*Scarcely<sub>(A1)</sub> had (I)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed from<sub>(C2)</sub> them...*

f. לְפָנַי – PP complement

The לְפָנַי PP is used as an object complement infrequently (10x) and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *in front of/ahead of/before* Y.”<sup>123</sup> Thus it indicates the path or destination of the action of the verb. Examples of object complements marked with the לְפָנַי PP include:

(1) וְהוּא עָבַר לְפָנֵיהֶם (Gen 33:3)

*But he<sub>(C1)</sub> passed over before<sub>(C2)</sub> them.*

(2) עָבַר לְפָנֵי הָעָם (Exod 17:5)

*(You)<sub>(C1)</sub> pass before<sub>(C2)</sub> the people.*

(3) וְהַחֲלוּצֵי יַעֲבֹר לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן יְהוָה: (Josh 6:7)

*And the armed men<sub>(C1)</sub> will pass ahead of<sub>(C2)</sub> the ark of the Lord.*

(4) עָבַרְוּ לְפָנַי (1 Sam 25:19)

*(You)<sub>(C1)</sub> Pass over before<sub>(C2)</sub> me.*

(5) וַיַּעֲבֹר מֶלֶכְהֶם לְפָנֵיהֶם (Mic 2:13)

*Their king<sub>(C1)</sub> passes before<sub>(C2)</sub> them.*

g. לְ – PP complement

The לְ PP is used as an object complement extremely infrequently (4x) and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *to(ward)* Y” once in Josh 15:6.<sup>124</sup> Thus it indicates the destination of the action of the verb in Josh 15:6, but it also functions possessively with the

<sup>123</sup> Gen 32:17; 33:3; 33:14; Exod 17:5; Deut 3:18; Josh 6:7; 6:8; 1 Sam 9:27; 25:19; Mic 2:13.

<sup>124</sup> Gen 23:16; Josh 15:6; Amos 7:8; 8:2. The PP only functions directionally in Josh 15:6.

null copular clause in Gen 23:16 and it functions as an object marker in Amos 7:8 and 8:2.

Examples of object complements marked with the ל PP include:

(1) עָבַר לְסוֹחֵר (Gen 23:16)

*The passing over<sub>(C1)</sub> (was) to<sub>(C2)</sub> the trader.*

(2) וְעָבַר מִצָּפוֹן לְבֵית הָעֲרָבָה (Josh 15:6)

*And (it)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed from<sub>(A1)</sub> the north to<sub>(C2)</sub> Beth-Arabah.*

(3) לֹא־אֹסִיף עוֹד עָבֹר לוֹ: (Amos 7:8)

*I will not continue to (myself)<sub>(C1)</sub> pass over him<sub>(C2)</sub> again.*

(4) לֹא־אֹסִיף עוֹד עָבֹר לוֹ: (Amos 8:2)

*I will not continue to (myself)<sub>(C1)</sub> pass over him<sub>(C2)</sub> again.*

#### h. בין-PP complement

The בין PP is used as an object complement only in Gen 15:17, Jer 34:18, and 34:19, and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *between* Y.” Thus it indicates the path of the action of the verb. Examples of object complements marked with the בין PP include:

(1) וְהָיָה תַנּוּר עֶשֶׂן וְלֶפֶיד אֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָבַר בֵּין הַגְּזֵרִים הָאֵלֶּה: (Gen 15:17)

*And look, (there was) a smoking oven and a flaming torch, which (they)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed between<sub>(C2)</sub> these pieces.*

(2) וַיַּעֲבְרוּ בֵּין בְּתָרָיו: (Jer 34:18)

*And (they)<sub>(C1)</sub> crossed between<sub>(A1)</sub> its parts.*

(3) שָׂרֵי יְהוּדָה וְשָׂרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם הַסֹּרְסִימִים וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְכָל עַם הָאָרֶץ הָעֹבְרִים בֵּין בְּתָרֵי הָעֵגֶל: (Jer 34:19)

*The officials of Judah and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers and the priests, and all the people of the land (who) (they)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed between<sub>(C2)</sub> the parts of the calf.*

i. על + מן—compound PP complement

The על + מן compound PP is used as an object complement extremely infrequently (Gen 18:3 and Jer 11:15) and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *from beside* Y.” Thus it primarily indicates the source of the action of the verb. Examples of object complements marked with the על + מן compound PP include:

(1) אַל־יָגַא תַּעְבֵּר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ: (Gen 18:3)

*(You)<sub>(C1)</sub> do not pass by from<sub>(C2)</sub> your servant.*

(2) וּבִשְׂרָ־קֹדֶשׁ יַעֲבְרוּ מֵעַלְיָךְ כִּי רָעַתְכִי אֵז תִּמְעַלְזִי: (Jer 11:15)

*(Can) the sacrificial<sub>(C1)</sub> flesh pass over from upon<sub>(C2)</sub> you so that you rejoice<sub>(A1)</sub> (in) your disaster?*

j. אֶת + מִן—compound PP complement

The אֶת + מִן compound PP is used as an object complement only in Deut 2:8 and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *from with* Y.” Thus it indicates the source of the action of the verb:

(1) וַיַּעֲבֹר מֵאֶת אַחֵינוּ בְנֵי־עֵשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשֵׂעִיר מִדְּרֹךְ הָעֲרָבָה מֵאֵילַת וּמִמְעֵזֵינָן גְּבֹר (Deut 2:8)

*(We)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed from with<sub>(C2)</sub> our brothers the sons of Esau, who live in Seir, away from<sub>(A1)</sub> the Arabah road, away from<sub>(A2)</sub> Elath, and from<sub>(A3)</sub> Ezion-geber.*

k. עַד—PP complement

The עד PP is used as an object complement only in Judg 19:12 and nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *as far as* Y.” Thus it indicates the extent of the action of the verb:

(1) וְעָבְרָנוּ עַד־גִּבְעָה: (Judg 19:12)

*But (we)<sub>(C1)</sub> will cross over as far as<sub>(C2)</sub> Gibeah.*

### 1. אָחַר-PP complement

The אָחַר PP is used as an object complement only in 2 Sam 20:13 and nuances the gloss of עָבַר to “X crossed/passed *after/behind* Y.” Thus it indicates the location of the action of the verb:

(1) עָבַר כָּל-אִישׁ אַחֲרֵי יוֹאָב לְרִדְּוֹ אַחֲרֵי שֶׁבַע בֶּן-בְּכָרִי: (2 Sam 20:13)

*All the men<sub>(C1)</sub> passed after<sub>(C2)</sub> Joab in order to pursue<sub>(A1)</sub> Sheba, son of Bicri.*

### 3.3 – Monovalent frames of עָבַר

A minority of the occurrences of the root are monovalent, with a frequency of 15 times (3.23%).<sup>125</sup> Monovalent occurrences are used idiomatically and are primarily found in poetic literature. As the term suggests, all occurrences of עָבַר in this frame lack an overt object complement, but there are four occurrences with the adjuncts: אָ (Job 36:12), אָ (Zeph 2:2), מִן (Isa 31:9), and a VP (Esth 9:27). Although אָ and מִן are often used in the bivalent frame as directional PPs, in these cases they are used to denote means and cause, respectively, and are therefore adjuncts. Because all monovalent occurrences of עָבַר are idiomatic, I will display them below in section 3.6 on idioms.

### 3.4 Trivalent Frames of עָבַר

A minority of the occurrences of the root are trivalent, with a frequency of 6 times (1.29%).<sup>126</sup> Similar to bivalent frames I have only tagged directional PPs as second and third complements. The second complement position is occupied exclusively by the PP מִן, and the third complement position is occupied exclusively by the PPs אֶל (1x), הָ (4x), and עַד (1x).<sup>127</sup> Adjuncts do not occur with the trivalent frame. The מִן PP object complement, combined with the

<sup>125</sup> Gen 50:4; 2 Sam 11:27; 1 Kgs 18:29; Isa 31:9; Jer 8:20; Nah 1:12; Zeph 2:2; Ps 37:36; 90:4; 148:6; Job 17:11; 34:20; 36:12; Song 2:11; Esth 9:27.

<sup>126</sup> Josh 10:29; 10:31; 10:34; 18:13; 19:13; Judg 19:18.

<sup>127</sup> In each case the מִן-PP is accompanied by a destination locative PP in the third complement position. The basic gloss of each occurrence is “from...to.”



הֹ or אֶל PP third complement nuance the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *from* Y *into* Z.”

Similarly, the מִן PP object complement, combined with the עַד PP third complement nuances the gloss of עבר to “X crossed/passed *from* Y *as far as* Z.” Thus the trivalent frame is used to portray the full scope of the action of the verb, from source to destination or extent. I proceed with all 6 examples of the trivalent frame of עבר:

### 3.4.1 – עבר with הֹ-PP Third Complement

- (1) וַיַּעְבֵּר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמּוֹ מִמַּקְדָּה לִבְנֵה (Josh 10:29)

*Joshua*<sub>(C1)</sub> and *all*<sub>(C1)</sub> *Israel with him* crossed over *from*<sub>(C2)</sub> *Makkedah* *to*<sub>(C3)</sub> *Libnah*.<sup>128</sup>

- (2) וַיַּעְבֵּר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמּוֹ מִלִּבְנֵה לַכִּישָׁה (Josh 10:31)

*Joshua*<sub>(C1)</sub> and *all*<sub>(C1)</sub> *Israel with him* crossed over *from*<sub>(C2)</sub> *Libnah* *to*<sub>(C3)</sub> *Lachish*.

- (3) וַיַּעְבֵּר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמּוֹ מִלַּכִּישׁ עַגְלוֹנָה (Josh 10:34)

*Joshua*<sub>(C1)</sub> and *all*<sub>(C1)</sub> *Israel with him* crossed over *from*<sub>(C2)</sub> *Lachish* *to*<sub>(C3)</sub> *Eglon*.

- (4) וַעְבַּר מֵשֶׁם הַגְּבוּל לַיּוֹזָה אֶל־קֶתֶף לַיּוֹזָה (Josh 18:13)

*The border*<sub>(C1)</sub> passed over *from*<sub>(C2)</sub> *there* *to*<sub>(C3)</sub> *Luz*, *to*<sub>(C3)</sub> *the side of Luz*.<sup>129</sup>

- (5) וּמֵשֶׁם עָבַר קִדְמָה מִזֹּרְחָה (Josh 19:13)

*(It)*<sub>(C1)</sub> passed over *from*<sub>(C2)</sub> *there* *to*<sub>(C3)</sub> *the east*, *to*<sub>(C3)</sub> *the sunrise*...<sup>130</sup>

### 3.4.2 – עבר with עַד-PP Third Complement

- (1) עֹבְרִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ מִבֵּית־לָחֶם יְהוּדָה עַד־יִרְכָתַי הַר־אֶפְרַיִם (Judg 19:18)

*We*<sub>(C1)</sub> are passing over *from*<sub>(C2)</sub> *Bethlehem of Judah* *as far as*<sub>(C3)</sub> *the remote hill country of Ephraim*.

<sup>128</sup> “Joshua” and “all Israel with him” in examples 1-3 are in apposition.

<sup>129</sup> “To Luz” and “to the side of Luz” are in apposition.

<sup>130</sup> “To the east” and “to the sunrise” are in apposition.

### 3.5 Exceptions

The three noteworthy exceptions in the valency analysis of עבר are the ellipsis of the verb in Isa 28:19 and Prov 24:30 and its occurrence as an Adverbial Infinitive (Infinitive Absolute) in 2 Sam 17:16. Regarding the ellipsis of עבר, consider the texts of Isa 28:19 and Prov 24:30:

(1) קִי־בִבְקָר בִּבְקָר יַעֲבֹר בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה (Isa 28:19)

*For (pro: the scourge)<sub>(C1)</sub> will pass over morning<sub>(A1)</sub> by morning<sub>(A1)</sub>;*

*(pro: the scourge)<sub>(C1)</sub> (will pass over)<sub>(V)</sub> by day<sub>(A1)</sub> and by night<sub>(A1)</sub>.*

(2) עַל־שׂוּדָה אִישׁ־עֲצָל עֲבַרְתִּי וְעַל־כָּרֶם אָדָם חֲסֵר־לֵב: (Prov 24:30)

*(I)<sub>(C1)</sub> passed by<sub>(C2)</sub> the field of the slow man;*

*and (I)<sub>(C1)</sub> (passed)<sub>(V)</sub> by<sub>(C2)</sub> the vineyard of the man in want of heart.*

In Isa 28:19 the subject “the scourge” is implied by *pro*-drop, with a referent in verse 18, and “by morning” and “by morning” are in apposition as the object complement. In the second half of the verse, “by day” and “by night” superficially appear to be additional object complements to עבר, but since the verb has been analyzed as predominantly bivalent it is more likely that these constituents are object complements to an elided עבר. In Prov 24:30 elision of עבר is evinced primarily by repetition of word order and omission of the verb. Valency analysis therefore clarifies these cases of ellipsis with greater certainty than simple conjecture based on the poetic nature of these texts. Regarding the occurrence of עבר as an Adverbial Infinitive in 2 Sam 17:16, this conjugation of the verb is unique. Unlike finite verbs or infinitives (Infinitive Construct), which follow valency frames, the adverbial infinitive nearly always functions adverbially by modifying a verb of the same *shoresh* (root) and *binyan* (stem).<sup>131</sup> Since it can take no valency frame, the adverbial infinitive is therefore an exception to valency framing.

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<sup>131</sup> Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 420, suggests that the Infinitive Absolute is a “verbal noun of action,” however, John Cook and Robert Holmstedt, *Beginning Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic,

### 3.6 Idiomatic Uses of עבר

The majority of the uses of עבר are glossed as “X crossed/passed over Y,” yet several idiomatic uses of עבר are evident (56x). While I have included the valency frames of idioms using עבר in the overall data, I have been careful to exclude idiomatic occurrences from the examples above.<sup>132</sup> Because idioms have a tendency to complicate semantics and syntax, it is important to highlight the valency frames of each idiom in order to determine what role, if any, valency may play in idiomatic constructions. There are eight idiomatic functions of the root עבר in the Hebrew Bible: Transgression, Teleological, Temporal, Perceptive, Emotive, Monetary, Event, and Euphemistic.<sup>133</sup>

#### 3.6.1 Transgression

The root is used to indicate transgression (23x), typically of a commandment or covenant, and is translated “transgress.”<sup>134</sup> The derivation of this idiom from the dominant gloss of עבר is not difficult to discern. The verb typically refers to the physical crossing of a landmark or boundary, but the transgression idiom refers to the crossing of a metaphorical boundary (i.e. law

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2013), 77, suggest that “The Adverbial Infinitive is neither a noun nor verb. Rather, it is an infinitive that functions as an adverb” and “with a finite verb of the same root and binyan; it expresses a modal nuance (e.g., doubt, necessity, possibility) as the context dictates.”

<sup>132</sup> With the exceptions of Num 5:14 in 3.2.4b, and Gen 23:16 in 3.2.4f.

<sup>133</sup> G. Johannes, Ringgren, Helmer Botterweck and Heinz-Josef Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 415–16, 421, has the following relevant idiomatic uses: pass by/elapse, seep away, scatter/disperse, pass away/die, overflow, escape, transgressing God’s commandments, God’s intervention, God’s forgiveness, and entering into covenant; Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 833, has the following relevant idiomatic uses: transgress, pass by/away, expire, scatter, pass away; R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 642, has the following relevant idiomatic uses: exceed, pass away, monetary, transgress, entering into covenant.

<sup>134</sup> Num 14:41; 22:18; 24:13; Deut 17:2; 26:13; 29:11; Josh 7:11; 7:15; 23:16; Judg 2:20; 1 Sam 15:24; 2 Kgs 18:12; Isa 24:5; Jer 34:18; Hos 6:7; 8:1; Ps 17:3; Prov 8:29; Esth 1:19; 3:3; 9:27; Dan 9:11; 2 Chr 24:20. In Deut 29.11 the verbal action is entrance into covenant, which is the opposite of transgression.

or covenant).<sup>135</sup> The majority of the occurrences of this idiom follow a bivalent frame, with one monovalent occurrence (Esth 9:27).<sup>136</sup> An example of the transgression idiom is Num 14:41:

(1) אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה (Num 14:41)

*You<sub>(C1)</sub> are transgressing the command<sub>(C2)</sub> of the Lord.*

### 3.6.2 Teleological

The root is used teleologically (10x) to indicate the end of an event or lifetime, and is often translated “pass away.”<sup>137</sup> The derivation of this idiom from the dominant gloss of עבר is not difficult to discern. The teleological idiom refers to the existential crossing of something into a new state of existence.<sup>138</sup> This idiom occurs in a monovalent frame (6x), and a bivalent frame (4x).<sup>139</sup> An example of the teleological idiom is Psalm 148.6:

(1) חֶק־נִמְנוּ וְלֹא יֵעָבֹר: (Ps 148:6)

*A statute he gave and (it)<sub>(C1)</sub> will not pass away.*

### 3.6.3 Temporal<sup>140</sup>

The root is used temporally (8x) to denote the passage of time, and is translated “past/over.”<sup>141</sup> The derivation of this idiom from the dominant gloss of עבר is somewhat difficult to discern. The temporal idiom may refer to the metaphorical passage of time, based on the

<sup>135</sup> Perhaps this is the significance of passing between the halves of slain animals in Gen 15:17, where עבר is also used. Passing between the halves denotes covenant observance, while passing outside of the boundary of slain animals represents covenant disobedience.

<sup>136</sup> Num 14:41; 22:18; 24:13; Deut 17:2; 26:13; 29:11; Josh 7:11; 7:15; 23:16; Judg 2:20; 1 Sam 15:24; 2 Kgs 18:12; Isa 24:5; Jer 34:18; Hos 6:7; 8:1; Ps 17:3; Prov 8:29; Dan 9:11; Esth 1:19; 3:3; 9:27; 2 Chr 24:20.

<sup>137</sup> Isa 31:9; Jer 8:13; Nah 1:12; Ps 37:36; 148:6; Job 6:15; 30:15; 34:20; 36:12; Esth 9:28.

<sup>138</sup> With its connection to death, perhaps the idiom is a metaphor for the physical crossing of a dead person’s נֶפֶשׁ into Sheol.

<sup>139</sup> The ע-PP is a fairly common adjunct with this idiom, and the מן-PP is used as an adjunct in one occurrence.

<sup>140</sup> Admittedly, there is not much difference between teleological and temporal idioms, as both relate to the passage of time. However, the primary difference is that teleological idioms focus on the end or death of something, while temporal idioms refer to the passage of time (without necessarily emphasizing the end of that time). In other words, teleology focuses on the end point of an event, but temporality focuses on the extent of an event.

<sup>141</sup> Gen 50:4; 2 Sam 11:27; 1 Kgs 18:29; Jer 8:20; Zeph 2:2; Ps 90:4; Job 17:11; Song 2:11.

physical passing of astronomical bodies.<sup>142</sup> This idiom is exclusively monovalent.<sup>143</sup> An example of the temporal idiom is 2 Sam 11:27:

(1) וַיַּעֲבֹר הָאֲבֵל (2 Sam 11:27)

*(When) the mourning period<sub>(C1)</sub> had passed by...*

#### 3.6.4 Perception

The root is used to indicate perception (5x), typically in reference to God's perception or ignoring of something, and is often translated "overlook."<sup>144</sup> The derivation of this idiom from the dominant gloss of עבר is somewhat difficult to discern. The basis of the metaphorical overlooking/passing by of deeds may be related to physical passing by/avoidance of negative things, such as the path of the wicked in Prov 4:15. This idiom is exclusively bivalent. An example of the perceptive idiom is Jer 5:28:

(1) עָבְרוּ דְבָרֵי-רָע (Jer 5:28)

*(They)<sub>(C1)</sub> overlook deeds<sub>(C2)</sub> of wickedness.*

#### 3.6.5 Emotive

The root is used emotively (4x) to describe an emotion or disposition, and is translated "come upon/over."<sup>145</sup> The derivation of this idiom from the dominant gloss of עבר is not difficult to discern. In fact, a similar idiom is familiar in English (i.e. "he was overcome with anger"). In the emotive idiom an emotion metaphorically passes over someone much like a physical object (i.e. waves) or person could pass by or over a person. This idiom is exclusively bivalent. An example of the emotive idiom is Num 5:14:

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<sup>142</sup> The passage of time from a daily and seasonal perspective was based entirely on the physical passage of astronomical bodies. With respect to seasonal passing, the verb probably refers to a cumulative effect of daily passing.

<sup>143</sup> The ע-PP is the only adjunct used with this idiom, and occurs once.

<sup>144</sup> Isa 40:27; Jer 5:28; 11:15; Mic 7:18; Prov 19:11.

<sup>145</sup> Num 5:14 (x2); 5:30; Ps 73:7.

(1) אוֹ-עֵבֶר עָלָיו רוּחַ-מְקַנָּאֵה (Num 5:14)

*Or if a spirit<sub>(C1)</sub> of jealousy comes upon<sub>(C2)</sub> him...*

### 3.6.6 Monetary

The root is used monetarily (3x) to refer to units of currency, and is translated variously as “sell; monetary standard; appraisal.”<sup>146</sup> The derivation of this idiom from the dominant gloss of עבר is one of the more difficult to discern. The monetary idiom may refer metaphorically to the physical passing over/assessing of items to determine their value. In this regard, a common standard of assessment could be considered a unit of currency. This idiom is exclusively bivalent. An example of the monetary idiom is Gen 23:26:

(1) כֶּסֶף עוֹבֵר (Gen 23:16)

*...the silver<sub>(C2)</sub> (which) (he)<sub>(C1)</sub> has assessed.*

### 3.6.7 Event

The root is used to describe the occurrence of an event (2x), and is translated “happen.”<sup>147</sup> This idiom is exclusively bivalent.<sup>148</sup> The derivation of this idiom from the dominant gloss of עבר is not difficult to discern. The event idiom is related to the emotive idiom to the extent that each refers to the metaphorical passing of an intangible object, such as an emotion or event, which is related to the passing by of a physical object. An example of the event idiom is Job 13:13:

(1) וְיַעֲבֹר עָלַי מָה: (Job 13:13)

*Let whatever<sub>(C1)</sub> happen to<sub>(C2)</sub> me.*

### 3.6.8 Euphemism

The final function of the root is euphemistic, which occurs only in Isa 47:2 and is bivalent. This occurrence follows the standard locative translation “cross (over),” but is used

<sup>146</sup> Gen 23:16; 2 Kgs 12:5; Ezek 48:14.

<sup>147</sup> Job 13:13; 1 Chr 29:30.

<sup>148</sup> The על-PPs are all in apposition.

euphemistically so that it does not seem to refer to the same manner of crossing. In this regard the derivation of the euphemism from the dominant gloss of עבר is the most difficult to discern. At best, it can be said that the euphemism is a metaphor for the physical crossing of rivers, but what the rivers represent (or for that matter, what it means to cross them) is ambiguous. The root is used in Isaiah 47:2 as follows:

(1) עֲבַרְי נְהַרֹּתַי: (Isa 47:2)

*(You)<sub>(C1)</sub> cross the rivers<sub>(C2)</sub>.*

My analysis of the idiomatic uses of עבר shows that there is some correlation between valency and idiom. Specifically, the modified semantics of certain idioms require certain valency frames. However, such semantic modification for idiomatic usage does not necessarily denote that the idioms represent lexically distinct roots.<sup>149</sup> This is primarily the case because it is possible to retrieve from each type of idiom a semblance of the dominant gloss of עבר.<sup>150</sup> However, since the majority of idiomatic uses of עבר follow the majority valency frame (i.e. they are bivalent), the syntax of the root also supports the semantic correlation. So although the semantics of עבר changes slightly from dominant gloss to idiom, the valency frame is consistent.

In summary, in this chapter I have discussed the various glosses of עבר in standard reference works, proposed how these may be simplified based on my valency analysis, and discussed various valency frames of עבר (Qal) and their nuances. First, I showed that the verb occurs with a bivalent frame 95.26% of the time, which is well above Villavicencio's ideal minimum of

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<sup>149</sup> This is what Herbst, *A Valency Dictionary of English*, xxxiii. refers to as “gradience.” In other words it would be a mistake to label the standard lexical root I עבר, the root used for transgression as II עבר, the root used for teleological events as III עבר, etc.

<sup>150</sup> Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 642; for example, transgression may connote crossing over the ideological boundary of a covenant, or may be related to the covenant ceremony of passing between the halves of slaughtered animals, which are symbolic of the covenant boundaries. Passing away in the sense of death may connote the crossing of a person's נֶפֶשׁ into Sheol.

80%.<sup>151</sup> As the dominant valency frame, the verb occurs with NP, null NP, implicit indefinite, and directional PP object complements and a variety of adjuncts. Second, I showed that the verb occurs with a monovalent frame 3.23% of the time, all of which function idiomatically, occasionally with an adjunct. Third, I showed that the verb occurs with a trivalent frame 1.29% of the time, exclusively using a מן PP as an object complement, with the third complement position occupied exclusively by the directional PPs הָ, אֶל, and עַד. Fourth, I showed that the only noteworthy exceptions to my analysis of עבר were the ellipses of the verb in Isa 28:19 and Prov 24:30 and the sole occurrence in 2 Sam 17:16 of the Adverbial Infinitive, an adverbial modifier that lacks a valency frame. Finally, I discussed the primary idiomatic uses of עבר in the interest of understanding whether congruence exists between valency frames and idiomatic syntax and semantics. I determined that since the majority of idiomatic uses of עבר are bivalent, and therefore syntactically congruent with the dominant valency frame, the fundamental difference between the dominant and idiomatic glosses of עבר is a nuance in semantics.

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<sup>151</sup> Villavicencio, “Learning to Distinguish PP Arguments from Adjuncts,” 5.



## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

#### 4.1 Implications of Valency Analysis of עבר

My analysis of עבר has revealed two significant implications. First, standard reference materials such as lexicons and theological dictionaries, while valuable, tend to be overly complicated. In the case of עבר, the reference materials focus more on minority glosses of the verb than they should. My analysis has shown that a simplified gloss of “X crossed/passed over Y” is appropriate the majority of the time, though nuanced glosses based on statistical minority complements are also warranted. Valency analysis is able to accomplish a simplified gloss by distinguishing between complements and adjuncts, and glossing only the former with the verb. In this way a valency lexicon is able to avoid unnecessarily complicated lexical entries. Second, valency analysis is able to identify elliptical structures in BH and contribute possible solutions to clauses with difficult syntax.

#### 4.2 Prospects for Future Research

There are three potential prospects for future research into valency analysis of BH. First, valency analysis may be used to determine how closely the different *binyanim* are related. For example, it is often assumed that the Hiphil *binyan* should be translated as the causative alternative to the Qal, but valency analysis of each *binyan* as a distinct lexeme has the potential to more thoroughly address this issue. Second, valency analysis could be synthesized with other methods of literary analysis (i.e. communicative theory) to provide a more comprehensive approach to the HB. Third, with the inherent difficulty of motion verbs and their use of directional complements, an examination of BH motion verbs (i.e. הֵלֵךְ, בּוֹא, יָצָא, etc.) may reveal

that distinct semantic hierarchies of object complements are appropriate for different types of verbs. Specifically, although directional complements are often considered optional or adjunct on semantic hierarchies, their prevalence with motion verbs could suggest that they are obligatory for these verbs.

### 4.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to contribute to the burgeoning field of BH valency studies by proposing an analysis of the valency of עבר (Qal). In the introduction I proposed that עבר (Qal) is primarily a bivalent verb. In chapter 1 I explained the basis for valency theory and the function of constituents as complements or adjuncts. The former being those constituents which are syntactically and semantically required by the verb in order to complete its meaning and grammar, and the latter being those which are not required by the syntax and semantics of the verb. I also discussed four tests that are typically used by linguists to distinguish between complements and adjuncts in modern languages, but which are potentially problematic for valency analysis of ancient languages like BH. I also adopted the list of 14 semantic roles proposed by Barry Blake, which I was able to use in distinguishing between complements and adjuncts on semantic grounds. I concluded chapter 1 with a discussion of the contributions of valency analysis of BH, namely, that valency analysis is able to resolve grammatically questionable constructions, contribute to discussions of textual corruption, and to identify ellipsis. In chapter 2 I suggested that the subject NP of BH verbs is always obligatory, even if it is phonologically or morphologically absent due to the phenomenon of *pro*-drop in BH. I also discussed the frequent lack of an overt object complement for עבר, and proposed that *pro*-drop, implicit indefinite object complements, and monovalency were responsible for this. I closed chapter 2 with a discussion of Cook's hierarchical method of PP evaluation and proposed that on

the basis of semantic roles, the typically optional or adjunct directional PPs should be considered obligatory complements of the motion verb עבר.

In chapter 3 I discussed the various glosses of עבר in standard reference materials and I proposed that my valency analysis provided a simpler dominant gloss of “X passed/crossed over Y.” I supported this assertion with a discussion of the valency frames of עבר. First, I observed that עבר is primarily bivalent (95.26%) and occurs with NP, null NP, implicit indefinite, and directional PP object complements. Second, I observed that עבר is rarely monovalent (3.23%), and that all monovalent occurrences are idiomatic. Third, I showed that עבר is extremely rarely trivalent (1.29%), using exclusively the מן PP as an object complement and the אָל, אֶל, and עַד directional PPs as third complements. I also discussed three exceptions to the data, ellipsis of the verb in Isa 28:19 and Prov 24:30, and the Adverbial Infinitive in 2 Sam 17:16. I closed chapter 3 with a discussion of the idiomatic uses of עבר and their syntactic and semantic congruence with the dominant bivalent syntax and dominant gloss of the verb. Finally, in this chapter I briefly discussed the implications of my analysis of עבר and prospect for future research. Namely, the analysis has simplified traditional glosses of the verb and allowed for identification of elliptical structures and solution of difficult syntax. It has also opened the door for determining the relationships between *binyanim*, examining motion verbs and their constituents, and incorporating valency analysis with other methods of literary analysis. As a bivalent verb עבר (Qal) can now be more accurately understood and analyzed by interpreters of the Hebrew Bible.

## APPENDIX

### DICTIONARY ENTRY

**עבר** (qal) ‘cross/pass over’ 1/2/3 [S V (NP/PP) (PP)] 464x†

Comments:

(1) Monovalent (15x). All monovalent occurrences of the verb are used idiomatically:

Gen 50:4; 2 Sam 11:27; 1 Kgs 18:29; Isa 31:9; Jer 8:20; Nah 1:12; Zeph 2:2; Ps 37:36; 90:4; 148:6; Job 17:11; 34:20; 36:12; Song 2:11; Esth 9:27.

(2) Bivalent (442x):

(2a) NP complement (114x):

Unmarked (43x):

Num 20:17; 21:22; Deut 2:8; 17:2; 1 Sam 26:13; 2 Sam 17:20; 19:19; 19:32; 2 Kgs 6:9; 12:5; Isa 10:29; 16:8; 23:10; 23:2; 23:12; 24:5; 33:8; 33:21; 35:8; 41:3; 47:2; Jer 2:10; 5:22 (x2); 5:28; 8:13; 23:9; 48:32; Ezek 39:11; 48:14; Hos 8:1; Amos 5:5; 6:2; Mic 2:13; Ps 8:9; 38:5; 73:7; 80:13; 89:42; Prov 8:29; Lam 1:12; 2:15; 1 Chr 19:17.

Marked by **את** (71x):

Gen 31:21; 31:52 (x2); 32:11; 32:23; 32:32; Num 14:41; 22:18; 24:13; 32:21; 32:29; 33:51; 35:10; Deut 2:13 (x2); 2:14; 2:18; 2:24; 2:29; 3:27; 4:21; 4:22; 4:26; 9:1; 11:31; 12:10; 27:2; 27:4; 27:12; 30:18; 31:2; 31:13; 32:47; Josh 1:2; 1:11; 3:14; 3:17; 4:1; 4:22; 7:11; 7:15; 16:6; 23:16; 24:11; Judg 2:20; 3:26; 10:9; 11:29 (x2); 1 Sam 13:7; 14:23; 15:24; 30:10; 2 Sam 2:29; 10:17; 17:21; 17:22 (x2); 17:24; 18:23; 19:37; 19:40; 24:5; 1 Kgs 2:37; 2 Kgs 18:12; Jer 34:18; Hos 6:7; Esth 3:3; Dan 9:11; 1 Chr 12:16; 2 Chr 24:20.

(2b) Null complement (114x):

Gen 18:5; 37:28; Exod 12:23; Num 20:19; 20:20; 22:26; 32:7; 32:27; 32:30; 32:32; Deut 2:28; 3:21; 3:25; 3:28; 4:22; 9:3; 27:3; 29:15; 30:13; 31:3 (x2); Josh 1:14; 3:1; 3:6; 3:16; 3:17; 4:10; 4:11 (x2); 4:12; 4:23 (x2); 5:1; Judg 3:28; 8:4; 12:5; 1 Sam 9:27; 14:1; 14:4; 14:6; 14:8; 15:12; 26:22; 2 Sam 15:22 (x2); 15:23 (x2); 15:24; 15:33; 17:16; 19:34; 19:38; 19:39; 19:40; 19:41 (x2); 24:20; 1 Kgs 19:11; 2 Kgs 2:8; 2:9; 2:14; 4:8; 4:31; 14:9; Isa 8:8; 26:20; 28:15; 28:18; 28:19; 51:10; 51:23 (x2); 60:15; 62:10; Jer 9:9; 9:11; Ezek 5:14; 14:15; 16:15; 16:25; 33:28; 35:7; 36:34; 39:11; 39:14; 39:15; 47:5; Mic 2:8; 5:7; Nah 1:8; Hab 1:11; Zeph 3:6; Zech 7:14; 9:8; Ps 17:3; 48:5; 57:2; 104:9; 141:10; Prov 4:15; 9:15; 26:10; Job 6:15; 14:5; 19:8; 30:15; 37:21; Ruth 2:8; 4:1; Lam 3:44; Esth 1:19; Dan 11:10; 11:40; 2 Chr 25:18.

(2c) Indefinite implicit complement (37x):

Exod 15:16 (x2); 33:22; Lev 27:32; Josh 2:23; 6:7; Judg 6:33; 12:1; 19:14; 1 Sam 29:2 (x2); 2 Sam 2:15; 16:9; 18:9; 1 Kgs 13:25; 20:39; Isa 28:19; 29:5; 45:14; Jer 13:24; Amos 8:5; Mic 1:11; Hab 3:10; Ps 42:5; 129:8; 144:4; Prov 10:25; 22:3; 27:12; Job 11:16; 21:29; Song 5:5; 5:6; 5:13; Esth 4:17; Neh 2:14; 2 Chr 21:9.

(2d) PP complement (177x):

**ב**-PP complement (68x):

Gen 12:6; 30:32; 41:46; Exod 12:12; 32:27; Lev 26:6; Num 13:32; 14:7; 20:17 (x2); 20:18; 20:21; 21:22; 21:23; 33:8; Deut 2:4; 2:27; 29:11; 29:15; Josh 1:11; 3:2; 3:4; 3:11; 4:7; 18:9; 24:17; Judg 9:26; 11:17; 11:19; 11:20; 1 Sam 9:4 (x4); 2 Sam 15:23; 19:19; 20:14; 1 Kgs 18:6; 22:36; Isa 8:21; 10:28; 34:10; 43:2; 62:10; Jer 2:6; 51:43; Ezek 5:17;

9:4; 9:5; 14:17; 29:11 (x2); 39:14; 39:15; Joel 4:17; Amos 5:17; Nah 2:1; Zech 10:11; Ps 66:6; 84:7; 103:16; Prov 4:15; 7:8; Job 15:19; 33:18; 33:28; Neh 9:11; 2 Chr 30:10.

**על-PP complement (46x):**

Gen 18:5; 32:22; Exod 30:13; 30:14; 33:22; 34:6; 38:26; Num 5:14 (x2); 5:30; 6:5; Deut 24:5; Judg 9:25; 2 Sam 15:18 (x2); 1 Kgs 9:8; 2 Kgs 4:9; 6:26; 6:30; Isa 45:14; 54:9; Jer 18:16; 19:8; 22:8; 33:13; 49:17; 50:13; Ezek 16:6; 16:8; Hos 10:11; Jonah 2:4; Mic 7:18; Nah 3:19; Zeph 2:15; Zech 9:8; Ps 42:8; 88:17; 124:4; 124:5; Prov 19:11; 24:30; Job 9:11; 13:13; Lam 4:21; 1 Chr 29:30; 2 Chr 7:21.

**הִ-ADV complement (15x):**

Num 34:4 (x2); Deut 4:14; 6:1; 11:8; 11:11; 34:4; Josh 15:3 (x2); 15:4; 15:10; 15:11; Judg 12:1; 2 Kgs 8:21; Isa 23:6.

**אל-PP complement (15x):**

Josh 4:5; 4:13; 15:7; 15:10; 16:2; 18:18; 18:19; 22:19; Judg 11:32; 12:3; 1 Sam 27:2; 1 Kgs 19:19; 2 Kgs 4:8; Jer 41:10; Neh 2:14.

**מן-PP complement (11x):**

Deut 26:13; Judg 11:29; 18:13; 2 Sam 16:1; 1 Kgs 22:24; Isa 40:27; Ps 18:13; 81:7; Song 3:4; Esth 9:28; 2 Chr 18:23.

**פני-PP complement (10x):**

Gen 32:17; 33:3; 33:14; Exod 17:5; Deut 3:18; Josh 6:7; 6:8; 1 Sam 9:27; 25:19; Mic 2:13.

**ל-PP complement (4x):**

Gen 23:16; Josh 15:6; Amos 7:8; 8:2.

**בין-PP complement (3x):** Gen 15:17; Jer 34:18; 34:19.

**מן-PP + על-PP complement (2x):** Gen 18:3; Jer 11:15.

**מן-PP + את-PP complement (1x):** Deut 2:8.

**עד-PP complement (1x):** Judg 19:12.

**אהר-PP complement (1x):** 2 Sam 20:13.

(3) Trivalent (6x):

(3a) **מן-PP complement 2 (6x):** with **הִ-ADV (5x)** or **עד-PP (1x)** complement 3. Josh 10:29; 10:31; 10:34; 18:13; 19:13; Judg 19:18.

(4) Exceptions:

2 Sam 17:16 features an adverbial infinitive modifying a finite verb. Functioning adverbially, this occurrence of the root has no valency. Isa 28.19 and Prov 24.30 evince verbal ellipsis.

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