Rocine Lesson 5

ֶלְאָדָם אָמַר

Genesis 3:17
Goal

• Identify and read the X-qatal construction.
What we already know

We can identify and parse the verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Person, Gender, Number</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Root meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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What we already know

ולהָדָם אָמַר

We can identify and parse the verb.

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<tr>
<td>אמר</td>
<td>Qal</td>
<td>Qatal</td>
<td>3 m s</td>
<td>To Be Determined*</td>
<td>say</td>
</tr>
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* Note

- The Qatal here is NOT in a dependent clause.
  (It would need to follow אֲשֶׁר, אִם, or כִּי to be in a dependent clause.)
- Since it is not in a dependent clause, it is NOT fulfilling the function of relative past background.
The significance of the qatal verb form gives an attribute to the subject of the verb. Translate many of the qatal verb forms which are NOT in a dependent clause as “attributions.”

For your translation, use an -er word or a gerund (-ing noun) + possessive pronoun.

E.g. Translation of יפרע

- He was a sayER (of)
- or
- His sayING (of)
The significance of the qatal

וּלְאָדָם אָמַר

• The qatal verb form gives an attribute to the subject of the verb. Translate many of the qatal verb forms which are NOT in a dependent clause as “attributions.”
• For your translation, use an -er word or a gerund (-ing noun) + possessive pronoun.
• E.g. Translation of אמר
  • *He was a sayER (of)*
    or
  • *His sayING (of)*

• In our verse above (Genesis 3:17) YHWH is speaking to Adam after he has spoken to the serpent and to the woman. Now he turns to address the man, Adam.
• YHWH, therefore, is the subject of the our verb אמר.
• According to our rule, then, how would you translate אמר here?
• Or to put it another way, what attribute of YHWH is being brought into focus here?
X-qatal

The word order in our verse is referred to as an
  - X-qatal
    or sometimes
  - Waw-X-qatal
X-qatal

וּלָאָדָם אָמָר

• The word order in our verse is referred to as an
  • X-qatal
    or sometimes
  • Waw-X-qatal
• What are the elements?
  • The Waw is the Waw.
  • The X is the bit that comes between the waw the verb. The X can be a number of different things, e.g. subject, direct object, indirect object, or a prepositional phrase.
  • The Qatal is the Qatal verb.
The word order in our verse is referred to as an X-qatal or sometimes Waw-X-qatal.

RULE: In Historical Narrative, the X-Qatal has focus-shifting function, called topicalization.

- It is this unusual word order in Hebrew (something coming before the verb) that signals to the reader that the X component is in focus.
- We will try to represent that in English with the following construction (also an unusual word order in English)

(And) It was ______ “X” ______ who(that) (Remainder of clause)
• Using what we have learned, how would you translate our lesson verse (above)?

Translation of the qatal in a non-dependent clause:
• E.g. Translation of אָמַר
  • *He was a sayER (of)*
  or
  • *His sayING (of)*

Translation of the X-Qatal or Waw-X-Qatal construction:
• (And) It was _______“X”_______ who(that) (Remainder of clause)______.
Using what we have learned, how would you translate our lesson verse (above)?

Translation of the qatal in a non-dependent clause:
- E.g. Translation of 
  אָמַר
  - *He was a sayER (of)*
  - or
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Translation of the X-Qatal or Waw-X-Qatal construction:
- (And) It was ______“X”_______ who(that) ___(Remainder of clause)______.

Translation: *And it was to Adam that he was a sayer.*
What does the X-qatal do?

In Historical Narrative the X-qatal does a number of things:

<table>
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<th>Beginning of a discourse</th>
<th>Middle of a discourse</th>
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<tr>
<td>a summary of what follows</td>
<td>a change in focus,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a switch in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- switch of characters in a story</td>
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</table>

The one word used for all these functions is **topicalization**.

\[ X\text{-}qatal = \text{topicalization} \]
What we already know

We can now identify the “function” column of our verb analysis chart from above.

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## Summary

**Qatal in Historical Narrative**

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<th>QATAL IN INDEPENDENT CLAUSES (Lesson 5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preceded by</td>
<td>any other word or phrase, i.e. an “X”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a relative, e.g. כִּי אִם אֲשֶׁר</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translate</td>
<td>has, had, have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(And) it was“X” who(that) ____</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Function” in verb analysis chart</td>
<td>Qatal in dep. clause = relative past background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X-qatal = topicalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>יָשָׁם יִתְרוֹ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה עַל־אֱלֹהִים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Jethro heard all which God had done.</td>
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# Summary of Qatal and Wayyiqtol

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<th>WAYYIQTOL (Lessons 1, 2, 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preceded by</strong></td>
<td>any other word or phrase, i.e. an “X”</td>
<td>nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Translate</strong></td>
<td>(And) it was “X” who(that) _____</td>
<td>Usually as an English past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Function”</strong></td>
<td>X-qatal = topicalization</td>
<td>Historical narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mainline</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| יִשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָה אֱלֹהִים | וַיִּשָּׂא מְשָׁמָרָיו מִלְתֵּי אֲנִי יהוה | וַיֹּ֫לֶךְ מֵשֶׁה אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל | Jethro heard all which God had done.  
And it was to Adam that he was a sayer.  
God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am YHWH”  
Moses went and spoke the words to all Israel |
Concerning English Bibles

Most English translations generally ignore the difference between the qatal and the wayyiqtol verb forms.

- Genesis 1:1 is a qatal verb form, and translators generally use a simple past translation: “In the beginning God created.”
- Genesis 1:3 is a wayyiqtol verb form, and translators use simple past once again: “And God said …”
- This book, on the other hand, suggests trying to capture the difference in meaning between the qatal and wayyiqtol verb forms: “It was in the beginning that God was creator ... And then God said ...”
Concerning English Bibles

The reason we are learning Biblical Hebrew is not to once again translate the Hebrew Bible. Many excellent translations already exist. Rather, we are trying to better understand the nuance of the original language.