The Progressive-Imperfective Path from Standard to Late Biblical Hebrew

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the semantics of the Biblical Hebrew imperfect and participial predicate in Standard (SBH), and Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH) from the perspective of diachronic typology. It focuses on what is called the progressive-imperfective path, a diachronic pathway characterised by a number of interrelated developments, which expand the semantic range of the form while preserving the default aspectual meaning of the prototypical progressive. A detailed description of the pathway, with implications for the diachronic as well as the synchronic analysis of Biblical Hebrew, is presented. It is shown that LBH represents a later stage of the progressive-imperfective path than SBH, primarily due to an increased use of participles with general meanings. The use of the participle with stative lexemes, however, is not diagnostic of linguistic change in Biblical Hebrew. This illustrates the fact that the established typological models have limitations when it comes to explaining certain features of the Biblical Hebrew development.

A   INTRODUCTION

In Biblical Hebrew, both the imperfect and the active participle are used to express specific, progressive meaning, as well as non-specific, general meanings, sometimes even in rather close juxtaposition, as illustrated by examples (1) a.-b.:

(1)   a.

וַיִּשְׁאָלֵהוּ הָאִישׁ לֵאמֹר מַה־תְּבַקֵּשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־אַחַי אָנֹכִי מְבַקֵּשׁ

The man asked him, "What **are** you **seeking** [impf.]?" He said, "I **am seeking** [ptc.] my brothers" (Gen 37:16).

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b.

עַל־כֵּן אֲנִי זֹבֵחַ לַיהוָה כָּל־פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם הַזְּכָרִים וְכָל־בְּכוֹר בָּנַי אֶפְדֶּה

> Therefore I **sacrifice** [ptc.] to the Lord every male offspring that opens the womb, but every firstborn of my sons I **redeem** [impf.] (Exod 13:15).

The two forms are not totally interchangeable, however. The participle generally favours the specific meaning, whereas the imperfect tends to be used for general meanings, although there is some variation between different parts of the HB.[2] It is an old contention that this variation is diachronic, and that the use of the participle in the sense of (1) b. is more typical of books that, due to their content, have been considered to be of later date.[3] Modern scholars describe it as a typical feature of the so-called Late Biblical Hebrew.[4]

Comparative linguistic studies have shown that the gradual takeover of general meanings by new progressive forms and, in many cases, the loss of specific progressive meanings in older imperfectives and presents, is typical not only of Semitic languages, but also across language phyla—so much so, in fact, that it is considered to be a defining feature of a universal diachronic progressive "path(way)."[5] On the basis of such studies, Hebraists have stated that the Biblical Hebrew imperfect and participial predicate represent different evolutionary stages along the same progressive path, the imperfect being the older, more advanced form, and the participle the younger one.[6]

It can readily be seen that the comparative data speak in favour of the traditional diachronic interpretation of the variation in the expression of general

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[2]   On the term "Hebrew Bible," (HB) see footnote 41.

[3]   See Samuel R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Some Other Syntactical Questions* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1892), § 135.2 *Obs*.

[4]   Mats Eskhult, "Traces of Linguistic Development in Biblical Hebrew," *HS* 46 (2005): 363; Jan Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew: A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose* (Jerusalem: Simor, 2012), 394-396; Ohad Cohen, *The Verbal Tense System in Late Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013): 137-140.

[5]   See, for example, Joan L. Bybee, Revere Perkins and William Pagliuca, *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages of the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 14-15; 140-148. An overview of the development in many Semitic languages (but without reference to Biblical Hebrew) is offered in Frithiof Rundgren, *Erneuerung des Verbalaspekts im Semitischen: funktionell-diachronische Studien zur semitischen Verblehre* (Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1963), 64-84.

[6]   T. David Andersen, "The Evolution of the Hebrew Verbal System," *ZAH* 13 (2000): 45-50; John A. Cook, *Time and the Biblical Hebrew Verb: The Expression of Tense, Aspect, and Modality in Biblical Hebrew* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 217-233.

meanings in the HB. The most extensive applications of the diachronic-typological framework, however, have considered Biblical Hebrew as a whole, with the aim of reconstructing the overall development from Pre- to Post-Biblical Hebrew.[7] The implications for the inner-Biblical development have also been noted, but there is still much room for in-depth studies.[8]

This article examines the evidence of a semantic evolution along the progressive path in the Biblical Hebrew imperfect and participle in predicate position, from Standard Biblical Hebrew to late Biblical Hebrew (henceforth SBH and LBH). More precisely, the investigation deals with the particular branch of the progressive path that we may call the "progressive-imperfective (sub)path." This path encompasses the development from specific to general meaning illustrated in example (1), as well as some other developments, which all have in common that they do not change the imperfective aspect of the prototypical progressive. The other defining feature of this path is that all the individual developments can be seen as indicators of an overall tendency of a movement from predications expressing accidentiality to predications expressing essentiality (to be explained in section 2).

B   THE SEMANTICS OF THE PROGRESSIVE-IMPERFECTIVE PATH

Which are the semantic factors at play on the progressive-imperfective path? First of all, there is a common denominator that remains stable throughout, namely the aspectual meaning, which is often termed "imperfective." As we shall see, there are a few cases of durative uses which perhaps are not imperfective in the real sense, but nevertheless may belong to this special branch of the progressive path (see examples [16]-[18]). The aspectual meaning distinguishes this particular branch from other branches within the progressive path, such as the development of futures or historic presents.

As for the unstable factors, a first rule of thumb is that the prototypical progressive refers to events that are *dynamic* and, hence, typically *transitory*. General meanings, as in (1) are, by comparison, more *static* and *permanent*.[9] Lexically stative predicates do typically not occur in progressive constructions

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[7]   Andersen, "Evolution"; Cook, *Time*; Alexander Andrason, "The Panchronic Yiqtol: Functionally Consistent and Cognitively Plausible," *JHScr* 10 (2010); Art. #10, 63 pages; DOI: 10.5508/jhs.2010.v10.a10.

[8]   On Late Biblical Hebrew, see Jan Joosten, "The Distinction between Classical and Late Biblical Hebrew as Reflected in Syntax," *HS* 46 (2005): 334-335; Cook, *Time*, 233.

[9]   On this, see, for example Bernard Comrie, *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 34, 38. Binnick stresses the inadequacy of the concepts. See Robert I. Binnick, *Time and the Verb: a Guide to Tense and Aspect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 285-286.

even if the meaning is specific rather than general, and when they do, the exceptions tend to confirm the rule. Thus, when the English progressive is used with certain stative predicates it implicates dynamicity, as in *You're being naughty*. Other stative verbs may occur in the progressive without any such implications, like postural verbs in English (*sit*, *stand*, etc.). On the other hand, postural verbs denote events that are transitory in the prototypical case. When a postural verb in English refers to a permanent state, the simple present is used instead (*The statue stands in the garden*). Conversely, stative verbs that have no natural connotation of transitoriness, can obtain such a connotation in the progressive (*For the time being, she is living in London*).[10] The same effect occurs in habitual sentences (*At that time I was playing tennis every week*), which can be considered as permanent-state predicates, albeit not in a lexical sense.[11] The use of progressives with permanent-state lexemes to implicate transitoriness is also known from other languages.[12] An evidence for the notional similarity between habitual predicates and permanent-state lexemes is that habitual readings of the predicate can cause lexical reanalysis of the verb. This is evidently the case with the Hebrew verb *yāšab*, which is polysemous between the meaning "to sit" and the more abstract and durative "to live, dwell, stay" (i.e. "be in the habit of sitting [somewhere]").

The principle of transitoriness can be used with a high degree of sophistication in sentences referring to states that, objectively, are "permanent," but from the speakers' subjective point of view are treated as passing experiences. Thus, according to Langacker, the sentence *A statue of George Lakoff is standing in the plaza* either reports on a temporary location of the statue, or else "on someone's immediate (hence temporary) perception of its location."[13] Torres Cacoullos discusses similar examples in Spanish in terms of the "experiential" use of the progressive. In the opinion of Torres Cacoullos, the expres-

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[10]   Comrie, *Aspect*, 37. Leech defines the meaning of the habitual progressive as "habit in existence over a limited period." See Geoffrey N. Leech, *Meaning and the English verb* (2nd ed.; London: Longman, 1987), 32.

[11]   Andrey Shluinsky, "Individual-Level Meanings in the Semantic Domain of Pluractionality," in *New Challenges in Typology: Transcending the Borders and Refining the Distinctions* (ed. Patience Epps and Alexandre Arkhipov; TLSM 217; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009), 181.

[12]   Mario Squartini, *Verbal Periphrases in Romance: Aspect, Actionality, and Grammaticalization*, (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), 111; Karen H. Ebert, "Aspect in Maltese," in *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe* (ed. Östen Dahl; EALT 20-6; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000), 765-766.

[13]   Ronald W. Langacker, *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), 94.

sion of "speaker participation" is a more basic semantic function in the progressive than transitoriness.[14]

Thus, as progressive forms expand their semantic range to include various stative uses, their basic "progressiveness" may become rather attenuated, but as long as there is an older progressive operating in the same field, some semantic contrast is likely to be felt by the competent speaker. This is probably true even in the case of the juxtaposed sentences in (1), even though it is difficult to be certain about the nature of the difference. On a somewhat speculative note, we could try to glean an explanation from the context, which I quote here in translation:

> When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your ancestors, and gives it to you, you shall set apart to the Lord every offspring that opens the womb. Every male firstborn of your livestock shall be the Lord's. But every firstborn donkey you shall redeem with a sheep, or, if you do not redeem it, you shall break its neck. And every firstborn male among your children you shall redeem. When in the future your child asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall answer, 'With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, the house of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from human firstborn to the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice [ptc.] to the Lord every male offspring that opens the womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem [impf.] (Exod 13:11-15).

As we see, the context makes clear that this utterance is directed from a father to a son, who we may picture as witnessing, or just having witnessed, the sacrifice a young animal, and asking out of curiosity (maybe recalling that he has seen the same thing happen before): "What does this mean?" The speaker's use of the participle in the first clause could have something to do with the fact that the recent actual occurrence of the kind of sacrifice that he is talking about is still exerting a vivid impression on the participants at the time of the utterance—a kind of experiential meaning, in Torres Cacoullos' terms.[15]

At any rate, there is an obvious difference between the first clause and the second in that the latter refers to a more remote situation. Moreover, whereas the first clause refers to something that occurs repeatedly, the second clause refers to a one-time event in the life of the family. The father's claim that he redeems "every first-born of my sons" is superficially incongruous, but,

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[14] Rena Torres Cacoullos, *Grammaticization, Synchronic Variation and Language Contact: A Study of Spanish Progressive - Ndo Constructions* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins).

[15] Another habitual partciple with a similar reference to a recently-witnessed event occurs in Exod 16:29.

in effect, he refers to himself as a type of all Israelite men. The purpose is to establish a *principle*: "This is how we (should) do (and I, for one, comply with that norm)." In the participial clause there is more room for ambiguity. The father could be taking the more ethically neutral perspective of his son, intending something to the effect of "That is why (as you can verify) I am in the habit of sacrificing to the Lord every male that opens the womb." It is of some of importance here to recognise the adversative force of the conjunction *wĕ* "and, but" heading the last clause. Psychologically, this clause anticipates any counter-question that may arise concerning the fate of the firstborn sons in the Israelite families.

What I am aiming at with this interpretation is a rather significant distinction within the type of general sentences often lumped together as one "habitual" class, namely the distinction between *actual* and *potential* pluri-occasionality.[16] A habitual sentence in the stricter sense requires that the event denoted by the predicate actually be repeated on a number of occasions, lest it be false. A more typical example than the participial clause in (1) b. would be a sentence like *John plays tennis on Thursdays*. In potential general sentences, however, the repetition, or sometimes even the actual occurrence of the event, is at most a very strong assumption, which can be cancelled in certain contexts.[17] Thus, the sentence *Every firstborn of my sons I redeem* can be truthfully uttered by the father (or all Israel) as soon as he has entered under the obligation to do what he says, even if he has not yet done it. The same goes for general statements about professions as in *Peter sells cars*, or even ability statements as *The professor speaks Chinese*. It may at first appear counter-intuitive that the latter sentence would not entail pluri-occasionality, but if we imagine that the "professor" is a linguistic robot which has just been delivered from the factory, it becomes evident that the pluri-occasionality rests only on presuppositions. Such actuality-cancelling conditions do not exist for genuine habituals.

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[16] "Pluri-occasionality" is a rather self-explanatory term taken from Johanson. In Johanson's definition, "[a] pluri-occasional global event is a set of identical subevents, distributed over several occasions, at clearly separated intervals along the time axis." See Lars Johanson, "Viewpoint Operators in European Languages," in *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe* (ed. Östen Dahl; EALT 20-6; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter), 29.

[17] Bertinetto and Lenci calls this kind of general meaning "gnomic imperfectivity," and distinguishes it from genuine habituality. See Pier Marco Bertinetto and Alessandro Lenci, "Habituality, Pluractionality, and Imperfectivity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect* (ed. Robert I. Binnick; Oxford: Oxford University Press), 871, 876. Manninen makes the same distinction in terms of "habitual predicates" and "property predicates." See Satu Manninen, "A Minimalist Analysis of Stage Level and Individual Level Predicates," in vol. 1 of *The Department of English in Lund: Working Papers in Linguistics*; p. 3, [cited 9 August 2015], (ed. Satu Manninen and Carita Paradis). Online:http://www.sol.lu.se/fileadmin/media/forskning/workingpapers/engelska/vol01/Satu.pdf).

From a diachronic point of view, I assume that potential pluri-occasionality as a rule occurs later than genuine habituality, given that the latter is more similar to the progressive prototype in terms of its actuality.

The modal nuances of ability and obligation which are expressed in the potential general uses of old progressives should not be confused with modal meanings which have more in common with the future use of such forms. Future-related modal meanings are often specific and non-imperfective, but they can also be general. For example, in Biblical Hebrew, the imperfect can have a general directive meaning, as in (2) b. below. I take this meaning as an inference of the future function of the imperfect, closely related to the specific directive imperfect. For an illustration, consider (2) a. (specific) and (2) b (general).

(2)   a.

כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה תְּדַבְּרוּן אֶל־עֵשָׂו בְּמֹצַאֲכֶם אֹתוֹ

You **shall say** [impf.] the same to Esau when you meet him (Gen 32:19).

b.

זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד

Remember the day of the sabbath, and keep it holy. Six days you **shall labor** [impf.] . . . (Exod 20:8-9).

A special subgroup within the general category is made up by the *generic* sentences. Unlike the above-mentioned types, generic sentences have general subject referents, as in (3):

(3)

מִיָּמִים יָמִימָה תֵּלַכְנָה בְּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְתַנּוֹת לְבַת־יִפְתָּח הַגִּלְעָדִי אַרְבַּעַת יָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה

Each year the daughters of Israel **go** [impf.] out for four days to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite (Judg 11:40).

In Hebrew, as well as cross-linguistically, generics represent an endpoint in the progressive-imperfective path, in the sense that this meaning tend to persist when the form ceases to be used with other meanings.[18]

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[18]   Miguel Pérez Fernández, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 124; Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*, 148; Martin Haspelmath, "The Semantic Development of Old Presents: New Futures and Subjunctives Without Grammaticalization," *Diachronica* 15/1 (1998): 49.

Further, there is a distinction to be made between general pluri-occasionals (habituals) and non-general (i.e. specific) pluri-occasionals. Consider the following example:

(4)

<div dir="rtl">

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה צַעֲקַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאָה אֵלָי וְגַם־רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַלַּחַץ אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לֹחֲצִים אֹתָם

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And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians **are oppressing** [ptc.] them (Exod 3:9).

The verb in the relative clause, *lāḥaṣ*, literary means "squeeze, press," and it refers to a global macro-event, consisting of a multitude of individual acts. The clause is not about the Egyptians and their habits, but about a campaign of oppression, which is being launched against the Israelites. This oppression is viewed as an ongoing process, very much as the activity of building in the next example does, although in this case, the overall semantic structure of the predicate is telic, rather than atelic:

(5)

<div dir="rtl">

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ צָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבִנְיָמִן כִּי־בְנֵי הַגּוֹלָה בּוֹנִים הֵיכָל לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

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The enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people from the exile **were building** [ptc.] a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. (Ezra 4:1).

In both (4) and (5), the reference is to a specific, but intermittent process, whose actualisation does not necessarily coincide with the time of speech. Notionally, as well as diachronically, this type of predicate occupies a middle ground between habitual predicates on the one hand, and uni-occasional actual-present predicates on the other.[19]

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[19] To describe this kind of meaning, Torres Cacoullos makes use of the term "continuous," an imperfective category that was postulated by Comrie alongside the progressive and the habitual, and which he somewhat loosely defined as "imperfectivity that is not occasioned by habituality." See Rena Torres Cacoullos, "Grammaticalization Through Inherent Variability," *StLang* 36/1 (2012): 88-89; cf. Comrie, *Aspect*, 25, 33. Johanson describes this middle ground between progressive and habitual in terms of "low focality," also with reference to Comrie (Johanson, "Viewpoint Operators," 86, 88). Note that Johanson's term focality has to do with the degree of actual presentness of the event, and should not be confused with the distinction by Bertinetto, Ebert and De Groot between focalised and non-focalised progressives, which refers to the presence or non-presence of a focalisation point in an utterance (Pier Marco Bertinetto, Karen H. Ebert and Casper de Groot, "The Progressive in Europe," in *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe* (ed. Östen Dahl; EALT 20-6; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000), 527; see section 3).

A final distinction concerns the difference between events that are repeated over a number of separate occasions—pluri-occasional repetition— and events that are repeated during one and the same occasion—uni-occasional repetition, or iterativity. We have already seen examples of pluri-occasionality above. The following example illustrates iterativity:

(6)

וַיַּחֲלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים
וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ

He dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the ground, and its top reached to heaven, and the angels of God **were ascending** [ptc.] and **descending** [ptc.] on it (Gen 28:12).

Iterativity no doubt occurs at an earlier stage of the development than pluri-occasionality does, but the distinction is not likely to be the dividing line between two fully grammaticalised forms on the progressive-imperfective path.[20]

In grammatical studies of Biblical Hebrew, as well as generally, the semantic categories that has been described above are often mixed. Especially terms like "iterative," "frequentative" or other terms indicating some kind of repetition, can function as catch-all for all, or most of the categories, including potential general meaning.[21] The term "habitual" tends to be used in a broad

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[20] In Johanson's terminology, the iterative would be a "high-focal" expression of imperfectivity (Johanson, *Viewpoint Operators*, 86 – Johanson's term for imperfective is "intraterminal"). Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*, 136-137, write that the progressive in some languages is "restricted to activities that are actually ongoing at the moment of speech," mentioning Dutch and Spanish as examples. The Dutch progressive is an optional, not fully grammaticalised form. See Karen Ebert, "Progressive Markers in Germanic Languages," in *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe* (ed. Östen Dahl; EALT 20-6; Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000), 629. It is not correct, however, that the Spanish progressive has this restriction, given the habitual usages attested by Torres Cacoullos, *Ndo Constructions*, 190).

[21] The following descriptions are found in standard grammars: Driver writes that the imperfect often has "a frequentative interpretation." Like the English present tense, it expresses "general truths," events that "may occur at any time," or "actually occur periodically." The participle, he states, is used "[l]ess frequently, particularly in the earlier books, for facts that are liable to recur." In Kautsch's edition of Gesenius' grammar, the imperfect is said to express events that are "repeated," including events that are "customarily repeated." Joüon & Muraoka speak only about "repeated action," whereas Meyer mentions "Wiederholungen und Gewohnheiten" Waltke & O'Connor write that the imperfect can have stative as well as habitual meaning, the latter being defined as the representation of a "repeated general, non-specific situation." In Gibson's syntax, we read that the imperfect "expresses actions which are iterative (frequentative), customary or habitual" (sometimes with a "distributive

sense, which covers the whole spectrum of pluri-occasionality and potential general meanings. For a more accurate understanding of the diachronic development, it is helpful to keep these categories apart. Figure 1 summarises the distinct, but partly entangled and parallel semantic developments that characterise the progressive-imperfective path:[22]
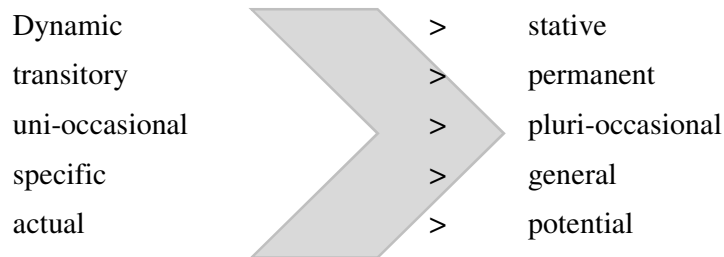
Dynamic	>	stative
transitory	>	permanent
uni-occasional	>	pluri-occasional
specific	>	general
actual	>	potential

Figure 1. Semantic developments on the progressive-imperfective path

The figure can be applied to the progressive form in general terms, as well as individual verbs. The extent to which the model applies to an individual verb, however, will depend on various factors, especially whether it is dynamic or stative. A prototypical progressive, at least, has all the features in the left column, and in the most complete scenario it will incorporate each of the opposite characteristics during the course of its evolution. Thus, in the first step it represents a dynamic, transitory, uni-occasional, specific event which is actually occurring at speech time. In the next phase, it can represent events that are pluri-occasional and/or non-actual at speech time. In phase three, it loses both

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nuance"). Joosten, describing the past uses of the imperfect, distinguishes between "durative" uses with stative verbs (past contexts) and "iterative" with dynamic verbs. Referring to present uses, he states that the form usually presents "processes that come about repeatedly or habitually." As a special case Joosten mentions proverbial expressions in which the form "presents processes that are not merely customary in a certain time or place but that recur universally." Joosten also notes that the participle sometimes refers to situations that are neither "iterative or habitual," nor actually occurring at speech time ("real present"). He calls this non-actual present meaning "the extended present." See Driver, *Treatise*, § 32, 135.2 *Obs*; Emil Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (2nd ed.; transl. A. E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), § 107c, g; Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (2nd ed.; Roma: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2009), § 113c; Rudolf Meyer, *Satslehre* (3rd ed.; vol. 3 of *Hebräische Grammatik*; SG 5765; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), § 100.2b; Bruce K. Waltke and Michael O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 31:3c, e; John C. L. Gibson and Andrew B. Davidson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar: Syntax* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1994), § 63; Joosten, *Verbal System*, 242-243, 276-277, 285-286.

[22]   Note that it is not claimed here that these developments are unique to the progressive-imperfective path or that progressive forms cannot acquire any of this meanings along another path. See, for example, the comment on general directives in connection with example (2) b.

specificity and dynamicity, and is used with general, habitual meaning. From there, it can go on to incorporate permanent and/or potential general plu-ractionality, as well as generic meaning. Of these shifts, the movement from specific to general is the one that best reflects the change that the grammarians have described with regard to the LBH participial predicate.

It is to be noted that the opposition of specific versus general involves both the predicate and the subject. The generalisation of the subject referent (which presupposes the presence of a general predicate event) leads to the generic type of predications. Although generic meaning arises late and persists long, it is very possible that it develops partly in parallel with other general meanings. Several of the cases that I have classified as generic are somewhat atypical and could represent an early, or even pre-generic stage. Thus, in the following example, the class of individuals referred to by the subject is very limited and the time span of the predicated states very short:

(7)

וּבָזֶה הַנַּעֲרָה בָּאָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר יִנָּתֵן לָהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּהּ מִבֵּית
הַנָּשִׁים עַד־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ בָּעֶרֶב הִיא בָאָה וּבַבֹּקֶר הִיא שָׁבָה אֶל־בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים שֵׁנִי
אֶל־יַד שַׁעֲשְׁגַז סְרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַפִּילַגְשִׁים

On these conditions the girl **came** [ptc.] to the king: Anything that she **wanted** [impf.] **was given** [impf.] her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. In the evening she **came** [ptc.] there and in the morning she **returned** [ptc.] to another part of the harem to the care of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, the guard of the concu-bines (Esth 2:13-14).

While none of the various semantic shifts listed above defines the pro-gressive-imperfective evolution *per se*, I suggest here that they can be seen as different facets of an overall movement along a scale from *accidentiality* to *essentiality*. Accordingly, in its prototypical function, the progressive form predicates accidental conditions, from which the subject referent is autonomous to a very high degree. With time, the form is used for conditions that are more and more integrated in the subject referent, until, eventually, the subject-defin-ing function becomes dominant, as in the generics. To this end of the spectrum belongs, of course, also the proverbial generic type, which does not speak as much of the subject referent as of timeless ethical and epistemological princi-ples. Figure 2 illustrates the development in both specific and holistic terms:
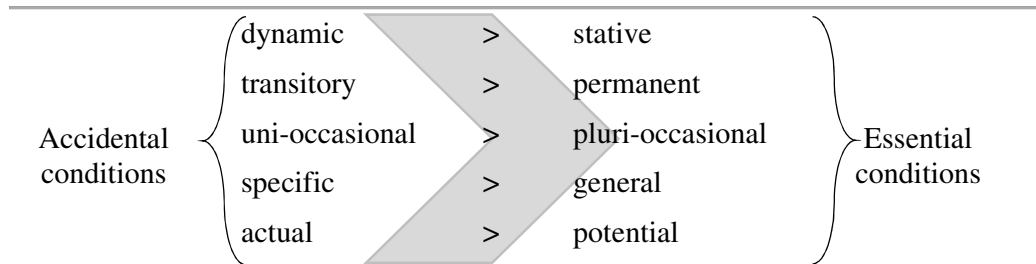
Accidental conditions	dynamic	>	stative	Essential conditions
	transitory	>	permanent	
	uni-occasional	>	pluri-occasional	
	specific	>	general	
	actual	>	potential	

Figure 2. Semantic developments of the progressive-imperfective path holistically interpreted

It is sometimes difficult to pinpoint which of the above semantic factors is at play in a given case. For example, the borderline between general and specific pluri-occasionality, or between actual and potential general meanings, is often very thin, and perhaps not even possible to draw without a preconceived idea of the inherent meaning of the verb. Sometimes, the factors are simply inadequate, in which case it is more fruitful to resort to a holistic assessment of the degree of accidentiality or essentiality of the predication (see examples [1] b. and [13]). Hence, my employment of these concepts at this stage must be considered tentative, and the results approximate as far as the details are concerned.

C   A TYPOLOGY OF PROGRESSIVE SOURCES

The lexico-semantic and morphosyntactic origins of verbal forms affect their semantic profile and development, especially in the early stages. This section deals with the problem of the classification of progressive source types, and its possible consequences for the present investigation.[23]

To begin with the basic facts of the Biblical Hebrew forms, the imperfect is a finite inflected form, marked for person, gender, and number. The participle is, of course, non-finite. As predicate it has no auxiliary or other copula, and the participial clause is thus from a morphosyntactic point of view an asyndetic nominal clause. There is also in Biblical Hebrew a marginal periphrastic construction with the auxiliary *hāyâ* "to be." The periphrasis and the asyndetic participle are considered as two distinct forms in this study, since the former is mainly non-imperfective and non-specific in Biblical Hebrew.

There is a limited number of progressive source types, which can be classified in various ways. Below is a simplified synopsis of the classification made by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca on the basis of their study of seventy-six languages from twenty-five different phyla. In the synopsis, the semantic and syntactic structure of the source types is described in general terms, and, where appropriate, approximated with English glosses, using "VERB" in the place of the verb.

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23   Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*, 15.

Location
Be-verb + pre-/postposition + nominal form of the verb:
"Be in/at/on VERBing"
Postural/residential verb + nominal or finite form of the verb:
"Stand/sit/lie/reside/live VERBing" "Stand/sit etc. (and) VERB"
Movement
Movement verb + nominal (or finite?) form of the verb:[24]
"Walk/come/go VERBing"
Reduplication
Repetition of word or syllable
"VERB-VERB"
Other
E.g. continuative verb + nominal (or finite?) form of the verb "Continue/keep on VERBing"

Table 1. Source types of progressives (adapted from Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca).[25]

Of these types, the first is so much more common than all the others that Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca assume the locative function to be the original meaning of the progressive class as a whole: "[T]he original function of the progressive is to give the location of an agent as in the midst of an activity."[26]

Heine has a different classification, which includes what he calls the "equation schema," consisting of subject, copula, and participle:

Type of proposition:	**Gloss:**
"X is a Y."	He is (an) eat-ing (one).[27]

Table 2. Heine's equation schema.[28]

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[24] It is not clear from Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca's description whether both nominal and finite verbs are used within this type.

[25] Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*, 128-133. See also p. 168 concerning reduplication.

[26] Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*, 133.

[27] The English -ing-form is not very well suited to gloss this function, since it is a conflated gerund/participle. Thus, the English progressive is based on the gerund, and hence, it does not belong to this type (see footnote 35). The formulation in table 2, however, shows the *-ing*-form not as a progressive, but a substantivised participle.

Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca do not count this type of construction as a separate class, but include it in the locative type on the basis that traces of locative lexemes are often hidden in such constructions.[29] This is certainly the case with the Italian progressive, which Heine adduces as an example of his equation schema, since the *be*-verb there is *stare* with the basic meaning "to stand," which indicates that it rather stems from a postural source than an equative source. It is noticeable that Heine's equation schema corresponds exactly with how many Hebraists have reconstructed the original meaning of the Biblical Hebrew participial predicate. However, Heine does not discuss Hebrew data, nor is Hebrew included in Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca's survey.

The rather homogeneous picture of the progressive source types emerging from the work of Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca is complicated by Bertinetto, Ebert, & de Groot, who postulate two major types of progressives with partly differing semantic properties, namely the "focalised" and the "durative" types.[30] Focalised progressives have the classical imperfective function of "expressing the notion of an event viewed as going on at a single point in time."[31] Durative progressives, as the name indicates, "are evaluated relative to a larger interval of time," and differs from the focalised variant, for example, in being compatible with perfective and habitual meaning.[32] The groups are not considered by the authors as two distinct and mutually exclusive variants of the progressive category. Rather, they say, durative progressives represent an earlier stage of not yet fully grammaticalised progressives, which, in the course of time, may become focalised progressives. Bertinetto, Ebert and De Groot find evidence for such a development in the Italian *stare* + gerund-progressive, and in support for their hypothesis they also cite the Old English construction *be* + participle (*be* VERB-*ende*) as well as the Latin corresponding construction.[33] Thus, they hypothesise that there is a "pre-progressive" diachronic path, which encompasses all the subtypes within the locative progressive source types postulated by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca for an illustration, I quote here their example of a non-focalised and durative Latin periphrasis:

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[28] Adapted from Bernd Heine, "Grammaticalization as Explanatory Parameter," in *Perspectives on Grammaticalization* (ed. William Pagliuca; Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1994), 269.

[29] Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*, 128.

[30] Pier Marco Bertinetto, Karen H. Ebert and Casper de Groot, "Progressive", 527. They also include as a third category the "absentive," but this can be considered as a special case.

[31] Bertinetto, Ebert and De Groot, "Progressive," 527.

[32] Bertinetto, Ebert and De Groot, "Progressive," 527, 533. See examples (16)-(18) below.

[33] Bertinetto, Ebert and De Groot, "Progressive," 528-531.

(8)

	[. . .]	ubi	erat	Johannis	prius	baptizans	[. . .]
		where	was	John		before	baptizing

"[. . .] where John had previously been baptizing people [. . .]" Latin (Vulgata, John 10:40).

However, the evidence for this reconstruction is far from straightforward. Firstly, although the development of the Italian *stare* + gerund from a durative to a focalised progressive can be proven beyond doubt, it is questionable to posit the Latin participial periphrasis as a forerunner to it, given the semantic and syntactic differences between the two constructions. Similarly, the Modern English progressive cannot readily be identified with the Old English participial periphrasis, as Bertinetto, Ebert and De Groot suggest.[34] Secondly, it has been argued by Killie that the use of the Old English participial periphrasis does not comply with Bertinetto, Ebert and De Groot's reconstruction of the pre-progressive path. The same holds for the Greek participial periphrasis, which probably served as the model for the corresponding Latin form.[35] In fact, none of these forms can be said to have developed into a progressive.[36] Thirdly, there is much evidence from Germanic languages of prepositional periphrastic progressives that are highly focalised even though they are at a very early stage in their process of grammaticalisation.[37] In sum, there are strong indications that a durative stage may precede a focalised progressive stage in postural progressive, but not in other progressive source types. It seems crucial here to distinguish the postural progressive source type from

[34]   It is true that the English progressive construction in some sense is a mixture of a participial and gerundial periphrasis; on the one hand, the English participle changed its ending -*ende* and became formally identical with the gerund ending in -*ing*; on the other, the preposition that was used in the gerundial progressive was increasingly omitted (e.g. *He is on hunting* became *He is hunting*). But the fact that the resulting *be VERBing*-periphrasis was largely restricted to focalised progressive uses must have resulted from the influence of the gerundial construction. See Kristin Killie, "The Development of the English BE + V-ende/V-ing Periphrasis: from Emphatic to Progressive Marker," *ELL* 18/3 (2014): 380; Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca, *Evolution of Grammar*, 135-136).

[35]   Klaas Bentein, "Prog Imperfective Drift in Ancient Greek? Reconsidering *Eimi* 'Be' with Present Participle," *TPS* 111/1 (2013): 104; Killie, "Development," 373.

[36]   For the Old English periphrasis, see the previous footnote; for the Greek periphrasis, see Bentein, "Prog Imperfective Drift," 97-100.

[37]   Features distinguishing the Germanic prepositional progressive from the postural, durative type are, for example, that they are good with momentaneous verbs, but not with stative ones, and neither with delimiting adverbs. See Ebert, "Progressive Markers," 614, 625. Originally, the English prepositional-gerundial progressive, too, was "clearly focalized" (Killie, "Development," 380).

constructions with a genuinely copulative auxiliary. The fact that the postural auxiliary of a progressive may become more and more copula-like over time is not relevant for the classification of the source construction, in which the auxiliary is not a copula but a main verb with a gerundial (or other) complement.

Now, the Biblical Hebrew participial predicate can, from a syntactic point of view, be regarded as an asyndetic variant of the copulative periphrasis found in Greek and Old English. Semantically, however, only the Hebrew construction is a genuinely progressive form. This means that cross-linguistic typology gives insufficient guidance as to what particular behaviours to expect of it. Among the source types discussed in this section, Heine's equative participial construction is the one that resembles the Hebrew construction the most, but the evidence for this type is disputed, and it is not certain that the progressive participle in Biblical Hebrew belongs to it. As for the Greek periphrasis, most of the occurrences of progressive meaning that are attested for it can probably be derived from an attributive participial construction, and this could be the case in Biblical Hebrew, too.[38] This issue may be the subject of another study, but already at this point, we can assume that the Biblical Hebrew progressive may not in every detail follow the same track as other progressive types. This caveat applies, for example, in the case of the participle's interaction with stative lexemes, and in the case of the non-focalised, durative uses (to be discussed in the next section).

As far as the Biblical Hebrew imperfect is concerned, its origins are uncertain. It has been suggested that its pre-Biblical ending in -*u* was originally a locative suffix added to a nominal form of the verb, which would mean that the form belongs to the locative pre-/postpositional type.[39] Another possibility which has been raised is that the form is genetically related to the Akkadian *iparras*, and that the gemination of the second radical shows that it belongs to the reduplicated source type.[40] This question, too, must be left unsolved here. Anyhow, given that the imperfective is further advanced on the progressive path than the participle, it can be assumed that the impact of its source is less visible at the stage(s) of Biblical Hebrew.

D   THE DATA

The data for this investigation was gathered from a sample of texts representing what are widely held to be two distinct diachronic forms of Biblical Hebrew, namely Standard, and Late Biblical Hebrew (henceforth abbreviated SBH and LBH.[41] This periodisation has been criticised for relying on unfounded

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[38]   Bentein, "Prog Imperfective Drift," 91.
[39]   Cook, *Time*, 220.
[40]   Andrason, "Panchronic Yiqtol," 24-25.
[41]   Commonly, SBH and LBH are considered to be the second and third stages in a tripartite periodisation of Biblical Hebrew, with Archaic Biblical Hebrew as the oldest

presuppositions of the absolute chronology of the texts, but alternative dia-chronic models of the language represented in this collection of scriptures, which undoubtedly stem from a period of several hundred years, are lacking. Moreover, even staunch critics of the standard model, as Young and Rezetko, seem to consider that SBH contains a higher degree of old features than LBH, even though they stress that this fact has no import for the dating of the texts, but rather reflects conscious stylistic choices by the scribes who produced them.[42] The question of the absolute dates of the texts is not directly relevant to this study, where the assessment of the diachronic stage of the language is based on linguistic typology, and not on historical issues. It has to be kept in mind, however, that the overall assessment of the corpora that is made here does not necessarily describe the diachronic status of every text within them. Moreover, the question of how the relative chronology relates to absolute chro-nology is not addressed.

The LBH- and SBH-corpora used for this study consists of mainly nar-rative prose. The core LBH texts are included in their entirety, except for parts of Chronicles that are common with texts in Samuel, Kings, and the Psalms.[43] The SBH corpus contains a sample of texts from Genesis through 2 Kings, roughly comparable to the LBH texts in terms of genre. The included samples are the following:

SBH: Gen 15-49:1; Exod 1-14, 16-19; Judg 1 - 1 Sam 13 (except the poems in Judg 5 and 1 Sam 2); 1 Kgs 17 - 2 Kgs 8.

LBH: Esther; Daniel (Hebrew parts); Ezra (Hebrew parts); Nehemiah; 1-2 Chronicles (except synoptic parts).

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form. See Eduard Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Mag-nes 1982), § 17; Ángel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (trans. John Elwolde; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 52. Other terms are also used; see the overview in Ian Young, "Introduction: The Origin of the Problem," in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (ed. Ian Young; JSOTSup 369 London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2003), 3-4. The text consulted is the MT of *Biblica Hebraica*, as reproduced in the computer software Biblia Hebraica with Westminster Hebrew Morphology 4, provided by Accordance Bible Software. Accordingly, when I speak of the "Hebrew Bible" (HB) in this article, it refers to this particular text, rather than the whole tradition of textual witnesses.

[42]   Hence, they call SBH more "conservative" than LBH. See Robert Rezetko and Ian Young, *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 400-401).

[43]   Ralph W. Klein, "A Comparison of 1 Chronicles with Its Vorlage and a Correla-tion with Vannutelli" n.p. [cited 9 August 2015]. Online: http://fontes.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/synopsis.htm; Ralph W. Klein, "A Compari-son of 2 Chronicles with Its Vorlage and a Correlation with Vannutelli," n.p. [cited 9 August 2015]. Online: http://fontes.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/synopsis.htm.

The participial forms under consideration are the *qal* active participle and the participles of the stem forms *piʿel*, *hipʿil*, and *hitpaʿel*, which all typically have progressive-imperfective meaning when they appear in predicate position. Excluded are the *nipʿal* participle, the *qal* passive and the participles of the passive stemforms *puʿal* and *hopʿal*.[44] The adjectival so-called participles of the *qātēl*-type, are not considered. Only non-periphrastic, syntactic predicates are included. However, an exception was made for the negated participle, which syntactically is a conjunct participle, but functionally is the equivalent of a predicate (e.g. *ʾênô kōtēb* lit. "there is none of him writing" has the function of "he is not writing").

E   FROM SBH TO LBH

The data confirm the established view that the participle is used with general meaning to a greater extent in LBH as compared to SBH. At the outset of the investigation, I rated permanent-state lexemes (e.g. *to live*) and transitory-state lexemes with a contextually induced permanent meaning as equivalent to predicates with general meaning (see section 2).[45] As can be seen in table 3, the frequency with which these meanings occur differs significantly between the two forms, and the balance is reversed as one moves from the SBH- to the LBH-corpus. The participial periphrasis is not included in the count, since it is mainly aoristic and/or general, and, hence, does probably not stem from a progressive source.

SBH		LBH	
imperfect	*participle*	*Imperfect*	*participle*
67 % (93)	33 % (46)	29 % (29)	71 % (70)

Table 3. Distribution of general meaning and permanent-state verbs in the progressive-imperfective path in the SBH- and LBH-corpora.

The overall tendency as shown by the table is representative for all books except for Daniel and Ezra in the LBH-corpus. In the book of Daniel, I found no relevant token, and in Ezra, there are only two, one imperfect and one participle. In the SBH-corpus, a section of the Joseph narrative in Gen 39 exhibits an exceptionally high number of general participial predicates (mainly consist-

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[44]   *Puʿal* and *hopʿal* are actually passive participles of *piʿel* and *hipʿil*, and closer to resultative meaning than progressive (Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, § 55, 121o. The participle of *nipʿal* is aspectually ambiguous. It may, as Joüon and Muraoka write, "underscore [. . .] an action in process" (ibid., § 121q), but it may express resultative meaning as well (see e.g. Gen 32;22; 41:32; 1 Kgs 22;17).

[45]   The following lexemes found in the corpus were included in this category: *ʾāhēb* "to love," *hāyâ* "to be," *yādaʿ* "to know," *yāšab* "to live," *māšal* "to rule," *niqrāʾ* "to be called, named," *šāqat* "be quiet, undisturbed," *śārar* "to be prince, rule," *šērēt* "to serve."

ing of the same verbs repeated in a formulaic way throughout the chapter) but in the Joseph story as a whole, the imperfect is preferred for general meaning.

The figures conceal some uses of the participle that are probably not diagnostic for the diachronic development. Thus, there is a group of participles that could be taken as nouns: *rōʿâ* "to shepherd; shepherdess" (Gen 29:9), *mōšēl* "to rule; rulers" (Gen 45:26; see also Judg 14:4; 15:11; Neh 9:37; 1 Chr 29:12; 2 Chr 20:6), *šōpěṭâ* "to judge; judge" (Judg 4:4); *měšārēt* "to serve; servant" (1 Sam 2:18; 3:1; see also 2 Chr 13:10), and *šōměrîm* "to guard; guards" (Neh 12:25).[46] A handful more examples can be excluded on the ground that they are adjectival: *měšakkālet* "unfruitful" (2 Kgs 2:19); *šōweh* "appropriate, seemly" (Esth 3:8; 5:13; 7:4); *šōnôt* "different" (Esth 3:8); *šōqeṭet* "quiet" (1 Chr 4:40); maybe also *mēbîn* "knowledgeable, understanding, talented" (1 Chr 15:22). Furthermore, permanent-state lexemes and transitory-state lexemes with context-induced permanent meaning turned out not be a diagnostic feature (see below). Most notable in this group is *yāšab* "to live," which occurs eleven times in the SBH-corpus and twice in the LBH-corpus (the verb is never used with this meaning in the imperfect, except in the future). All in all, the number of participial predicates that I have considered non-diagnostic amount to nineteen in the SBH-corpus and twenty in the LBH-corpus.

I found no indications of a shift in the use of participles with transitory-state lexemes. In SBH as well as LBH, the participle is good with perception verbs, postural and other stative locative verbs, verbs of transitory physical and mental conditions, *etcetera*. The imperfect, as a rule, is avoided for referring to specific transitory events regardless of the degree of dynamicity of the verb.

As mentioned above, the participle is regularly used with the permanent-state verb *to live* (*yāšab*) in the SBH-corpus ([9] a.), and occurs with *to know* (*yādaʿ*; [9] b.), and *to love* (*ʾāhēb* [9] c.):[47]

(9)   a.

וַיָּקָם אַחֲרֵי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל תּוֹלָע בֶּן־פּוּאָה בֶּן־דּוֹדוֹ אִישׁ יִשָּׂשכָר
וְהוּא־יֹשֵׁב בְּשָׁמִיר בְּהַר אֶפְרָיִם

> After Abimelek, Tola, son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, rose to save Israel. He **lived** [ptc.] in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim (Judg 10:1).

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[46]   As or the participle of the verb *rāʿâ* there is normally no ambiguity. The participle in 2 Chr 13:10 may well be attributive rather than predicative.

[47]   To this group belongs also *ʿōmēd lipnê* in Judg 20:28 (see footnote 57 below). In the LBH-corpus, the participle of *yādaʿ* occurs as predicate in Esth 4:11, 14; 2 Chr 2:7. Example (9) c. contains both *yādaʿ* and *yāšab* as participles, but not in predicate position; hence, they are not part of the investigation.

b.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲדֹנִי יֹדֵעַ כִּי־הַיְלָדִים רַכִּים וְהַצֹּאן וְהַבָּקָר עָלוֹת עָלָי וּדְפָקוּם יוֹם אֶחָד וָמֵתוּ כָּל־הַצֹּאן

He said to him: "My lord **knows** [ptc.] that the children are frail and that I have to take care of the sheep and the cattle, which are nursing; and if they are overdriven just one day, all the sheep will die (Gen 33:13).

c.

וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob became a mild man, who stayed at home among the tents. Isaac loved Esau, for he had a taste for wild game, but Rebekah **loved** [ptc.] Jacob (Gen 25:28).

In Biblical Hebrew, many of the stative verbs occur more or less synonymously in the participle and in the perfect. It has been suggested by Dobbs-Allsopp that for some of them, including *to love* and to *know* (but not *to live*) the participle has the effect of adding a notion of dynamicity, just as the English progressive does with some verbs.[48] More research is needed to confirm this, in my opinion. Typologically, the Biblical Hebrew case most of all resembles how perfect/resultative and progressive/imperfective forms behave in many other languages, including English. Thus, the closest English parallel to the difference between perfect and participial statives in Biblical Hebrew would be oppositions like *He has understood/He understands*, *He has hidden/He is hiding, etcetera*.[49]

For the present study, no comparison with the perfects has been done, and the corpora contain few examples of these verbs in the participle. As far as the participle *yōdēaʿ* in example (9) b. is concerned, it refers to a quite situation-specific knowledge, and there could be something transitory about it (if

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[48]   Frederick W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Biblical Hebrew Statives and Situation Aspect," *JSS* 45 (2000): 38-39. Dobbs-Allsopp also mentions, *rāʾâ* "see" and *šāmaʿ* "hear," but these verbs are not synonymous in the perfect and the participle in Biblical Hebrew. As for *āyab* "hate," there are insufficient data upon which to compare the participle and the perfect.

[49]   See Johanson on the so-called *initiotransformative* verbs. See Lars Johanson, "The Aspectually Neutral Situation Type," in *Aktionsart and Aspectotemporality in non-European Languages* (ed. Karen H. Ebert and Fernando Zúñiga; Zürich: Universität Zürich, 2001), 9; also Karen H. Ebert, "Ambiguous Perfect-Progressive Forms Across Languages," in vol. 2 of *Temporal Reference, Aspect and Actionality* (2 vols; ed. Pier Marco Bertinetto; Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1995).

not dynamic). There is no impression of transitoriness from what is told about Rebekah's love in (9) c., however, unless we must suppose that the participle *per se* enforces that reading. As for the participle *yōšēb*, there is no doubt that it expresses permanence in (9) a. and several other instances.[50] Moreover, the participle can in the SBH-corpus be used with transitory lexemes referring to permanent states, as in the example (10) below (the verb *ʿālâ* "go up" is a stative verb in this context). There is no reason to believe that the participle is intended to convey the transitoriness of the observer's experience (cf. section 2):[51]

(10)

וַיָּחֵלּוּ לְהַכּוֹת מֵהָעָם חֲלָלִים כְּפַעַם בְּפַעַם בַּמְסִלּוֹת אֲשֶׁר אַחַת עֹלָה בֵית־אֵל וְאַחַת גִּבְעָתָה

They began to slay the people, as before, along the main roads, one of which **goes up** [ptc.] to Bethel and the other to Gibeah (Judg 20:31).

The participle is not good with the two stative lexemes: *yākōl* "to be able" and *hāyâ* "to be." With these verbs, the imperfect must be used, even though the verb *hāyâ* is very rare also with the imperfect in non-future uses.[52]

(11)   a.

הַבֶּט־נָא הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם־תּוּכַל לִסְפֹּר אֹתָם

Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you **are able** [impf.] to count them (Gen 15:5).

b.

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

I **am** [impf.] who I **am** [impf.] (Exod 3:14).

As regards general sentences, the participle in the SBH-corpus more often than not represents the states as transitory, leaving the field of permanent generalities for the imperfect. Compare, for example (12) a. and (12) b.

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[50]   See also Gen 24:3; 24:37; Judg 4:2; 6:10; 2 Kgs 4:13, and possibly 2 Kgs 6:1. Transitory meaning can be inferred in Gen 24:62; 1 Sam 13:16; 1 Kgs 17:19, and 2 Kgs 2:18. The LBH-occurrences of this participle are found in Neh 11:21; 1 Chr 5:8.
[51]   See also Exod 8:18. For similar examples in the LBH-corpus, see Neh 13:24 (*makkîrîm*); 2 Chr 3:12, 13 (x2).
[52]   In the entire text of the HB, *yākōl* never occurs as a participle. *Hāyâ* is found once in the function of an immediate future (Exod 9:3). For other examples of *hāyâ* with the imperfect in our corpora, see Gen 41:27 (could be future); Exod 3:15; 1 Chr 9:24.

(12)   a.

וְיוֹסֵף הוּרַד מִצְרָיְמָה וַיִּקְנֵהוּ פּוֹטִיפַר סְרִיס פַּרְעֹה שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים אִישׁ מִצְרִי מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִדֻהוּ שָׁמָּה וַיְהִי יְהוָה אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי וַיַּרְא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי יְהוָה אִתּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה יְהוָה מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדוֹ

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian man, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him there. The Lord was with Joseph so that he became successful, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that everything that he **did** [ptc.], the Lord **made successful** [ptc.] (Gen 39:1-3).

    b.

לָמָּה שִׁלַּמְתֶּם רָעָה תַּחַת טוֹבָה הֲלוֹא זֶה אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁתֶּה אֲדֹנִי בּוֹ וְהוּא נַחֵשׁ יְנַחֵשׁ בּוֹ הֲרֵעֹתֶם אֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם

Why have you repaid evil for good? Is it not this [cup] that my master **drinks** [IPF] from and also **uses for divination** [IPF]? You have done a wicked thing in doing this (Gen 44:5).

The participial predicates in (12) a. reports Josephs success during a certain limited phase of his adventures in Egypt, as it was being witnessed by Potiphar.[53] By contrast, in the example with the imperfect clauses in (12) b., there is no hint of a larger temporal frame against which Joseph's habits can be viewed as transitory.

However, as we already have seen (see [1] b.), the participle may also be used in contexts suggesting that the situation is permanent. Further investigations will have to be undertaken to explain the issue more fully. As illustrated by our first example, passages with juxtaposition of imperfect and participial clauses will be particularly interesting for the study of the more subtle nuances that distinguish the two forms. A key to the understanding of the problem may be the overall assessment of the degree of accidentiality and essentiality in the predication. An additional example is given below just as an illustration of the complexity of the individual factors involved. In this passage, the prophet Elijah has been instructed by God to go and hide himself in a *wadi*, where he shall drink from the brook and be supplied with food by the ravens, and the narrative then describes how this happens. Elijah's stay in the hiding place is presented as very transitory, yet the narrator uses the imperfect to refer to his drinking-activities during this period. This is contrasted with the bringing of food, per-

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53   The example resembles (4), which I classified as non-habitual, but in this case, the point is to report a regularity rather than an ongoing process. It is worth repeating, however, that the borderlines are not clear-cut.

formed by the ravens, which is described by means of a participle. Both predi-cates represent regularities of limited duration, but the choice of forms here may reflect something of the fact that the ravens' regular activity at the place was a more accidental thing to them than Elijah's was to him. The imperfect-clause reveals more about the nature of the subject referent. Thus:

(13)

וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ כִּדְבַר יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּנַחַל כְּרִית אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן וְהָעֹרְבִים מְבִיאִים לוֹ לֶחֶם וּבָשָׂר בַּבֹּקֶר וְלֶחֶם וּבָשָׂר בָּעֶרֶב וּמִן־הַנַּחַל יִשְׁתֶּה וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים וַיִּיבַשׁ הַנָּחַל כִּי לֹא־הָיָה גֶשֶׁם בָּאָרֶץ

> So he went and did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens **brought** [ptc.] him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he **drank** [impf.] from the brook. Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land (1 Kgs 17:6).

While admitting that transitoriness may be an insufficient parameter in many cases, the participial predicate seems on the whole to be more restricted to contexts that make the situation appear as transitory in the SBH-corpus than in the LBH-corpus, with the possible exception of uni-occasional permanent states. With regard to the pluri-occasional category as a whole, most of the pro-posedly transitory SBH-examples represent the continuum from specific to general pluri-occasionality.[54] There are also some cases that seem to refer to permanent pluri-occasional states, but they stay within the field of actual pluri-occasionality.[55] It is hard to find any example of participial predicates with potential general meaning (but see the comments on example [1] b. above).[56]

As one turns to the LBH-corpus, it is still possible to detect the same basic meaning contrast between the two forms. The imperfect gravitates heavily towards the essential pole of the scale (fig. 2), and has only stative/general meanings. Possible instances of transitory habitual meaning are rare.[57] The

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[54] With the exception of the group of possibly nominal participles, the tokens within this spectrum are found in Gen 15:2; 21:22; 31:5, 12; 39:3 (x2), 6, 23 (x3); 47:14; Exod 3:9; 5:8 (x2), 13, 16, 17; 6:5; Judg 4:5; 18:1, 3, 1 Sam 2:23, 24; 1 Sam 12:2; 3:13; 1 Kgs 17:6.

[55] To this group belong the participles in Gen 21:22; Exod 13:16; 16:29; 18:16, 17; 2 Kgs 6:22.

[56] See, however, the comments on example (1) b. above. A possible exception could be Judg 20:28, where the participle refers to a professional duty, but it is not likely that the expression *ʿāmad lipnê* should be read in the literal sense of "stand before," since it appears to be a technical term meaning roughly "be in someone's service, be employed." If so, the verb could here be considered a permanent-state lexeme.

[57] See Esth 3:2 (x2); Neh 9:12 (possibly a future in the past); 1 Chr 12:23; 2 Chr 25:14 (x2).

participle is much more dominant across a wider range of the imperfective field in LBH than in SBH, but the form is more obligatory the closer one gets to the prototypical progressive meaning. In the following LBH-passage, the two forms appear in juxtaposition, apparently expressing a distinction in terms of permanence. The general event represented by the imperfect appears as a timeless fact, whereas the event of the participial clause is temporally delimited:

(14)

נִבְנֶה עִמָּכֶם כִּי כָכֶם נִדְרוֹשׁ לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם וְלֹו[58] אֲנַחְנוּ זֹבְחִים מִימֵי אֵסַר חַדֹּן מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר הַמַּעֲלֶה אֹתָנוּ פֹּה

Let us build with you, for, like you, we **seek** [impf.] your God, and we **have been sacrificing** [ptc.] to him since the days of King Esarhaddon of Assyria, who brought us here (Ezra 4:2).

On the other hand, one does find the participle in more advanced, essential-type predications in the LBH-corpus. This involves permanent pluri-occasional readings, but also, to some degree, potential pluri-occasionals and generics.[59] Thus the (previously cited) example (15) a. is generic and also contains a strong deontic modal connotation of permission/obligation, whereas (15) b. describes the (permanent) professional duties of the subject referent.

(15)   a.

וּבָזֶה הַנַּעֲרָה בָּאָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר יִנָּתֵן לָהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּהּ מִבֵּית הַנָּשִׁים עַד־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ בָּעֶרֶב הִיא בָאָה וּבַבֹּקֶר הִיא שָׁבָה אֶל־בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים שֵׁנִי אֶל־יַד שַׁעֲשְׁגַז סְרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַפִּילַגְשִׁים

On these conditions the girl **came** [ptc.] to the king: Anything that she wanted [impf.] was given [impf.] her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. In the evening she **came** [ptc.] there and in the morning she **returned** [ptc.] to another part of the harem to the care of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, the guard of the concubines (Esth 2:13-14).

b.

וַאֲנַחְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְלֹא עֲזַבְנֻהוּ וְכֹהֲנִים מְשָׁרְתִים לַיהוָה בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן וְהַלְוִיִּם בַּמְּלָאכֶת וּמַקְטִרִים לַיהוָה עֹלוֹת בַּבֹּקֶר־בַּבֹּקֶר וּבָעֶרֶב־בָּעֶרֶב

As for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not abandoned him. The priests who serve the Lord are sons of Aaron, and the Levites assist

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58   According to the *qere* reading of the MT text.
59   Examples within this group (besides the cited examples) are found in Esth 3:8 (ʿōśîm); 9:19; 10:3 (x2); Ezra 4:2; Neh 9:6 (mištaḥăwîm); 13:24 (mĕdabbēr); 1 Chr 6:34; 29:17; 2 Chr 13:11 (x2); 16:9; 18:17; 19:6 (?); 24:20; 28:23.

them. They **present burnt offerings and fragrant incense** [ptc.] to the Lord every morning and evening (2 Chr 13:10-11).[60]

On reflection, it must be assumed that these predications involve states of actual pluri-occasionality. But the immediate context in both examples strongly suggests a potential reading, in the sense that they report not just what the subject referents did/do, but what they were/are *expected* to do.

In both corpora there are examples of clauses lacking a focalisation point, where the verb seems to be chosen mainly to convey a sense of duration. An instance of this usage has already been cited in example (13) above. The function is particularly noticeable in participial clauses. It may occur, for example, in combination with a periphrastic participle with an ingressive-durative meaning.[61] The ingressive periphrasis typically has the auxiliary in the imperfect consecutive, marking the onset of the state as an independent item in a successive chain of events. In the example below, however, the auxiliary is in the perfect, and the function of the clause is not to advance the course of events, but to expound on the content of the previous clause. The asyndetic participial clauses add further details to this elaborative structure, and, hence, they can also be considered as ingressive, but the sense of ingressiveness is not very palpable, because of their more indirect connection with the narrative mainline.[62]

(16)

וַיִּתֵּן שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף אֵת כָּל־הָאֲסִירִם אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֹּהַר וְאֵת כָּל־
אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה אֵין שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר רֹאֶה אֶת־כָּל־מְאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ

The chief jailer committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison, and whatever **was done** [lit. "[they] did" ptc.] there, he became the one who **did** [aux. + ptc.] it. The chief jailer **paid no heed** [ptc.] to anything that was in Joseph's care (Gen 39:22-23).

The aspectual meaning is even more indeterminate in the next example, where the participle refers to an isolated past state of affairs:

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[60]   Concerning the first participle here, see footnote 47.
[61]   Cf. Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, § 121g.
[62]   A more extreme example is the long paragraph of participial clauses in the fourth chapter of Nehemiah (Neh 4:11-17). The paragraph starts with a periphrastic clause which is markedly ingressive, but as the paragraph evolves it becomes more independent from the narrative mainline, and can be read as an embedded piece of expository discourse.

(17)

וְאֶת־מַתְכֹּנֶת הַלְּבֵנִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם עֹשִׂים תְּמוֹל שִׁלְשֹׁם תָּשִׂימוּ עֲלֵיהֶם

> You shall require them to make the same quantity of bricks as they **made** [ptc.] previously (Exod 5:8).

The durative function also occurs with specific meaning. The following examples contains narrative, aoristic-durative participles, the second of them with a time-delimiting adverb:

(18)   a.

וַתֵּלֶךְ מֵאִתּוֹ וַתִּסְגֹּר הַדֶּלֶת בַּעֲדָהּ וּבְעַד בָּנֶיהָ הֵם מַגִּשִׁים אֵלֶיהָ וְהִיא מוֹצָקֶת[63]
וַיְהִי כִּמְלֹאת הַכֵּלִים וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל־בְּנָהּ הַגִּישָׁה אֵלַי עוֹד כֶּלִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אֵין עוֹד
כֶּלִי וַיַּעֲמֹד הַשָּׁמֶן

> She left him and shut the door behind her and her children. They **brought** [ptc.] jars to her, and she **kept pouring** [ptc.]. When the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another jar." But he said to her, "There is no more jar." Then the oil stopped flowing (2 Kgs 4:4-6).

b.

וַיָּקוּמוּ עַל־עָמְדָם וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּסֵפֶר תּוֹרַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם רְבִעִית הַיּוֹם וּרְבִעִית
מִתְוַדִּים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם

> They stood up in their place and read from the book of the law of the Lord their God for a fourth part of the day, and for another fourth they **confessed** [ptc.] and **worshiped** [ptc.] the Lord their God (Neh 9:3).

Since the non-focalised participles can be taken as non-imperfective, they could, by definition, be excluded in an investigation of the progressive-imperfective path, even when they have general meaning. However, their connotation of durativity is most probably implicated by the basic aspectual meaning of the form. The prototypical function of the progressive is to represent an event as ongoing and unfinished relative to a focal time, which can be the time of speech or some time in the text (see section 3). When the context of the clause does not supply such a time, the default progressive representation of the event as ongoing will still be evoked by the form, conveying an impression of duration, which is absent in ordinary past (or future) forms. This, I submit, will be the case with any progressive construction employed in non-prototypical contexts, although the impression will be particularly accentuated in progressive constructions whose auxiliaries was originally a main verb with durative *Aktionsart*.

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[63]   According to the *qere* reading of the MT.

The durative participles are more frequent in the LBH-corpus than in the SBH-corpus.[64] The question of whether this increase somehow can be related to the universal pathway-theory, or if it has to do with other factors, such as style, cannot be answered in this article, but there is no reason to believe that it is a remainder from a pre-progressive stage.

F   CONCLUSIONS

In this article, the progressive-imperfective path have been described as an interwoven series of semantic developments which, combined, constitute an overall shift from accidentality to essentiality. The model can be used to describe the diachronic development as well as to shed light on the different nuances of seemingly synonymous uses of the imperfect and the participles in a synchronic perspective.

The main result of the investigation is the conclusion that texts from the LBH-corpus clearly represent a more advanced stage of the progressive-imperfective diachronic path than the SBH texts, with the exception of Ezra and Daniel, which lack sufficient data. The difference is first and foremost seen in the overall increase of participial predicates with general meaning, but to some extent there is also, among such predicates, a movement towards expressing more essential-like generalities, in terms of permanence, potentiality and genericity.

Already at the SBH-stage, the participle interacts quite freely with stative lexemes without any progressive-like connotations, and it is even used regularly to refer to permanent states. From a typological perspective, these uses seem somewhat out of phase with the fact that the form is used much more restrictively with general meanings. The situation may be one of a rather advanced type of progressive, but it may also be the case that the acceptability of stative lexemes has to do with factors that are special to the source from which the construction has developed.

While non-focalised durative meanings are especially characteristic of pre-progressive stages in other progressive types, this is not the case with the participial predicate of Biblical Hebrew, which is more frequent in this function in LBH than in SBH.

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[64]   In the SBH-corpus, I identified 13 cases of non-focalised durative meaning (specific and general) out of the total number of 357 participial clauses (Gen 39:23 [x3]; 42:35; 47:14; Exod 5:8; Judg 20:42; 1 Sam 6:12; 1 Kgs 17:6; 22:20, 44; 2 Kgs 4:5; 6:25). In the LBH-corpus, the ratio is 38 out of 200 (Esth 4:3; 8:17 [x2]; 9:3, 4 [x2]; 10:3 [x2] Dan 8:27; 10:23; Ezra 3:12, 13; 10:6; Neh 4:11 [x3]; 12, 15 [x2], 17; 5:2, 3, 4; 6:17; 8:7, 11; 9:3 [x2]; 1 Chr 6:34; 12:30; 2 Chr 17:11; 29:28 [x3]; 30:16, 21; 32:23; 34:12).

The results of the present article raise several questions for further research, for example: What different nuances are expressed by the imperfect and the participle in clauses with general meaning? What is (or what are) the semantic and morphosyntactic source(s) of the Biblical Hebrew participial predicate? How shall we understand the non-focalised durative use of the participle in relation to diachronic typology?

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