

Studia Biblica Slovaca

Ročník 10

2018

Číslo 2

Offprint



Studia Biblica Slovaca je recenzovaný vedecký časopis zameraný na skúmanie Svätého písma Starého a Nového zákona predovšetkým zo stránky filologickej, historickej, exegetickej a teologickej.

Ročník X (2018), číslo 2

Vydáva Rímskokatolícka cyrilometodská bohoslovecká fakulta Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, Kapitulská 26, 814 58 Bratislava 1, IČO 0039786510.

Vedecké kolégium/Advisory board: Reimund BIERINGER (Leuven, B) – Georg BRAULIK OSB (Wien, A) – Peter DUBOVSKÝ SJ (Roma, I) – Pavol FARKAŠ (Nitra, SK) – Massimo GRILLI (Roma, I) – Leslie HOPPE OFM (Chicago, USA)

Šéfredaktor: Blažej ŠTRBA (Badín, SK)
Zástupca šéfredaktora: Jozef JANČOVIČ (Bratislava, SK)
Redaktor pre recenzie: František TRSTENSKÝ (Spišské Podhradie, SK)
Výkonný redaktor: Martina KORYTIAKOVÁ (Roma, I)

Redakčná rada /Editorial board: Jaroslav BROŽ (Praha, CZ) – Juraj FENÍK (Košice, SK) – Júlia Daniela ISKROVÁ OP (Ružomberok, SK) – Róbert JÁGER (Euclid, USA) – Peter JUHÁS (Münster, D) – Branislav KLUŠKA (Ružomberok, SK) – Róbert LAPKO (Košice, SK) – Libor MAREK (Detroit, USA) – Jaroslav RINDOŠ (Bratislava, SK) – Milan SOVA (Bratislava, SK) – Jozef TIŇO (Bratislava, SK) – Gabriela Ivana VLKOVÁ OP (Olomouc, CZ)

Za lektorovanie všetkých článkov zodpovedá redakčná rada.

Obálka: Martin Mičko

Na príprave publikácie sa podieľali: Alessandro Coniglio OFM, Štefan a Clare Macko, Zuzana Očkájková a Lucilla Mária Tongel'ová SDR.

Príspevky v slovenčine, češtine a v angličtine (od zahraničných autorov) alebo knihy na recenziu prosíme poslať na adresu redakcie: *Studia Biblica Slovaca*, Banská 28, 976 32 Badín (Slovakia), redakcia@biblica.sk.

Príspevky sa požadujú v elektronickej podobe, podľa možnosti v textovom editore Microsoft Word. Ak sú používané iné fonty písma pre hebrejštinu a gréčtinu ako v programe BibleWorks, tak upresniť aké, prípadne preposlať používaný font spolu s príspevkom. Príspevok typu štúdia, poznámka alebo reflexia musí byť doplnený abstraktom a jeho anglickou verziou, anglickým názvom príspevku, max. piatimi kľúčovými slovami v slovenčine/češtine a angličtine, zoznamom bibliografie a kontaktom na autora príspevku. Nevyžiadané rukopisy sa nevracajú. Redakcia si vyhradzuje právo upraviť titulok a vykonať potrebnú jazykovú a štylistickú úpravu prijatých príspevkov. Spresňujúce podmienky pre prispievateľov sú dostupné na www.biblica.sk.

Články časopisu sú abstrahované v dvoch svetových periodikách: *Old Testament Abstracts* ISSN 0364-8591 a *New Testament Abstracts* ISSN 0028-6877.

S povolením Arcibiskupského úradu v Bratislave zo dňa 3. júna 2014

Prot. N. 2229/2014

Studia Biblica Slovaca

Printed in Slovakia, 12/2018

Vychádza dvakrát do roka.

Cena: 6 €

ISSN 1338-0141

EV 3744/09

A Note on the Ellipsis of the Preposition *Bet* before the Nouns בית and פתח

Steven E. Fassberg

Already in the Middle Ages Jewish grammarians noted that sometimes the biblical text was missing a preposition before a noun¹. In particular, it was pointed out that *bet* was absent before בית “house”. See, e.g., Ibn Janah in the 11th century, who cited the passages נָדְרָה וְאִם־בֵּית אִשָּׁה נִדְרָה “and if she vowed (in) her husband’s house” (Num 30:11); כִּי־עָשְׂתָה נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְזָנוֹת בַּיִת אָבִיהָ “because she has done disgracefully in Israel by whoring (in) her father’s house” (Deut 22:21); אֲדָ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה בַיִת יְהוָה סִפּוֹת כֶּסֶף מְזַמְרוֹת מְזַרְקוֹת חֲצִצְרוֹת כָּל־כְּלֵי זָהָב וְכִלְי־כֶסֶף “but there were not made (in) the house of the Lord silver basins, snuffers, bowls, trumpets, any vessels of gold and vessels of silver” (2 Kgs 12:14). Ibn Janah declared: רוצה לומר בהם כולם בבית “i.e., all of them are בבית”².

Modern grammarians agree with their medieval predecessors that prepositions were to be expected but are not attested in certain biblical passages. The standard reference grammars of Gesenius – Kautzsch – Cowley and Joüon – Muraoka discuss the absence of *bet* before nouns under the rubric of subordination of nouns to verbs, and they note the lack of *bet*, especially before בית “house” and פתח “opening, entrance, gate”³. Samuel R. Driver commented that the preposition is almost always absent before בית and פתח when they occur in construct, e.g., הֲיֵשׁ בַּיִת־אָבִיךָ מְקוֹם לָנוּ לָלֵץ “Is there space in your father’s house for us to lodge in?” (Gen 24:23), וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֵהָל “while he was sitting at the

¹ See, e.g., David Kimḥi’s remarks on ellipsis and elision in CHOMSKY, *Hebrew Grammar*, § 89b.

² IBN JANĀH, *Sefer Ha-Riqmah*, 1:285.

³ GESENIUS – KAUTZSCH – COWLEY, *Grammar*, § 118g mentions it under “The Looser Subordination of the Accusative to the Verb” and calls it “accus. loci”; JOÜON – MURAOKA, *Grammar*, § 126h lists it in the chapter under “The Indirect Accusative” and describe it as an “accusative of local determination”.

entrance to the tent” (18:1)⁴. Gesenius – Kautzsch – Cowley concurs with Driver’s description, but Joüon – Muraoka refines it ever-so-slightly. According to the latter grammar, פֶּתַח “usually” occurs when in construct to a following noun (as opposed to בְּפֶתַח), whereas בֵּית is “common” (as opposed to בְּבֵית). Driver added that the preposition is regularly attested when the two nouns are not part of a construct chain and the noun is determined either by a definite article or by a pronominal suffix, e.g., אֶת־קוֹל רִגְלֶיהָ בָּאָה בְּפֶתַח “the sound of her feet as she was coming in the entrance” (1 Kgs 14:6); וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית “and everything that was in the house” (Gen 34:29); וַיְהִי מֵאָז הִפְקִיד אֹתוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ “and it was since (the time) he appointed him over his house” (39:5).

The purpose of the present note is twofold. The first is to modify somewhat the description by Gesenius – Kautzsch – Cowley and Joüon – Muraoka concerning the frequency of the missing preposition *bet* before בֵּית and פֶּתַח. There is actually an inverse proportion in the occurrences of *bet* before פֶּתַח and בֵּית when in construct: as a rule the preposition is absent before פֶּתַח, but it is attested twice as often as not before בֵּית. The statistics are:

- a. פֶּתַח + *nomen rectum* 4 × בְּבֵית + *nomen rectum* 108 × (+ 24 × as compound proper noun, e.g., בבית לחם)
- b. פֶּתַח + *nomen rectum* 51 × בֵּית + *nomen rectum* 62 ×

The second objective of this note is to propose another explanation for the absence of the preposition *bet* before בֵּית and פֶּתַח. Gesenius – Kautzsch – Cowley suggests that euphonic reasons were responsible for the absence of *bet* since both nouns begin with a labial consonant; Joüon – Muraoka speaks of a possible haplology⁵. I wonder if a different phenomenon is not responsible – grammaticalization, a general linguistic process by which lexical items such as nouns and verbs lose their literal meanings and turn into grammatical markers. For example, in English the verbal form “going” develops into a marker of

⁴ DRIVER, *Samuel*, 29, n. 3 (on 1 Sam 2:29); cf. הֲעוֹד לָנוּ חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה בְּבֵית אָבִינוּ “Do we still have a portion and an inheritance in our father’s house?” (Gen 34:31); וַתֵּשֶׁב בְּפֶתַח עֵינַיִם “and she sat at the entrance to Enayim” (38:14).

⁵ So too BROCKELMANN, *Syntax*, § 81a. WALTKE – O’CONNOR, *Introduction*, mentions haplology and the syntactic conditioning of Driver (before a *nomen regens*), but stops short of adopting either explanation.

imminent future action (“I am going to sit here all day”) and the cardinal numeral “one” becomes an indefinite article “a(n)”⁶.

In the light of internal Hebrew as well as comparative evidence from other Semitic languages, I wonder if an incipient process of grammaticalization was not responsible for the absence of the *bet* before בית and פתח. In addition to retaining its basic meaning of “house”, it is clear that speakers of Hebrew also grammaticalized בית into (1) an adverb מבית “within”, e.g., וּכְפַרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבַּיִת, “and you shall pitch it within and without with pitch” (Gen 6:14); and (2) a preposition ל- מבית “within”, e.g., וְהֵבֵאתָ שָׁמָּה מִבַּיִת לְפָרְכָת, “and you shall bring in there within the veil” (Exod 26:33)⁷. I suggest that as the next part of the process, בית began also to be understood as a preposition “in, at” without ג-⁸. Thus the use of *bet* before the noun בית became superfluous since בית, in addition to meaning “house”, could also mean “in + the house”. This is not surprising in the light of the frequency of the בית – it is the second most frequent noun of place in Biblical Hebrew after ארץ “land”⁹.

Akkadian and Syriac provide supporting evidence. In Middle and Neo-Assyrian, *bet*, in addition to its basic meaning of “house”, develops into a subordinating locative (and temporal) conjunction¹⁰. See, e.g., in Neo-Assyrian¹¹:

<i>bēt šunu rēssunu iši</i>	“summon them <u>wherever</u> they are”;
<i>šupru bēt šūtūni liš[b]utu</i>	“send (word) that he should be arrested <u>wherever</u> he is”.

In Syriac ܒܝܬ also shows semantic bleaching and sometimes has acquired the meaning of “place” as in ܒܝܬܗ ܗܝܘܬܗ ܒܝܬܗ “because all of it is a place of well-watering” (Gen 13:10) or ܒܝܬܗ ܕܥܘܠܐ “place of pasture for flocks of sheep” (Isa 32:14)¹². Note, however, possible confusion with the homonym ܒܝܬ “between, among”; the latter is derived by many from

⁶ On grammaticalization in the Semitic languages, see RUBIN, *Grammaticalization*. For the two examples cited from English, see RUBIN, *Grammaticalization*, 4-5.

⁷ BROWN – DRIVER – BRIGGS, *Lexicon*, 110 (§ 8a-b).

⁸ For examples of nouns grammaticalizing into prepositions in Semitic languages, see RUBIN, *Grammaticalization*, 46-48.

⁹ See WATTS, *Lists of Words*, 16-18.

¹⁰ CAD, vol. 2:B, 272.

¹¹ HAÄMEEN-ANTTILA, *Neo-Assyrian*, §§ 3.6; 4.5.9.

¹² Might one even go so far as to interpret this use of ܒܝܬ as approaching a locative conjunction “place where” > “where”?

a contraction of the preposition ¹³כַּסְּ. As in Biblical Hebrew, rarely does one find the preposition *beth* before כַּסְּ when the latter functions as nomen regens¹⁴.

In the Gəʿəz Bible, *bayt* occurs without the preposition *b* in those passages where the Hebrew Bible lacks the *bet*, e.g., Gen 24:23; 38:11; Num 30:11¹⁵. The same is true for these passages in Targums Onqelos and Jonathan, and the Peshitta.

A similar process of grammaticalization would seem to be responsible for the absence of the preposition *bet* before פֶּתַח. Unlike *byt*, which is grammaticalized elsewhere in Semitic, there are, however, no parallels with the noun פֶּתַח. Other Semitic languages express the concept “opening, entrance” with different nouns, e.g., Akkadian *bābu*, *nērebu*, Arabic *bāb*, Aramaic תַּרְע, Gəʿəz *xoxta*, which did not develop into prepositions.

In sum, the preposition *bet* is almost always missing before פֶּתַח when in construct, whereas *bet* is more than twice as frequent as not before בֵּית when in construct. I suggest that the absence of the *bet* is not the result of a phonetic process, but rather stems from the grammaticalization of the nouns בֵּית and פֶּתַח. The former is grammaticalized elsewhere in Semitic; the latter, however, is not.

Bibliography

- BROCKELMANN, Carl: *Hebräische Syntax*, Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1956.
- BROWN, Francis – DRIVER, Samuel Rolles – BRIGGS, Charles A.: *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1907.
- CHOMSKY, William: *David Kimḥi's Hebrew Grammar (Mikhlol)*, New York: Dropsie College, 1952.
- DILLMANN, August: *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae*, Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1865.

¹³ E.g., PAYNE SMITH, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, 43; cf. DUVAL, *Traité*, § 290, who derives this form of the preposition from original *byt*. On the distribution of כַּסְּ, כַּסְּ, and כַּסְּ in Syriac, see MURAOKA, *Classical Syriac Particles*.

¹⁴ PAYNE SMITH, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 43.

¹⁵ DILLMANN, *Lexicon*, 535. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer who reminds me of the complexity of the translation process of the Bible into Geʿez, which includes the role of the LXX, other influences, as well as late revisions. He notes that, in Gen 38:11, there are two cases of ellipsis (בֵּית אֲבִיָּה and בֵּית אֲבִיָּה). In both cases, LXX reads ἐν τῷ οὐνοῦ; however, the Ethiopic text has in the first instance *westa bēta abuki* (*westa* is the preposition “in, into, to”) but in the second only *bēta abuhā*. He adds that LXX in Gen 24:23 reads παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ σου for בֵּית אֲבִיָּה.

- DRIVER, Samuel Rolles: *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.
- DUVAL, Rubens: *Traité de grammaire syriaque*, Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881.
- GESENIUS, Heinrich Fridrich Wilhelm – KAUTZSCH, Emil Friedrich – COWLEY, Arthur Ernest: *Geseniu's Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 21910.
- HAÄMEEN-ANTTILA, Jaakko: *A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar* (SAAS 13), Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2000.
- IBN JANĀH, Jonah: *Sefer Ha-Riqmah (Kitāb al-Lumaʿ)*. Translated into Hebrew by Judah Ibn Tibbon, edited by Michael Wilensky (in Hebrew). Vol. I., Jerusalem: Academy of Hebrew Language, 21963.
- JOÜON, Paul – MURAOKA, Takamitsu: *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Second reprint of the second edition, with corrections (SubBi 27), Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2009.
- MURAOKA, Takamitsu: On the Classical Syriac Particles for «Between». In: Christian-Bernard Amphoux – Albert Frey – Ursula Schattner-Rieser (eds.): *Études sémitiques et samaritaines: offertes à Jean Margain* (Histoire du texte biblique 4), Lausanne: Zèbre, 1998, 135-142.
- PAYNE SMITH, J. (Mrs. Margoliouth) (ed.): *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary: Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.
- RUBIN, Aaron D.: *Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization* (HSS 57), Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- WALTKE, Bruce K. – O'CONNOR, Michael Patrick: *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- WATTS, John D. W.: *Lists of Words Occurring Frequently in the Hebrew Bible*, Leiden: Brill, 1960.

Summary

In Biblical Hebrew the preposition *bet* is often absent before the nouns בית “house” and פתח “opening, entrance, gate”. Scholars have noted that both the preposition and the initial consonant of the nouns are labials and the lack of the *bet* has been explained as possible haplogy. The article presents the frequency of the forms with and without *bet* and, in the light of internal and comparative evidence, it is suggested that the two nouns have become partially grammaticalized.

Keywords: Biblical Hebrew, grammaticalization, prepositions.

Zhrnutie

V biblickej hebrejčine predložka *bet* často absentuje pred podstatným menom בית „dom“ a פתח „otvor, vstup, brána“. Vedci poznamenávajú, že predložka a aj začiatočná spoluhláska uvedených podstatných mien sú labiály, a chýbajúce *bet* vysvetľujú ako možnú haplológiu. Príspevok predstavuje výskyty tvarov s predložkou *bet* i bez nej a, na základe vnútorných a porovnávacích dôkazov, tvrdí, že obidve podstatné mená boli čiastočne gramatikalizované.

Kľúčové slová: hebrejská Biblia, gramatikalizácia, predložky.

Steven E. Fassberg
Dept. of Hebrew Language
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Mt. Scopus
91905 JERUSALEM, Israel
steven.fassberg@mail.huji.ac.il

Obsah

Edgar KELLENBERGER

Bezmenné božské sily v Starom zákone? Debata s Erhardom
Gerstenbergerom 107-120

Mathew OLICKAL

„PÁNOVA sláva“ v kňazských púštnych tradíciách:
Diskutovaný prípad Numeri 14,10 121-141

Bernard GOSSE

42 generácií v Ježišovej genealógii v Mt 1,1-17 a symbolizmus
čísla 42 ako prekliatia alebo požehnania v Biblii a v Egypte 142-151

Poznámky

Adriana ALEXYOVÁ

Návrh štruktúry Knihy Numeri 152-158

Steven S. FASSBERG

Poznámka k elipse predložky *bet* pred podstatnými menami בית
a פתח 159-164

Abstrakty a recenzie 165-176

Správy a oznamy 177-180

Contents

Edgar KELLENBERGER

Faceless Divine Energies in the Old Testament? A Conversation
with Erhard Gerstenberger 107-120

Mathew OLICKAL

The “Kabod Yahweh” in the Priestly Wilderness Traditions:
Numbers 14:10 as a Case Study 121-141

Bernard GOSSE

The 42 Generations of the Genealogy of Jesus in Matt 1:1-17, and
the Symbolism of Number 42, Curse or Blessing, in the Bible and
in Egypt 142-151

Notes

Adriana ALEXYOVÁ

A Proposal for a Structure of the Book of Numbers 152-158

Steven S. FASSBERG

A Note on the Ellipsis of the Preposition *Bet* before the Nouns בית
and פתח 159-164

Abstracts and Reviews 165-176

Communications and References 177-180

ISSN 1338-0141

www.biblica.sk