

The Infinitive in Biblical Hebrew

Edit Doron, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

1. Introduction

Biblical Hebrew (BH) verbal forms manifest rich inflection within the finite (Fin) clause, encoding the functional categories of temporality (T), mood (Mood), grammatical aspect (Asp), and modality (Mod). These categories have been widely discussed in the literature, and their relative role is still under debate (recently Hatav 1997, 2008, Joosten 2002, Cook 2006, 2012 and others). In particular, Asp and Mod have proven hard to disentangle in the morphology of the BH verb. The present work will reflect this by assuming that these two categories are composed together as Asp/Mod (AM) in the inflection of the verb.

Objectives of the paper are to show that:

- I. The same functional categories which determine the inflection of the BH finite verb also determine the feature specification of the BH infinitive. (In particular, the functional categories of the BH infinitive are clausal rather than nominal (section 4).)
- II. BH has a single infinitive combined with different inflectional categories, yielding the so-called *Infinitive Absolute* and *Infinitive Construct*, which, together with the finite (Fin) verb, gives rise to 4 clause types: Fin, Poss-inf, PRO-inf, and Nom-inf.
- III. These clause types are classified by their highest functional projection T_{Fin}, T, AM, Mood, which accounts for their distribution.
- IV. There is a concomitant 4-way alternation of attachment options of subject and object clitics to the verb: [+Scl+Ocl], [+Scl-Ocl], [-Scl+Ocl], [-Scl-Ocl].

The examples in (1) illustrate, using the same verb *remember*, the Fin and infinitival clause types in their typical functions. The Fin construction is a clause in the indicative mood, or in a variety of irrealis moods (imperative/ jussive/ cohortative), and Nom-inf is an irrealis root clause. Irrealis mood endows the clause with illocutionary force. Poss-inf and PRO-inf are embedded clauses lacking force, and their distribution will be discussed in detail below.¹ Poss-inf often functions as a temporal adverbial, and PRO-inf – as a purpose adverbial:

- 1.a Fin
- i. Indicative (בראשית מב 9) **וַיִּזְכֹּר יוֹסֵף אֶת הַחֲלֻמוֹת אֲשֶׁר חָלַם לָהֶם (בראשית מב 9)**
wayyizkōr yōsēp ʔēt ha-hālōmōt ʔāšer hālam lā-hem
and.remembered.3MS Joseph ACC the-dreams that dreamt.3MS to-3MP
Then Joseph **remembered** the dreams which he had dreamed about them. (Gen. 42:9)
 - ii. Imperative (דברים ט 27) **זָכֹר לְעַבְדֶיךָ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִשְׁחָק וְלַיַעֲקֹב (דברים ט 27)**
zākōr la-šābāde-kā la-ʔabrāhām la-yiṣḥāq ū-la-yaʿāqōb
remember.IMPR.2MS to-servants-POSS.2MP to-Abraham to-Isaac and-to-Jacob
Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Deut 9:27)
- b. Nom-inf (שמות כ 7) **זָכֹר אֶת-יְוָם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ (שמות כ 7)**
zākōr ʔēt yōm haš-šabbāt la-qaddāš-ō
remember.INFABS ACC day.CS the-sabbath to-sanctify.INF-ACC.3MS
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Ex. 20:8)

¹ The distinction between the BH Poss-inf and PRO-inf, which serves the base of the distinction between the Modern Hebrew Gerund and Infinitive, is already found in Doron 2016, 2019.

c Poss-inf (תהילים קלו 1) על נהרות בבל שם ישבנו גם-בכינו בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת-צִיּוֹן (תהילים קלו 1)
ʕal nahārōt bāḇel šām yāšab-nū gam bākī-nū bə-zokṛ-ēnū ʔeṭ ʕiyṗōn
 by rivers.CS Babylon there sat-1P also wept-1P **when-remember.INF-POSS.1P** ACC Zion
 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept **when we remembered** Zion.
 (Ps. 137:1)

d PRO-inf² וְהָיְתָה הַקֶּשֶׁת בְּעָנָן וְרָאִיתִיהָ לְזָכֹר בְּרִית עוֹלָם בֵּין אֱלֹהִים וּבֵין כָּל-נֹפֵשׁ חַיָּה (בראשית ט 16)
wəhāyət-ā haq-qešet be-ʕānān ū-rəʔt-ti-hā
 and.be.MOD-3FS the-rainbow.F in.the-cloud and-will.see-1S-ACC.3FS
li-zkōr *bərīt ʕōlām bēn ʔēlōhīm ū-bēn kol nepēš hayyā*
to-remember.INF covenant.CS eternity between God and-between all soul living
 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it **to remember** the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature. (Gen. 9:16)

The Poss-inf subject is in the possessive case, overtly marked for pronomial subjects, in particular the 1st person singular, where the possessive marking differs from accusative marking of the corresponding object clitics in the PRO-inf construction. Thus, the 1st person object clitic *-ēnī* in (2a) differs in form from the 1st person subject clitic *-ī* in (2b):

2.a PRO-inf הֲלֹ [הַיְגִי PRO] אֵתָּה אֹמֵר כְּאִשֶּׁר הִרְגַתְּ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי (שמות ב 14)
ha-lə-[hārḡ-ēnī PRO] ʔattā ʔōmēr kaʔāšer hāraḡ-tā ʔeṭ ham-miṣrī
 Q-to- [kill.INF-ACC.1S PRO] you intend.PTC.MS as killed-2MS ACC the Egyptian
 Do you intend **to kill me** as you killed the Egyptian? (Ex. 2:14)

b Poss-inf וְלֹא-יְהִיָּה בְּכֶם נֶגֶף לְמִשְׁחִית בְּ[הַכְּתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם] (שמות יב 13)
wə-lō yihye b-ākem neḡeṗ lə-mašhīt
 and-NEG be.MOD at-2MP plague to-destroy.PTC.MS
bə- [hakkōt-ī bə-ʔereš miṣrāyīm]
 when-[strike.INF.POSS.1S at-land.CS Egypt]

And the plague shall not be on you to destroy you **when I strike the land of Egypt**. (Ex. 12:13)

- 3.a Fin [+Scl+Ocl] עָשִׂיתִי
ʕāšī-ti-w
 made-1S-ACC.3MS
- b Nom-inf [-Scl-Ocl] עָשָׂה
ʕāšō
 make.INFABS
- c Poss-inf [+Scl-Ocl] בְּעִשׂוֹתַי
ba-ʕāšōt-ī
 when-make.INF-POSS.1S
- d PRO-inf [-Scl+Ocl] לְעִשׂוֹתַי
la-ʕāšōt-ēnī
 to-make.INF-ACC.1S

² It should be clear that the contrast between the overt vs. covert subject in Poss-inf vs. PRO-inf is **grammatical** and has nothing to do with the **pragmatic** contrast between overt and null pronominal subjects in finite clauses like (i), where the overt/covert choice has to do with information structure:

i. וּבַהֲעֵלוֹת הָעָנָן מֵעַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִסְעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכֹל מִסְעֵיהֶם, וְאִם-לֹא יַעֲלֶה הָעָנָן--וְלֹא יִסְעוּ עַד-יוֹם הָעֵלְתוֹ (שמות מ 36-37)

4.a Fin

(יחזקאל כ 14) הגוים אשר הוצאתים לעיניהם
hag-gōyim ʔāšer hōšē-tī-m lə-ʕēnē-hem
 the peoples that **brought.out-1S-ACC.2MP** to-eyes-POSS.3MP
 the peoples in whose sight **I had brought them out** (Eze. 20:14)

b PRO-inf

(שמות יב 42) להוציאם מארץ מצרים
lə-hōšīt-ām mē-ʔereš mišrāyim
to-bring.out.INF-ACC.3MP from-land.CS Egypt
 for **bringing them out** of the land of Egypt (Ex. 12:42)

c Poss-inf

בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים * (ויקרא כג 43) **בהוציאם מארץ מצרים**
bə-hōšīt-ī ʔōtām mē-ʔereš mišrāyim
when-bring.out.INF-POSS.1S ACC.3MP from-land.CS Egypt
 when **I brought them out** of the land of Egypt (Lev. 23:43)
 * *bə-hōšīt-ī-m mē-ʔereš mišrāyim*
when-bring.out.INF-POSS.1S -ACC.3MP from-land.CS Egypt

The ungrammaticality in the (c) example above is not due to “heaviness” of two combined clitics, since even if the subject is not a pronominal clitic but a full lexical item, even then an object clitic is impossible in the Poss-inf construction:

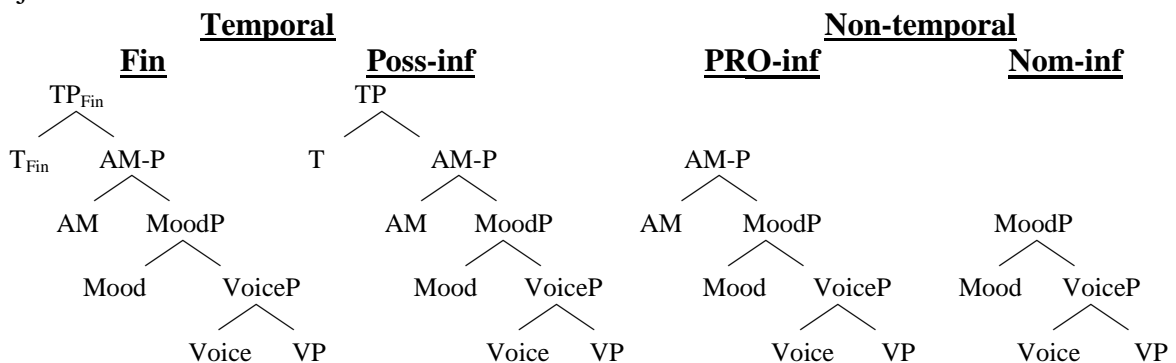
5. Poss-inf

a (בראשית ד 15) וישם יהוה לקנן אות לבלתי הבות-אתו כל-מצאו * לבלתי הבותו כל-מצאו
wayyāsem YHWH lə-qayin ʔōt lə-biltī hakkōt ʔoṭō kol mōšʔ-ō
 and.put.3MS Lord to-Cain mark to-NEG kill.INF ACC.3MS any find.PTC.MS-POSS.3MS
 And the Lord set a mark on Cain, **lest anyone finding him should kill him.**(Gen. 4:15)

* *lə-biltī hakkōt-ō kol mōšʔ-ō*
 to-NEG kill.INF-ACC.3MS any find.PTC.MS-POSS.3MS

b (יהושע יד 7) בן-ארבעים שנה אנכי בשלח משה עבד-יהוה אתי ... * בשלחני משה
ben ʔarbāšim šānā ʔānōkī bi-šalōah mōše ʕebēd JHWH ʔōtī
 son.CS forty year I **when-send.INF** Moses servant.CS Lord ACC.1S
 I was forty years old when **Moses** the servant of the Lord **sent me...** (Josh. 14:7)
 * *bə-šolh-ēnī mōše*
when-send.INF-ACC.1S Moses

6. The four clausal types are distinguished by what Wurmbrand 2001, 2014 has called their restructuring signature: how much of the hierarchy of clausal functional categories is projected in the clause.



7.

highest inflection	+T	-T
+ verbal	Fin [+Scl+Ocl]	PRO-inf [-Scl+Ocl]
- verbal	Poss-inf [+Scl-Ocl]	Nom-inf [-Scl-Ocl]

This corresponds to what has often been remarked in the literature: object clitics attach to inflection which is characteristically verbal (e.g. in Romance, Cardinaletti and Shlonsky 2004, Cardinaletti 2008).³

2. One infinitive, different inflectional categories

Historically, the Infinitive Absolute (INFABS) is the original infinitive, also found in Akkadian (Blau 1979:§30), while the Infinitive Construct (INF) has been claimed to originate in a different Proto-Semitic form, related to the imperfective (Bauer and Leander 1922:§43). Yet, synchronically in BH, I would like to propose that the two are actually two inflectional forms of a single infinitive. The derivations are shown in the following table:⁴

8.

	Agency		Simple		Intensive		Causative	
Voice								
Active	<i>šamōr</i> observe.INFABS	<i>šamōr</i> observe.INF	<i>kabbēd</i> honor.INFABS	<i>kabbēd</i> honor.INF	<i>haqrēb</i> offer.INFABS	<i>haqrib</i> offer.INF		
Middle	<i>hiššābaš</i> VOW.INFABS	<i>hiššābaš</i> VOW.INF	<i>hitnappēl</i> attack.INFABS	<i>hitnappēl</i> attack.INF				
Passive			<i>gunnōb</i> be-stolen.INFABS	<i>hukkabbēs</i> be-laundered. INF	<i>huggēd</i> be-told.INFABS	<i>hulledeṭ</i> be-given- birth.INF		

The Infinitive Absolute is the citation form of the verb, and has adverbial uses (typically bare of arguments). The adverbial infinitive either directly modifies the inflected verb (9a-b), as described in Callaham 2014, HataV 2017, and references therein, or it modifies the VP (9c-d):

9.

- ראה ראייתי את-עני עמי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם (שמות ג 7)
- a *rāʔō* *rāʔī-ī* *ʔeṭ* *šōnī* *šamm-ī* *ʔāšer bə-miṣrāyim*
see.INFABS saw-1S ACC oppression.CS people-POSS.1S that in-Egypt
I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt. (Ex. 3:7)
- b **שוב** אֲשׁוּב אֲלֶיךָ כִּפְתַת חַיָּה וְהִנֵּה-בֵן לְשָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ (בראשית יח 10)

³ Indeed the participle, which is inflected as a noun, mostly takes genitive marked object clitics:

<i>mōšʔ-ī</i> find.PTC.MS-POSS.1S anyone who finds me (Gen. 4:14)	<i>məpāllet-ī</i> deliver.PTC.MS-POSS.1S He delivers me (Ps. 18:49)	<i>məšanʔ-ī</i> hate.PTC.MS-POSS.1S he who hates me (Job 31:29)	<i>šōlh-ī</i> send.PTC.MS-POSS.1S He who sent me (2Sam.24:13)
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Yet the participle exhibits noun/verb duality, and there are also a few cases where it heads a finite clause with accusative object clitics:

hā-ʔēl ha-məʔazzər-ēnī *hāyil* הָאֵל הַמְּאַזְרֵנִי חַיִּל (תהילים יח 33)
the-God that-arm.PTC.MS-ACC.1S strength It is God who arms me with strength (Ps. 18:33[32])

⁴ The Infinitive Absolute of some verbs in derived templates also has exponents constructed by analogy to the Simple Active template, e.g. *niḥōm* ‘fight’, *yassōr* ‘chasten’. Note: passive infinitives are extremely rare.

oriented logophoric pronoun), as in (10a), or a lexical DP, as in (10b). As is to be expected of imperative clauses, they are typically root clauses (Palmer 2001).

10. Nom-inf

a שְׁמוֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ (דברים ה 11)
šāmōr *ʔeɫ yōm haš-šabbāt la-qaddaš-ō*
observe.INFABS ACC day.CS the-sabbath to-sanctify.INF-ACC.3MS
Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Deut. 5:11(12))

b וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הַמִּנְחָה: הַקָּרֵב אֶתְּךָ בְּנֵי-אֶהֱרֹן לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֶל-פְּנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ (ויקרא ו 7)
wə-zōɫ *tōraɫ ham-minhā*
 and-this.F (is) law.F.CS the-grain.offering.F

haqrēḥ *ʔōɫāh bənē ʔahārōn liḥnē JHWH ʔel.pənē ham-mizbēaḥ*
offer.INFABS ACC.3FS sons.SC Aaron before Lord on the-altar

This is the law of the grain offering: **The sons of Aaron shall offer** it on the altar before the Lord. (Lev. 6:7[14])

11. Fin Imperative

a שְׁמַר אֶת-הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה (מ"א כ 39)
šamōr *ʔeɫ hā-ʔīš haz-ze*
guard.IMPR.2MS ACC the-man the-this
Guard this man (1Kings 20:39)

b וְאַתָּה הַקָּרֵב אֶלֶיךָ אֶת-אֶהֱרֹן אַחִיךָ (שמות כ 1)
wə-ʔattā haqrēḥ *ʔēl-ekā ʔeɫ ʔahārōn ʔāḥ-ɪkā*
and-you take.IMPR.2MS to-2MS ACC Aaron brother-POSS.2MS
 Now you take Aaron your brother (Ex. 28:1)

3.2. [+Indicative] infinitival clauses

The form of the infinitive in the second type of construction is the Infinitive Construct. This form allows the attachment of pronominal clitics, something that is strictly disallowed in the Nom-inf construction, which has the Infinitive Absolute form. As we have seen, this difference is due to the fact that subject and object clitics attach to the relevant functional categories, which are present in the second type of construction but not in the Nom-inf construction.

The first subtype, familiar from other languages, has a null pronominal anaphor subject (PRO), typically controlled by another DP in the linguistic context. This is the PRO-inf type. We will now see that it does not have temporal specification, i.e. no T functional category, yet it does have Asp/Mod specification. As it is not specified for T, the subject is not assigned case, and is hence PRO. As it is specified for Asp/Mod, which is verbal inflection, it allows object clitics.

The second subtype, Poss-inf, has an overt subject with possessive case,⁹ I will now argue that this construction is temporal and hence includes specification of the functional category T. As it has T specification, but not a finite one, it allows subject but not object clitics. It is distinguished from finite clauses, with a finite T (and hence both subject and object clitics). I assume that it is non-finite T which assigns possessive case to the subject, in parallel to the

⁹ The possessive case is a marked case of the subject in other languages as well, such as Alaskan Yup'ik (Abney 1987:28), Finnish (Kiparsky 2001), Ladakhi, Lak, Niue (Lander 2011: 590), Tagalog (Aldridge 2006, Collins 2017), Tzutujil Maya (Abney 1987:31), and others.

non-finite *-ing* functional category which assigns accusative case to the subject of Acc-ing gerunds in English according to Reuland's 1983 analysis.¹⁰

In the following examples of PRO-inf and Poss-inf, notice the Infinitive Construct forms *rəʔōt* 'see' and *šūb* 'return' in (12) and (13), which differ from the corresponding Infinitive Absolute forms *rāʔō* and *šōb* of the same verbs in (9) above.

12.a PRO-inf

(ש"א יט 15) [ראות את-PRO רוד] וישלח שאול את-המלאכים ל-
wayyišlah šāʔūl ʔet ham-malʔākīm li- [rʔōt PRO ʔet dāwid]
 and.sent.3MS Saul ACC the-messenger to-[see.INF PRO ACC David]
 Then Saul sent the messengers back to see David (1Sam 19:15)

b Poss-inf

וכ[ראות שאול את-רוד]...אמר אל-אבנר (ש"א יז 55)
wə-ki- [rʔōt šāʔūl ʔet dāwid] ... ʔamar ʔel ʔabnēr
 and-as-[see.INF Saul ACC David] said.3MS to Abner
 When Saul saw David...., he said to Abner, (1Sam. 17:55)

13.a PRO-inf

וישלח את-היונה ולא-תקפה [שוב אליו-PRO רוד] (בראשית ח 12)
wayšaʔallah ʔet hay-yōnā wə-lō yāšəpā [šūb PRO ʔel-āw ʔōd]
 and.sent.3MS ACC the-dove.F and-NEG repeated.3FS [return.INF PRO to-3MS anymore]
 ... and [he] sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore. (Gen 8:12)

b Poss-inf

ב[שוב יהוה את-שיבת ציון] היינו כחלמים (תהילים קכו 1)
bə- [šūb YHWY ʔet šibat ʔiyyon] hāyī-nū kə-hōlmīm
 when-[return.INF Lord ACC return.CS Zion] were-2P as-dream.PTC.MP

It seemed like a dream when the Lord brought us back to the city of Zion. (CEV; Ps. 126:1)

The two constructions contrast sharply in distribution. The (b) examples in (12) – (13) are temporal adverbials, and none of the (a) examples are. This is not an accident, as it is the case in general that temporal preposition only take Poss-inf complements, never PRO-inf complements. This shows that Poss-inf clauses include T specification in their structure, whereas PRO-inf clauses do no. Thus only the former can serve as Specifier of the main clause T head (Cinque 1999). PRO-inf clauses function as purpose clauses, as in (12a) and (15b), i.e. they are Asp/Mod phrases (AM for short) which are Specifiers to the Asp/Mod head of the main clause:^{11, 12}

¹⁰ It has often been noticed that the BH Infinitive Construct subsumes properties of both infinitives and gerunds in other languages. PRO-inf subsumes both the English infinitive and the PRO-ing gerund. Poss-inf parallels the English Acc-ing gerund, despite the morphological difference between accusative and genitive. Poss-inf does not parallel the English Poss-ing, which is a nominal rather than a clausal construction (Pires 2001, 2006, 2007; Moulton 2004).

¹¹ Purpose clauses are part of infinitival clauses which “are a group which displays a characteristic future-oriented, irrealis semantics” (Portner 1997: 183). Yet, as argued by Wurmbrand 2001, 2014, the seeming temporal relation of the infinitival clause to the main clause is not due to T but to Mod, which determines the inherent future orientation of purposes.

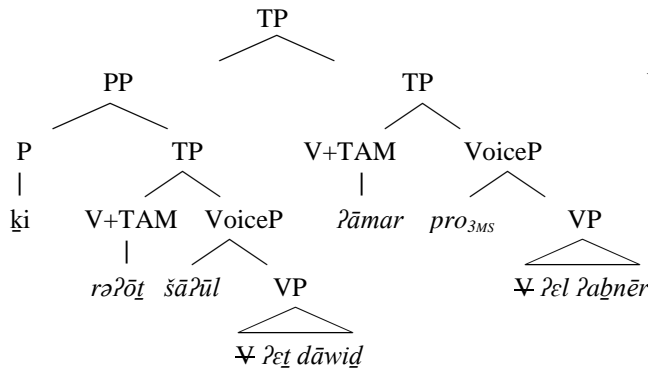
¹² Purpose clauses are distinct from rationale clauses (Jones 1985, Verstraete 2008), which can be expressed by the Poss-inf construction. The latter describes a result event, as in (i) below, not necessarily the outcome an agent's intentions, unlike the intentional/modal characterization of purpose clauses:

(i) Poss-inf: rationale clause

וישמרו דרך יהוה ... למען [הביא יהוה על-אבניהם את אשר-דבר עליו] (בראשית יח 19)

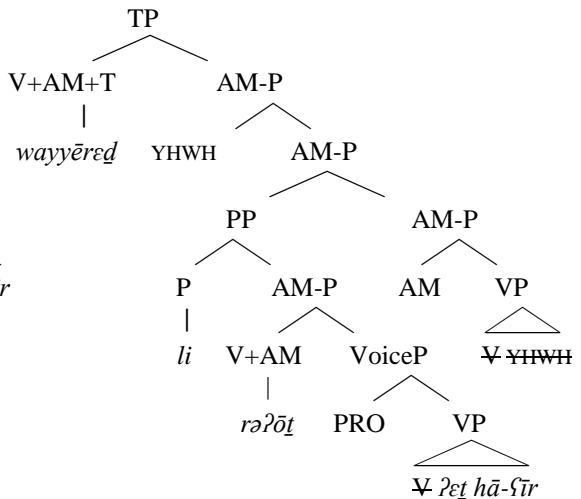
(15)a. Poss-inf
Spec of T: temporal adverbial (cf. 6b)

וַיֵּרָא אֶל-דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל-אַבְנֵר (ש"א יז 55)
wə-ki-rəʔōt šāʔul ʔet dāwid ʔāmar ʔel ʔabnēr
 and-as-see.INF Saul ACC David said.3MS to Abner
 When Saul saw David... he said to Abner (1Sam. 17:55)



b. PRO-inf
Spec of Asp/Mod: purpose adverbial

וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה לְרֹאֵת אֶת-הָעִיר ... (בראשית יא 5)
wayyēred YHWH li-rəʔōt ʔet hā-ʕir
 came.down.3MS YHWH to-see.INF ACC the-city
 The Lord came down to see the city (Gen 11:5)



Infinitival clauses also function as complements, and as such are selected by different types of verbs. Poss-inf clauses are propositional TPs, and are hence selected by propositional attitude verbs, such as *know* (Gen. 19:35, Jer. 15:15), *remember* (Jer. 2:2, 18:20), *consent* (Gen. 19:21), *hear* (1Sam 14:27), *see* (Is. 52:8), illustrated in (16a).

PRO-inf clauses are Asp/ModP, and hence complements of aspectual verbs, e.g. *begin* (Judg. 20:39), *repeat* (1Sam 15:35), *stop* (1Sam. 23:13), *finish* (Lev. 16:20), or modal verbs such as *be able* (Deut 7:22), *want* (1Sam. 19:2), *intend* (Ex. 2:14), *plan* (Deut. 19:19), *refuse* (Num. 20:21), *give up* (1Sam. 27:1), *order* (2Sam. 17:14), *prevent* (Num. 22:16), illustrated in (16b).¹³

(16) a. Poss-inf
Complement of propositional attitude verb

זָכַרְתִּי לְךָ ... [לְקַיְּמְךָ אַחֲרַי בְּמִדְבָּר] (ירמיהו ב 2)
zākartī l-āk... lekt-ēk ʔahār-ay
 remember.1S to-2FS go.INF-POSS.2FS behind-1S
 I remember your following me... (Jer. 2:2)

b. PRO-inf
Complement of Modal/Aspectual verb

אֲתָהּ אֹמֵר לְ[הַרְגֵנִי] (שמות ב 14)
ʔattā ʔōmēr la-horḡ-ēnī
 you intend.PTC to-kill.INF-ACC.1S
 You intend to kill me. (Ex. 2:14) cf. (2a)

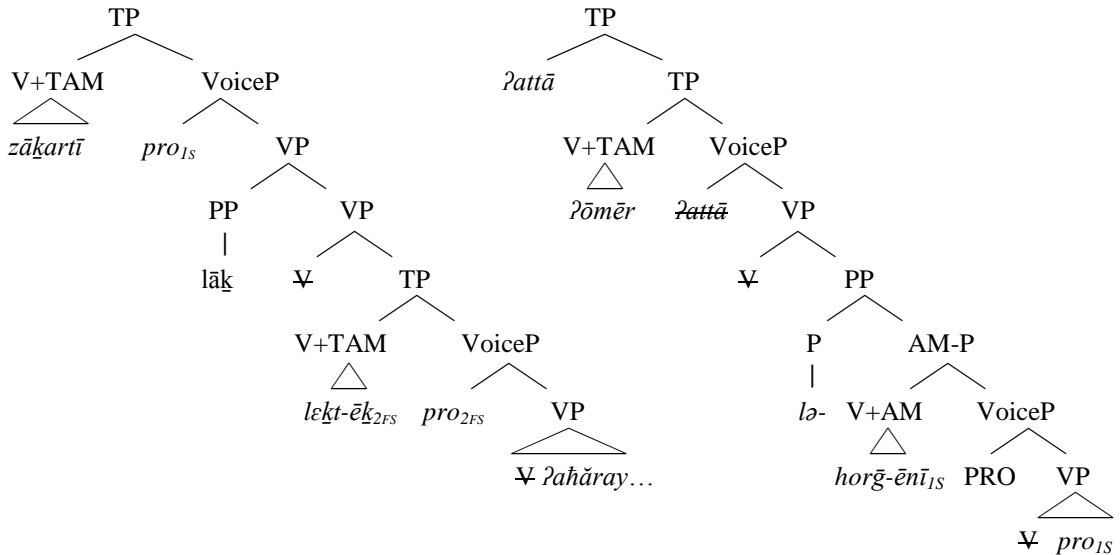
wəšamərū derek YHWH ləmaʕan [hābī YHWH ʕal ʔabrāhām ʔēt ʔāšer dibber ʕāl-āw]
 and.keep.MOD.3MP way.CS Lord for [bring.INF Lord on Abraham ACC that spoke.3MS on-3MS]
 that they keep the way of the Lord,..., that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him
 (Gen. 18:19)

One syntactic difference which distinguishes purpose and rationale clauses is that only the former allow an additional controlled empty category (glossed as e_j in the following example):

(ii) PRO-inf: purpose clause

חָמַל הָעָם עַל-מִיטַב הַצֹּאן וְהַבְּקָר לְמַעַן [לְיַהֲוֶה אֱלֹהֵי] e_j **PRO**_i וְיָבֵחַ (שמואל א טו 15)
hāmal hā-ʕām ʕal mētab haš-šōn wə-hab-bāqār; ləmaʕan [zəbōah PRO_i e_i la-YHWH ʔēlōh-ekā]
 spared.3MS the-people_i on best.CS the-cattle and-the-beef_i to [sacrifice.INF PRO_i e_i to-Lord God-yours]
 The people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God (1Sam. 15:15)

¹³ As noted in Doron (2018), propositional attitude verbs receive a modal interpretation when they take PRO-inf complements, e.g. *know* (1Kings 3:7), *think* (1Sam 18:25), *hear* (Gen 39:10), *fear* (Judg. 7:10), *remember* (Ps. 109:16) and others.



Aspectual and modal verbs in the (16b) structure are control verbs expressing root modality (ability, deontic). When the same verbs modify the aspectual and modal dimension of a state/event which is not determined by the actions or abilities of an agent, their modality is interpreted as circumstantial, they do not have an agent, and function as raising verbs (Hacquard 2011). The following examples describe the beginning (a), repetition (b), possibility (c) of an event/state, independently of an agent. The infinitival clause, which lacks T, undergoes restructuring with the main clause, and the subject of the infinitive is assigned nominative case by the main clause TAM:

17.a (בראשית יח 11) [להיות לשרה ארח כנשים] חָדַל

ḥāḏal li-[ḥəyōt̪ lə-šārā ḥōrah̄ kan-nāšīm]
ceased.3MS to-[be.INF to-Sarah period.M as.the-women]
 Sarah had passed the age of childbearing (Gen. 18:11)

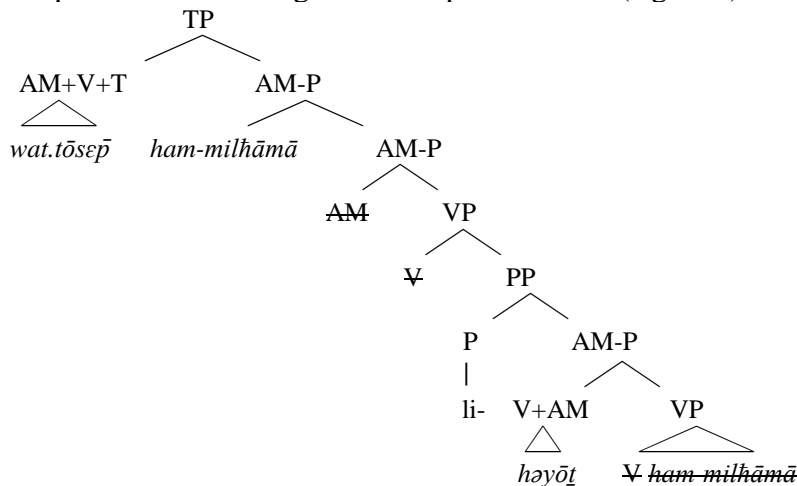
b (ש"ב יז 17) [בוא העירה pro3MP] לְ [pro3MP לְהֵרָאוֹת] כִּי לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְהֵרָאוֹת

kī lō yūklū lə-[ḥērāḥōt̪ pro3MP] lā-[ḥō pro3MP ḥā-ḥīr-ā]
 for NEG **can.MOD.3MP** to-[be-seen] to-[come the-city.ILL]
 because they could not be seen entering the city. (MEV; 2Sam. 17:17)

c (ש"א יט 8) [המלחמה] וַתִּשֶׁבַע [המלחמה] וַתִּשֶׁבַע

wat.tōsep̄ ham-milḥāmā li-[ḥəyōt̪ ham-milḥāmā]
 and.**recurred.3FS** the-war.F to-[be.INF the-war.F]
 And there was war again (Gen. 19:8)

(18) Complement of a raising Modal/Aspectual verb (e.g. 17c)



I summarize in (20) the morpho-syntactic characteristics of the different finite and infinitival clauses, where the relevant functional categories are ordered by the hierarchy in (19):

19. T < Asp/Mod < Mood < Voice

20.

	Phrasal Category	Functional spine	Force	Verb form	Subj. Case	Subj. clitic	Obj. clitic
Fin	TP _{Fin}	+T _{Fin} +AM +Mood	+	Finite	Nom	+	+
Poss-inf	TP	+T +AM+Mood	-	Inf. Constr	Poss	+	-
PRO-inf	AM-P	-T+AM+Mood	-	Inf. Constr	-	-	+
Nom-inf	MoodP	-T-AM+Mood	+	Inf. Abs.	Nom	-	-

4. The clausal nature of the infinitive construction

The Hebrew grammatical tradition views the infinitive absolute as verbal, and the infinitive construct as nominal. The European grammatical tradition views both infinitives as mixed nominal/verbal categories. But the approach above has analysed (i) the infinitive as V rather than N, not even a deverbal N, and (ii) the functional categories projected by V as clausal rather than nominal – similarly to what has been shown by Pires 2006 for the English PRO-ing and Acc-ing gerunds, i.e. that they are clausal rather than nominal.¹⁴ There is a lot of evidence for both points.

First, the infinitive assigns accusative case to its direct object, as could be seen in all the examples above where the infinitive had a direct object.¹⁵ Moreover, object clitics attached to the infinitive are always accusative rather than genitive. In the case of nominal forms, such as the participle, one mostly finds genitive object clitics (fn. 3).

Second, the infinitive has no nominal morphological inflection of gender, number, or definiteness.¹⁶ The infinitive is case marked in a few examples by the accusative *ʔeṭ*, as in (22a), but so are Fin CPs as in (22b):

22.

- a
- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | (מ״ב יט 27) | |
| <i>wə-ʂeṭ-əḵā</i> | <i>ū-ḥōʔāḵā</i> | <i>yādāʕ-tī</i> |
| and-go.out.INF-POSS.2MS | and-come.in.INF-POSS.2MS | knew-1S |
| <i>wə-ʔeṭ</i> | <i>hiṭraggez-ḵā</i> | <i>ʔēlāy</i> |
| and-ACC | rage.INF-POSS.2MS | at-1S |
- But I know .. your going out and your coming in, and your rage against Me.
(2Kings 19:27)

¹⁴ In English, Poss-ing gerunds are nominal.

¹⁵ Modern Hebrew allows nominalized verbs to assign accusative case as well, which is a marked option crosslinguistically. This phenomenon originates in Medieval Hebrew under Arabic influence (Blau 1990, Goshen-Gottshstein 1951/2006). Yet it is not found in Biblical Hebrew, where forms such as *ʔahāḇa* ‘love’, which were later recategorized as nouns, are still infinitives:

(i)

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | (מ״א י 9) | |
| <i>bə-ʔahāḇaṭ</i> | <i>YHWH ʔeṭ</i> | <i>yisrāʔel ləʕōlām</i> |
| because-love.INF | Lord ACC | Israel forever |
- Because the LORD has loved Israel forever (1Kings 10:9)

¹⁶ There are few cases where the infinitive happens to have feminine morphology, such as *love* in the previous fn. There are even fewer cases where the infinitive is preceded by the article *the*.

b זָכַר אֶל-תְּשֹׁכַח אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הִקְצַפְתָּ אֹתָּ-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר (דברים ט 7)

zākōr *ʔal tiškaḥ* *ʔēt ʔāšer hiqṣap-tā*
remember.IMPR.2MS NEG forget.JUSS.2MS ACC that provoked-2MS

ʔet YHWH ʔēlōh-ekā *bam-midbār*
ACC Lord God-POSS.2MS in.the-desert

Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness (Deut. 9:7)

Third, the infinitive is not modified by adjectives but by adverbs, such as the adverbs *hētēb* ‘well’, *ʔōd* ‘more’, and *mahēr* ‘at once’ in (23):

23.

a וְאָכַת אֹתוֹ טָחוֹן הֵיטֵב עַד אֲשֶׁר-דָּק לְעֶפֶר (דברים ט 21)

wā-ʔekkōt *ʔōt-ō* *tāhōn* ***hētēb*** *ʕad ʔāšer daq la-ʕāpār*
and-crushed.1S ACC.3MS grind.INFABS **well** until that fine to-dust

... and crushed it and ground it very small, until it was as fine as dust (Deut. 9:21)

b אֶל-תּוֹסֵף דַּבֵּר אֵלַי עוֹד בַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה (דברים ג 26)

ʔal tōsep *dabbēr* *ʔel-ay ʕōd* *bad-dābār haz-ze*
NEG repeat.JUSS.2MS speak.INF to-1s **more** in.the matter the-this

Speak no more to Me of this matter (Deut. 3:26)

c לֹא תוּכַל פְּלִתֵם מֵהָרָ (דברים ז 22)

lo tūkāl *kallōt-ām* ***mahēr***
NEG be.able.MOD.2MS destroy.INF-ACC.3MP **at.once**

you will be unable to destroy them at once (Deut. 7:22)

Fourth, despite the genitive case marking of its subject, the infinitive in the Poss-inf construction is not a noun. It does not head a construct state phrase. Unlike the nominal construct where the construct state (CS) noun must be absolutely adjacent to its complement, the same is not true of the infinitive in the Poss-inf construction. Here, no adjacency is required. The subject of the infinitive is separated from the verb in many examples, something which never happens in a construct. The subject is separated from the infinitive verb *hakkōt* in (24a) by the accusative pronoun *ʔōtō*, and similarly in the other examples in (24):

24.

a לְבַלְתִּי [הַכּוֹת-אֹתוֹ כָּל-מִצְאוֹ] (בראשית ד 15)

la-bilti [*hakkōt ʕōtō kol mōṣʔ-ō*]
to-NEG [kill.INF ACC.3MS any find.PTC-POSS.3MS]
...lest anyone finding him should kill him. (Gen. 4:15)

b וַיְהִי כִּי-נִוּחַ עָלֵיהֶם הַרוּחַ וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ (במדבר יא 25)

wa-yahī *kə-[nōaḥ ʕāl-ehem hā-rūaḥ]* *wayyitnabbəʔū*
and-was.3M as-[rest.INF **on-3MP** the-spirit] and.prophesized.3MP

and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied (Num. 11:25)

c הַמֶּשֶׁל בְּכֶם שְׁבָעִים אִישׁ] (שופטים ט 2)

ha-[məšōl b-ākem šibʕīm ʔiš]
Q- [reign.INF **at-2MP** seventy man]

[Which is better for you] that all seventy ... reign over you ...? (Judg. 9:2)

d וַהֲיָה לְ[נִוּחַ שְׁמָה כָּל-רֹצֵחַ] (דברים יט 3)

wə.hāyā *lā-[nūs šāmmā kol rōṣēaḥ]*
will.be.3MS to-[flee.INF **there** any murder.PTC.MS]
that any manslayer may flee there (Deut. 19:3)

We now turn to showing that embedded infinitival clauses have the distribution of embedded clauses rather than nominal projections. They are found as complements of prepositions, but only prepositions which take clausal arguments, including Fin CPs, for example the preposition *kə-* ‘as’ expressing similarity:

25.

- a (שמות כא 7) לא תצא כצאת העבדים
lō tēṣē kə-ṣēt hā-ʕābādīm
 NEG go.out.MOD.3FS **as-go.out.INF** the.slaves.M
 she shall not go out as the male slaves do (Ex. 21:7)
- b (שמות מ 15) ומשחת אתם כאשר משחת את אביהם
umāšah-tā ʔōtām kə-ʔāšer māšhūt ʔet ʔābīhem
 annoint.MOD-2MS ACC.3MP **as-that** annointed.2MS ACC father-POSS.3MP
 You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father (Ex. 40:15)

Prepositions like *ʕim* ‘with’, which only take DPs complements and do not take Fin-CP complements, also do not take infinitival clauses. On the other hand, prepositions like *yaʕan* ‘since’, which do not take nominal complements in Classical BH but do take Fin-CPs, also take infinitival clauses:

26.

- a (מ"א כא 20-21) יען התמכרתי לעשות הרע בעיני יהוה, הנני מבי אלקיך רעה
yaʕan hiṭmakker-əḵā la-ʕāśōt hā-raʕ bə-ʕēnē YHWH
since betook.INF-POSS.2MS to-do.INF the-evil in-eyes.CS YHWH
hin-ənī mēbī ʔēl-ekā rāʕā
 behold-1S bring.PTC.MS to-2MS calamity
 Because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord, behold, I will bring calamity on you. (2Kings 21:20-21)
- b (מ"א כא 29) יען כי-ניכנע מפני לא-אבי הרעה בימיו
yaʕan kī niḵnaʕ mip-pān-ay
since that submitted.3MS from-face-POSS.1S
lō ʔābī hā-rāʕā bə-yām-āw
 NEG bring.MOD.1S the-calamity in-days-POSS.3MS
 Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. (1Kings 21:29)

The quantifier *kol* ‘all’, typically constructed with noun phrases, is found in the construct with infinitival clauses, but so it is with Fin CPs:

- 27.a (מ"א ח 52) לשמע אליהם בכל קראם אליך
li-šəmōaʕ ʔāl-ēhem bə-ḵōl qoraʔ-ām ʔēl-ekā
 to-listen.INF to-3MP **when-any** call.INF-POSS.3MP to-2MS
 to listen to them whenever they call to You (1Kings 8:52)
- b (ש"ב ב 6) וישע יהוה את-דוד בכל אשר הלך
wayyōšaʕ YHWH ʔet dāwid bə-ḵōl ʔāšer hālāk
 and.saved.3MS Lord ACC David **where-any that** went.3MS
 So the LORD preserved David wherever he went (2Sam. 8:6)

Other nouns as well, such as *yōm* ‘day’, which are constructed to infinitival clauses, are also constructed to Fin CPs:

- 28.a (דברים טו 3) למען תזכר את-יום צאתך מארץ מצרים
ləmaʕan tizkōr ʔet yōm ṣēt-ḵā me-ʔereš mišrayim
 for remember.MOD.2MS ACC **day.CS** exit.INF-POSS.2MS from-land.CS Egypt
 that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt

(Deut 16:3)

- b יום אֲשֶׁר-לִדְתַנִּי אִמִּי אֶל-יְהִי בְרוּךְ (ירמיהו כ 14)
yom ʔāšer yaʔlād-aṭ-nī ʔimm-ī ʔal yaḥī bārūk
day that bore-3FS-ACC.1S mother-POSS.1S NEG be.JUSS.3MS blessed
 Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me!

Moreover, like Fin-CPs, infinitival clauses function as relative clauses. (29a) has a Fin-CP relative clause, (29b) – a PRO-inf relative clause, and (29c) – a Poss-inf relative clause.

29.a Fin

- (במדבר יח 15) כָּל בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר-יָקִיבוּ לַיהוָה
kol bāšār ʔāšer yaqrībū la-YHWH bāšār
 all flesh [that bring.MOD.3MP to-Lord flesh]
 all flesh which they bring to the Lord (Num. 18:15)

b PRO-inf

- לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל (בראשית כח 20)
leḥem le-ʔekōl leḥem
 bread to-[eat.INF PRO bread]
 bread to eat (Gen. 28:20)

c Poss-inf

- מִים לְשָׁתֵת הָעָם (שמות יז 1)
mayim li- štōt hā-ʕām mayim
 water to-[drink.INF the-people water]
 water for the people to drink (Ex. 17:1)

Negation is found with infinitival clauses, and it can be shown that negation takes scope over the entire clause rather than just modifying the infinitival head. Only clausal scope can give the correct reading in (30). Sacrificing to the Lord is the purpose of sending off the people, not the purpose of **not** sending off the people. Therefore, negation attaches to the full clause *letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord* rather than to the head *letting go*.¹⁷

30.

- (שמות ח 25) אֶל-יִסֹף פְּרָעָה הַתֵּל לְבַלְתִּי [שְׁלַח PRO אֶת-הָעָם לְזִבְחָה לַיהוָה]
ʔal yōsēp parʕō hāṭēl la-biltī [šalah PRO ʔet hā-ʕām
 NEG repeat.JUSS.3MS Pharaoh deceive.INF to-NEG [send.INF PRO ACC the-people
li-[zbōah PRO la-YHWH]]
to sacrifice PRO to-Lord]]

But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord. (Ex. 8:25[29])

5. Conclusion

The paper shows that Biblical Hebrew infinitival constructions are clausal rather than nominal, and that the functional categories which determine the inflection of the finite verb also determine the feature specification of the infinitive. Moreover, the morphosyntax of the different infinitival clauses determines their distribution. Nom-inf clauses are root clauses with irrealis Mood, hence have the conversational force of imperatives. PRO-inf and Poss-inf clauses are not specified for irrealis Mood, and thus have no conversational force. They therefore must be embedded clauses. The lack of T specification determines that the PRO-inf clause cannot be interpreted as an independent proposition, but is rather interpreted as part of

¹⁷ In Modern Hebrew, the negative *biltī* has grammaticalized into a prefix which attaches to lexical items, in particular adjectives.

the event denoted by the main clause, since it depends for its temporal anchoring on the temporal specification of the main clause. The Asp/Mod category of the PRO-inf construction allows it to function as complement of aspectual and modal verbs, and as specifier to Mod/Asp heads, i.e. as purpose clauses. The Poss-inf clause, on the other hand, contains a T head, and hence denotes a separate proposition from the one denoted by the main clause. Accordingly, it functions as a complement of propositional attitude verbs or a temporal/result specifier of the main-clause T. Moreover, the different categories T, Asp/Mod, and Mood in finite and infinitival clauses have been shown to explain the various possibilities of subject and object cliticization in the each type of clause.

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