A Unified Account of the Infinitive Absolute in Biblical Hebrew
Elizabeth Cowper and Vincent DeCaen, University of Toronto

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1. Introduction

• Based on prior work (DeCaen 1995, 2014; Cowper and DeCaen 2017), and reporting on work in progress, we propose a unified syntactic account for the Biblical Hebrew (BH) infinitive absolute IA).

• In addition to the constructions usually included (Waltke and O'Connor 1990, Harbour 1999, Hatav 2017), where the same verb root appears as the infinitive absolute and as the main verb of the clause, we extend the account to cases where the two verbal forms have different roots, and to conjoined verbal projections where only the first verb bears the clausal inflection.

• We argue that the infinitival phrase merges as a phrasal modifier of a verbal projection (*v*P or VoiceP), and that its surface position depends on independently motivated movements of either the main verb or the infinitival phrase. Contra Harbour (1999, 2007), we argue that the infinitival phrase is a full XP, rather than a head.

• We hypothesize that the infinitive absolute form is the default spellout for a verb bearing no inflectional features, predicting that it might appear in other constructions as well.

• We show that same form indeed appears in certain coordinate constructions that exhibit a pattern parallel to first-conjunct agreement. We propose that these constructions involve VoiceP conjunction, where only the first conjunct moves to the relevant inflectional head, leaving the second conjunct to be spelled out with the default form.

2. The phenomenon

2.1 Sources of data

• A database of approximately 875 infinitives in total, extracted from BibleWorks (4.0.034d(1998) with MORPH 3.0), supplemented by MORPH 4.20.[1] Approximately 420 of these were from Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) (Genesis through 2 Kings).

• The data were also supplemented by tokens gleaned from the literature (Hatav 2017 counts 266 tokens of "tautological" infinitive absolute in SBH)

• All translations here are from the King James Version (KJV)

2.2 Properties of the Infinitive Absolute:

• Traditionally, the construction is defined as involving reduplication of the root and possibly also the binyan of the main verb of the clause (Hatav's 2017 *tautological infinitive*). When the two verbs appear in different binyanim, the infinitive overwhelmingly takes the *pa`al* form (Harbour 1999).

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[1] The data were cleaned so as to exclude misparsed examples.

(1) Same root, same binyan: וְאָבִ֙יהָ֙ יָרֹק יָרַק֙ בְּפָנֶ֔יהָ

wə?ābîhā // **yārōq** yāraq *pro* bəpānêhā   (Num 12:14)

and her father // **spit/IA** he spit *pro* in her face

'If her father **but** spit in her face'

(2) Same root, different binyan (IA as plain qal/pa`al):   אַ֤ךְ טָרֹ֣ף טֹרָ֔ף וְלֹ֥א רְאִיתִ֖יו עַד־הֵֽנָּה

                                                    (Gen 44:28, cited by Harbour 1999: 167)

ṭārōp tōrāp wəlō? rə?îtîw ʕad-hḗnnâ

tear/IA torn-apart.3MSG and not saw.1SG until now

'**Surely** he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since'

- While the infinitive phrase frequently consists only of a single word, it can also take arguments or modifiers.

(3) PP modifier: וְשִׁבְעָ֣ה הַכֹּהֲנִ֡ים נֹשְׂאִים֩ ... הֹלְכִ֗ים הָל֤וֹךְ וְתָקְעוּ֙² בַּשּׁוֹפָר֔וֹת

wəšib?â hakkōhănîm nōśə?îm <u>hōləkîm</u> [**hālôk** wə**tāqʕaʕ** baššôpārôt]   (Josh 6:13)

and-seven the priests carrying <u>going</u> **go/IA** *and*-**sound/IA** on the trumpets

'And seven priests bearing … <u>went on</u> **continually**, *and* **blew** with the trumpets'

(4) PP modifier and DP direct object: אֶֽעֱבֹ֨ר בְּכׇל־צֹֽאנְךָ֜ הַיּ֗וֹם הָסֵ֤ר מִשָּׁם֙ כׇּל־שֶׂה³

pro ?eʕĕbōr bəkol-ṣō?nkā hayyôm **hāsēr** miššām kol-śeh³   (Gen 30:32)

I <u>will pass</u> among all your flock today **remove/IA** from there every sheep

'I <u>will pass</u> through all thy flock to day, **removing** from thence all the sheep'

(5) Pronominal direct object and PP modifier: וַיְמַדְּדֵ֤ם בַּחֶ֙בֶל֙ הַשְׁכֵּ֣ב אוֹתָ֔ם אַ֔רְצָה

wayəmaddədēm *pro* baḥébel **haškēb** ?ôtām ?árṣâ   (2 Sam 8:2)

and-he measured with the cord **make lie down/IA** them on-ground

'and measured them with a line, **casting them down** to the ground'

- The infinitive absolute can also occur in conjoined constructions:

(6) Two conjoined infinitives modifying the main clause: הָל֤וֹךְ וְטָפֹף֙ תֵּלַ֔כְנָה

hālôk wə**ṭāpōp** <u>tēláknâ</u>   (Isa 3:16)

go/IA *and*-**trip/IA** <u>they(F)-go</u>

'**walking** *and* **mincing** as <u>they go</u>'

(7) Infinitive absolute conjoined with an inflected infinitive: וַיֵּ֤שֶׁב הָעָם֙ לֶאֱכֹ֣ל וְשָׁת֔וֹ

wayyḗšeb hāʕām <u>le?ĕkōl</u> wə**šātô**   (Ex 32:6)

and then sat the people <u>to eat</u> *and* **drink/IA**

'and the people sat down <u>to eat</u> *and* **to drink**'

(8) Infinitive absolute conjoined with a finite verb: וַיִּתְקְעוּ֙ בַּשּׁוֹפָר֔וֹת וְנָפוֹץ֙ הַכַּדִּ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֖ר בְּיָדָֽם:

wayyitqə?û baššôpārôt **wənāpôṣ** hakkaddîm ?ăšer bəyādām   (Judges 7:19)

and <u>they blew</u> on the trumpets *and*-**break/IA** the jars that in their hand

'and <u>they blew</u> the trumpets, *and* **brake** the pitchers that were in their hands'

(both activities at the same time)

- The infinitival phrase never contains an overt subject.

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² Read ותקעו as the IA ותקוע *wətāqôaʕ*.

³ The object here has been abbreviated, and the inverted order is the result of heavy XP shift.

• The infinitive absolute can occupy a variety of positions in the main clause:

(9)   At/near the end of the clause:

a.   כִּי־תִשְׂתָּרֵר עָלֵינוּ גַּם־הִשְׂתָּרֵר:

kî- *pro* tiśtārēr   ʕālênû gam-**hiśtārēr**   (Num 16:13)

for you <u>would lord</u> over us even **lord/IA**

'except thou <u>make</u> thyself **altogether** a prince over us?'

b.   אֵלַין יֵצֵא יָצוֹא

ʔēlay yēṣēʔ   **yāṣôʔ**   (2 Kgs 5:11)

to me <u>he comes out</u> **come out/IA**

'He will **surely** <u>come out</u> to me'

c.   וְאֶת־צְלָמָיו שִׁבְּרוּ הֵיטֵב

wəʔet-ṣəlāmāyw <u>šibbərû</u>   **hêṭēb**   (2 Kgs 11:18)

and their idols   <u>they smashed</u> **do well/IA**

'and his images <u>brake they in pieces</u> **thoroughly**'

d.   וַיִּשְׁטְחוּ לָהֶם שָׁטוֹחַ סְבִיבוֹת הַמַּחֲנֶה:

wayyišṭəḥû lāhem   **šāṭôaḥ**   səbîbôt hammaḥăneh   (Num 11:32)

and <u>spread</u>   to them   **spread/IA** around the camp

'and <u>they spread</u> them **all abroad** for themselves round about the camp'

(10)   Directly after the main verb:[4]

a.   הָרְגֵנִי נָא הָרֹג אִם־מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ

<u>horgḗnî</u> nāʔ **hārōg** ʔim-māṣā́ʔtî ḥēn bəʕênḗkā

<u>kill me</u>   now **kill/IA** if I found favour in your eyes   (Num 11:15)

'<u>kill me</u>, I pray thee, **out of hand**, if I have found favour in thy sight'

b.   שִׁמְעוּ שָׁמוֹעַ מִלָּתִי

<u>šimʕû</u> **šāmôaʕ** millātî   (Job 13:17 = 21:2)

<u>listen!</u> **listen/IA** my word

'<u>Hear</u> **diligently** my speech'

c.   לָ֟מָה הֶעֱבַרְתָּ הַעֲבִיר אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן

lā́mâ <u>heʕĕbártā</u> **haʕăbîr** ʔet-hāʕām hazzeh ʔet-hayyardēn   (Josh 7:7)

why <u>you brought across</u> **bring across/IA** the people the this the Jordan

'wherefore hast thou **at all** <u>brought</u> this people over Jordan'

(11)   Directly before the main verb:

a.   שָׁמוֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

šāmôr <u>tišmərûn</u> ʔet-miṣwōt   ʔădōnāy ʔĕlōhêkem   (Deut 6:17)

keep/IA <u>you shall keep</u> commandments of my lord your god

'Ye shall **diligently** <u>keep</u> the commandments of the LORD your God'

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[4] We assume that *nāʔ* in (10a) originates in sentence-initial position and moves to a position after *horgḗnî* for prosodic reasons.

b.   זָכֹר֙ תִּזְכֹּ֔ר אֵ֚ת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֣ה יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לְפַרְעֹ֖ה

zākōr <u>tizkōr</u>   ʔēt ʔăšer-ʕāśâ ʔădōnāy ʔĕlōhḗkā ləparʕōh   (Deut 7:18)

remember/IA <u>you must remember</u> that did my lord your god to Pharaoh

'but shalt **well** <u>remember</u> what the LORD thy God did'

c.   הָל֤וֹךְ וְטָפֹף֙ תֵּלַ֔כְנָה

hālôk *wəṭāpōp* <u>tēláknâ</u>   (Isa 3:16)

go/IA *and* **trip/IA** <u>they(F) walk</u>

'**walking** *and* **mincing** as <u>they go</u>'

(12)   As the only verbal element in the clause:

a.   שָׁמ֣וֹר אֶת־י֥וֹם֙ הַשַּׁבָּ֖ת לְקַדְּשֹׁ֑ו

šāmôr ʔet-yôm haššabbāt   ləqaddəšô   (Deut 5:12; cf. Deut 16:1, 27:1)

keep/IA day   the sabbath   to make it holy

'**Keep** the sabbath day to sanctify it'

b.   זָכֹ֕ור אֵ֛ת אֲשֶׁר־עָשֶׂ֥ה יְהוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ לְמִרְיָ֑ם

                                                      (Deut 24:9; cf. Ex 13:3, 20:8, Deut 24:9, 25:17, Josh 1:13)

zākôr   ʔēt ʔăšer-ʕāśâ   ʔădōnāy ʔĕlōhḗkā ləmiryām

remember/IA that did   my lord   your god to Miriam

'**Remember** what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam'

3. Prior accounts

In general, prior discussions of the infinitive absolute consider only those where the infinitive and the main verb of the clause have the same root.

Traditional accounts (e.g. Waltke and O'Connor 1990) simply list the various IA constructions, attributing different placement of the infinitive absolute to factors like emphasis.
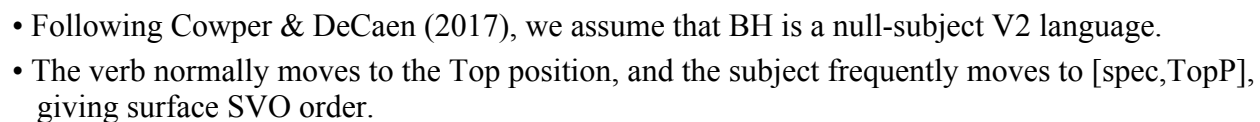
Generative approaches (Harbour 1999, 2007, 2008; Hatav 2017) also focus exclusively on the reduplicative construction, where the same verb root appears in the infinitive and in the main verb of the clause.

• Harbour (1999, 2007, 2008) analyses them as predicate clefts, with the infinitive absolute spelling out the trace of a moved verb. If the copy includes v^0, which for Harbour determines the binyan, then the two verbs appear with the same binyan. If only the verb root appears in the copy, then the default *pa`al* form appears due to a morphological repair operation.

  – This account inherently cannot be extended to include forms with different verb roots.

  – Since the construction is derived by head movement, it also cannot accommodate instances where both the main verb of the clause and the infinitive are fully phrasal and have their own arguments.

(13)   PP modifier and DP direct object: אֶעֱבֹ֨ר בְּכָל־צֹאנְךָ֜ הַיּ֗וֹם הָסֵ֤ר מִשָּׁם֙ כָּל־שֶׂ֣הו

pro ʔeʕĕbōr bəkol-ṣōʔnkā   hayyôm **hāsēr**   miššām   kol-śeh   (Gen 30:32)

I <u>will pass</u> among all your flock today **remove/IA** from there every sheep

'I <u>will pass</u> through all thy flock to day, **removing** from thence all the sheep'

• Hatav's (2017) focus is primarily on the information-structural properties of the construction; she does not provide an explicit syntactic analysis.

4. Theoretical framework

(14)

```
            &P
          /    \
   hanging      \
   topic      &   ForceP
             /      \
       wh-word       \
               Force   TopP
                      /    \
                 topic      \
                        Top   FinP
                             /    \
                       subject     \
                               Fin   AspP
                                    /    \
                                 Asp   VoiceP
                                      /    \
                                subject     \
                                        Voice   vP
                                               /___\
                                              ... v ...
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- Following Cowper & DeCaen (2017), we assume that BH is a null-subject V2 language.

- The verb normally moves to the Top position, and the subject frequently moves to [spec,TopP], giving surface SVO order.

(15) hûʔ   hēsîr   ʔet-habbāmôt   הוּא הֵסִיר אֶת־הַבָּמֹות
      he   removed   ACC the high places   (2 Kings 18:4)
      'He removed the high places,'

- Sometimes the subject in [spec,TopP] is phonologically null, giving apparent V1 order.

(16) a. wə-pro   šibbar   ʔet-hammaṣṣēbōt   וְשִׁבַּר אֶת־הַמַּצֵּבֹת
          and-3MSG smashed   ACC the sacred stones   (2 Kings 18:4)
          'and brake the images,'

b. wə-*pro*   kārat   ʔet-hāʔăšērâ   וְכָרַת אֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרֶה
    and-3MSG cut down ACC-Asherah   (2 Kings 18:4)
    'and cut down the groves.'

• Sometimes something other than the subject moves to [spec,TopP], leaving the subject *in situ* and giving verb-subject order.

(17)   בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ:
    bərēʔšît   bārāʔ ʔĕlōhîm ʔēt haššamáyim wəʔēt hāʔáreṣ   (Genesis 1:1)[5]
    in-beginning created God   the heavens   and the earth
    'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'

• Sometimes there is phonologically overt material in projections above TopP, giving apparent V3 order.

(18) a.   הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא הַגָּבִיעַ בְּיָדוֹ הוּא יִהְיֶה־לִּי עָבֶד
      [hā-ʔîš ʔăšer nimṣāʔ haggābîaʕ bəyādô]   hûʔ yihyeh -llî ʕébed (Gen 44:17)
      the-man that   found the cup   in his hand he will be to.me slave
      'but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant'

    b.   כִּי אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה רֹאֶה לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה
      [kî ʔet-kol-hāʔáreṣʔăšer ʔattâ rōʔeh] ləkā   ʔettənénnâ   (Gen 13:15)
      for all the land   that   you see   to-you I will give
      'For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it.'

• Sometimes the verb moves past Top⁰ to a higher head, giving true V1 order. In (19), the verb has moved as far as the jussive Force head (Cowper and DeCaen 2017).

(19) a. yāʔēr ʔădōnāy ~~yāʔēr~~ pānāyw ʔēlékā   יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ:
      shine my lord   his face to you   (Num 6:25)
      'the LORD make his face shine upon you.'

    b. wəyāśēm *pro* ~~yāśēm~~ ləkā   šālôm   וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם:
      and-give *pro*   to-2MSG peace   (Num 6:26)
      'and [the LORD] give you peace.'

5. Our proposal

5.1 The infinitive absolute is a verbal projection (VoiceP or vP).

• Evidence that it is phrasal, not a head (cf. Harbour 1999):
  – The infinitive can take both phrasal modifiers of its own, and nominal arguments.

(20) a.   אֶעֱבֹר בְּכָל־צֹאנְךָ הַיּוֹם הָסֵר מִשָּׁם כָּל־שֶׂהו
                                                (Gen 30:32)
      pro ʔeʕĕbōr bəkol-ṣōʔnkā   hayyôm [*pro* **hāsēr**   miššām   kol-śeh[6]]
      I <u>will-pass</u> among all your flock today *pro* **remove/IA** from there every sheep
      'I <u>will pass</u> through all thy flock to day, **removing** from thence all the sheep'

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[5] The Hebrew text follows the Leningrad codex and its Tiberian vocalization, a standard version sufficient for our purposes here (but see Khan, 1987, 1996). Where the word stress does not fall on the final syllable, an acute accent is added for clarity. The systematic post-vocalic spirantization of stops is omitted.

[6] The object here is abbreviated to make the structure clearer; the inverted order is the result of heavy XP shift.

    b.   וַיְמַדְּדֵם בַּחֶבֶל הַשְׁכֵּב אוֹתָם אַרְצָה

wa-yəmaddədēm *pro* baḥébel   [PRO **haškēb**   Ɂôtām Ɂárṣâ]   (2 Sam 8:2)

and <u>he measured</u>   *pro* with the cord PRO **make lie down/IA** them on-ground

'and <u>measured</u> them with a line, **casting them down** to the ground'

- Evidence that the infinitive consists of no more than VoiceP:
  - It cannot take an overt subject: there is no mechanism internal to the infinitival clause that would case-license a subject.
  - The infinitival verb is initial in the infinitival phrase, suggesting that it is not dominated by an inflectional head with an EPP feature.
  - It cannot bear clitics (though it can take overt nonsubject arguments, and be modified). This is unsurprising if clitics are hosted by an inflectional head above Voice. VoiceP can accommodate full overt DP (internal) arguments, but not clitics.

5.2 The infinitive absolute modifies a verbal projection (VoiceP or vP).

- Evidence that it merges no higher than VoiceP:
  - The IA surfaces below grammatical aspect when it remains in situ in (21).
    · We assume that the participle spells out progressive aspect, as in English (DeCaen 1995).
    · Since there is no marked tense feature to be spelled out in (21), the clause contains no finite auxiliary.

(21)   a.   וְשִׁבְעָה הַכֹּהֲנִים נֹשְׂאִים ... הֹלְכִים הָלוֹךְ וְתָקְעוּ בַּשּׁוֹפָרוֹת

                                                           (Josh 6:13)

wəšibɁâ   hakkōhănîm nōśəɁîm [$_{AspP}$ <u>hōləkîm</u> [$_{IA}$ **hālôk wətāqɔ̂aɁ**   baššôpārôt]]^7

and seven   the priests   carrying   <u>going</u>   **go/IA** and **sound/IA**   on the trumpets

'And seven priests bearing … <u>went on</u> **continually**, and **blew** with the trumpets'

    b. hēmmâ [$_{AspP}$ <u>hōləkîm</u>   [$_{IA}$ **hālôk** wədabbēr]]   הֵמָּה הֹלְכִים הָלוֹךְ וְדַבֵּר

        they   <u>going</u>   **go/IA** and **talk**/IA   (2 Kgs 2:11)

        'as they **still** <u>went on</u>, and **talked**'

  - When the IA remains *in situ*, it surfaces at or near the end of the clause, followed only by other adjuncts, as expected if it is an adjunct to either *v*P or VoiceP.

5.3 The infinitive absolute, like other XPs, can move.

- It can move to [spec,TopP]. Then it appears directly before the verb, which is in Top.

(22)   זָכֹר תִּזְכֹּר אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפַרְעֹה

zākōr   <u>tizkōr</u>   Ɂēt Ɂăšer-Ɂāśâ Ɂădōnāy Ɂĕlōhékā ləparɁōh   (Deut 7:18)

remember/IA <u>you must remember</u>   that did my lord your god to Pharaoh

'but shalt **well** <u>remember</u> what the Lᴏʀᴅ thy God did'

- The verb can move higher, to a functional head above [spec,TopP]. This leaves the infinitive absolute, still in [spec,TopP], immediately after the verb. In (23), the wh-word occupies [spec,ForceP], the verb has moved to Force, and the infinitive absolute is in [spec,TopP].

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^{7} Read ותקעו as the IA ותקוע *wətāqɔ̂aɁ*.

(23) לָ֤מָה הֶֽעֱבַ֨רְתָּ֙ הַעֲבִ֗יר אֶת־הָעָ֤ם הַזֶּה֙ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן
(Josh 7:7)

lā́mâ	hēʕăbártā	**haʕăbîr**	ʔet-hāʕām	hazzeh	ʔet-hayyardēn
why	you brought across	**bring across/IA**	the people	the this	the Jordan

'wherefore hast thou **at all** brought this people over Jordan'

- A hanging topic can appear in the highest specifier position, [spec, &P]. This can result in a variety of orders, depending on what has moved to [spec,TopP], and how far the verb has moved.

(24) kol-ʕōməsêhā **śārôṭ** yiśśārḗṭû
all burdening with it **cut/IA** they will be cut (Zach 12:3, cited by Harbour 1999: 169)
'All that burden themselves with it shall be cut **in pieces**.'

כָּל־עֹמְסֶ֣יהָ שָׂר֣וֹט יִשָּׂרֵ֑טוּ

The tree in (25) shows all the possible positions of the finite verb and the infinitive absolute.

(25)
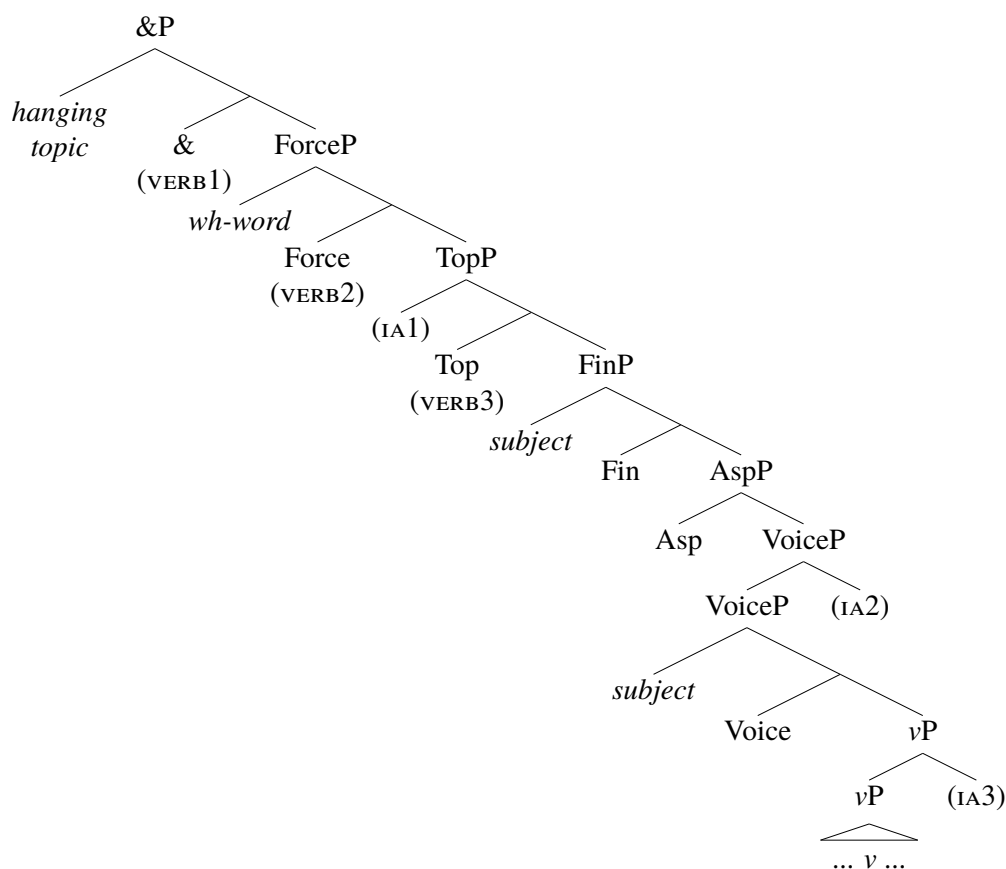
- This structure, together with the movements listed in (26), along with the possibility that the subject may be overt or phonologically null, derives all the observed word orders.
- The movements in (26a–c) are argued for by Cowper & DeCaen (2017), independently of the infinitive absolute construction.
- The movement in (26d) is also not specific to the infinitive absolute construction; it is just a special case of movement of a nonsubject XP to the clausal topic position, also discussed in Cowper & Decaen (2017).

(26)   a. Finite verb moves to Top (ordinary declarative sentence)
       b. Finite verb may move from Top to Force or another C-head (questions, exclamatives)
       c. Finite verb may move to & (narrative inversion)
       d. IA may move to [spec,Top]

- The information-structural differences that correlate with the surface position of the IA can be attributed to the factors that influence which of these independently motivated movements take place, such as the topicality of the IA itself (see Hatav 2017) and the presence or absence of marked features of heads above TopP.

6. Interim summary

- We have argued that the syntax of the infinitive absolute construction can be understood quite straightforwardly in terms of the clausal syntax of Biblical Hebrew, and that no construction-specific syntactic processes or structures are required.
- We have not so far said anything about either the morphological shape of the IA or the mechanism deriving the so-called tautological infinitive, i.e. those cases where the IA reduplicates the main verb of the clause, and carries meanings often described as emphasis ("intensifying infinitive" Waltke and O'Connor 1990: §35.3.1b). Before turning to these, we first discuss another kind of construction in which the IA form appears.

7. Coordinate structures and the infinitive absolute

(27)   Two conjoined infinitives absolute modifying the main clause: הָלוֹךְ וְטָפֹף֙ תֵּלַ֔כְנָה
       hālôk *wəṭāpōp*   <u>tēláknâ</u>   (Isa 3:16)
       go/IA *and*-**trip/IA** <u>they(F) go</u>
       'walking *and* mincing as <u>they go</u>'

- The IA forms in (27) are accounted for by the analysis already presented: the conjoined IA forms are an adjunct to the matrix VoiceP, and have moved as a constituent to [spec,TopP].

(28)   Infinitive absolute conjoined with an inflected infinitive: וַיֵּ֤שֶׁב הָעָם֙ לֶאֱכֹ֣ל וְשָׁת֔וֹ
       wayyḗšeb   hāʕām   leʔĕkōl *wə***šātô**   (Ex 32:6)
       and then sat the people to eat *and* **drink/IA**
       'and the people sat down to eat *and* to **drink**'

- Here, the IA form is conjoined with a full infinitival form, and is not interpreted as a modifier. Given the meaning, one might expect both 'to eat' and 'drink' to be expressed with the regular infinitive, as they are in (29).

(29)   וַאֲנִ֞י אָב֣וֹא אֶל־בֵּיתִ֗י לֶאֱכֹ֧ל וְלִשְׁתּ֛וֹת וְלִשְׁכַּ֥ב עִם־אִשְׁתִּ֖י
       waʔănî ʔābôʔ ʔel-bêtî   leʔĕkōl **wəlištôt**   **wəliškab** ʕim-ʔištî   (1 Sam 11:11)
       and.I   will.go to-my.house to.eat **and.to.drink and.to.lie** with-my.wife
       'shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife?'

(30) Infinitive absolute conjoined with a finite verb: וַיִּתְקְעוּ֙ בַּשּׁוֹפָר֔וֹת וְנָפ֖וֹץ הַכַּדִּ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֖ר בְּיָדָֽם:
(Judges 7:19)

wayyitqəʔû   baššôpārôt   *wənāpôṣ*   hakkaddîm ʔăšer bəyādām
and they blew on the trumpets *and-break/IA* the jars that in their hand
'and they blew the trumpets, *and* **brake** the pitchers that were in their hands'
(both activities at the same time)

• As in (28), (30) shows an IA form in what appears to be a conjoined verb phrase, where the other conjunct takes a different form – here a finite verb. Again, one might expect both verbs in this example to bear the same (finite, in this case) inflection, as can be seen in (31).

(31) וַיָּבֹא אוּרִיָּה אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד לְשָׁלוֹם יוֹאָב

wayyābōʔ   ʔûriyyâ ʔēlāyw *wayyišʔal*   dāwīd lišlôm   yôʔāb (2 Sam 11:7)
and.then.he.came Uriah   to.him   *and.he.asked* David about.welfare.of Joab
'And when Uriah was come unto him, David **demanded** of him how Joab did'

What needs to be explained in both of these examples is why the two verbs do not carry the same inflection, and why the second conjunct in both examples takes the particular form that it does.
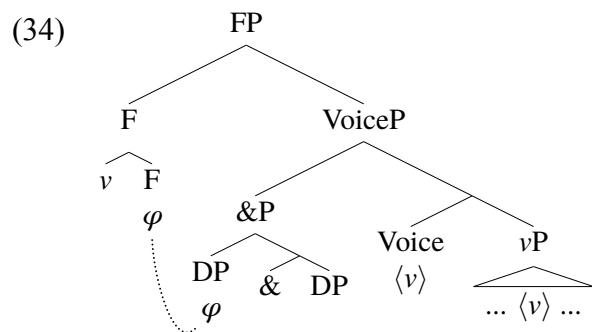
7.1 A similar phenomenon: first-conjunct agreement

• In a variety of languages, coordinate structures display asymmetric agreement patterns (McCloskey 1986, Munn 1999, Doron 2000, Bošković 2009, many others).

• A typical pattern is for the verb to agree with only the first conjunct of a postverbal subject:

(32) mšat   kull mra   w   xu-ha   Moroccan Arabic
left.F.SG each woman and brother-her   (Munn 1999: 653)
'Each woman and her brother left.'

• Current syntactic accounts of coordinate structures treat them as asymmetric, with the first conjunct occupying a higher position than the second. Various versions have been proposed:
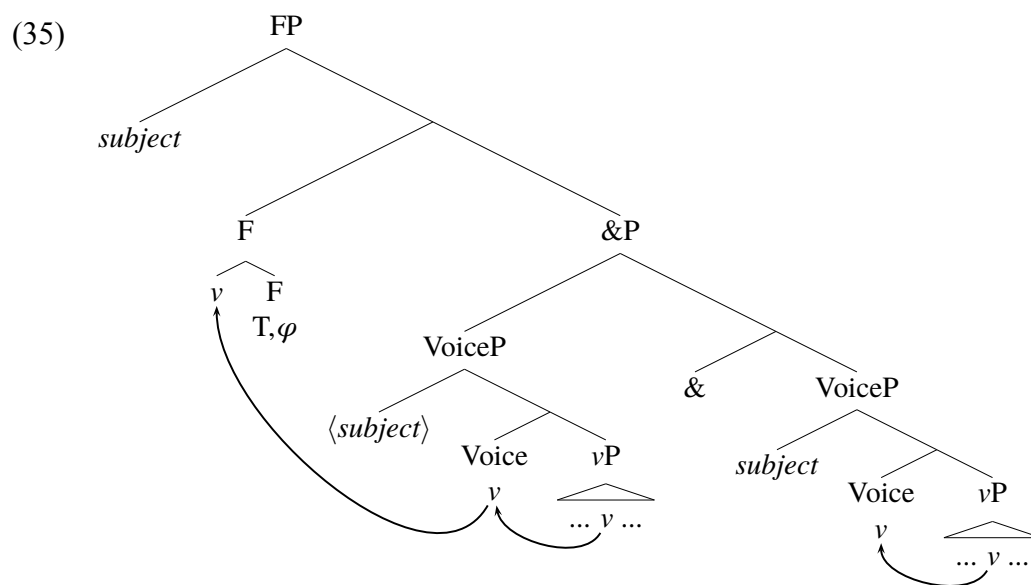
(33) a.   &P   Standard X-bar view: 1st conjunct in [spec,&P]
          DP & DP

      b.   NP   Munn's (1993) Boolean phrase, adjoined to NP
          NP BP
              B NP

• Roughly speaking, first-conjunct agreement can happen with postverbal subjects because the first conjunct is structurally closer to the head hosting the preposed verb.

• Details vary from account to account, but the common thread is that agreement holds between a c-commanding head and the higher of two conjoined constituents, as schematized in (34).

(34)

```
                    FP
            ┌────────┴────────┐
            F               VoiceP
          ⌢                ┌───┴────┐
         v  F            &P        ┌──┴──┐
            φ          ┌─┴─┐     Voice   vP
                      DP  & DP   ⟨v⟩    ⌢
                      φ              ... ⟨v⟩ ...
```

7.2 First-conjunct inflection: the relation between a higher inflectional head and a coordinate verbal phrase

We propose that a similar mechanism is responsible for the asymmetric inflectional patterns in (28) and (30).

(35)

```
                        FP
            ┌───────────┴────────────┐
        subject                      │
                   ┌─────────────────┴──────────┐
                   F                            &P
                 ⌢                      ┌────────┴────────┐
                v  F                 VoiceP             ┌──┴───┐
                   T,φ          ┌──────┴─────┐         &    VoiceP
                            ⟨subject⟩      ┌──┴──┐        ┌───┴────┐
                                         Voice  vP      subject    │
                                           v   ⌢              ┌────┴───┐
                                             ... v ...      Voice     vP
                                                              v      ⌢
                                                                  ... v ...
```

- Each verb moves to its own Voice head.
- The first verb then moves to the inflectional head.
- The second verb remains in Voice, and is spelled out with whichever binyan Voice provides.
- The subject of the first verb moves to the specifier of the inflectional head; the second subject is not case-licensed and cannot be overt. It can, however, be referentially distinct from the first subject, as in (36).

(36) וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְפָנָיו אַבְרֵךְ וְנָתוֹן אֹתוֹ עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

(Gen 41:43 KJV)

wayyiqrəʔû *pro* ləpānāyw ʔabrēk *wənātôn* *pro* ʔōtô ʕal kol-ʔéreṣ miṣráyim
and shouted *pro* before him kneel *and* **give**/INF *pro* him over all land of Egypt
'and they [people] cried before him, Bow the knee: *and* he [Pharaoh] **made** him [Joseph] ruler over all the land of Egypt'

- This account predicts that if both subjects are phonologically overt (i.e., overt full pronouns or DPs), the coordinate structure will include higher, inflectional categories like FinP or AspP. (31) above is an example of such a structure.

- Unsurprisingly, sentences of this form occur with the conjunction 'and', but also with the disjunction 'or', as in (37).

(37) a. וְכִי־תִמְכְּרוּ מִמְכָּר לַעֲמִיתֶךָ אוֹ קָנֹה מִיַּד עֲמִיתֶךָ

wə-kî-timkərû mimkār laʕămîtékā *ʔô* **qānōh** miyyad ʕămîtékā (Lev 25:14)
and-if you sell sale to your neighbour *or* **buy**/INF from hand of your neighbour
'And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand'

b. אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַיהוָה אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה

ʔîš kî-yiddōr néder laʔdōnāy *ʔô* **hiššābaʕ** šəbūʕâ (Num 30:3[2] KJV)
man that vows vow to my lord *or* **swear**/INF oath
'If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath'

7.3 Infinitive absolute as a default verbal spellout

- Why is the second-conjunct verb spelled out with the same form as the infinitive absolute?
  – We propose that the IA form is what surfaces when a verb cannot move to (or form an Agree relation with) an inflectional head (Asp, Fin, Tense, etc.).
  – Under a realizational view of morphology such as Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993, a.o.), the IA form is thus the default inflectional spellout of a verbal head, just as (following Harbour 1999, 2007) *pa`al* is the default *binyan* for a verb that cannot move to or form an Agree relation with a Voice head.

8. Conclusion and remaining questions

- We have argued that the infinitive absolute construction consists of a verbal projection (*v*P or VoiceP), modifying another verbal projection. Syntactically, the infinitive absolute behaves just like other phrasal modifiers, in that it sometimes moves to [spec,TopP].
- The tautological infinitive construction is a special case of this more general construction.
- The morphological form of the infinitive absolute is the default inflectional form taken by a verb with no access to an inflectional head. It is found, not only in VoiceP/*v*P modifiers, but also as the second of two conjoined VoicePs, where only the first verb moves to the inflectional head position.
- We have taken no position here on the mechanism by which the verb root is copied in the tautological infinitive, though we have ruled out Harbour's account, in which the tautological infinitive is the spellout of the trace of a moved verb.

• We have nothing new to say about cases like (12), where the infinitive absolute is the only verb in the clause. It can be noted that these examples are highly formulaic, and that for each of them, a close counterpart can be found that also contains a finite verb.

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