SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF RUTH

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This syntactic analysis of the book of Ruth is conducted in dialogue with Dawson's *Text-Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew*.[1] The purpose is to let the reader compare two different approaches of a text-linguistic orientation. Such large-scale approaches are not numerous although the label 'text-linguistics' is frequently used. Dawson's examination of Ruth is done as usual with the aid of statistics. He also researches the interplay between main-line and off-line clauses. He repeats claims that I have already commented upon in my book review just quoted when he writes:

> As we have come to expect, these interruptions of the main line are not spread haphazardly through the text, but function as indicators of episode divisions and as peak markers. Where concentrations of off-line clauses occur, the significance of the break, or of the peak event, is greater (p. 176).

As usual Dawson first examines the 'non-Reported Speech material,' that is, historical narrative; then the 'Reported Speech sections,' that is, direct speech.[2] I will not follow his lead in this point but I will examine the full text of Ruth in its original order. However, I will not arrange the text according to three linguistic levels as I did elsewhere;[3] I will rather follow Dawson's arrangement of the text in order to facilitate comparison.

Ruth 1:1-7

Dawson comments as follows on the two וַיְהִי clauses in Ruth 1:1:

> Two ויהי clauses in succession is in itself very unusual (p. 177).

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1. D.A. Dawson, *Text-Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew*, Sheffield 1994, 175-208; see my book review in the present volume. In order to keep my contribution within an acceptable size I extracted the present discussion on Ruth. I thought it was not unfit to publish it independently.

2. The consequence is a partition of the text that is rather strange by someone who adopts a 'text-linguistic approach.' The full text of Ruth 'in Columnar Format' is found in Appendix 2 of Dawson's book (pp. 223-236).

3. See my *Lettura sintattica della prosa ebraico-biblica*. Principi e applicazioni, Jerusalem 1991, and "Analysis of Biblical Narrative," in: R.D. Bergen (ed.), *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, Dallas 1994, 175-198.

Maybe others would not care to note such phenomenon. Since for Dawson היה is a paragraph and/or a peak event marker, the fact that two such forms follow one after the other is embarrassing. Apart from that, there is nothing unusual from the point of view of syntax.[4] Using his CD-ROM, Dawson discovered "only 17 pairs of ויהי clauses in succession (e.g. Job 1.3 and Exod. 12.41), and two triplets (Gen. 39.2 and Josh. 17.1-2)" (p. 177). Of course, a complete data-base is not enough for syntactical analysis. Let us consider, for instance, the examples mentioned by Dawson. In Job 1:3, the two וַיְהִי are coordinated forms of the 'full verb': "His flock was (וַיְהִי) seven thousand sheep (…) so that this man was (וַיְהִי) the greatest of all the people of the east" (the same in Gen. 39:2 and Josh. 17.1-2). Further, let us consider what Dawson writes on Gen. 27:30, among other texts:

> Some of these occurrences are clearly paragraph-initial if not episode-initial (e.g. Ruth 1.1, Gen. 39.2 and Job 1.3); others may either be episode-initial, or they may require to be divided thus marking one boundary each (initial/terminal). Gen. 27.30 is an example of a 'maybe'—this pair may *initiate* the section wherein Esau seeks a blessing from Isaac (which Jacob has just 'stolen'), or the first of the two ויהי clauses may serve to conclude the previous section, while the second clause opens the following section (p. 177; italics in the original).

Now, in Gen. 27:30 both ויהי introduce a circumstance in a double sentence: "It happened (וַיְהִי) as soon as Isaac finished blessing Jacob; it happened (וַיְהִי), when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting." Here, we find a double sentence (i.e. protasis - apodosis) with two circumstantial clauses as the protasis; exceptionally, each circumstantial clause is introduced by וַיְהִי although both have the same apodosis ("Esau his brother came in from his hunting").[5] Is there, then, any meaning in Dawson's comment above?

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4. Indeed, there is a problem with the system I proposed in: *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose*, Sheffield 1990 (hereafter: *Syntax*). In fact, macro-syntactic "*wayehi* never occurs at the beginning of an independent narrative unit" (*Syntax* §36, p. 60). Now, macro-syntactic ויהי is also found at the beginning of other Biblical books: Joshua, Judges and 2 Samuel (in 1 Samuel it is the 'full verb,' not the macro-syntactic marker; on this distinction see my paper: "Sullo stato sintattico del verbo *hāyâ*," *L A* 40 [1990] 9-23). However, my original statement is not disproved by these cases because this ויהי appears to be an editorial device to link books together in a large canonical organization of the Hebrew Bible. Note that Ruth follows Judges in the Greek canon. I have studied this subject in: "Organizzazione canonica della Bibbia ebraica. Tra sintassi e retorica," *RivBiblIt* 43 (1995) 9-29. See comment by P. Joüon, *Ruth.* Commentaire philologique et exégétique, 2 ed., Rome 1986, 30.

5. Exod. 12:41 is another case of two וַיְהִי introducing two circumstances that function as one protasis; see *Syntax* §30, p. 52.

The case of Ruth 1:1 is different from Gen. 27:30 because the first וַיְהִי is the 'macro-syntactic marker' introducing the protasis while the second is the apodosis: "It happened (וַיְהִי) at the time when the judges judged, that there was (וַיְהִי) a famine in the land."[6] I conclude, first, that it is not enough to note a succession of ויהי forms; rather it is necessary to evaluate this phenomenon syntactically; and second, that dividing two successive וַיְהִי clauses may be needed by Dawson's 'text-linguistic analysis,' but then this violates the syntax.

Thus, the story of Ruth begins in the main line of communication (1.1.1-3),[7] but soon after it uses the secondary line to convey background information (1.2.1-3). The main line resumes soon afterwards (1.2.4). Here is the full text:

1.1.1	It happened at the time when the judges judged,	וַיְהִי בִּימֵי שְׁפֹט הַשֹּׁפְטִים
1.1.2	that there was a famine in the land.	וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ
1.1.3	A certain man of Bethlehem in Judah	וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
	went to sojourn in the country of Moab,	לָגוּר בִּשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב
	he and his wife and his two sons.	הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו
1.2.1	Now, the name of the man was Elimelech	וְשֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ
1.2.2	and the name of his wife, Naomi,	וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ נָעֳמִי
1.2.3	and the names of his two sons were	וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי־בָנָיו
	Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites	מַחְלוֹן וְכִלְיוֹן אֶפְרָתִים
	from Bethlehem in Judah.	מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
1.2.4	They went to the country of Moab	וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂדֵי־מוֹאָב
1.2.5	and remained there.	וַיִּהְיוּ־שָׁם
1.3.1	Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died,	וַיָּמָת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ אִישׁ נָעֳמִי
1.3.2	and she was left with her two sons.	וַתִּשָּׁאֵר הִיא וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ
1.4.1	These took Moabite wives for themselves;	וַיִּשְׂאוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מֹאֲבִיּוֹת
1.4.2	the name of the one was Orpah	שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָרְפָּה
1.4.3	and the name of the other Ruth.	וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית רוּת
1.4.4	They lived there about ten years.	וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם כְּעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים
1.5.1	Then both Mahlon and Chilion died,	וַיָּמוּתוּ גַם־שְׁנֵיהֶם מַחְלוֹן וְכִלְיוֹן
1.5.2	so that the woman remained	וַתִּשָּׁאֵר הָאִשָּׁה

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6. Another such case is 2 Sam. 7:4; see *Syntax* §30, p. 52.

7. For a quick comparison, I follow Dawson's method for identifying the sentences; i.e., "1.1.1-3" means sentences 1 to 3 in Ruth chapter 1, verse 1.

	without her two sons and her husband.	מִשְּׁנֵי יְלָדֶיהָ וּמֵאִישָׁהּ
1.6.1	Then she got up with her daughters-in-law	וַתָּקָם הִיא וְכַלֹּתֶיהָ
1.6.2	and returned from the country of Moab,	וַתָּשָׁב מִשְּׂדֵי מוֹאָב
1.6.3	for she had heard in the country of Moab	כִּי שָׁמְעָה בִּשְׂדֵה מוֹאָב
1.6.4	that the Lord had visited his people	כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ
	by giving them food.	לָתֵת לָהֶם לָחֶם
1.7.1	So she set out from the place	וַתֵּצֵא מִן־הַמָּקוֹם
1.7.2	where she was,	אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָׁמָּה
1.7.3	while her two daughters-in-law were with her,	וּשְׁתֵּי כַלֹּתֶיהָ עִמָּהּ
1.7.4	and they went on the way	וַתֵּלַכְנָה בַדֶּרֶךְ
	to return to the land of Judah.	לָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה

The main line (chain of narrative wayyiqtol) continues without interruptions until background information is to be given (1.4.2-3; similar to 1.2.1-3). As in 1.2.4, the main line is resumed after a little pause. In this way, the information is conveyed by the narrator in a structured form, with foreground and background.

Ruth 1:8-10

1.8.1	But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,	וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי לִשְׁתֵּי כַלֹּתֶיהָ
1.8.2	"Go,	לֵכְנָה
1.8.3	return each of you to her mother's house.	שֹׁבְנָה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמָּהּ
1.8.4	May the Lord deal kindly with you,	יַעֲשֶׂה [Qere: וַעַשׂ] יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד
1.8.5	as you have dealt with the dead and with me.	כַּאֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים וְעִמָּדִי
1.9.1	May the Lord grant	יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם
1.9.2	that you may find a home, each of you	וּמְצֶאןָ מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה
	in the house of her husband!"	בֵּית אִישָׁהּ
1.9.3	Then she kissed them,	וַתִּשַּׁק לָהֶן
1.9.4	and they lifted up their voices	וַתִּשֶּׂאנָה קוֹלָן
1.9.5	and wept.	וַתִּבְכֶּינָה
1.10.1	And they said to her,	וַתֹּאמַרְנָה־לָּהּ
1.10.2	"On the contrary, we will return to your people with you."	כִּי־אִתָּךְ נָשׁוּב לְעַמֵּךְ

The direct speech sections are numerous and various in Ruth. I will examine them in full, while at the same time, comment on Dawson's analy-

sis.[8] In this way, I intend to better illustrate my theory.[9] Since the speech formulas are all in the wayyiqtol form, the direct speeches are firmly linked to the main line. As a result, the flow of communication proceeds in a straightforward manner, without major interruptions, and the pace of the text is swift.

Ruth 1:8-10 beautifully illustrates both direct (1.8.2-3; 1.9.1) and indirect (1.9.2) volitive forms.[10] In 1.8.2 and 1.8.3 we find coordinated forms without waw, while in 1.9.1 and 1.9.2 non-coordinated verb forms despite the presence of waw. Note that the coordinated forms are of the same person while the non-coordinated ones are of third and second persons, respectively. Unfortunately, no definite syntactic criteria are available for distinguishing coordinated from non-coordinated volitive forms; the main criterion is semantic.[11] Further, 1.8.4 and 1.9.1 are clear examples of clause-initial yiqtol with a volitive force; on the contrary, indicative yiqtol is a second-place form (x-yiqtol). Remarkably, Ketib in 1.8.4 has the long form of yiqtol instead of the usual short, jussive one, as read by Qere.

Dawson comments on 1:10 in a footnote as follows:

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8. While examining Ruth 1:6-19, Dawson comments on the role of Reported Speech (1:8-9) in a Narrative History text. He writes: "This is the first instance of Reported Speech in this text, and it will be helpful to explore here its role in Narrative History texts. Without exception, Reported Speech material can be 'translated' into main-line Narrative History wc + Prefix [i.e. wayyiqtol] clauses, but something is lost in so doing. For example, Naomi's first exchange with her daughters-in-law could be recast as, 'Ruth [sic] told her daughters-in-law to return to their families, and blessed them; and she kissed them and they raised their voices and wept, and [Ruth!] refused to go'" (p. 179). One wonders what is the meaning of this solution. What Dawson proposes here is traditionally called *oratio obliqua*, that has a different grammatical structure from the *oratio directa*. In our youth, we all did exercises of this kind: summarizing a poem or a novel and putting the direct speech into indirect speech. One would ask, then: Is this solution different from 'embedding' proposed several times by Dawson? It should not, because in Dawson's view, no grammatical change occurs in embedding except for the beginning of a Narrative History text (p. 175). Therefore, one gets the impression of extemporization.

9. *Syntax*, Ch. 6 is on direct speech. See more recently, my paper, "Essential Hebrew Syntax," in: E. Talstra (ed.), *Narrative and Comment*. Contributions presented to Wolfgang Schneider, Amsterdam [1995], 111-125, esp. §2.

10. According to P. Joüon - T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, vol. II, Roma 1991, "The volitive moods may be used without a Waw, or with a Waw which has the purely juxtaposing value of *and*. (…) In the indirect volitive the form is used with a Waw which logically has subordinating (final, i.e. indicating a purpose, or consecutive) value, e.g. *and (consequently)* (Latin: *ut*)" (§114a, p. 373). I would only object that the indirect volitive does not indicate consequence but only purpose, because for consequence Biblical Hebrew consistently uses w^eqatal.

11. *Syntax* §65 briefly illustrates the complex picture of the volitive forms of different persons; see also *Lettura sintattica* §5.3.

> This unit is composed of a speech formula, and a subordinated clause for which we must supply an ellipsis (…). I can offer no further comment on this regarding text-type (…) (note 66, p. 188).

However, כִּי is most probably not the subordinating conjunction meaning 'because,' or 'that,' but the non-subordinating particle meaning 'but, on the contrary' that normally follows a negative statement.[12] Moreover, this clause does not show any 'ellipsis.' The verb form used is indicative x-yiqtol found at the beginning of a direct speech in the axis of the future (§4c-d above). As the speech situation suggests, a certain emphasis falls on the 'x' element: 'On the contrary, we will return to your people *with you*.'

Finally, direct speech shows a tense shift from volitive future (1.8.2-4) to the past (1.8.5) and back again (1.9.1-2). Indeed, direct speech freely shifts from one to the other of the three temporal axes (past, present, and future). This fact causes serious problems to the identification of rigidly defined text-types as those of Dawson. He writes:

> As can be seen from the clause-types, this text is readily identifiable as Hortatory text. We can propose another Hortatory text embedded in the first (1.8.4–9.1)—a blessing, since there is a shift to third person—bracketed by the two, and one, imperative clauses (p. 188).

Why one would invoke embedding here is a mystery to me. Indeed, with too-rigidly defined text-types it is difficult to handle direct speech. Besides, do we not need longer texts to assign them with any confidence to a specific text-type? Is there a purpose for attributing Ruth 1:8-9 to a specific text-type, after all? Is text-linguistic analysis to be understood in terms of text-types?

Ruth 1:11-13

1.11.1	Naomi said,	וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי
1.11.2	"Turn back, my daughters,	שֹׁבְנָה בְנֹתַי
1.11.3	why will you go with me?	לָמָּה תֵלַכְנָה עִמִּי

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12. Consult GK §163. This כִּי is probably equivalent to כִּי לֹא 'no, but,' a way of challenging a previous proposal; see Joüon, *Ruth*, 37-38. This כִּי (unlike the subordinating 'causal,' or 'object,' כִּי) has no grammatical function in the clause, and therefore it does not occupy a place in it – i.e. it is a non-subordinating particle. See my discussion on כִּי in the book review of: W. Groß - H. Irsigler - T. Seidl (ed.), *Text, Methode und Grammatik*. Wolfgang Richter zum 65. Geburtstag, St. Ottilien 1991, in *LA* 44 (1994) 667-692, §3.

1.11.4	Have I yet sons in my womb	הַעֽוֹד־לִי בָנִים בְּמֵעַי
1.11.5	so that they may become your husbands?	וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לַאֲנָשִׁים
1.12.1	Turn back, my daughters,	שֹׁבְנָה בְנֹתַי
1.12.2	go your way,	לֵכְןָ
1.12.3	for I am too old to have a husband.	כִּי זָקַנְתִּי מִהְיוֹת לְאִישׁ
1.12.4	If I should say,	כִּי אָמַרְתִּי
1.12.5	I have hope,	יֶשׁ־לִי תִקְוָה
1.12.6	even if I should both have a husband this night	גַּם הָיִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה לְאִישׁ
1.12.7	and bear sons,	וְגַם יָלַדְתִּי בָנִים
1.13.1	would you therefore wait	הֲלָהֵן תְּשַׂבֵּרְנָה
1.13.2	till they would grow?	עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדָּלוּ
1.13.3	Would you therefore refrain from marrying?	הֲלָהֵן תֵּעָגֵנָה לְבִלְתִּי הֱיוֹת לְאִישׁ
1.13.4	No, my daughters,	אַל בְּנֹתַי
1.13.5	for it is more bitter to me than to you	כִּי־מַר־לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם
1.13.6	that the hand of the Lord went forth against me."	כִּי־יָצְאָה בִי יַד־יְהוָה

Dawson gives rather confused clues for the analysis of this passage as he writes:

> The text allows us much more freedom to explore. It contains 18 clauses: (…) the first six (…) [are] followed by a subordinated clause (1.12.3), into which the remaining material in this Reported Speech section is embedded by another subordinated clause, a speech formula (1.12.4) (p. 188).
> We can assign the two questions and their intervening subordinated clause (1.13.1-3) to a single subsection; and I propose that כי אמרתי of 1.12.4-7, which immediately precedes it, is a sort of protasis, to those questions (p. 189).

The syntax of the passage is clear, though complex. The backbone, or foreground, is represented by the volitive forms 1.11.2, 1.12.1-2, and 1.13.4;[13] the rest conveys the cause and explanation, or background. The conjunction כִּי has causal force in 1.12.3, while it introduces the protasis in 1.12.4 – כִּי אָמַרְתִּי *is* the protasis, not 'a sort of protasis.' Further, 1.12.5 is the only clause 'embedded' into the preceding speech formula; the following 1.12.6-7 are two more protases, coordinated to 1.12.4, while 1.13.1 and 1.13.3 are two apodoses (with 1.13.2 as subordinated clause). Finally, the two conjunctions כִּי in 1.13.5-6 have, again, different functions: The first

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13. Clause 1.13.4 is elliptical; see GK §152g.

introduces a causal clause (as 1.12.3), the second a 'Subject clause' ("it is more bitter … *that* the hand of the Lord went out against me").[14]

The swift change of perspective in this direct speech makes it impossible for Dawson to identify a specific text-type (p. 189) – not a big loss, I suppose.

Ruth 1:14-15

1.14.1	Then they lifted up their voices	וַתִּשֶּׂנָה קוֹלָן
1.14.2	and wept again.	וַתִּבְכֶּינָה עוֹד
1.14.3	Orpah kissed her mother-in-law (good-bye),	וַתִּשַּׁק עָרְפָּה לַחֲמוֹתָהּ
1.14.4	while Ruth clung to her.	וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ
1.15.1	(Naomi) said,	וַתֹּאמֶר
1.15.2	"See, your sister-in-law has gone back	הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבִמְתֵּךְ
	to her people and to her gods;	אֶל־עַמָּהּ וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֶיהָ
1.15.3	return after your sister-in-law."	שׁוּבִי אַחֲרֵי יְבִמְתֵּךְ

The main line of communication (with wayyiqtol) goes on uninterrupted except for 1.14.4 where a waw-x-qatal construction is used to convey a background information related to the preceding verb. This is a pause, not a real interruption in the line of communication.

On 1:15 Dawson comments as follows:

> This is a Hortatory text, where the reason for the command is given; this arrangement is called by Longacre a Hortatory Reason Paragraph (p. 189).

This analysis is basically not incorrect, yet it does not describe the syntax accurately nor explain the presence of qatal at the beginning of a direct speech – a fact that should be a major concern for Dawson. Note first of all that הִנֵּה is a particle of direct speech with the function of presenting to a participant in the dialogue information that has a special relevance with respect to the actual moment of communication. This information requires, on the part of the participant, some kind of reaction which is frequently introduced by וְעַתָּה 'and therefore (do such and such).'[15] Second, qatal following הִנֵּה constitutes the

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14. On the 'Substantival clause,' or 'that-clause,' with the function of subject or object, see Joüon-Muraoka §157.

15. Full analysis of הִנֵּה and וְעַתָּה clauses is found in *Syntax* §§66-73.

oral counterpart of an historical narrative wayyiqtol. In this case, the corresponding narrative clause 'and (Orpah) went back to her people' is actually found in the LXX but is only implied in the MT.[16]

Ruth 1:16-17

1.16.1	Ruth said,	וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת
1.16.2	"Entreat me not to leave you	אַל־תִּפְגְּעִי־בִי לְעָזְבֵךְ
	by returning from behind you;	לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ
1.16.3	for where you will go	כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי
1.16.4	I will go,	אֵלֵךְ
1.16.5	and where you will lodge	וּבַאֲשֶׁר תָּלִינִי
1.16.6	I will lodge;	אָלִין
1.16.7	your people is my people,	עַמֵּךְ עַמִּי
1.16.8	and your God my God;	וֵאלֹהַיִךְ אֱלֹהָי
1.17.1	where you will die	בַּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי
1.17.2	I will die,	אָמוּת
1.17.3	and there will I be buried.	וְשָׁם אֶקָּבֵר
1.17.4	May the Lord do so to me	כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי
1.17.5	and more also	וְכֹה יֹסִיף
1.17.6	if even death will part me from you."	כִּי הַמָּוֶת יַפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵךְ
1.18.1	Thus Naomi saw	וַתֵּרֶא
1.18.2	that she was determined to go with her	כִּי־מִתְאַמֶּצֶת הִיא לָלֶכֶת אִתָּהּ
1.18.3	and stopped speaking to her (about this).	וַתֶּחְדַּל לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ

Dawson describes 1:16-17 as follows:

This masterful section, introduced by a simple speech formula, contains 13 clauses, only one of which (a negated Imperative clause [1.16.2], occurring first in the sequence of Reported Speech clauses) does not occur as subordinated text. The subordinated clauses (1.16.3-1.17.6) include 8 Prefix clauses, broken by 3 Verbless (1.16.7-8, 1.17.5 [w/ Ptc.]) and 1 Jussive (1.17.4) (p. 190).

First, 1.17.5 is not a 'Verbless clause' (by the way, what does the abbreviation 'w/ Ptc.' mean?) but one with Jussive exactly as 1.17.4. Sec-

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16. A similar example with a fact first narrated historically with wayyiqtol, and then reported orally with qatal is found in Ruth 4:13 versus 4:17 (see below).

ond, one would like to know why 1.16.2 is non-subordinated while 1.17.4 is subordinated; no reasons are given for this analysis. Third, for Dawson "this is another Hortatory Reason Paragraph," a strange designation, because the text does not contain any main-line form according to Dawson's theory; in fact, the 'negated Imperative' with אַל + Jussive is 'Band 2: Secondary Line of Exhortation' according to the 'Hortatory Cline' in p. 116. Further, the two Jussive clauses found in 1.17.4-5 are 'imprecation formulas' with the Lord as their subject. One would ask then: Does this 'Hortatory' text consist of the 'Secondary Line of Exhortation' only, or does it also comprise the 'imprecation formula'?

Rather, 1.16.2 is a main-line clause (foreground). It is followed by a motive clause (background) that comprises two 'double sentences' with 1.16.3 and 1.16.5 as the protases, and 1.16.4 and 1.6.6 as the apodoses.[17] A third, similar double sentence is found after the two simple nominal (verbless) clauses 1.16.7-8; 1.17.1 is the protasis and 1.17.2-3 are two apodoses. Note that yiqtol and waw-x-yiqtol are interchangeable in the function of the apodosis.[18]

The 'curse' (1.17.4-6) consists of two jussive x-yiqtol constructions as main-line forms (foreground), and a כִּי clause as a secondary-line form (background). In the indicative x-yiqtol clause of 1.17.6 the 'x' element bears emphasis – "if *even death* will part me from you."

Ruth 1:19-22

1.19.1	The two of them went on	וַתֵּלַכְנָה שְׁתֵּיהֶם
	until they came to Bethlehem.	עַד־בֹּאָנָה בֵּית לָחֶם
1.19.2	And it happened, as soon as they came to Bethlehem,	וַיְהִי כְּבֹאָנָה בֵּית לֶחֶם
1.19.3	that the whole town was stirred because of them.	וַתֵּהֹם כָּל־הָעִיר עֲלֵיהֶן
1.19.4	(The women)said,	וַתֹּאמַרְנָה
1.19.5	"Is this Naomi?"	הֲזֹאת נָעֳמִי
1.20.1	She said to them,	וַתֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶן
1.20.2	"Do not call me Naomi,	אַל־תִּקְרֶאנָה לִי נָעֳמִי
1.20.3	call me Mara,	קְרֶאןָ לִי מָרָא
1.20.4	for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.	כִּי־הֵמַר שַׁדַּי לִי מְאֹד

17. A similar passage is Josh. 1:16-18; it is examined in *Syntax* §52.

18. In the apodosis, for the axis of the future, as here, yiqtol, x-yiqtol and wᵉqatal are found with no syntactic difference; see *Syntax* §§113; 126.

1.21.1	I went away full,	אֲנִי מְלֵאָה הָלַכְתִּי
1.21.2	and the Lord has brought me back empty.	וְרֵיקָם הֱשִׁיבַנִי יְהוָה
1.21.3	Why will you call me Naomi,	לָמָּה תִקְרֶאנָה לִי נָעֳמִי
1.21.4	when the Lord has passed judgment against me	וַיהוָה עָנָה בִי
1.21.5	and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"	וְשַׁדַּי הֵרַע לִי
1.22.1	So Naomi returned,	וַתָּשָׁב נָעֳמִי
1.22.2	while Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law	וְרוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה כַלָּתָהּ
	was with her, who returned from the land of Moab.	עִמָּהּ הַשָּׁבָה מִשְּׂדֵי מוֹאָב
1.22.3	Now, they came to Bethlehem	וְהֵמָּה בָּאוּ בֵּית לֶחֶם
	at the beginning of barley harvest.	בִּתְחִלַּת קְצִיר שְׂעֹרִים

For Dawson, a new episode starts in 1.19.2 for he is convinced that וַיְהִי is an off-line form marking a beginning in the text. Needless to say, I have strong reservations on this subject from the point of view of syntax. It suffices to note that if a break was to be indicated in 1.19.2, the circumstantial clause without וַיְהִי, 'as soon as they came to Bethlehem,' would have served the purpose. Indeed, just the opposite is the case: וַיְהִי marks a connection in the text. The closure of the episode is marked by an off-line waw-x-qatal clause in 1.22.3, while 1.22.2 is a waw-simple nominal (verbless) clause conveying background information to the preceding wayyiqtol.[19]

Dawson mentions 1.19.5 in a footnote, since he does not study it in the text; still he tries to identify its text-type by converting the question into a statement. In his view,

> it is likely that this is a representative of the Expository text-type (p. 191, note 68).

On 1:20-21 he writes:

> The first two clauses are clearly Hortatory; the remainder is less easy to place. This is poetic in style, and we have very little to go on in terms of studies of *poetic syntax* (p. 191; italics in the original).

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19. The technique of closing an episode with a secondary line form – i.e. simple nominal (verbless) clause, or a clause with a finite verb in the second place – is attested elsewhere in the Bible, e.g. the end of Ruth (4:18-22; see below); consult my *Lettura*, pp. 128 (Judg. 1:36); 226 (2 Sam. 6:23). The same technique is attested in many literatures both ancient and modern, as pointed out by H. Weinrich. From the NT, the following passages marking a closure with the imperfect can be cited: Mat. 2:15; Mark 1:13, 1:45; Luke 1:80; John 13:30. Note that imperfect is a secondary-line verb form in Greek; see my paper, "Dall'aoristo all'imperfetto o dal primo piano allo sfondo. Un paragone tra sintassi greca e sintassi ebraica," *LA* 42 (1992) 85-108.

To say that 1.20.2-3 are 'clearly Hortatory' does not seem to agree with the fact that in the 'Hortatory Cline' established on p. 116 ''*l* + Jussive / Prefix' is considered 'Band 2: Secondary Line of Exhortation.' The distinction between positive volitive forms ('Band 1') and corresponding negative forms ('Band 2'), contradicts syntax (see *Syntax* §55); the example here – with negative and positive statement on the same subject following one another – shows most clearly that it also contradicts common sense: '*Do not call* me Naomi, *call* me Mara.' Further, on which criteria does Dawson affirm that the remainder is 'poetic in style' is not explained. Everything is good prose and good syntax. If it proves difficult to identify a text-type here, this is not a good reason to invoke the difficulty of poetry;[20] it would be easier to abandon the text-types; and in fact, from time to time Dawson seems to forget their characteristics.

After two volitive forms (foreground) in 1.20.2-3, we find a causal clause (background; 1.20.4). Clauses 1.21.1-2 contain two (waw-) x-qatal constructions 'for oral report' (oral narrative); they are main-line forms in the axis of the past (*Syntax* §§22-23). Afterwards, we find a shift to the axis of the future ('modality') by means of an interrogative clause (1.21.3); to this foreground construction, two circumstantial waw-x-qatal clauses are linked as background (1.21.4-5).[21]

Ruth 2:2

2.1.1	Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's,	וּלְנָעֳמִי מְיֻדָּע [מוֹדַע Qere] לְאִישָׁהּ
	a man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech,	אִישׁ גִּבּוֹר חַיִל מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ
2.1.2	whose name was Boaz.	וּשְׁמוֹ בֹּעַז
2.2.1	Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi,	וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אֶל־נָעֳמִי
2.2.2	"Let me go to the field,	אֵלְכָה־נָּא הַשָּׂדֶה
2.2.3	and glean the ears of grain	וַאֲלַקֳטָה בַשִּׁבֳּלִים
2.2.4	after him in whose sight I shall find favor."	אַחַר אֲשֶׁר אֶמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינָיו
2.2.5	She said to her,	וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ

20. True, much has to be done on poetic syntax, but by this I mean something different from, and more basic than, identifying the text-types. My choice of studying Biblical Hebrew prose apart from poetry is based on the observation that poetry uses the verb forms differently; see *Syntax*, Ch. 10. A major difference is that the criterion of 'first place versus second place in the sentence' does not hold in poetry; in poetry word order is probably governed by prosody or other similar criteria.

21. On waw-x-qatal denoting background in direct speech, see *Syntax* §54.

| 2.2.6 | "Go, my daughter." | לְכִי בִתִּי |

2.1.1 is a simple nominal (verbless) clause conveying antecedent information to the next episode in the story.[22] 2.1.2 is a grammatically identical clause with a circumstantial function; literally, 'while his name was Boaz.'

The volitive form in 2.2.3 can be interpreted as direct (coordinated) as well as indirect (subordinated) depending on the interpretation (see comment on 1.8.2-3 above); if we take it as subordinated, 2.2.3 indicates purpose: "Let me go to the field … *in order to glean* the ears of grain." The yiqtol in 2.2.4 is prospective: 'after him in whose sight *I shall find* favor.'[23]

Ruth 2:3-6

2.3.1	So she set forth,	וַתֵּלֶךְ
2.3.2	went	וַתָּבוֹא
2.3.3	and gleaned in the field after the reapers.	וַתְּלַקֵּט בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֲרֵי הַקֹּצְרִים
2.3.4	She happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz,	וַיִּקֶר מִקְרֶהָ חֶלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה לְבֹעַז
2.3.5	who was of the family of Elimelech.	אֲשֶׁר מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ
2.4.1	And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem.	וְהִנֵּה־בֹעַז בָּא מִבֵּית לֶחֶם
2.4.2	He said to the reapers,	וַיֹּאמֶר לַקּוֹצְרִים
2.4.3	"The Lord is with you."	יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם
2.4.4	They answered,	וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ
2.4.5	"The Lord bless you!"	יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה
2.5.1	Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers,	וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז לְנַעֲרוֹ הַנִּצָּב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים
2.5.2	"Whose maiden is this?"	לְמִי הַנַּעֲרָה הַזֹּאת
2.6.1	The servant who was in charge of the reapers answered	וַיַּעַן הַנַּעַר הַנִּצָּב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים

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22. See *Syntax* §§16; 18-19 and compare Ruth 4.1.1 below.

23. Prospective yiqtol, which is characteristic of direct speech, is also found in historical narrative with the function of conveying a prevision of the story (*Syntax* §88). In the latter case, it is translated with the conditional mood while in direct speech it is translated with future tense. A more accurate translation of the examples in *Syntax* §88 should read as follows: "to see what *he would call* them," and "in order to know *what would happen* to him (literally, '*what would be done* to him')" (p. 117).

2.6.2	and said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
2.6.3	"It is a Moabite maiden, who came back	נַעֲרָה מוֹאֲבִיָּה הִיא הַשָּׁבָה
	with Naomi from the land of Moab.	עִם־נָעֳמִי מִשְּׂדֵה מוֹאָב
2.7.1	She said,	וַתֹּאמֶר
2.7.2	'Pray, let me glean!	אֲלַקֳטָה־נָּא
2.7.3	I shall gather among the sheaves	וְאָסַפְתִּי בָעֳמָרִים
	after the reapers.'	אַחֲרֵי הַקּוֹצְרִים
2.7.4	So she came,	וַתָּבוֹא
2.7.5	and she stood up from early morning until now,	וַתַּעֲמוֹד מֵאָז הַבֹּקֶר וְעַד־עַתָּה
2.7.6	and now she is sitting aside (?) for a while."[24]	זֶה שִׁבְתָּהּ הַבַּיִת מְעָט

Having decided to "examine Reported Speech as individual, fully self-contained, units" (p. 93), Dawson treats the above direct speeches independently, and identifies for each one a special text-type. As a result, he usually makes long comments for short texts whose text-types are not easily classified, or he resorts to criteria different from grammar and syntax. For instance, on 2.4.3 he writes as follows:

> Although the embedded text contains Verbless clause, it is Hortatory (it contains a blessing, not a command) rather than Expository. Here is a case where semantics, rather than syntax, identifies for us a text's type. As I have repeatedly noted, evaluation by means of one rarely excludes the other (p. 192).

However, semantics should *never* exclude syntax, and syntax should always precede semantics. In the case of 2.4.3, syntax teaches that a simple nominal (verbless) clause without any finite verb has indicative, not jussive, function; therefore, one should translate: "The Lord *is* with you."[25] This indicative clause contrasts 2.4.5, which has a jussive yiqtol in the first place: "The Lord bless you!"

As in the case of 1.19.5 (see above), Dawson thinks that the non-rhetorical question in 2.5.2 is an 'Expository' text (p. 192). Now, grammatically both question and answer (2.6.3) are simple nominal (verbless) clauses composed of predicate and subject as shown in the following diagram:

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24. Literally, "and this is her sitting aside (?) for a while."

25. The speech situation in Judg. 6:13 confirms that the greeting formula in 2.4.3 has indicative force; in fact, Gideon replies to the same greeting as follows: "Pray, sir, if the Lord is with us (וְיֵשׁ יְהוָה עִמָּנוּ), why then has all this befallen us?"; see *Lettura sintattica*, p. 170. Contrast Joüon, *Ruth*, 48.

(2)	(1)	
הַנַּעֲרָה הַזֹּאת	לְמִי	2.5.2
הִיא הַשָּׁבָה עִם־נָעֳמִי מִשְּׂדֵה מוֹאָב	נַעֲרָה מוֹאֲבִיָּה	2.6.3
Subject	*Predicate*	

Dawson rightly perceives an 'Embedded Narrative History text' here. At the same time, he forces the text to fit into a rigidly defined text-type. He writes:

> The first and the last clauses in the embedded Narrative History text [i.e. 2.6.3 and 2.7.6] look very like the sort of things we have begun to expect at the initial, and terminal, boundaries of Narrative texts (p. 193).

Sticking to his assumption that 'embedded Narrative History' is in no way different from 'non-embedded Narrative History,' Dawson interprets 2.6.3 and 2.7.6 as an opening and closing device of a 'Narrative History' text, respectively.[26] Now, the function of the initial off-line clause in narration is to provide a setting for the following story, but this is hardly the case in 2.6.3. On the other hand, 2.7.6 – a difficult clause indeed – shifts from past to present axis. As already observed, direct speech freely shifts from one temporal axis to another as the main line of communication. This kind of shift is impossible in historical narrative, which has no axis of the present (the 'present in the past' is imperfect), or axis of the future (the 'future in the past' is the conditional mood) as main line. Therefore, a shift from wayyiqtol to simple nominal clause, as in 2.7.5-6, would represent in historical narrative a shift from foreground to background. In conclusion, it is impossible to treat oral and historical narrative as one genre.

Ruth 2:8-9

2.8.1	Boaz said to Ruth,	וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז אֶל־רוּת
2.8.2	"You did hear, my daughter!	הֲלוֹא שָׁמַעַתְּ בִּתִּי
2.8.3	Do not go to glean in another field;	אַל־תֵּלְכִי לִלְקֹט בְּשָׂדֶה אַחֵר
2.8.4	do not move from here at all,	וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי מִזֶּה
2.8.5	and thus, you shall keep close to my maidens.	וְכֹה תִדְבָּקִין עִם־נַעֲרֹתָי
2.9.1	Your eyes shall be upon the field	עֵינַיִךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה

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26. Dawson puts forward this idea without proof or control.

2.9.2	which they shall reap,	אֲשֶׁר־יִקְצֹרוּן
2.9.3	and you shall go after them.	וְהָלַכְתָּ אַחֲרֵיהֶן
2.9.4	Hereby, I explicitly charge the young men	הֲלוֹא צִוִּיתִי אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים
	not to molest you.	לְבִלְתִּי נָגְעֵךְ
2.9.5	When you shall be thirsty,	וְצָמִת
2.9.6	you shall go to the vessels	וְהָלַכְתְּ אֶל־הַכֵּלִים
2.9.7	and drink	וְשָׁתִית
2.9.8	what the young men have drawn."	מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאֲבוּן הַנְּעָרִים

Dawson is concerned with showing that the passage consists of two units. As he writes:

> 2.8.3-9.2 are clearly Hortatory clauses; 2.9.3 and 2.9.5-8 are clearly Proce-
> dural/Instructional (p. 194).

Still, not a single main-line clause is found in the first unit judging from Dawson's 'Hortatory Cline' (p. 116). In fact, 2.8.3-4 as ''*l* + Jussive / Prefix' are 'Band 2: Secondary Line of Exhortation;' such is also 2.8.5, that is a 'Modal Prefix;' and 2.9.1 is 'Band 4: Setting (problem).' As for the second unit, it contains wᵉqatal, that is the normal form in instructions, but it also contains a qatal (2.9.4). Again, the inadequacy of the text-types is patent.

The syntactic structure of the passage is well accounted for by applying the system proposed here. From the axis of the past, with qatal at the beginning of an oral narrative (2.8.2), the text shifts to the axis of the future, with volitive forms (2.8.3-4), and with indicative waw-x-yiqtol (2.8.5); then, to the axis of the present, with simple nominal (verbless) clause (2.9.1), and again to the axis of the future, with x-yiqtol and wᵉqatal (2.9.2-3; 2.9.5-8). The qatal in 2.9.4 is "performative" and has present meaning (this function is more clear in legal matters; see comment on Ruth 4:1-17 below).

A small note on the translation of הֲלוֹא is in order here (see 2.8.2; 2.9.4). As a particle introducing a rhetorical question, הֲלוֹא is equivalent to הִנֵּה; its function is to urge the addressee to consider one particular piece of information which is important for him/her.[27] I have rendered this function

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27. There are clear examples where הֲלוֹא and הִנֵּה exchange freely; see *Syntax* §72, and note 61, p. 204; more recently, D. Sivan - W. Schniedewind, "Letting Your 'Yes' Be 'No' in Ancient Israel: A Study of Asseverative לֹא and הֲלֹא," *JSS* 38 (1993) 209-226.

with two strengthening devices available in English: "You *did* hear" and "I *explicitly* charge," respectively.

Ruth 2:10-13

2.10.1	She fell on her face,	וַתִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנֶיהָ
2.10.2	bowed to the ground,	וַתִּשְׁתַּחוּ אָרְצָה
2.10.3	and said to him,	וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
2.10.4	"Why have I found favor in your eyes,	מַדּוּעַ מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ
	that you should take notice of me,	לְהַכִּירֵנִי
2.10.5	when I am a foreigner?"	וְאָנֹכִי נָכְרִיָּה
2.11.1	Boaz answered	וַיַּעַן בֹּעַז
2.11.2	and said to her,	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ
2.11.3	"All that you have done for your mother-in-law	הֻגֵּד הֻגַּד לִי
2.11.4	after the death of your husband	כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂית אֶת־חֲמוֹתֵךְ
	has been fully told me.	אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישֵׁךְ
2.11.5	You have left your father and mother	וַתַּעַזְבִי אָבִיךְ וְאִמֵּךְ וְאֶרֶץ
	and your native land	מוֹלַדְתֵּךְ
2.11.6	and came to a people	וַתֵּלְכִי אֶל־עַם
2.11.7	that you did not know before.	אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעַתְּ תְּמוֹל שִׁלְשׁוֹם
2.12.1	The Lord recompense you for your work,	יְשַׁלֵּם יְהוָה פָּעֳלֵךְ
2.12.2	and your reward be full from the Lord,	וּתְהִי מַשְׂכֻּרְתֵּךְ שְׁלֵמָה מֵעִם יְהוָה
	the God of Israel,	אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
2.12.3	under whose wings you have come	אֲשֶׁר־בָּאת לַחֲסוֹת
	to take refuge!"	תַּחַת־כְּנָפָיו
2.13.1	She said,	וַתֹּאמֶר
2.13.2	"May I find favor in your eyes, my lord,	אֶמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנִי
2.13.3	since you have comforted me	כִּי נִחַמְתָּנִי
2.13.4	and since you have spoken	וְכִי דִבַּרְתָּ
	to your maidservant's heart,	עַל־לֵב שִׁפְחָתֶךָ
2.13.5	because I will not be	וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה
	like one of your maidservants."	כְּאַחַת שִׁפְחֹתֶיךָ

Dawson considers 2:10 and 2:13 together because of their similarity. He writes:

(2.10.3-5) This unit is comprised of 3 clauses (…):[28] a speech formula, a Suffix clause (a question) and a Verbless clause. Once again, we have a non-rhetorical question, which—in combination with the Verbless clause—permits us to determine this as an embedded Expository text (note 77, p. 194).

The first section of this unit [i.e. 2.13.2-5] remarks on the unexpected kindness of Boaz (which in this text is followed by two subordinated clauses); the second is a statement of identity. This is similar in structure to 2.10.3-5; the specific paragraph- and text-types of these units are difficult to ascertain (p. 195).

This analysis raises a number of problems. First, Dawson notes that the qatal clause in 2.10.4 is a 'non-rhetorical question' and that, together with the following verbless clause, it constitutes 'an embedded Expository text.' However, even if this is correct, it does not explain the appearance of qatal at the beginning of the text. Second, 2.13.2 hardly 'remarks on the unexpected kindness of Boaz' because it contains a clause-initial, jussive yiqtol;[29] it is, therefore, a request not a remark. Indeed, 2.10.4 is a remark on a past favor while 2.13.2 is a new request based on the past benevolence shown by Boaz (2.13.3-4).

In order to understand the new request, we have to analyze 2.13.5. Dawson's opinion that it 'is a statement of identity' presupposes a translation similar to that of RVS: "though I am not one of your maidservants;" but the presence of a yiqtol form of היה shows that 2.13.5 refers to the future not to the present, for no such form is used when there is a reference to the present.[30] In order to smooth the text, the LXX version disregards the negation and translates: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἔσομαι ὡς μία τῶν παιδισκῶν σου "and behold I will be as one of your maidservants." According to the MT, however, Ruth says exactly the opposite.[31]

Further, Dawson comments:

28. In the Hebrew text quoted here, two words are misspelled: הן for חן and להכירנו for להכירני. Such errors are, however, rather rare in Dawson's book.

29. Clauses 2.12.1-2 also contain two initial, coordinated jussive yiqtol forms (compare 2.4.5). For Dawson, it is a 'Hortatory text' (p. 195). Happily enough, he does not say, as he usually does, that the היה clause in 2.12.2 is an 'off-line device.' By this time, his theory seems to be in disarray.

30. See my paper, "Sullo stato sintattico del verbo hāyâ" §3.

31. Ruth does not seem to be as humble as the LXX would imply; rather, she seems to request a different status from that of a maidservant. In this respect, the fact that Boaz invited Ruth to take food together with the reapers (2:14) may be seen as a step toward granting that request. Apparently, Ruth aims at coming to a close relationship with Boaz (see 3:7ff.). Contrast Joüon, *Ruth*, 57; cf. pp. 52-53 on 2:8.

> Leaving aside 2.11.3, whose text-type affiliation is elusive, I turn to the next four clauses (2.11.4-7), which are clearly Narrative History (note again the concluding subordinate clause) (p. 195).

The adjective 'elusive' betrays the inadequacy of Dawson's theory to handle a qatal clause at the beginning of a direct speech. In fact, since 2.12.3 is according to Dawson 'again the conclusive subordinate clause,' 2.11.3 should be 'the initial boundary of the Narrative History text' (compare his comment on 2.6.3 and 2.7.6, p. 193). Moreover, to say that 2.11.4 is 'clearly Narrative History' when it is an 'object clause' of 2.11.3 is bizarre. As a matter of fact, we do have a 'Narrative History,' or more precisely, an oral narrative; it begins with main-line x-qatal (2.11.3) and continues with wayyiqtol as expected (see *Syntax* §§75-76).

Ruth 2:14

2.14.1	At mealtime Boaz said to her,	וַיֹּאמֶר לָה בֹעַז לְעֵת הָאֹכֶל
2.14.2	"Come here!	גֹּשִׁי הֲלֹם
2.14.3	Thus, you shall eat some bread,	וְאָכַלְתְּ מִן־הַלֶּחֶם
2.14.4	and dip your morsel in the vinegar."	וְטָבַלְתְּ פִּתֵּךְ בַּחֹמֶץ
2.14.5	So she sat beside the reapers,	וַתֵּשֶׁב מִצַּד הַקּוֹצְרִים
2.14.6	and he passed to her parched grain;	וַיִּצְבָּט־לָהּ קָלִי
2.14.7	she ate	וַתֹּאכַל
2.14.8	and sated herself,	וַתִּשְׂבַּע
2.14.9	and she had some left over.	וַתֹּתַר

As Dawson rightly remarks,

> the embedded text [i.e. 2.14.2-4] appears to be a command, and its result (p. 196).

In fact, wᵉqatal in 2.14.3-4 does not carry on the volitive force of the 'command' (imperative) but expresses 'result,' or consequence.[32]

Ruth 2:15-18

2.15.1	Then she rose to glean,	וַתָּקָם לְלַקֵּט

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32. *Syntax* §§61-63.

2.15.2	and Boaz instructed his young men, saying,	וַיְצַו בֹּעַז אֶת־נְעָרָיו לֵאמֹר
2.15.3	"Even if she shall glean among the sheaves,	גַּם בֵּין הָעֳמָרִים תְּלַקֵּט
2.15.4	you shall not reproach her.	וְלֹא תַכְלִימוּהָ
2.16.1	You shall even pull out some from the bundles for her,	וְגַם שֹׁל־תָּשֹׁלּוּ לָהּ מִן־הַצְּבָתִים
2.16.2	and leave it	וַעֲזַבְתֶּם
2.16.3	so that she can glean;	וְלִקְּטָה
2.16.4	and you shall not rebuke her."	וְלֹא תִגְעֲרוּ־בָהּ
2.17.1	So she gleaned in the field until evening.	וַתְּלַקֵּט בַּשָּׂדֶה עַד־הָעָרֶב
2.17.2	Then she beat out what she had gleaned,	וַתַּחְבֹּט אֵת אֲשֶׁר־לִקֵּטָה
2.17.3	and it was about an ephah of barley.	וַיְהִי כְּאֵיפָה שְׂעֹרִים
2.18.1	She took it up	וַתִּשָּׂא
2.18.2	and went into the city.	וַתָּבוֹא הָעִיר
2.18.3	She showed her mother-in-law	וַתֵּרֶא חֲמוֹתָהּ
2.18.4	what she had gleaned.	אֵת אֲשֶׁר־לִקֵּטָה
2.18.5	She also brought out	וַתּוֹצֵא
2.18.6	and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.	וַתִּתֶּן־לָהּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר־הוֹתִרָה מִשָּׂבְעָהּ

Dawson remarks as follows:

> The embedded text [i.e. 2.15.3-2.16.4] appears to be a solid stretch of Proce-
> dural/Instructional material, much of it in secondary (off-line) forms owing to negation
> or fronting of emphasized clausal elements. The repetition of גם at 2.15.3 and 2.16.1
> may indicate the onset of paragraphs… (p. 196).

According to normal use, a direct speech in the axis of the future begins
with x-yiqtol without any emphasis on the fronted 'x' element, and contin-
ues with weqatal and its negative form וְלֹא + yiqtol. Therefore, the clauses
2.15.3-2.16.4 can be all main line from the point of view of syntax.
Semantics, however, may suggest that 2.15.3 and 2.15.4 are a 'double
sentence' with x-yiqtol as the protasis (2.15.3) and weqatal as the apodosis
(2.15.4); see my translation above.[33]

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33. The syntactic pattern 'x-yiqtol + (negative) weqatal' in 2.15.3-4 consists, then, of two
coordinated verb forms of the future (i.e. initial and continuation form, respectively) or,
alternatively, of the construction with the so-called 'waw *apodoseos*.' In other words, the
translation is either: "She shall glean even among the sheaves, and you shall not reproach
her;" or the one given above. Only interpretation suggests the best option. On yiqtol occu-
pying the second place in the sentence (x-yiqtol) when functioning as the protasis, see

Ruth 2:19-20

2.19.1	Her mother-in-law said to her,	וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חֲמוֹתָהּ
2.19.2	"Where did you glean today?	אֵיפֹה לִקַּטְתְּ הַיּוֹם
2.19.3	And unto where have you turned?[34]	וְאָנָה עָשִׂית
2.19.4	Blessed be the man who took notice of you."	יְהִי מַכִּירֵךְ בָּרוּךְ
2.19.5	Then she told her mother-in-law	וַתַּגֵּד לַחֲמוֹתָהּ
2.19.6	the one with whom she had worked.	אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה עִמּוֹ
2.19.7	She said,	וַתֹּאמֶר
2.19.8-9	"The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."	שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בֹּעַז
2.20.1	Naomi said to her daughter-in-law,	וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי לְכַלָּתָהּ
2.20.2	"He is blessed before the Lord,[35]	בָּרוּךְ הוּא לַיהוָה
2.20.3	who has never forsaken his kindness with the living and with the dead."	אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַמֵּתִים
2.20.4	Naomi also said to her,	וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נָעֳמִי
2.20.5	"The man is a close relative of ours;	קָרוֹב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ
2.20.6	he is one of our nearest kin."	מִגֹּאֲלֵנוּ הוּא

Dawson finds problems with 2.19.1-4:

> This unit consists of 1 speech formula, 2 Suffix clauses (in question format), and 1 Jussive (blessing) clause. I cannot comment any further at this point, since the difficulties of question texts, and of Suffix clauses unaccompanied by contextual material to help with identification, precludes greater precision (…) (note 80, p. 196).

The 'difficulties' mentioned by Dawson are only his – because he cannot identify the text-type. Otherwise, there are no difficulties at all. Further, Dawson writes about 2.20.2-3 as follows:

Syntax §107, and my paper, "A Neglected Point of Hebrew Syntax: Yiqtol and Position in the Sentence," *LA* 37 (1987) 7-19, §2.4.3.

34. Literally, 'unto where did you do?'. Contrast Joüon, *Ruth*, 53.

35. See J. Scharbert, " 'Gesegnet sei Abram vom Höchsten Gott'? Zu Gen 14,19 und ähnlichen Stellen im Alten Testament," in: Groß - Irsigler - Seidl (ed.), *Text*, 387-401, and my comment in *LA* 44 (1994) 670. See also Ruth 3.10.2 below.

This embedded text can be described as a Hortatory unit, despite its similarity of clause-types to the preceding text; the Verbless clause, in this case, presupposes a Jussive form of היה (p. 197).

One would observe, first, that it is not clear how the preceding text, i.e. 2.19.8-9, is similar to 2.20.2-3. Second, 2.20.2 is a simple nominal (verbless) clause. As such, it is a statement, and does *not* 'presuppose a Jussive form of היה' (see comment on 2.13.5 above). Indeed it is different from 2.19.4 where a Jussive form (initial yiqtol) of היה *is* present. As a general principle, there is nothing to 'presuppose' beyond the surface structure in syntactic analysis.

Ruth 2:21-23

2.21.1	Ruth the Moabitess said,	וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה
2.21.2-3	"Besides, he said to me,	גַּם כִּי־אָמַר אֵלַי
2.21.4-5	'You shall keep close by my servants,	עִם־הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־לִי תִּדְבָּקִין
2.21.6	till they have finished all	עַד אִם־כִּלּוּ אֵת כָּל־הַקָּצִיר
2.21.7	my harvest.'"	אֲשֶׁר־לִי
2.22.1	Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law,	וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי אֶל־רוּת כַּלָּתָהּ
2.22.2	"It is well, my daughter,	טוֹב בִּתִּי
2.22.3	that you go out with his maidens,	כִּי תֵצְאִי עִם־נַעֲרוֹתָיו
2.22.4	and so nobody will molest you in another field."	וְלֹא יִפְגְּעוּ־בָךְ בְּשָׂדֶה אַחֵר
2.23.1	So she kept close to the maidens of Boaz, gleaning	וַתִּדְבַּק בְּנַעֲרוֹת בֹּעַז לְלַקֵּט
	until the end of the barley	עַד־כְּלוֹת קְצִיר־הַשְּׂעֹרִים
	and wheat harvests	וּקְצִיר הַחִטִּים
2.23.2	Afterwards she stayed with her mother-in-law.	וַתֵּשֶׁב אֶת־חֲמוֹתָהּ

Dawson presupposes that גַּם is "an elliptical – or rather, defective – clause" (p. 198). For the sake of comparison, I keep his clause numbering (2.21.2-3) although nothing is missing, and therefore we have only one clause there. The conjunction following גַּם is כִּי *recitativum* introducing a direct speech (GK §157b). The x-yiqtol clause in 2.21.4-5 is an indicative, main-line verb form in the axis of the future. It is found at the beginning of a second direct speech (2.21.4-7) embedded in the first (2.21.2-3).

In 2.22.3, כִּי introduces a Subject clause as in 1.13.6. The form וְלֹא +
yiqtol is the negative counterpart of weqatal, and as such it indicates
consequence, not purpose (see comment on Ruth 2:15-16 above).

Ruth 3:1-5

3.1.1	Naomi her mother-in-law said to her,	וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נָעֳמִי חֲמוֹתָהּ
3.1.2	"My daughter, should I not seek a home for you,	בִּתִּי הֲלֹא אֲבַקֶּשׁ־לָךְ מָנוֹחַ
3.1.3	that[36] it may be well with you?	אֲשֶׁר יִיטַב־לָךְ
3.2.1	And now, is not Boaz our kinsman,	וְעַתָּה הֲלֹא בֹעַז מֹדַעְתָּנוּ
3.2.2	with whose maidens you were?	אֲשֶׁר הָיִית אֶת־נַעֲרוֹתָיו
3.2.3	See, he is winnowing	הִנֵּה־הוּא זֹרֶה
	barley at the threshing floor[37] tonight.	אֶת־גֹּרֶן הַשְּׂעֹרִים הַלָּיְלָה
3.3.1	Therefore, you shall wash	וְרָחַצְתְּ
3.3.2	and anoint yourself,	וָסַכְתְּ
3.3.3	and put on your best clothes	וְשַׂמְתְּ שִׂמְלֹתֵךְ [Qere: שִׂמְלֹתַיִךְ] עָלַיִךְ
3.3.4	and go down to the threshing floor.	וְיָרַדְתִּי [Qere: וְיָרַדְתְּ] הַגֹּרֶן
3.3.5	Do not make yourself known to the man	אַל־תִּוָּדְעִי לָאִישׁ
	until he has finished eating and drinking,	עַד כַּלֹּתוֹ לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת
3.4.1	in order that when he lies down,	וִיהִי בְשָׁכְבוֹ
3.4.2	you shall know the place	וְיָדַעַתְּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם
3.4.3	where he lies.	אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב־שָׁם
3.4.4	Then you shall go	וּבָאת
3.4.5	and uncover the place of his feet	וְגִלִּית מַרְגְּלֹתָיו
3.4.6	and lie down;	וְשָׁכָבְתִּי [Qere: וְשָׁכָבְתְּ]
3.4.7	and he, on his part, will tell you	וְהוּא יַגִּיד לָךְ
3.4.8	what you should do."	אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂין
3.5.1	She replied,	וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ
3.5.2	"All that you say [Qere: to me] I will do."	כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי [Qere: אֵלַי] אֶעֱשֶׂה

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36. On the functions of אֲשֶׁר see T. Seidl, "'*ašer* als Konjunktion. Überblick und Versuch
einer Klassifikation der Belege in Gen – 2 Kön," in: Groß - Irsigler - Seidl (ed.), *Text*, 445-
469, and my discussion in *LA* 44 (1994) 680-686, §5.

37. Literally, "the threshing floor of barley"; see Joüon, *Ruth*, 67.

Dawson's analysis is concentrated, as usual, in the identification of text-types, and ignores problems of syntax. We find repeated use of particles of direct speech, הֲלוֹא, וְעַתָּה and הִנֵּה, with the function of calling the attention on facts important for the participants in the exchange.[38] Non-volitive weqatal (3.3.1-4; 3.4.2-6) happily interacts with volitive forms – negative imperative (3.3.5) and indirect weyiqtol (3.4.1).[39] The chain of weqatal forms is broken in 3.4.7 by waw-x-yiqtol in order to present Boaz's reaction as coincidental with Ruth's behavior.[40]

According to Dawson, clauses 3.4.7-8 are "Narrative Predictive (…), forming a Procedural Result sort of paragraph" (p. 199); however, a text-type with background information only is hardly feasible (for Dawson, yiqtol belongs to 'Band 2: Backgrounded Predictions': p. 115).

Ruth's reply (3.5.2) is an indicative x-yiqtol clause, expressing foreground, indicative future.

Ruth 3:6-9

3.6.1	So she went down to the threshing floor	וַתֵּרֶד הַגֹּרֶן
3.6.2	and did	וַתַּעַשׂ
	just as her mother-in-law had told her.	כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוַּתָּה חֲמוֹתָהּ
3.7.1	Boaz ate	וַיֹּאכַל בֹּעַז
3.7.2	and drank,	וַיֵּשְׁתְּ
3.7.3	and his heart was merry.	וַיִּיטַב לִבּוֹ
3.7.4	Finally, he went to lie down	וַיָּבֹא לִשְׁכַּב
	at the end of the heap of grain.	בִּקְצֵה הָעֲרֵמָה
3.7.5	Then she came softly,	וַתָּבֹא בַלָּט
3.7.6	uncovered his feet,	וַתְּגַל מַרְגְּלֹתָיו
3.7.7	and lay down.	וַתִּשְׁכָּב
3.8.1	And at midnight	וַיְהִי בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה
3.8.2	the man was startled,	וַיֶּחֱרַד הָאִישׁ
3.8.3	turned over,	וַיִּלָּפֵת

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38. See *Syntax* §§66-73, and Ruth 2:8-9 above.

39. Ruth 3:3b-4 is analyzed in *Syntax* §52. *Pace* Joüon, *Ruth*, 69, וִיהִי is fully justified in its normal function of expressing purpose.

40. See my translation above, "and he, *on his part,* will tell you." If we had another weqatal instead of waw-x-yiqtol, Boaz's reaction would be presented as successive, and the translation would be different: "*and then* he will tell you."

3.8.4	and behold, a woman lay at his feet!	וְהִנֵּה אִשָּׁה שֹׁכֶבֶת מַרְגְּלֹתָיו
3.9.1	He said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
3.9.2	"Who are you?"	מִי־אָתּ
3.9.3	She answered,	וַתֹּאמֶר
3.9.4	"I am Ruth, your maidservant.	אָנֹכִי רוּת אֲמָתֶךָ
3.9.5	You can spread your skirt over your maidservant,	וּפָרַשְׂתָּ כְנָפֶךָ עַל־אֲמָתְךָ
3.9.6	for you are next of kin."	כִּי גֹאֵל אָתָּה

Dawson makes a long commentary on a small exchange (3:9) in order to identify its text-type, again exposing the inapplicability of his theory. What he considers "a background 'setting' for the Instruction section" (p. 200) is in fact a 'presentative clause'[41] (3.9.4); in fact, Ruth identifies herself answering Boaz's question. Further, w^{e}qatal (3.9.5) is not a volitive form, but it makes explicit Boaz's right on Ruth: 'You can,' 'you have the right to.'[42]

Ruth 3:10-13

3.10.1	He said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
3.10.2	"You are blessed before the Lord, my daughter;	בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לַיהוָה בִּתִּי
3.10.3	you have made this last kindness	הֵיטַבְתְּ חַסְדֵּךְ הָאַחֲרוֹן
	greater than the first,	מִן־הָרִאשׁוֹן
	in that you have not gone after young men,	לְבִלְתִּי־לֶכֶת אַחֲרֵי הַבַּחוּרִים
	whether poor or rich.	אִם־דַּל וְאִם־עָשִׁיר
3.11.1	And now, my daughter, do not fear,	וְעַתָּה בִּתִּי אַל־תִּירְאִי
3.11.2-3	I will do for you all that you shall say,	כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ
3.11.4	for all my fellow townsmen know	כִּי יוֹדֵעַ כָּל־שַׁעַר עַמִּי
3.11.5	that you are a woman of worth.	כִּי אֵשֶׁת חַיִל אָתּ
3.12.1-3	Indeed, even if I truly am	וְעַתָּה כִּי אָמְנָם כִּי אִם [Ketib]
	a near kinsman,	גֹאֵל אָנֹכִי
3.12.4	yet there is another kinsman nearer than I.	וְגַם יֵשׁ גֹּאֵל קָרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי

41. On the 'presentative clause,' see my paper, "Simple Nominal Clause (SNC) or Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew Prose," *ZAH* 6 (1993) 216-227, esp. pp. 220-222.

42. Note this 'modal value' of w^{e}qatal, also attested with yiqtol; see *Lettura sintattica*, note 67, p. 59 (Judg. 1:8); p. 109 (Judg. 6:10) etc. Compare Joüon, *Ruth*, 73: "et (donc) tu dois étendre…"

3.13.1	Remain this night,	לִינִי הַלַּיְלָה
3.13.2	and in the morning,	וְהָיָה בַבֹּקֶר
3.13.3	if he will do the part of the next of kin for you,	אִם־יִגְאָלֵךְ
3.13.4	well,	טוֹב
3.13.5	he will do it;	יִגְאָל
3.13.6	but if he is not willing	וְאִם־לֹא יַחְפֹּץ
	to do the part of the next of kin for you,	לְגָאֳלֵךְ
3.13.7	then, I will do it for you	וּגְאַלְתִּיךְ אָנֹכִי
3.13.8	as the Lord lives.	חַי־יְהוָה
3.13.9	Lie down until the morning."	שִׁכְבִי עַד־הַבֹּקֶר

According to Dawson, the four verses just quoted are three different text-types – Hortatory, Expository, and Predictive. Again it is difficult to see any purpose in this analysis; syntactic analysis is by far more interesting. One would not say that in 3:12 we find a 'defective' clause;[43] rather, the first כִּי is *recitativum* (see comment on Ruth 2.21.2-3), or 'strengthening,' and the second is linked to אָמְנָם 'truly that' as in Job 12:2; further, אִם has conditional value. The simple nominal (verbless) clause in 3.10.2 is a statement, not a wish, as in 2.20.2 (above). In 3.11.2-3, the basic syntactic pattern is x-yiqtol, i.e. the אֲשֶׁר clause is embedded as the 'x' element in the superordinate sentence x-yiqtol; this x-yiqtol is a main line form expressing simple future (as in 3.5.2-3 above). As usual, direct speech easily shifts from present (3.10.2), to past (3.10.3), to future (3.11.1-3), again to present (3.11.4-3.13.1) and to future (3.13.2-7). Note the equivalence between yiqtol (3.13.5) and weqatal (3.13.7) in the function of apodosis.[44]

Ruth 3:14-18

3.14.1	She lay at the place of his feet	וַתִּשְׁכַּב מַרְגְּלָתוֹ [מַרְגְּלוֹתָיו :Qere]
	until the morning,	עַד־הַבֹּקֶר
3.14.2	and arose	וַתָּקָם

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43. Dawson counts three clauses whereas I count only one here; still, I follow his numbering, '3.12.1-3.' For him, the first clause is defective – '[…] ועתה;' the second is כִּי אָמְנָם, but a conjunction and an adverb constitute no clause. In what is for him the third clause, Dawson deletes the conjunction אִם following the Qere; but the consonantal text can be explained as it is as a highly emphatic assertion. Consult Joüon, *Ruth*, 75.

44. As already observed above; see Ruth 1:16-17 and footnote there.

3.14.3	before one could recognize	בְּטֶרֶם [Qere: בְּטֶרֶם] יַכִּיר אִישׁ
	another.	אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ
3.14.4	He said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
3.14.5	"Let it not be known	אַל־יִוָּדַע
3.14.6	that the woman came to the threshing floor."	כִּי־בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֹּרֶן
3.15.1	He said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
3.15.2	"Bring the mantle	הָבִי הַמִּטְפַּחַת
3.15.3	you are wearing	אֲשֶׁר־עָלַיִךְ
3.15.4	and hold it out."	וְאֶחֳזִי־בָהּ
3.15.5	So she held it,	וַתֹּאחֶז בָּהּ
3.15.6	and he measured out six measures of barley,	וַיָּמָד שֵׁשׁ־שְׂעֹרִים
3.15.7	and laid it upon her;	וַיָּשֶׁת עָלֶיהָ
3.15.8	then he went into the city.	וַיָּבֹא הָעִיר
3.16.1	She came to her mother-in-law,	וַתָּבוֹא אֶל־חֲמוֹתָהּ
3.16.2	and she said,	וַתֹּאמֶר
3.16.3	"Who are you, my daughter?"[45]	מִי־אַתְּ בִּתִּי
3.16.4	She told her	וַתַּגֶּד־לָהּ
3.16.5	all that the man had done for her.	אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה־לָהּ הָאִישׁ
3.17.1	She said,	וַתֹּאמֶר
3.17.2	"These six measures of barley he gave to me,	שֵׁשׁ־הַשְּׂעֹרִים הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי
3.17.3	for he said [to me],	כִּי אָמַר [Qere: אֵלַי]
3.17.4	'Do not go back empty-handed	אַל־תָּבוֹאִי רֵיקָם
	to your mother-in-law.'"	אֶל־חֲמוֹתֵךְ
3.18.1	She replied,	וַתֹּאמֶר
3.18.2	"Wait, my daughter,	שְׁבִי בִתִּי
3.18.3	until you learn	עַד אֲשֶׁר תֵּדְעִין
3.18.4	how the matter turns out,	אֵיךְ יִפֹּל דָּבָר

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45. This question is usually translated differently from its plain meaning, e.g. "How did you fare, my daughter?" (RSV); but this is, naturally, a guess translation in order to avoid the problem of Naomi asking Ruth for her identity. See also Joüon, *Ruth*, 78. However, the ancient versions translate it in the plain sense (except the LXX B). For some reason, then, it is necessary for Naomi to ask that question, maybe because it was still dark, as Boaz did in 3:9. Rightly or wrongly, I am reminded of 1 Sam. 17:55 where Saul asks Abner about David – whom he knew already according to the present text – as follows: "whose son is this youth?" The literary critics, of course, interpret this as a sign of different sources. It is, however, strange that the narrator left a patent inconsistency in the text; some meaning for that question must be found.

3.18.5	for the man will not rest,	כִּי לֹא יִשְׁקֹט הָאִישׁ
3.18.6	but will settle the matter today."	כִּי־אִם־כִּלָּה הַדָּבָר הַיּוֹם

As usual, Dawson identifies a text-type in each part though small; e.g. 3.14.5-6 is for him a Hortatory text despite the fact that אַל + Jussive is 'Band 2: Secondary Line of Exhortation' (p. 116), as observed several times already. His comment on 3.17.2-3 reveals once more the inability of his theory to handle an oral narrative beginning with qatal.

> The 'past tense' parts of the embedded text hint at Narrative History, but the evidence is not sufficient to secure identification (p. 202).

Dawson does not say what else it could be if it is not 'Narrative History.' At this point, one is allowed to make explicit Dawson's problem here and in similar cases. According to his theory, a qatal clause at the beginning of direct speech is to be a 'stage-setting device' of a following narrative; however, the narrative itself is missing in many cases. On the contrary, in my view this qatal exemplifies the distinction between the two genres of the prose: oral narrative beginning with qatal in the first place or x-qatal, and historical narrative beginning with wayyiqtol. Actually, the sentence נָתַן לִי שֵׁשׁ־הַשְּׂעֹרִים הָאֵלֶּה (3.17.2) is the oral-narrative counterpart of the historical narrative clause וַיָּמָד שֵׁשׁ־שְׂעֹרִים (3.15.6); that is, the same fact is first narrated historically with wayyiqtol, then reported orally with x-qatal.[46]

Ruth 4:1-17

4.1.1	Now, Boaz went up to the gate.	וּבֹעַז עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר
4.1.2	He sat down there;	וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם
4.1.3	and behold, the next of kin,	וְהִנֵּה הַגֹּאֵל עֹבֵר
4.1.4	of whom Boaz had spoken, was passing by.	אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־בֹּעַז
4.1.5	So Boaz said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
4.1.6	"Turn aside;	סוּרָה
4.1.7	sit down here, friend";	שְׁבָה־פֹּה פְּלֹנִי אַלְמֹנִי
4.1.8	and he turned aside	וַיָּסַר
4.1.9	and sat down.	וַיֵּשֶׁב

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46. Or with qatal-x without any difference; see Ruth 4:13 *versus* 4:17 below. With this construction no emphasis falls on the 'x' element preceding qatal, *pace* Joüon, *Ruth*, 79.

4.2.1	He took ten men of the elders of the city,	וַיִּקַּח עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים מִזִּקְנֵי הָעִיר
4.2.2	and said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
4.2.3	"Sit down here";	שְׁבוּ־פֹה
4.2.4	and they sat down.	וַיֵּשֵׁבוּ
4.3.1	Then he said to the next of kin,	וַיֹּאמֶר לַגֹּאֵל
4.3.2-3	"Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is hereby selling the parcel of land which belonged to our kinsman Elimelech.	חֶלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר לְאָחִינוּ לֶאֱלִימֶלֶךְ מָכְרָה נָעֳמִי הַשָּׁבָה מִשְּׂדֵה מוֹאָב
4.4.1	And I, on my part, I formally say:	וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי
4.4.2	I want to declare to you as follows,	אֶגְלֶה אָזְנְךָ לֵאמֹר
4.4.3	'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people.	קְנֵה נֶגֶד הַיֹּשְׁבִים וְנֶגֶד זִקְנֵי עַמִּי
4.4.4	If you will redeem it,	אִם־תִּגְאַל
4.4.5	redeem it;	גְּאָל
4.4.6	but if no one will redeem,[47]	וְאִם־לֹא יִגְאַל
4.4.7	tell me,	הַגִּידָה לִּי
4.4.8	that I may know,[48]	[Qere: וְאֵדְעָה] וְאֵדַע
4.4.9	for there is no one besides you to redeem it,	כִּי אֵין זוּלָתְךָ לִגְאוֹל
4.4.10	and I come after you.'"	וְאָנֹכִי אַחֲרֶיךָ
4.4.11	And he said,	וַיֹּאמֶר
4.4.12	"I will redeem it."	אָנֹכִי אֶגְאָל
4.5.1	Then Boaz said,	וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז
4.5.2[49]	"The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, it is also from Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the dead, that I [Qere: you] hereby buy it in order to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance."	בְּיוֹם־קְנוֹתְךָ הַשָּׂדֶה מִיַּד נָעֳמִי וּמֵאֵת רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אֵשֶׁת־הַמֵּת קָנִיתִי [Qere: קָנִיתָה] לְהָקִים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ

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47. This verb is normally corrected to the second person: 'but if you will not redeem'; however, the third person can be interpreted as impersonal.

48. Indirect cohortative (Qere); see Joüon, *Ruth*, 83.

49. I follow Dawson's numbering of the clauses even though it does not correspond to my analysis. In fact, בְּיוֹם־קְנוֹתְךָ הַשָּׂדֶה מִיַּד נָעֳמִי is one clause, the protasis, and the rest of 4:5 is another clause, the apodosis. On the double sentence (protasis - apodosis), see *Syntax*, Ch. 8.

4.6.1	Then the next of kin said,	וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל
4.6.2	"I cannot redeem it for myself,	לֹא אוּכַל לִגְאוֹל [לִגְאָל־ :Qere] לִי
4.6.3	lest I impair my own inheritance.	פֶּן־אַשְׁחִית אֶת־נַחֲלָתִי
4.6.4	You take my right of redemption for yourself,	גְּאַל־לְךָ אַתָּה אֶת־גְּאֻלָּתִי
4.6.5	for I cannot redeem it."	כִּי לֹא־אוּכַל לִגְאֹל
4.7.1	Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging:	וְזֹאת לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגְּאוּלָּה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּרָה
4.7.2	to confirm a transaction, having drawn off his sandal,	לְקַיֵּם כָּל־דָּבָר שָׁלַף אִישׁ נַעֲלוֹ
4.7.3	one used to give it to the other;	וְנָתַן לְרֵעֵהוּ
4.7.4	and this was the manner of attesting in Israel.	וְזֹאת הַתְּעוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
4.8.1	So the next of kin said to Boaz,	וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לְבֹעַז
4.8.2	"Buy it for yourself,"	קְנֵה־לָךְ
4.8.3	and drew off his sandal.	וַיִּשְׁלֹף נַעֲלוֹ
4.9.1	Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people,	וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז לַזְּקֵנִים וְכָל־הָעָם
4.9.2	"You are witnesses this day	עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם
4.9.3	that I hereby buy	כִּי קָנִיתִי
4.9.4	all that belonged to Elimelech	אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לֶאֱלִימֶלֶךְ
4.9.5	and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon from the hand of Naomi.	וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְכִלְיוֹן וּמַחְלוֹן מִיַּד נָעֳמִי
4.10.1	Also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I hereby buy to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance,	וְגַם אֶת־רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיָּה אֵשֶׁת מַחְלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהָקִים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ
4.10.2	so that the name of the dead shall not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his native place;	וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת שֵׁם־הַמֵּת מֵעִם אֶחָיו וּמִשַּׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ
4.10.3[50]	you are witnesses this day."	עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם
4.11.1	Then all the people who were at the gate,	וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעָם
4.11.2	and the elders, said,	אֲשֶׁר־בַּשַּׁעַר וְהַזְּקֵנִים

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50. In Dawson's Appendix (p. 235), a wrong numbering of the clauses is found, while in the text (p. 205) the numbering is correct.

4.11.3	"We are witnesses.	עֵדִים
4.11.4	May the Lord make the woman, who is coming	יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה
	into your house, like Rachel and Leah,	אֶל־בֵּיתֶךָ כְּרָחֵל וּכְלֵאָה
4.11.5	who together built up the house of Israel.	אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׁתֵּיהֶם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
4.11.6	May you prosper in Ephrathah	וַעֲשֵׂה־חַיִל בְּאֶפְרָתָה
4.11.7	and be renowned in Bethlehem;	וּקְרָא־שֵׁם בְּבֵית לָחֶם
4.12.1	and may your house be like the house of Perez,	וִיהִי בֵיתְךָ כְּבֵית פֶּרֶץ
4.12.2	whom Tamar bore to Judah,	אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה תָמָר לִיהוּדָה
4.12.3	because of the children that the Lord will give you	מִן־הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן יְהוָה לְךָ
	by this young woman."	מִן־הַנַּעֲרָה הַזֹּאת
4.13.1	So Boaz took Ruth	וַיִּקַּח בֹּעַז אֶת־רוּת
4.13.2	and she became his wife.	וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה
4.13.3	He went in to her,	וַיָּבֹא אֵלֶיהָ
4.13.4	and the Lord gave her conception,	וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לָהּ הֵרָיוֹן
4.13.5	and she bore a son.	וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן
4.14.1	Then the women said to Naomi,	וַתֹּאמַרְנָה הַנָּשִׁים אֶל־נָעֳמִי
4.14.2	"Blessed is the Lord,	בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה
4.14.3	who has not left you	אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִשְׁבִּית לָךְ
	this day without next of kin,	גֹּאֵל הַיּוֹם
4.14.4	in order that his name may be renowned in Israel.	וְיִקָּרֵא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
4.15.1	He shall be to you a restorer of life	וְהָיָה לָךְ לְמֵשִׁיב נֶפֶשׁ
	and a nourisher of your old age;	וּלְכַלְכֵּל אֶת־שֵׂיבָתֵךְ
4.15.2-3	for it is your daughter-in-law who loves you	כִּי כַלָּתֵךְ אֲשֶׁר־אֲהֵבַתֶךְ
	that bore him,	יְלָדַתּוּ
4.15.4	she who is more to you than seven sons."	אֲשֶׁר־הִיא טוֹבָה לָךְ מִשִּׁבְעָה בָּנִים
4.16.1	Then Naomi took the child	וַתִּקַּח נָעֳמִי אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד
4.16.2	and laid him in her bosom,	וַתְּשִׁתֵהוּ בְחֵיקָהּ
4.16.3	and became his nurse.	וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאֹמֶנֶת
4.17.1	And the women of the neighborhood	וַתִּקְרֶאנָה לוֹ הַשְּׁכֵנוֹת
	gave him a name, saying,	שֵׁם לֵאמֹר
4.17.2	"A son has been born to Naomi."	יֻלַּד־בֵּן לְנָעֳמִי
4.17.3	They named him Obed,	וַתִּקְרֶאנָה שְׁמוֹ עוֹבֵד
4.17.4	who was the father of Jesse, the father of David.	הוּא אֲבִי־יִשַׁי אֲבִי דָוִד

The text begins and ends with off-line constructions: on the one hand, waw-x-qatal (4.1.1);[51] on the other, simple nominal (verbless) clause, and nine 'compound nominal clauses' type (waw) x-qatal (4:18-22). The narrative line of wayyiqtol is interrupted in 4:7 (see below). Soon after, the main line resumes in 4.8.1 with wayyiqtol. The many direct speeches are linked to the main line of the narrative by their speech formulas that are in the wayyiqtol (4.1.5; 4.2.2; 4.3.1 etc.). Another pause in the flow of narrative is found in 4.17.4 where a simple nominal (verbless) clause conveys background information to the previous wayyiqtol. I have translated it with a relative clause: "*who was* the father of Jesse," but the clause is not relative in Hebrew; it is circumstantial, i.e. literally: "*while he was* the father of Jesse."[52]

The וְהִנֵּה clause in 4.1.3 functions as background to the previous wayyiqtol. It is a device characteristic of direct speech used in historical narrative to convey in a lively way an information that is significant for the moment of communication (see comment on Ruth 2:8-9 and 3:1-5 above).

An important verb form in the direct speech sections is the so-called 'performative qatal,' characteristic of formal and legal actions.[53] It is found in the following clauses: 4.3.2-3,[54] 4.4.1, 4.5.2, 4.9.3, and 4.10.1.

The clause-initial yiqtol in 4.4.2 and 4.11.4 is volitive, while the form found in the protasis in 4.4.4 (positive) and 4.4.6 (negative) is indicative, i.e. 'If *you will* redeem (…) if *no one will* redeem.' The w^eyiqtol in 4.4.8 is an indirect volitive form subordinated to the preceding imperative: 'tell me *in order that* I may know.'[55] In 4.12.1 it is rather coordinated to the preceding imperative forms (see comment on Ruth 1:8-10 above).   A

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51. It is an 'antecedent construction' (see 2.1.1 above). Joüon, *Ruth*, 79-80, rightly observes that the author avoided a wayyiqtol here but does not perceive the exact function of the construction.

52. It is customary to call such sentences 'relative,' 'temporal,' etc. according to the way they are translated in modern languages. However, these designations do not correspond to the syntax of the Hebrew. See 2.1.2 above.

53. Consult Joüon-Muraoka §112f-g; *Syntax*, note 46, pp. 202-203; *Lettura sintattica*, p. 258 ('Qatal, performativo'). With performative qatal, the event happens in the very moment of the act of speaking an accepted formula; e.g. 'Naomi (…) is *hereby* selling the parcel of land' (4.3.2-3); 'And I, on my part, say *hereby*' (4.4.1); 'it is also from Ruth (…) that you buy *hereby*' (4.5.2 b), etc.

54. The two clauses are inseparable because the אֲשֶׁר clause is embedded in the superordinate x-qatal clause in such a way that it cannot be isolated. For his part, Dawson always takes the אֲשֶׁר clause off of its context and puts it in a different line.

55. The consonantal form (Ketib) is defective; Qere suggests the full spelling: וְאֵדְעָה.

volitive w^eyiqtol is also present in 4.14.4: '*in order that* his name *may be renowned*;' it neatly contrasts the non-volitive w^eqatal in 4.15.1: '*He shall be* to you a restorer of life.'[56] The x-yiqtol at the beginning of a direct speech in 4.4.12 is a main-line form expressing indicative future; its negative counterpart is לֹא + yiqtol in 4.6.2 (see also 4.6.5). The negative form in 4.10.2 indicates consequence; its positive counterpart would be w^eqatal.

About 4:7, Dawson writes as follows:

> The next four clauses are intriguing: a verbless clause (4.7.1); two verb-initial Suffix clauses (4.7.2-3); and another verbless clause (4.7.4, a résumé of the first) (p. 184).

Note, first, that 4.7.2 is not 'verb-initial' if one divides the text as I did above; second, 4.7.3 is not 'verb-initial Suffix,' i.e. it is not a waw 'copula' + qatal construction but w^eqatal (i.e. the 'inverted' verb form) expressing customary law (e.g. Judg. 2:19). Syntactically, the two verb forms do not belong to the same level, because in the secondary level of communication, qatal expresses single action while w^eqatal repeated action. In the present context, qatal indicates anteriority with regard to the temporal level of w^eqatal.[57]

Thus, Ruth 4:7 interrupts the narrative chain of wayyiqtol forms for awhile in order to convey background information necessary to explain what is described in 4:8. It is a kind of indirect comment of the writer to the reader, as if he said, 'In order to understand what Ruth's next of kin is going to do, you have to know that…'[58]

Simple nominal (verbless) clauses are attested in direct speech as present tenses in 4.9.2, 4.10.3 and 4.14.2; clause 4.11.3 – similar to 4.9.2 and 4.10.3 – consists of the predicate only, while the subject is implied.

Note a neat temporal opposition between אֲשֶׁר + qatal referring to the past (4.12.2) and אֲשֶׁר + yiqtol referring to the future (4.12.3).

A couple of problems are found in 4:5. First, instead of וּמֵאֵת רוּת, some would read גַּם־אֶת רוּת "Ruth also (you buy)" (see BHK, and BHS),

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56. Joüon, *Ruth*, 93, rightly observes: "Bien entendu והיה ne continue pas le jussif indirect ויקרא, mais se rapporte à גאל."

57. This is called 'retrospective' qatal in *Syntax* §8.

58. This is a very good example of a 'mixed genre' in Biblical Hebrew – the indirect 'comment.' Without intervening overtly in the first person and with a direct address to the reader (as is found in modern narrative), the writer addresses the reader indirectly by using verb forms characteristic of direct speech, i.e. w^eqatal here. The verb forms used in the mixed genres have different temporal value, however; for instance, w^eqatal is a future tense in direct speech, while it conveys description or custom (i.e. aspect) in historical narrative.

but the LXX also has a preposition before the personal name. Syntactically, 4.5.2 is a clause type waw-x-qatal with the function of emphasizing the 'x' element; I translated it with a cleft sentence: "*it is* also from Ruth the Moabitess (…) *that* I (you) buy it."[59] Second, the first person qatal of the Ketib in 4.5.2 b is usually read as a second person following the Qere (קָנִיתָה). Another 'emphatic' x-qatal construction is found in 4.15.2-3: "for *it is* your daughter-in-law who loves you *that* bore him."[60]

If we compare Dawson's analysis, the same problems emerge that were already pointed out several times, especially the problem of explaining a qatal at the beginning of an oral narrative. Here are some of his comments on various passages of Ruth 4:1-17.

> The earlier section (4.3.2-4.2) is unclear, though I take it to be a stage-setting device for the Hortatory text that follows it (p. 204).
> The embedded text [i.e. 4.9.2-4.10.3] is bracketed by the two Verbless clauses (identical); these identify the incorporating text as Expository; the material contained in the subordinated clauses is some sort of historical/expository material (p. 205).
> This [i.e. 4.9.2-4.10.3] appears to be a formal speech; we simply do not have enough data processed to be able to venture conclusions about its text-linguistic features (note 88, p. 205).
> The embedded text [i.e. 4.14.2-4.15.4] is Hortatory (a blessing)—it has a historical section (4.14.2-4) giving the reason for the praise (p. 206).
> The embedded text [i.e. 4.17.2] does not admit to any more precise description than 'historical' (p. 206).

These are totally unsystematic, *ad hoc*, and not always accurate solutions. First, qatal is said to be a 'stage-setting device' in 4.3.2 and 4.4.1, while 'historical/expository' in 4.9.3 and 4.10.1, although Dawson's 'Expository Cline' does not reserve any place for it (p. 116). Second, qatal is subordinated in 4.9.3, but clearly not in 4.10.1. Third, I do not know what kind of conclusions about formal speech we are unable to venture, but performative qatal is a well-established feature of it. Fourth, the so-called 'historical section' in 4.14.2-4 comprises the following forms: a simple nominal (verbless) clause, an אֲשֶׁר + qatal clause, and a weyiqtol (not wayyiqtol!) clause – that is, no historical verb form at all. Fifth, section 4.14.2-4.15.4 that is said to be 'Hortatory' comprises (besides the 'historical section' just mentioned): כִּי + qatal, אֲשֶׁר + qatal, and אֲשֶׁר + sim-

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59. The meaning may be that Ruth is seen as a partner in the deal on the same footing with Naomi, and not just an object on sale together with the field; see, however, 4.10.1. On the cleft sentence, see my paper, "Marked Syntactical Structures in Biblical Greek in Comparison with Biblical Hebrew," *LA* 43 (1993) 9-69, esp. §§1; 5.

60. Rightly so Joüon, *Ruth*, 93.

ple nominal (verbless) clause – that is, no distinctive 'Hortatory' verb form. Besides this section it is said to be 'Hortatory' because it contains a 'blessing,' i.e. 4.14.2; however, the last clause is also said to begin the 'historical section' 4.14.2-4. Finally, 4.17.2 does admit a 'more precise description' at least from the point of view of syntax. It is a 'qatal for reporting,'[61] that is, the oral-narrative counterpart of the historical-narrative wayyiqtol in 4.13.5. Putting together the examples found in Ruth, we have the following picture:

	Historical narrative	versus	Oral narrative	
3:15	וַיָּמָד שֵׁשׁ־שְׂעֹרִים	versus	שֵׁשׁ־הַשְּׂעֹרִים הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי	3:17
4:13	וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן	versus	יֻלַּד־בֵּן לְנָעֳמִי	4:17

This opposition is, in my opinion, unmistakable both in terms of morphology (i.e. wayyiqtol versus x-qatal, or qatal), and genre (i.e. historical narrative always in the third person versus oral narrative eventually in the first or second person). Both constructions are main line in their respective genre.

Finally, Ruth 4:13, 16 gives Dawson the opportunity to reconsider, in some way, his position concerning the verb היה – that it signals a break in the text *per se*. One reads an admission of doubt, at least, in the following comment:

> The question arises as to whether היה clauses that translate into English as 'become' clauses have different macro-syntactic significance. I have strong doubts about this, for the real issue seems to have more to do with the semantic domains of the English words 'be' and 'become' than with the *function* of the Hebrew clause-type(s).
>
> Nevertheless, the question presents itself, and the more so here because the semantic content of the passages in which they are found does not admit altogether readily to their identification as episode-boundary features. (…) Further work on this verb will give us more freedom to draw conclusions about its various functions (p. 186; italics in the original).

Clearly, the וַיְהִי forms in 4.13.2 and 4.16.3 are coordinated, main-line verbs – here as everywhere else.

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61. See its description in *Syntax* §§22-23.

Ruth 4:18-22

4.18.1	Now these are the descendants of Perez:	וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת פָּרֶץ
4.18.2	Perez begot Hezron;	פֶּרֶץ הוֹלִיד אֶת־חֶצְרוֹן
4.19.1	Hezron begot Ram;	וְחֶצְרוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־רָם
4.19.2	Ram begot Amminadab;	וְרָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־עַמִּינָדָב
4.20.1	Amminadab begot Nahshon;	וְעַמִּינָדָב הוֹלִיד אֶת־נַחְשׁוֹן
4.20.2	Nahshon begot Salmon;	וְנַחְשׁוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־שַׂלְמָה
4.21.1	Salmon begot Boaz;	וְשַׂלְמוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־בֹּעַז
4.21.2	Boaz begot Obed;	וּבֹעַז הוֹלִיד אֶת־עוֹבֵד
4.21.1	Obed begot Jesse;	וְעֹבֵד הוֹלִיד אֶת־יִשָׁי
4.22.2	and Jesse begot David.	וְיִשַׁי הוֹלִיד אֶת־דָּוִד

Dawson remarks:

> The remaining ten clauses do not require much comment. They conclude the book, as is obvious; they are not of what we have described as the Narrative text-type (p. 186).

Unfortunately, we are not told what they are positively. Note, first, that the presence of waw in 4.18.1 does not make the simple nominal (verbless) clause coordinate to the main-line wayyiqtol of 4:17. In fact, waw has no syntactic significance; without it the clause would have the same function.[62] Second, the text comprises one simple nominal (verbless) clause and nine 'compound nominal clauses' type x-qatal (i.e. with a finite verb in the second place). They are all off-line constructions in historical narrative with the function of providing background information.[63] Third, the information conveyed in the secondary line of

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62. The '*toledot*-formula,' that is a structuring device throughout the book of Genesis, is attested four times with waw (וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת), and six times without; see my paper, "Organizzazione canonica della Bibbia ebraica" §4. Waw does not play any syntactic role in Hebrew, but, of course, in the 'inverted' verb forms it plays a grammatical function. The different functions ascribed to it by grammarians are semantic not syntactic; e.g., in B.K. Waltke - M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, Ind. 1990, 733, waw is given twenty-five different entries.

63 This fact shows that they are all nominal clauses – either simple (verbless) or 'compound.' The distinction of verbal clause with finite verb in the first place, and of nominal clause with a finite verb in the second place ('compound nominal clause') or without a finite verb ('simple nominal clause') is basic in my description of the Hebrew verbal system; see *Syntax* §6.

communication is not less important than that conveyed in the main line. In fact, 4:18-22 represent the reason why the whole story was written (i.e. to trace David's lineage). Therefore, foreground does not mean more important information, nor background less important information. It is the writer who decides what information is to be conveyed in the main and in the secondary levels; and he decides this according to his strategy of communication.

Conclusion

From the point of view of the verb forms used, Ruth is wonderfully compact novel. It begins with a wayyiqtol that links it to the book of Judges. The main narrative line (wayyiqtol) goes on uninterrupted until 2:1. There we find an off-line construction with the function of providing 'antecedent information' at the beginning of a story. It is not, however, a new story but rather a new episode of the same. Another such off-line construction is found in 4:1. It also marks the beginning of a new episode.

   Therefore, the verb forms used mark off three sections in the story: Ch. 1, 2-3, and 4. These are, in H. Weinrich's terms, three 'texts.' In his words,

> A text is a logical (i.e. intelligible and consistent) sequence of linguistic signs, placed between two significant breaks in communication (quoted from *Syntax*, 56).

   Any verb form different from wayyiqtol produces a break in communication. However, a break is only 'significant' when an off-line construction refers to a *following* wayyiqtol as is the case with the two 'antecedent constructions' in Ruth 2:1 and 4:1. On the contrary, an interruption is not significant when an off-line construction refers to a *preceding* wayyiqtol as background to foreground as we found many times in Ruth; see e.g. 1.2.1-3 and 1.4.2-3.

   The first text of Ruth begins then with a main-line wayyiqtol in 1.1.1 and ends with an off-line construction in 1.22.3. The second text begins with an off-line 'antecedent construction' in 2.1.1-2. The main line then starts and goes on without significant breaks. The text ends with a main-line wayyiqtol in 3.18.1 (introducing a direct speech that concludes the episode). The third text similarly begins with an off-line 'antecedent construction' in 4.1.1. The main lines begins with wayyiqtol in 4.1.2 and continues uninterrupted until the concluding off-line constructions in 4:18-22, expressing background.

The narrative framework of the Ruth novel is, therefore, well understandable under the verbal system proposed. Ruth also contains much direct speech that can be suitably described under the same verbal system.

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